

Edification In Human-Beings Through Environment In The Novels Of Yann Martel's *Life Of Pi*, Carolyn Parkhurst's *Dogs Of Babel* And Russell Hoban's *Turtle Diary*

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ABSTRACT

If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.

-Napoleon hill

A perfect ecological understanding is needed for the existence of human species. Nature at its best endowed with all the essential features to survive. The ups and downs enable human beings to realise the possibilities and impossibilities in nature. Human beings have a serious responsibility in preserving the nature's wealth. It takes human life to the next level in all terms. Human beings share a equal space with the other species. This perfect understanding moulds the human beings at all stages which brings out the possibility of human survival. For the survival a proper knowledge of the other species is required. Non-human beings do share their sincerity by all means which human beings must aware of. From the early age animals have been a good companion to humans and at the same time helps in shaping the human minds.

In the novels of **Yann Martel's Life of Pi**, **Carolyn Parkhurst's Dogs of Babel** and **Russell Hoban's Turtle Diary**, three stages of human transformation is shown. From the young age to an adult, animals have been on the side of humans in nurturing intellectually. The novels bring out the survival skills, realisation of the self, adapting to the space in relation with the human-animal bond.

Keywords: Ecology, Survival, Mutual Understanding

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Yann Martel's novel, "*Life of Pi*" is one of the appropriate modern examples of human and animal relationships in literature. Though the novel deals with the connection between human and animal, it also focuses on the adult themes of spirituality and a good look at the discipline of life. So the novel is meant for both adults and children and can be said in a different way that children will grow up as adults one day. For those ages this novel is definitely a life learning lesson which has been presented in the world of magical realism. The novel moves through the life of a teenage boy, Pi and also his quest towards religions which he believes that will help him grow closer to God.

The two stories one in animal form and one in human form, both possess human and animal characteristics. The cook and the hyena were compared and seem to be the most savage of the castaways. When the hyena eats the zebra's leg, it shows the brutality and the terribleness. In order to survive the food chain is a natural one and there is no kind of pity over there. Through the character of Pi there is a realization that in desperate situation human has to act according to that for surviving.

Understanding of animal behaviour is a prominent one for human. In the Pondicherry zoo, the orangutan is treated as a family pet. Though it is easy to have orangutan as a pet, wild animal characteristic cannot be changed on its ways. Domestication of animals at all the times is impossible.

In the first story Richard Parker is a perfect companion to Pi. In the second story Richard Parker is a part of Pi. In both portrayals anthropomorphism is used prominently. As Parker is a part of Pi's aggressive behaviour, Pi wants to keep distance from himself. Against his morals, being a vegetarian he kills fish for his hunger.

The novel has an element of symbolism by giving vice versa characteristic of animal and human. This is clearly seen through Pi's encounters with plenty of ferocious wild animals. But he handles the situation in a professional manner. He gives animals human characteristics in his attempt on living on a life boat. Surviving on a lifeboat with some ferocious animals seems to be harsh in the reality. At one state he also expresses himself as an animal to give the reader a deeper sense of his own struggles.

Pi sees himself as a full grown royal Bengal tiger where they both share many traits and characteristics. During their stay on the lifeboat they both keep distant from each other. They are the last to attack and in the end all that remains are them. Both are smart in their behavior and physically strong too. They are strongest physically and the smartest. They devise plans of attack; they mark their territory and will defend it with their lives. The tiger is a perfect example of the dominance of Pi and the motivation behind his survival. The lessons Pi learns here are

valuable, even necessary, to his shipwreck experience, but they extend beyond simple survival training.

During his stay in the lifeboat with a tiger, Pi learns life lessons as a matter of survival. All the lessons he learnt is just because of Richard Parker in his entire voyage. The only thing he can speak of his voyage all the time is about Richard Parker. He cannot ignore or forget him easily as the entire experience he has is along with Richard Parker. The important point is that Pi has a little control over Richard Parker whereas Pi's life is held by Richard Parker. Just like holding Pi's life in his claws and teeth. It shows the danger of Pi's life along with a tiger.

