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Period 2

Humanities

What is Real

“What is reality?

Obviously, no one can say

Because it isn't words

It isn't material, that's just an idea”

-Alan Watts

To question reality is to question nothing. For anything to be considered real, the concept of reality itself must first be real. At its origin, "reality", like all other words, is a subjective concept that can be perceived in infinite forms. The question concerning reality often creates a paradox in which a definition becomes obsolete. Claiming that reality is an idea is the same as claiming ideas are reality, but again, that perspective would depend on a perception of what an idea constitutes. Thoughts and ideas are accepted as subjective things; people are usually aware that not everyone thinks the same, and those unique thoughts often dictate how people exist and are viewed by others. Lines become blurred when considering the nature of thoughts. Despite being commonly regarded as separate, emotions and senses can be considered different types of thought. What is a feeling, if not an expression of unconscious nonverbal thought? Although senses may seem solid, they could all be phantoms of physicality brought about by one's mind and perception of what something should feel like. If the essence of being alive and real exists within our thoughts, what would be the difference between ideas and reality? There can never be proof that thoughts are real or that reality itself is real, but that doesn't mean humanity must rely on faith. There is a distinct distinction between believing thoughts and trusting them. I trust my thoughts to filter themselves, knowing that they are not absolute. We only know what we think, and we can only know that we know because we think. Without thoughts, there would be no idea of reality, no idea of self with enough self-realization to notice not all people exist the same way.

“Oncoming death is terrible enough, but worse still is oncoming death with time to spare, time in which all the happiness that was yours and all the happiness that might have been yours becomes clear to you. You see with other Lucidity all that you are losing.” ( 147)

“But in point of fact, the explanation lies elsewhere. It is simple and brutal: a person can get used to anything, even killing.” 185

The quote implies that human beings have a remarkable capacity for adaptation and that even the most shocking or abhorrent behavior can become normalized over time. In the case of Pi, this quote is a reflection of his inner strength and resilience. Throughout the book, Pi is portrayed as a character who is able to adapt to difficult situations, and who is willing to do whatever it takes to survive. This is evident in his ability to coexist with Richard Parker in the middle of the ocean, as well as in his newfound willingness to kill and eat other creatures. However, at the same time, the quote suggests that Pi's ability to adapt to his circumstances comes at a cost. He is forced to confront the reality of violence and death; this can be seen in the way that he has found acceptance of the possibility of his own death. Despite all his experiences, Pi remains fundamentally compassionate and empathetic. He is still able to find beauty and meaning through difficult situations, and he never loses sight of his own humanity.

Story

The figure stood still as a shadow in the depth of night. Anyone would miss the strange sight with a quick glance. The figure blended with the parapets atop buildings, standing erect, but unseen. For, most people neglect to look up, having predetermined what awaits and finding it lacking in interest of change. Hance, the shadow knows to take advantage of the anonymity offered through the sky and rooftops. They regard the people walking below as inconsequential for they are no threat if they incline to look ahead, marching forward like soldiers with ill afforded time. The figure was more weary of the observant ones, the ones who have learned to watch; who wish to know, since they have experienced the consequence of remaining ignorant, the stupid ones who can’t accept that knowing. Like children who don’t know when to stop asking “why.” The ones who’s questions are answered fall into madness, their minds self-destructing. Time transitioned, shadow moved, the figure

1. Short sentences = stress, revelations, something happening quickly, fear, an Ah Ha moment

Long sentences = tension, more descriptive, leading, explanation

Diction can give personality to a story and through the connotation, you use it can also alter the meaning and perspective. It can also give more complexity and depth of throat.

2)I learned I need to better diversify my writing and make it more unique through alternating sentence structure

3)...

. Those ones wouldn't miss the feeling of displaced space where the figure inhabited, seeminging absorbing the night. They stood waiting, Then the shadows came, flowing through crevasse, moving as waves through an ocean of night. Pushing and pulling at the the intruder, the parasite who has infiltrated the natural, and they needed it

When Pi has to kill a fish and kill with his own hands for the first time he is showing the conflict of Maslow's hierarchy's levels. Pi displays the self-actualization level mentally, and he does not desire to have to kill or eat animals. Previously living as a vegetarian who was very connected to the part of himself that protected and worshiped life. So, when he finds himself killing a living thing due to physiological need, it shifts his mentality, and his physical need to eat overrides his desire to not kill. In this scenario his self actualization suffers from his need to live, and we see him falling into acceptance of what he has to do to live. As the story progresses Pi gets used to killing, almost gleeful when he finds an animal that can provide him with food. In one scene he happily butchers something right after he struggles so much to kill the first fish. This displays how much people are affected mentally by physical desires.

