**Life of Pi**

**Analytical Commentary**

**Beckett 2019**

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| **Write an analytical response for each of the following chapters. Each response should be about one page in length (one or two paragraphs) for a total of 3 pages. USE direct quotations from the text—with parenthetical references.** | | | | | |
| Read the chapter closely! | | | | | |
| **Chapter 16**  **(Comparing Religions)** | | **Chapter 31**  **(Kumar and Kumar)** | | **Chapter 60**  **(A night on the Ocean)** | |
| **Choose 1 of the Following:** | | | | | |
| **Writing** | **Thematic connections** | | **Magic Realism** | | **Hero’s Journey** |
| Explore the writing techniques employed in this chapter, and their effects. What is the main point or idea of the chapter? What tone does the chapter have? How does the writer achieve this? You may wish to consider such things as narrative voice, point-of-view, imagery, figurative language, sound devices, sentence structure, or characterization. | How is this chapter connected to the themes of the book? How does it show:   * the holy power of story, * Spiritual journey, * The importance of science, * Suffering * Mortality | | How does the chapter use the traits of magic realism? How does it   * seize the paradox of the union of opposites; * challenge binary oppositions like life and death and the pre-colonial past versus the post-industrial present. * depict “an amalgamation of realism and fantasy”   Look also forauthorial reticence, hybridity, and irony. | | How does the chapter exist as a depiction of the hero’s journey (Joseph Campbell’s monomyth) or how does it subvert the idea of the hero’s journey? |
| Use specific quotations from the text to support your ideas. Quotes and paraphrasing. Use parenthetical references . | | | | | |
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|  | R | Limited | Some | Considerable | Extensive |
| commentary reveals thorough knowledge and understanding of the text including subtleties |  |  |  |  |  |
| commentary reveals accurate and insightful understanding of literary techniques employed in the passage as well as their effects |  |  |  |  |  |
| persuasively incorporates relevant, specific text support (avoiding over-reliance on summary or restatement of text) |  |  |  |  |  |
| writing is organized in a way that is logical and easy-to-follow. Topic sentences |  |  |  |  |  |
| use of language is sophisticated and precise (vocabulary, sentence variety, sentence structure, tone) |  |  |  |  |  |

**Life of Pi**

**Analytical Commentary**

**Exemplar Analytical Paragraph Chapter 54**

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May 22, 2018

ENG4U

Mr. Beckett

Chapter 54: Pi’s hatches plots to rid himself of Richard Parker

In chapter 54, the reader finds Pi on his raft away from the lifeboat which is under Richard Parker’s control. The lifeboat is the tiger’s territory and Pi, on a rickety makeshift raft, wants the lifeboat for himself. The six plans he comes up with are:

* *Plan Number One: Push Him Off the Lifeboat*
* *Plan Number Two: Kill Him with The Six Morphine Syringes*
* *Plan Number Three: Attack Him with All Available Weaponry*
* *Plan Number Four: Choke Him*
* *Plan Number Five: Poison Him, Set Him on Fire, Electrocute Him*
* *Plan Number Six: War of Attrition* (225-228)

Martel’s writing is very interesting in its matter-of-fact manner and straightforwardness. The chapter consists of Pi weighing various plans to rid himself of Richard Parker. He poses each plan and then picks it apart and finds problems with it—with a sarcastic cynicism:

*Plan Number Three: Attack Him with All Available Weaponry.* Ludicrous. I wasn’t Tarzan. I was a puny, feeble, vegetarian life form. In India it took riding atop great big elephants and shooting with powerful rifles to kill tigers. What was I supposed to do here? Fire off a rocket flare in his face? Go at him with a hatchet in each hand and a knife between my teeth? (227)

It is like Pi is having a conversation with himself—playing Devil’s advocate for each idea he has.

Martel relies on writing these kinds of plans and lists in his writing for two reasons: First, is to show the workmanlike way Pi’s analytical and scientific mind is key to his survival. Castaways must do these kinds of things to keep themselves from going mad. The second is that Martel’s version of the magic realist mode includes a kind of everyday matter-of-fact tone. Magic realism is really about a hyper-real art that has splashes of magical colour. Pi’s planning, reading manuals, creating lists, and everyday work is kind of boring, were it not for the fact he is on a boat with a tiger. This initial list also sets the stage for Pi’s *Plan Number Seven: Keep Him Alive* (239)*.* Throughout these chapters Pi is shown to be a rich character with a rich inner life. Despite the straightforward and almost overly detailed prose, Martel uses Chapter 54 to give readers a view into Pi’s thoughts and the magic that will come to inhabit this world.