The danger Pi encounters can be said as fear. He realizes that fear is the opposition for surviving in life. Getting rid of fear is the only source of reaching success. Pi discovers the way to overcome his fear and knows to battle with it. He learns this greatest mental achievement only through the Richard Parker. In order to protect him from Richard Parker he boosts his mind to control. He starts to have a control on Richard Parker by giving some orders. Richard Parker too starts to obey Pi and it doesn't mean that he became weak. It is said that both mark their own territory and decides not to exceed their limit. This is said as mutual understanding which remains the necessity part in order to survive in life.

In truth every human being should understand that there is a difference of communication in human beings and non-human beings. As a human one could make non-human beings as their companion only in their natural way. Humans should not take advantage of them like dressing up like humans, expecting them to do our household works, putting them in our lifestyle etc.,. This leads to the superiority of humans over nonhuman beings. Each and every creature has a space in this world as created.

The novel *Dogs of Babel* begins in the mysterious death of Lexy, wife of linguistic professor Paul Iverson. Paul Iverson seeks to solve Lexy's mysterious death along with his dog companion Lorelei. As it is said, dogs are the best companion to humans in many forms. There are many dog assistance therapies and many are concerned in owning pet animals with them. They treat them as their own family with care and affection. But the abusing of dogs has been under a major issue in society.

The street dogs were put into struggle. If such dogs taken care by each individual in their streets means there would be no problem. Pet dogs are given timely foods and vaccinations by their owners. But they are not ready to provide food or shelter to the street dogs. Many animal welfare organizations are there to protect animals. But in the name sake they are doing harm for the entire animal community. Many talks are going in for the protection of dogs but when we go in depth much harm are there. For namesake pet lovers call them as pets. 50% of pet lovers treat their pets as pets. But 50% of pet lovers take advantage as human is superior over animals.

In the real world it is complicate and hard to apply or express the normal behaviour with freedom. Even in domestic or captive animals it is impossible to give freedom to express the normal behaviour. The normal behaviour of a dog is to roam many miles a day but it is considered as illegal in many towns. The best way to keep the pet dogs happy and stimulated is to find out the substitute behaviours.

In order to understand the life better, listening to nature is needed. It enhances the mind of a human to act in a natural calm way. In human lives the part of dogs has become an integral

one. Even if there is not a necessity the presence of dogs has been an important part in human life.

In the novel there is such a situation of Paul Iverson after his wife's death. He regrets for the loss and seeks the help of his companion Lorelei. He finds some comfort in sharing his suffering with Lorelei. The practices that he gives Lorelei doesn't mean that he is out of mind. Through the practices and the time he spends with Lorelei brings some stability in his mind.

Whether Paul succeeds in her speech practice is secondary one. But he understands the reality that the world of humans and animals is different. The language is totally different in the two worlds. The bond and the respect towards each other bring perfect streamline. This mutual understanding is a safe thing in which all the species has the right to be in their natural way.

All parts of an ecosystem are important, if you lose one, the rest will eventually follow. Sea turtles are a vital part of two ecosystems the beach/dune system and marine ecosystem. If sea turtles become extinct both these ecosystems would be affected as a direct result. Since humans make use of both ecosystems there then would be a direct effect that would negatively impact humans.

Through the novel *Turtle Diary*, Russell Hoban has made awareness that nature and man are correlative. To conserve these valuable creatures, human being should put effort to better understand turtle ecology. Along with other aquatic animals, people have to recognize turtles, which are critical components of freshwater ecosystems, and our rivers and lakes will not be the same without them. A plant or animal becomes extinct when the last living individual of its

species dies, causing it to vanish from the earth forever. If there is ever a time when the last green turtle on earth dies, then never again will this magnificent creature grace our world.

The characters William and Neaera are two strange person, living their life in a isolated one. Both keeps distance away from the reality but the turtles bring light to their life. The realisation of the self is possible through animals as hoban brings out through his characters. By releasing the turtles from the zoo they both feel a kind of relief from their contented mind. When the turtle starts swimming it is a symbolical representation that William and Neaera too ready to swim in the life. They both feel the same way and realised to stand up for their life's betterment.

Species have been going extinct for millions of years; it is a natural part of the evolutionary process. For example, most of the species that existed during the time of dinosaurs have perished. Many probably went extinct because of sudden geological or climatic changes -- possibly because of a large volcanic eruption or because of a giant meteor hitting the earth. Today, however, species are going extinct because of abrupt changes brought about by humans. Having this in mind every human being should involve themselves in saving our ecosystem.