When Pi is contemplating how to approach and deal with Richard Parker he finds himself conflicted. He originally wants to find a way to get rid of, or kill the tiger in order to guarantee his survival. He comes up with numerous methods, such as attacking him, drowning him, and poisoning him to guarantee Pi’s own safety. But he concludes to live harmoniously with Richard Parker, and he puts extra effort to feed and provide for the tiger. He could have given in and continued to find a way to kill richard parker, but he instead follows his strong will. In this scenario his need for safety and desire for empathy and companionship clash, with the self-actualization side winning. Since he is able to hold onto his mentality and true desires his experience on the ship is both improved and threatened. Richard Parker still presents a threat but he also gives Pi motivation to keep surviving.

I think Maslow's Hierarchy is a tool to identify the different aspects of life that people can experience and that can affect overall quality of life. But I don't believe human behavior is that simple or that the levels are divided so succinctly as presented in the theory. The pyramid form indicates that people move from the bottom to the top in efforts to better their human experiences. Some people might function this way, but I would assume that most people have found themselves jumping between levels through different stages of their lives. Some people might also find themselves fitting into a different stage, not mentioned in the hierarchy, or having some of the needs/qualities from multiple levels. I think that no person can truly be defined by their “level” on the pyramid, people's happiness and contentment cannot be determined by how far up they reach. Someone who has not perfected their self-esteem needs may be more fulfilled by someone who has. Humans all think and process differently, so it is impossible to judge them in such a clear way

“Only death consistently excites your emotions, whether contemplating it when life is safe and stale, or fleeing it when life is threatened and precious.” (pg. 217)

This quote suggests that death is the only thing that consistently evokes strong emotions in us, regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in. Whether we are living a safe and predictable life or facing a life-threatening situation, death is the one thing that we cannot ignore and that can stir up our emotions. This can be related to Pi’s journey of survival at sea after a shipwreck, since throughout his journey, Pi faces many challenges and dangers that put his life at risk. In these moments, he is forced to confront his mortality and the possibility of his death. This experience makes him reflect on the meaning of life, the value of survival, and the inevitability of death. Pi's experiences with Richard Parker, also bring him face-to-face with the reality of death. Richard Parker represents the unpredictable and dangerous nature of life, and Pi's survival is a constant struggle against his own fear and mortality. The fear of death and the desire to survive force Pi to find ways to cope with the overwhelming feeling of being alone and lost. I would ask how the theme of death is explored in the book, or how Pi's experiences at sea change his perspective on life and death.

Your passage highlights the stark contrast between Pi's usual refined and civilized way of eating and his current state of desperation and survival, where he is forced to eat like an animal. This realization seems to have a profound impact on him, as he feels a "pinching of the heart" and recognizes how low he has sunk. As you mentioned, this passage can be related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where Pi is forced to focus solely on his basic survival needs, such as food and shelter, rather than his higher-level needs, such as self-actualization and personal growth. This shift in focus is a direct result of his circumstances, as he is stranded at sea with limited resources and a fierce tiger for company. It's possible that Pi's realization of his animalistic eating habits could have an impact on his feelings or decisions moving forward. He may feel guilty or ashamed about his behavior and turn to religion for comfort.

“I did not count the days of the weeks or the months. Time is an illusion that only makes us pant. I survived because I forgot even the very notion of time” ( 192)

I agree that this paragraph is a testament to the toll that Pi's experiences have taken on him, both physically and emotionally. It is clear that Pi's faith in God is being tested, and his frustration and desperation are palpable. Pi may view his struggles and hardships as a result of his past actions or karma, rather than as a punishment inflicted by God. However, Pi's understanding and relationship with God are complex and multifaceted. Throughout the novel, Pi wrestles with questions of faith and spirituality, and his understanding of God evolves over time. As you pointed out, the shift in Pi's perspective in this paragraph reflects the uncertainty and doubt that he experiences throughout his journey. How do you think Pi's experiences and challenges on the boat shape his understanding of God and his faith overall? Do you think his faith is strengthened or weakened by his experiences?

—has the tiger end—-

“I tried to hold him back. Alas, it was too late. