

"The sky was many clouds at many levels, some thick and opaque, others looking like smoke. The sky was nothing but falling water, a ceaseless deluge that wrinkled and bloated my skin and froze me stiff.

There were many seas. The sea roared like a tiger. The sea whispered in your ear like a friend telling you secrets. The sea clinked like small change in a pocket. The sea thundered like avalanches. The sea hissed like sandpaper working on wood. The sea sounded like someone vomiting. The sea was dead silent" (Martel 215).

*Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel, explores the physical and moral journey of a young Pi Patel, as he tries to survive after falling victim to a shipwreck in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Pi, whose life is centered around religion, focuses on the intricacies of nature, the environment, and his connection to God in order to survive. Combated by the fear of death and the impending attacks from the animals in his lifeboat, Pi finds solace in the scenery around him, which reflect his emotional state and mood. Martel places a heavy emphasis on imagery and simile, which give life and detail to Pi's surroundings, those that he perceive to be dull and reflective of his own despair. Moreover, the use of parallelism and syntax to highlight the different depictions of the environment demonstrate the idea that truth is up to interpretation. There may be many seas, many skies, and many winds depending upon how Pi wants to tell his story and what he is trying to convey. Ultimately, Martel argues that life is up to interpretation, and that one can alter truth through story-telling to make up their own reality.

Through use of simile and personification, Pi accentuates the life of the inanimate objects around him, and in turn demonstrates the ability for humans to change reality to convey ideas and emotion. For example, in detailing the sky, Pi contends, "The sky was many clouds at many levels, some thick and opaque, others looking like smoke" (Martel 215). By likening the clouds to a thick, foggy haze, he is showing how the space above him reflects his own sentiments. A constant feeling of despair lurks over him, evident when Pi says, "Nature was sinking fast. I could feel a fatal weakness creeping up on me" (Martel 242). The fear that he feels creeping up on him is similar to the clouds, forming a thick smoke around him and engulfing all of his hope. Furthermore, later in the passage Martel uses metaphor to give a more certain description to the sky he so eloquently expressed earlier. Pi declares, "The sky was nothing but falling water, a ceaseless deluge that wrinkled and bloated my skin and froze me stiff" (Martel 242). In the same way that he did in the previous sentence, Martel uses literary device to portray the idea that Pi can alter the reality around him to fit his own beliefs and emotions. By using metaphor in place of simile, it gives the impression that Pi's assertion is more factual--the sky was nothing but falling water, not simply *like* falling water. The fact that the sky "froze" Pi is like the fear he exhibits while on the lifeboat, so debilitating that it takes away his rationality and morality.

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