Fernanda Torres

English 2A

3/13/2014

Does Pi feel safe with Richard Parker?

 How does Pi feel around Richard Parker? Pi is used to zookeeper training, so he is able to respond to cues from Pi and submit to his dominance. Pi manages, through several training exercises, to dominate Parker. This success gives him confidence, making his other obstacles seem less subtle. Caring and providing for Richard Parker keeps Pi busy and helps pass the time quickly. Pi saw Richard as support in helping him keep working hard and survive in the conditions he was, without having Parker to challenge and distract him Pi might have given up on life. Pi is able to take strong steps toward ensuring his continued existence, searching for food and keeping himself motivated. Pi performs many actions that he never thought he’d go through just for the fact to survive. He as a vegetarian now must trap and kill fish and eat their entire flesh. With time and desperation he has been tearing birds apart and stuffing them in his hungry stomach. He also used parts of the Frenchman that Richard killed as bait and even eats it; he becomes a desperate hungry cannibal. Pi could’ve had some serious problems with this wild tiger, but he found the way to tame him, and to see him as a matter of fighting for life.

 Does Pi feel safe with Richard Parker? This could sound pretty wild. It can be difficult to accept that a tiger and a boy could exist on a lifeboat alone; however in this relationship it makes this statement possible. We can maybe think that being near an animal like Richard makes you think that by the minute you walk in, it’s going to bite you up and completely devour you. But who knows what mysterious thinking these types of animals have, what goes through Richard Parker’s mind to be specific. There are always opportunities in which you can find a way to interact with a certain animal, and not find it so scary anymore. Pi has the capacity to manage Richard Parker’s movements, his actions, his intentions and how to control them.

Back at Pondicherry India, Pi’s father owned a zoo, providing Pi a relatively lifestyle and some understanding of animal psychology. He focuses in looking for food to feed Richard Parker so he won’t eat him. Pi carries a whistle in which he uses in the several training exercises he applies to Parker. With this object Parker feels pushed to do what he demands. Pi saw Richard Parker as a motivation of life. After the incident of the sinking of the Tsimtsum, Pi feels desperate and confused; he starts to think in how he will be able to survive all by himself, when he realizes he has lost his family too. He strangely feels motivation through the company of this Bengal tiger. Pi tries to identify the way that his movements and intentions work, and how he will be able to have under control all those aspects for him to survive.

Pi also performs many actions which he never thought he would ever do, due to his preferences in nutrition. “Lord, to think that I’m a strict vegetarian. To think that when I was a child I always shuddered when I snapped open a banana because it sounded to me like the breaking of an animal’s neck. I had descended to a level of savagery I never imagined possible” (Martel, chapter 66). He was a strict vegetarian, and he always loved his lifestyle that way. This drastically changes when he realizes he will have to fight to survive, he will have to find a way to not die of hunger. He entered the boat a total vegetarian but left it 227 days later as a carnivore of the first order. After catching his first fish he has the biggest of difficulties to kill it. It takes him a while to overcome his own fears before he finally wins the battle against himself and the fish. He then threw overboard all of his inhibitions so that he ate sea turtles and drank their blood and even killed a bird with his bare hands and ate its raw flesh without thinking twice. In addition a question that probably went through his mind a several of times was change, or death?

The most dangerous fear that Pi deals with is Richard Parker who has no mercy on his victims. Pi knows that he should deal with Richard Parker in a small damaged lifeboat. He can't run away from his fears, so he makes a border between Richard Parker and himself. Pi says, “I started thinking seriously about how I was going to deal with Richard Parker. This forbearance on his part on hot, cloudless days that is what it was and not simple laziness was not good enough. I couldn't always be running away from him. I needed safe access to the locker and to the top of the tarpaulin, no matter on what time of day or the weather and no matter of his mood. It was rights that I needed, the sort of rights that come with the might. It was time to impose myself and carve out territory,"(Martel, p. 224). Richard Parker symbolizes death, fear, danger, mortality, knowledge, ignorance, obstacles, suffering, mistreatment, motivation, beauty, awesomeness, and power. It can be difficult to accept that a tiger and a boy could exist on a lifeboat alone. Richard Parker could also be seen in Pi’s life from many other perspectives. Richard Parker could’ve been like an obstacle to Pi, he could’ve also eaten up Pi and throw him over the lifeboat. There are many other views of the role that this Bengal Tiger plays in Pi’s life, but don’t forget that Pi could’ve tricked Richard in a way he could’ve left the boat Pi could have tried to defeat him and terrify him. But Pi didn’t do that, he knew that having to survive on the lifeboat by his own was going to be difficult. He knew that there were going to be changes in his life. Pi felt confident and realized that having to be after Parker made time go past really fast and he’d easily forget many problems that he had to face.

Pi could’ve had some serious problems with this wild tiger, but he found the way to tame him, and to see him as a matter of fighting for life. Pi had the capacity to manage Richard Parker’s movements, his actions, his intentions and how to control them. Pi saw Richard Parker as a motivation of life through the company of this Bengal tiger. Pi also performs many actions which he never thought he would ever do, due to his preferences in nutrition. He entered the boat a total vegetarian but left it 227 days later as a carnivore of the first order. Richard Parker was a challenge that Pi decided to take.

Bibliography

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi.* New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2001.