

# Moral-Philosophical Values in Life of Pi: Pi's Journey of Self-Discovery

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**Abstract.** The main purpose of this study was to explore the moral-philosophical values in Yann Martel's novel "Life of Pi: Pi's journey towards life discovery. This aimed to analyze the moral-philosophical values revealed in the adversity of Pi and how do these moral-philosophical values shaped Pi's life discovery. Despite the wide acclaim of Life of Pi, most literary studies center on survival and faith, with limited scholarly attention to its moral-philosophical underpinnings – particularly in the context of Pi's spiritual transformation. In the study, the researchers employed a qualitative-descriptive design, employing close reading and thematic analysis using the deductive method to analyze the data. The Moral-Philosophical Theory of Martha Nussbaum (1947) was used as the main theory of the study which involves a comprehensive approach that takes into account human capabilities, emotions, well-being, and cultural diversity with the goal of promoting all individuals that can live flourishing lives. In terms of the moral-philosophical values, it was revealed that Pi encountered faith, compassion, determination, paying attention to what is close at hand, and intellectual virtue. Moreover, the analysis revealed that these values shaped Pi's life discovery: in the silence of despair, hope is the loudest; consoling companion; strong willpower; radical acceptance; and odds yield to the power of resilience. The findings of this study have significant implications for literature education and life in general. In the context of literary analysis and teaching, the study emphasizes the importance of engaging with texts that challenge to reflect on ethical dilemmas, human resilience, and spiritual depth. It illustrates how literature can serve not only as a source of aesthetic pleasure but also as a vehicle for moral reflection and philosophical inquiry.

**Keywords:** Journey; Life of Pi; Moral values; Philosophy; Spirituality.

## 1.0 Introduction

Life is a journey filled with many challenges to overcome, numerous experiences to learn from, and countless opportunities to explore. Journeys allow individuals to grow, become wiser, and see life from different perspectives. The values learned from school, community, church, and personal experiences play a crucial role in shaping one's life. However, one must also internalize these values as part of an inner exploration to survive and achieve a flourishing life. Values are fundamental beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes that have long been recognized by society as markers of what is good. In the broadest sense, they are considered the virtues that a person upholds in life (Gamage et al., 2021). Similarly, Sagiv et al. (2017) noted that various studies on personal values have shown they often guide decision-making in aspects such as career, religion, social relationships, and self-identity.

Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* is a story that transcends mere survival to explore deeper questions about life and belief. While the novel has been widely analyzed for its religious symbolism and narrative structure, its moral-

philosophical dimensions have received relatively little attention. As a Canadian philosophical novel that won the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2002, *Life of Pi* tells the story of Piscine Molitor “Pi” Patel, an Indian boy from Pondicherry, who is drawn to questions of spirituality and metaphysics from an early age. After a shipwreck, Pi survives 227 days on a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger, raising profound questions about the nature of reality and how it is perceived and narrated.

Novels are extended prose narratives that deal with significant complexity, often revealing inner thoughts, conflicting values, and personal growth. As fiction, they offer connection, enlightenment, and real-life perspectives on human experiences. In *Life of Pi*, Pi’s journey shapes his outlook on life through the moral-philosophical values uncovered during his adversity. American philosopher Martha Nussbaum, in her *Moral-Philosophical Theory* (1947), emphasizes that moral-philosophical values aim to promote and enhance the capabilities—basic human capacities—needed to live a flourishing life. These include physical health, education, emotional well-being, cross-cultural understanding, and social relationships, among others. The theory advocates for the protection and promotion of these capabilities for all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance.

Moral-philosophical values and personal values are interconnected, as personal values often stem from or align with broader moral and philosophical principles. Personal values significantly influence every aspect of life and contribute to the formation of personal and social identity. They are internal realities reflected in one’s habits, behaviors, beliefs, expectations, and relationships. Values form the foundation of one’s thinking patterns and actions. Furthermore, they play a vital role in decision-making, choice formation, and shaping perceptions and attitudes (Gamage, 2021). Aprianti (2022) noted that *the film adaptation of Life of Pi* demonstrates Pi’s character development, reflecting a positive transformation. His survival was made possible by his ability to adopt a positive attitude, bolstered by his strong determination and spirituality. Thus, adopting a positive attitude involves seeing the good in every situation, remaining optimistic and resilient in the face of adversity.

According to Jamison (2022), fictional adventure stories, particularly those centered on survival, pit characters against external forces such as nature, disease, or powerful antagonists. These narratives illustrate how characters respond to extreme conditions, reminding readers that life is about resilience, resourcefulness, and making informed choices. Survival stories resonate deeply, as they reflect the human capacity to adapt and grow, just as Pi did in *Life of Pi*, overcoming the many trials he faced. Moreover, *Life of Pi* tells a story of perseverance against seemingly insurmountable odds. Pi’s survival elevated his understanding of life (SparkNotes, 2023). Kanchana (2016) explains that literature reflects the self, and that self-exploration reveals the truth of one’s identity. In fictional adventure stories, discoveries and realizations are often key enlightenments of the character’s journey. Life’s dilemmas reshape the character’s thoughts, feelings, and worldview. *Life of Pi* ignites the moral obligation to rebuild oneself, society, and the world. The journey of self-exploration challenges individuals to pursue determination, choose authentic paths, and cultivate strong willpower, because ethical values and resolve lead to personal and societal transformation.

Nanwani (2021) asserts that core values learned in the past are continually reshaped in the present by qualities such as resilience, grit, care, and support. These values foster environments where individuals are respected, contributions are valued, and human dignity is upheld. When individuals focus on the positive rather than the negative, life takes on deeper meaning, fostering productivity and harmony within oneself and across communities. Ivy panda (2020) further emphasized that *Life of Pi* is a tale of survival of the fittest. Pi’s struggle forced him to momentarily set aside his moral beliefs—such as vegetarianism—in order to ensure self-preservation. Both he and Richard Parker survived because they adapted and demonstrated the strength needed in a life-or-death situation.

Aslani (2016) posits that *Life of Pi* embodies both religious-traditional and modern-scientific views of humanity. Understanding the full scope of the human experience requires embracing both approaches. Pi’s openness to these perspectives allowed him to realize his identity and find freedom. The novel is not only about surviving a shipwreck—it is about Pi’s personal evolution, challenges, and perception of truth.

Anwar (2019) highlights that the moral center of *Life of Pi* resides within Pi himself. While religious beliefs shaped his morals, he alone nurtured them within his spirit. The depth of his spirituality, morality, and humanity was revealed during his ordeal at sea, where he was tested not only physically, but also spiritually, morally, and

emotionally. Pi remained grounded in his faith and values, even when his survival was challenged. Thus, this study seeks to examine *Life of Pi* through its character development, moral-philosophical foundations, and thematic exploration.

Existing studies on *Life of Pi* have explored Pi's character development, focusing on themes of optimism, resilience, and spiritual growth. Scholars have explored moral reconstruction, the tension between personal values and survival, and the integration of scientific and spiritual perspectives. These analyses highlight Pi's inner transformation and the enduring power of human values and faith in the face of extreme conditions. However, a gap remains in the literature regarding a moral-philosophical framework that explores underexamined values such as mindfulness and radical acceptance. These offer a nuanced interpretation that connects existential insights with ethical development, enriching our understanding of Pi's journey.

This paper addresses this gap by offering a moral-philosophical reading of *Life of Pi*, framing Pi's survival as a journey of ethical and spiritual discernment. It highlights how his choices reflect deeper meaning and affirm the human capacity for faith, resilience, and purpose amid adversity. Ultimately, this study seeks to examine the moral-philosophical values revealed in Pi's journey of life discovery, arguing that adversity shaped his worldview and personal transformation.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

This study is of a qualitative and descriptive nature. It employed close reading and thematic analysis as methods using the deductive approach to extract the analysis and interpretation of data from the novel. In analyzing the data, the researchers followed relevant steps in the deductive approach. Moreover, the Moral-Philosophical Theory of Martha Nussbaum (1947) served as the primary theoretical framework for the study, which employs a comprehensive approach that considers human capabilities, emotions, well-being, and cultural diversity to promote a just and compassionate society where all individuals can lead flourishing lives. The novel "Life of Pi" was analyzed through the lens of moral-philosophical, focusing on the values revealed in Pi's life discovery through his journey.

### 2.2 Source of Data

Instead of an instrument, this research utilized a material. The "Life of Pi" by Yann Martel is a fantasy adventure novel and a runaway bestseller that won the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2002. This novel has since been translated into over fifty languages. The novel was adapted into a film, produced in 2012. Initially, it was published by Knopf Canada on September 11, 2001, by Harcourt Publishers in New York, and the novel was produced in the English language, containing 352 pages.

### 2.3 Literary Data Analysis

The novel "Life of Pi" was analyzed using a qualitative-descriptive method, employing thematic analysis and close reading, with a focus on passages that reveal moral and philosophical values. To identify and interpret these themes, the study followed these relevant steps in deductive approach: (1) identifying predefined themes based on relevant theories, (2) selecting and contextualizing the literary text, (3) conducting a close reading to locate passages related to the themes, (4) collecting textual excerpts that reflect these themes, (5) analyzing how the themes are developed within the narrative, (6) drawing interpretive conclusions, and (7) reflecting on the broader implications of the findings. Modifications were made to suit the literary context of the study, and the patterns were analyzed using moral-philosophical literary criticism.

### 2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

In the pre-gathering phase, the researchers downloaded the adopted material from the internet. Yann Martel, the author of the novel "Life of Pi", was contacted through email. The letter was sent to his wife, Alice Kuipers, and was forwarded directly to Yann Martel. Yann Martel messaged the researchers to confirm his approval for using his literary work for research purposes.

In gathering the themes, the researchers read the novel multiple times and re-read it several times. Thematic analysis was employed to address the study's aims, utilizing a moral-philosophical literary approach. The analysis consisted of two phases. In the first phase, "Life of Pi" was evaluated; analysis of the themes revealed that it

replicates the moral-philosophical values. In the second phase, the determined themes were identified based on textual evidence, taking into account their relevance and association. Moreover, the Moral-Philosophical Theory of Martha Nussbaum (1947) was used as the basis for identifying the themes.

In the post-gathering phase, the researchers presented the findings and offered recommendations for readers, teachers, and future researchers. The researchers presented the study's findings virtually through an online platform, Zoom, to the author, Yann Martel.

## 2.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations in these paragraphs include obtaining permission from the author, Yann Martel, to use his novel *Life of Pi* for research purposes. The researchers contacted Martel through his wife, Alice Kuipers, and received his approval via a message, ensuring informed consent for the use of his intellectual property. This process reflects respect for intellectual property rights and transparent communication with the author. Furthermore, after completing the study, the researchers shared their findings with Martel via an online platform, Zoom, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and ethical dissemination of the research results. These actions demonstrate a thoughtful and respectful approach to utilizing copyrighted material and collaborating with the creator of the work.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 The Moral-Philosophical Values in the Adversity

#### *Theme 1: Faith*

In the novel, faith emerges as a cornerstone of Pi's character, guiding his actions and shaping his moral compass as he faces challenges at sea. It represents a deep trust in guiding principles and ethical ideals, driving his pursuit of a just and ethical life. Despite uncertainties and adversities, Pi's unwavering conviction in the inherent value of moral virtues serves as a guiding force, influencing his commitment to uphold and embody these principles throughout his tumultuous journey. The line *"That is God as God should be. With shine and power and might. Such as can rescue and save and put down evil. – Chpt. 17"* signifies the strong belief of Pi that God is capable of intervening in the face of adversity. He believes that God is the ultimate solution to all occurrences, including challenges. Pi's explicit declaration of principles underscores his unwavering conviction in the divine.

The notion of God's presence serves as a life mantra for Pi, as expressed in the line, *"The presence of God is the finest of rewards. – Chpt. 20."* It becomes the basis of his principles, anchored by his religious beliefs, aiding him in systematically analyzing situations and enabling sound cognitive decisions. Faith is evident in his survival journey, serving as a legitimate instrument that helps him navigate his distressing environment and challenging circumstances. With this belief, Pi is assured and thoroughly convinced of God's authority. He declares that his safety rests solely in the hands of God, concluding, *"Yes, as long as God is with me, I will not die. Amen. – Chpt. 53"*. His ultimate dependence is on God alone, trusting that God orchestrates all things for good and works towards goodness.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2019), when Pi is stranded at sea, his faith is tested by his extreme struggles. However, he also experiences and appreciates the lavishness, *"abundance"* of his surroundings. All external obstacles are stripped away, leaving only an endless circle of sea and sky, and one day, he rejoices over a powerful lightning storm as a *"miracle"*. Moreover, Marcella (2022) stated that Pi never gives up hope or loses faith in God. Moreover, his unwavering faith in God is ultimately what enables him to survive his ordeal.

The scenarios mentioned above are all indicative of a clear vision that faith provides significant assistance and tools in Pi's journey across the ocean. The highlighted textual evidence attests to the assets of his survivability. For individuals, faith in God can be a source of resiliency, purpose, and strength. It may also enhance their abilities by providing a foundation for moral guidance, hope, and community support. However, depending on one's personal beliefs and experiences, the influence of faith on human capacity differs from individual to individual and is subjective.

#### *Theme 2: Compassion*

Compassion is the empathetic understanding of another's suffering, coupled with a genuine desire to alleviate or ease that suffering through kindness and support. This was vividly seen in Pi's journey in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger, Richard Parker. In the lines,

*"Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu, how good to see you, Richard Parker! Don't give up, please. Come to the lifeboat. Do you hear this whistle? TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE ! You heard right. Swim, swim! You're a strong swimmer. It's not a hundred feet. – Chpt. 37"* and *"Hold on tight, I'll pull you in. Don't let go. Pull with your eyes while I pull with my hands. In a few seconds you'll be aboard and we'll be together. – Chpt. 37"* signifies a sense of compassion. Pi's plea to Richard Parker proves that he is concerned with the tiger.

The phrases *"don't give up, please"* and *"don't let go"* seem like begging for encouragement and support in a challenging situation. Thus, offering reassurance and assistance can make a difference in such circumstances.

Richard Parker has a big part in Pi's life and in his survival. Pi considered that without Richard Parker, he would die from loneliness. The line *"Truly I do. I love you, Richard Parker. If I didn't have you now, I don't know what I would do. I don't think I would make it. No, I wouldn't. I would die of hopelessness. Don't give up, Richard Parker, don't give up. I'll get you to land, I promise, I promise! – Chpt. 86"* displays Pi's compassion that yields love, a love fueled by their shared journey. Richard Parker transforms into both an instrument and a constant companion in Pi's Odyssey.

According to Alfalcher (2018), compassion goes beyond rational concern for others; it helps satisfy a sufferer's need for recognition. This recognition can reassure individuals that their suffering is acknowledged, which may occur in various ways. People who have gone through painful experiences together often develop feelings of connection and solidarity. Shared pain appears to strengthen social bonds. This suggests that when a compassionate person shares in another's suffering, it can deepen the relationship between them. Compassion in action, especially in the workplace, means empathizing with another's suffering and voluntarily acting to alleviate their pain (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

The scenarios mentioned above illustrate Pi's compassion toward Richard Parker, which ultimately strengthened and deepened their bond. Pi demonstrates the transformative power of empathy and moral understanding by showing compassion to a fellow living creature, even one perceived as a threat.

### **Theme 3: Determination**

The commitment and dedication to reaching goals, despite life's challenges and setbacks, are a testament to determination. This approach involves taking charge of one's life and making a deliberate effort to achieve desired goals and interests. In the novel, the protagonist, Pi, depicts the value of determination in the face of adversity. When Pi is currently helping the Bengal tiger, Richard Parker, to swim on the boat after the shipwreck, the line *"Something in me did not want to give up on life, was unwilling to let go, wanted to fight to the very end. – Chpt. 37"* emphasizes Pi's strong willpower and perseverance to continue living and discover a path towards survival. Even in the face of great difficulty, he realizes that he *"did not want to give up life, was unwilling to let go, wanted to fight to the very end"*, displaying his consistent hope and optimism. Thus, these experiences allow him to establish a profound sense of self-awareness by striving to exceed his capabilities and gain an in-depth understanding of his potential.

Meanwhile, upon unrolling the tarpaulin, Pi sees a pile of life jackets, yet no water. However, he catches a clear sight of Richard Parker, the tiger, lying flat on his belly and only two feet away from him. At first, Pi feels scared, but he remains still, understanding that any abrupt action could irritate the tiger. The line *"Thirst pushed me on. I had to have water. I had to drink now-or I would die. – Chpt. 51"* signifies determination as Pi eagerly wanted to seek a way to provide himself with water. The phrase *"Thirst pushed me on - or I would die"* implies that his survival is critical for him to stay alive at the moment. His determination is seen as he fosters the will to sustain oneself independently by taking risks, which is vital for the development of his character.

Moreover, lastly, despite the difficult situation that Pi is facing, his determination to fight for his life and overcome all the odds is indicated in this line *"The voice said, 'I will not die. I refuse it. I will make it through this nightmare. I will beat the odds, as great as they are. – Chpt. 53"*. The refusal of Pi to succumb to the situation molded him to defy death

and conquer the challenges he encountered. Thus, Pi's strong will serves as the guiding light, significantly enriching his capability to overcome life's adversity.

"*Life of Pi*" narrates the tale of a young man battling overwhelming challenges to survive. Despite numerous struggles, the protagonist, Pi, maintains an optimistic outlook and resolute determination to endure. Despite daunting odds, Pi's perseverance triumphs over doubt as he utilizes every means available to ensure his survival. Pi emerges as a determined individual, ready to undertake extraordinary measures to achieve his goals (StudyMoose, 2016). Additionally, Paiz (2013) stated that survival is possible even in the direst situations. To survive, a person must be willing to overcome obstacles in their path. Determination is a significant factor in survival. The author, Yann Martel, demonstrates through Pi, who conquers emotional, moral, and physical obstacles.

The scenarios mentioned above imply that the protagonist, Pi, demonstrates great determination, a value recognized as one of the moral-philosophical virtues. Thus, determination is a fundamental trait that enables one to overcome challenges, achieve personal goals, and foster personal growth.

#### ***Theme 4: Paying Attention to What is Close at Hand***

In the novel, Pi finds creative solutions for survival in the face of extreme challenges. The line "*Survival had to start with me. In my experience, a castaway's worst mistake is to hope too much and do too little. – Chpt. 58*" is the philosophy of Pi that made him realize that it is more important to find practical solutions than relying solely on hope. Finding alternative ways is a major philosophical foundation that Pi can conveniently apply in his pursuit of survival.

As he is stuck in the lifeboat together with a Bengal tiger, Pi's adversity enables him to be more resourceful. This is presented in the line, "*In my case, to protect myself from Richard Parker while I trained him, I made a shield with a turtle shell. I cut a notch on each side of the shell and connected them with a length of rope. – Chpt. 72*". Pi realized that he would not keep running away from Richard Parker all the time. To carve out his territory, he decided to train Richard Parker. To protect himself, he used the turtle shell as a shield, demonstrating his resourcefulness. This instance reflects Pi's strategic thinking and ability to carve out solutions. Moreover, the theme often requires a combination of intelligence, resilience, and a keen understanding of one's surroundings. Therefore, Pi embodies this value, which made him succeed in diverse circumstances.

Beyond the challenges posed by the tiger, hunger and thirst become pressing issues for Pi. The sources that are present in the lifeboat are slowly diminishing. The sole and most important purpose in his life is to find and keep fresh water. Therefore, Pi needs to think of another way to store food and water. As shown in the line, "*I filled the bailing cups, the two plastic buckets, the two multi-purpose plastic containers, the three beakers, and the empty cans of water (which I now preciousely kept). Next, I filled all the plastic vomit bags, sealing them by twisting them shut and making a knot. – Chpt. 82*" signifies that Pi utilizes the available materials in the lifeboat, such as bailing cups, buckets, plastic containers, beakers, empty cans, and plastic vomit bags. This action revealed that Pi paid attention to what was close at hand as he put these materials into an innovative solution for his problem.

According to Aathithya (2013), Pi was helped by his patience and resourcefulness by paying attention to what was close at hand when he was in the water. Pi had to use the tools he had on hand and adapt to his environment because he could not drink the seawater to survive. His resourcefulness not only sustains him physically but also symbolizes the triumph of the human spirit in the harshest of circumstances. Pi demonstrates remarkable resourcefulness and ingenuity in order to stay alive, and his ability to adapt to his surroundings and make practical decisions in the face of adversity demonstrates his sheer determination to overcome impossible odds (BookKey, 2024).

The scenarios mentioned above suggest that Pi's inventiveness and his ability to focus on what is immediately available enable him to remain physically safe. His creative problem-solving skills, whether crafting tools or devising strategies, highlight his adaptability and resourcefulness.

#### ***Theme 5: Intellectual Virtue***

Intellectual virtues that pertain to cognitive or intellectual qualities are marked by the capability to adjust to various situations, derive lessons from experiences, and proficiently handle intricate challenges. In the story, the

presence of intellectual virtue emerges as a moral and philosophical value evident in Pi's life predicament. Intellectual virtues that pertain to cognitive or intellectual qualities marked by the capability to adjust to various situations, derive lessons from experiences, and proficiently handle intricate challenges.

Possessing intellectual virtues contributes to personal development that fosters a mindset of lifelong learning and enhances success in various aspects of life. As implied in the line *"But more than the setting, what arrested me was my intuitive understanding... – Chpt. 17"*, Pi's knowledge facilitates the identification of patterns, recognition of potential solutions, and the ability to learn from past experiences, enabling him to be more adaptive and resilient in facing his adversity.

When Pi had to devise a training program for Richard Parker and had to make him understand that he was the top tiger, and that his territory was limited to the floor of the boat, the stern bench, and the side benches as far as the middle crossbench. He had to fix in his mind that the top of the tarpaulin and the bow of the boat, bordered by the neutral territory of the middle bench, was his territory and utterly forbidden to Richard Parker,

*"I had to devise a training program for Richard Parker. I had to make him understand that I was the top tiger and that his territory was limited to the floor of the boat, the stern bench, and the side benches as far as the middle cross bench. I had to fix in his mind that the top of the tarpaulin and the bow of the boat, bordered by the neutral territory of the middle bench, was my territory and utterly forbidden to him. – Chpt. 58"*.

This inherent desire for exploration and continuous learning propels Pi to seek out fresh insights, fostering the capacity to formulate and implement effective strategies in various endeavors.

Moreover, documenting and recording readings and experiences provide a wealth of information that can be a valuable resource during a disaster. Along with Pi's strategy, when he read the instructions in the line

*"According to the instructions, each 500-gram carton was supposed to last one survivor three days. That meant I had food rations to last me—31 X 3—93 days! The instructions also suggested survivors restrict themselves to half a liter of water every twenty-four hours. I counted the cans of water. There were 124. Each contained half a liter. So I had water rations to last me 124 days. – Chpt. 51"*, Pi enhances his ability to anticipate, plan, adapt, and make informed decisions, ultimately contributing to a more effective response and recovery process.

According to Baehr (2015), intellectual virtues encompass three categories: those essential for sparking initial motivation to learn, those crucial for guiding the learning process, and those necessary for overcoming obstacles to learning. Pi's intellectual prowess becomes a crucial asset in the vast and unpredictable ocean, whether it is understanding the behavior of animals or devising makeshift tools. Intellectual virtue serves as a reminder that Pi's survival skills are innate, requiring a cognitive understanding that goes beyond theoretical perception. Additionally, Poe (2020) stated that cultivating intellectual virtues, such as open-mindedness, curiosity, and wisdom, enables individuals to make more informed and ethical decisions. Intellectual virtues also enable individuals to consider different perspectives, evaluate moral principles, and reflect on the consequences of their actions.

The scenarios mentioned above are prominent in the story, where Pi's knowledge from previous experiences and learnings becomes an asset in his survival. Intellectual virtues are undoubtedly a very rich and important contribution to the character of Pi in overcoming his journey; in fact, it is the most significant contribution in the novel.

Overall, the moral-philosophical values mentioned above are significant to Martha Nussbaum's Moral-Philosophical Theory (1947). In the novel *"Life of Pi"*, Pi's journey embodies themes of faith, compassion, determination, paying attention to what is close at hand, and intellectual virtue, which intersect with psychological, philosophical, and evolutionary theories. Pi's moral choices align with Nussbaum's moral-philosophical theory, highlighting the intricate interplay between psychological, moral, and philosophical perspectives on human behavior and values.

### 3.2 Pi's Life Discovery from the Moral-Philosophical Values

#### *In the Silence of Despair, Hope is the Loudest*

Life's challenges can be eased by an unwavering hope and faith that can encourage individuals to bear adversity, persist through difficulties, and emerge stronger and wiser. The line *"With the very first rays of light it came alive in me: hope... hope increased until it was like a song in my heart... Hope fed on hope. – Chpt. 45"* signifies *"Solitude began. I turned to God. I survived. – Chpt. 99"* demonstrates a sense of hope and survival amidst the complex challenges in life. When Pi struggled at his lowest point in life, he tried to get through the days, firmly believing that tomorrow would be better. His faith yields hope that makes him stronger and ignites his will to survive. Pi hopes that no matter how heavy the next days may be, he will not and cannot run out of reasons to keep going.

The novel asserts that it is more beautiful and valuable to believe than to go through life, doubting everything based on what seems most rational to people. Individuals have a character to choose to endure a world of suffering and loss by keeping faith in a God who cares in miraculous ways. This leads Pi to the belief that there is hope – a hope that sustained him across the Pacific Ocean in the most unlikely of circumstances (Fissel, 2013).

Thus, hope is the enduring quality of the soul that gives strength to live and go on in the darkest of nights. It is the very lifeblood of human existence and an indescribable mainstay to the souls of people. It brings life where death seems inevitable. Hope, as well, is the secret of survival, for if a person has hope that he will live, he can endure almost any amount of suffering (Sala, 2021). It is the direction that leads individuals on life's journey that uncovers the depths of one's existence and fosters the virtues of faith, compassion, perseverance, resourcefulness, and intellectual virtue.

#### *Consoling Companion*

In times of adversity and trauma, humans require companionship to prevail and triumph over darkness, just as Pi and Richard Parker do. The line *"A close relationship will also mean protection from the other members of the pride"* (Chpt. 14) conveys a sense of shared connection and camaraderie during difficult circumstances. Pi and Richard Parker share a bond rooted in companionship, offering each other protection and support for their well-being. In the vastness of the ocean, they become more than just a boy and a tiger; they become kindred spirits, navigating the tumultuous waters of life together.

Likewise, the line *"Richard Parker, thank you. Thank you for saving my life... But I hope you will remember me as a friend. I will never forget you, that is certain. You will always be with me, in my heart... So farewell, Richard Parker, farewell. God be with you"* (Chpt. 94) reflects the deep bond formed between Pi and Richard Parker and underscores the significance of their shared affliction. Throughout their journey, Richard Parker serves as both a physical threat and a consoling companion, giving Pi a sense of purpose and a connection to the natural world amid their isolation. As they face increasingly complex situations, the need for companionship intensifies for both Pi and Richard Parker. This highlights the importance of faith, compassion, determination, resourcefulness, and intellectual virtue – qualities that emphasize resilience and camaraderie in the face of adversity and survival.

According to Soloski (2023), Pi and Richard Parker eventually achieve a formed connection – almost a kind of friendship – a considerate acknowledgment of what is human within the animal, and animal within the human. It is Richard Parker's companionship that ultimately enables Pi to survive. Additionally, Swetha (2023) stated that human beings are inherently social creatures, and the need for companionship is deeply ingrained within us. We seek connection, support, and understanding from others. This need, rooted in our evolutionary past, fulfills many roles: providing emotional support, shared experiences, and a sense of belonging. Relationships are vital for our well-being, shaping our identity and fostering personal growth.

#### *Strong Willpower*

The real challenge of strength is found within, empowering the determination necessary to face life's obstacles directly with perseverance.

The line *"Some of us give up on life with only a resigned sigh. Others fight a little, then lose hope. Still others – and I am one of those – never give up. We fight and fight and fight. We fight no matter the cost of battle, the losses we take, the improbability*

*of success. We fight to the very end.* – Chpt. 53” infers the strong willpower and determination of Pi amidst the adversity he encountered in life.

It is evident in the novel that he remained persistent and refused to give up. Likewise, he relied on his perseverance and determination to overcome the challenges that arose. It is clear that Pi's commitment to never giving up served as a powerful motivator and guide for life discovery and growth. In life, individuals face difficult challenges that may even become life-or-death situations. It is how the individual faces it that determines their fate. Throughout the novel, Pi demonstrates how He faces his fears and portrays the primacy of survival through his determination and courage. It was Pi's will to live that pushed everything else aside in order to survive. When an individual finds their will to survive, they then will become determined to find any way to live. Because that drive empowers them to build up sufficient courage to fight for their lives at all costs (Samploon, 2020). Indeed, determination helps one to overcome challenges and develop as a person. It is a quality and an essential life capability that can be nurtured, learned, and harnessed, and enables one to persevere in the face of adversity (Pradeepa, 2023).

### ***Radical Acceptance***

Moreover, the line “... but what can you do? You must take life the way it comes at you and make the best of it – Chpt. 35” conveys a sense of acceptance and resilience in the face of unexpected outcomes or disappointments. The phrase “*what can you do?*” suggests an acceptance that certain circumstances are beyond one's control. It demonstrates an acceptance of the truth that not everything in life happens as planned. However, instead of dwelling on it, Pi encourages the idea of finding positives or opportunities even in less-than-ideal situations. The integration of these virtues shapes the concept of “radical acceptance” in Pi's life. It entails accepting the truth of his situation with a deep sense of faith, compassion for all living beings, unyielding determination to survive, ingenuity in employing existing resources, and intellectual virtue in finding meaning in chaos. Together, these virtues enable Pi to fully embrace his situation and navigate the challenges of his extraordinary journey.

According to Maidenberg (2022), radical acceptance rests on letting go of the illusion of control and a willingness to acknowledge and accept things as they are in the present moment. It is divided into three sections: accepting reality as it is, acknowledging that the event or condition generating suffering has a reason, and embracing the fact that life can still be worth living despite terrible experiences. Likewise, Brach (2019) describes radical acceptance as surrendering to our experiences and no longer being at war with ourselves. This is called affect regulation, and it is a skill that enhances our ability to tolerate distress and overall well-being. Thus, radical acceptance provides a transformative approach to navigating life's complexities and cultivating emotional resilience. By embracing the present moment and relinquishing the desire for control, individuals can embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Through the practice of radical acceptance, one can cultivate a greater sense of inner peace, authenticity, and emotional well-being (Lark, 2023).

### ***Odds Yield to the Power of Resilience***

Resilience involves fostering internal cognitive traits such as faith, compassion, and intellectual virtue, while also acknowledging external contextual factors like determination, resourcefulness, and the actions individuals take. The line “*I will beat the odds, as great as they are. I have survived so far, miraculously*” (Chpt. 53) shows that Pi's will and resilience—skills gained through continuous struggles—give him the positivity to cope with problems and prepare himself for the challenges ahead. This line illustrates how Pi's resilience is forged through adversity, imbuing him with the strength and optimism needed to face life's hardships. His inner positive voice becomes a guiding force, helping him endure and adapt after the shipwreck.

Resilience is not an innate trait but a skill developed through experience and patience (Prajapati, 2019). Similarly, Walker (2019) states that throughout Pi's journey, he must adapt to changing circumstances and learn to be resilient in the face of adversity. He maintains his faith and optimism despite being in a difficult environment for an extended period. Pi draws on his creativity to make the best of his situation, stay positive, and uphold his courage in order to survive. This teaches readers that resilience is an essential life skill—one we must develop to face whatever challenges life may bring. Overall, the impacts discussed above connect to moral and philosophical values, showing how these realizations strengthen and shape Pi's journey of self-discovery. In the silence of despair, hope becomes the loudest voice—rooted in faith. Pi's bond with Richard Parker, particularly his compassion, served as a source of comfort and companionship, helping them meet their mutual need for survival. Likewise, endurance and perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds nurture profound inner strength. Radical

acceptance—the process of embracing reality as it is—helps individuals let go of expectations and face life with clarity and courage. The odds may seem insurmountable, but with resilience, one can overcome obstacles and prove that even in the direst circumstances, it is possible to conquer the infinite possibilities that lie ahead.

## 4.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings presented, it is concluded that in the novel “Life of Pi”, Pi’s journey shaped his perspective in life through the uncovered moral-philosophical values in his adversity. In terms of the moral-philosophical values, it is revealed that Pi encountered faith, compassion, determination, paying attention to what is close at hand, and intellectual virtue. Finally, in evaluating the moral-philosophical values present in the story, the analysis revealed that these values shaped Pi’s life discovery: in the silence of despair, hope is the loudest, consoling companion, strong willpower, radical acceptance, and odds yield to the power of resilience. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby offered: Teachers may use Life of Pi as a reference for teaching moral-philosophical values; Life of Pi is highly recommended for readers fond in survival and life discovery genres; and future researchers may conduct literary criticism on other literature focusing on the moral-philosophical values and life discovery. The findings of this study have significant implications for literature education and life in general. In the context of literary analysis and teaching, the study emphasizes the importance of engaging with texts that challenge us to reflect on ethical dilemmas, human resilience, and spiritual depth. It illustrates how literature can serve not only as a source of aesthetic pleasure but also as a vehicle for moral reflection and philosophical inquiry.

## 5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors indicate affirm the following contributions: JMH - main author, writing, data gathering and analysis, editing, and supervising; PP - co-author, writing, data gathering, editing, research presentation; MCR - co-author, writing, data gathering, research presentation, and JR - co-author, technical advising, and editing.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

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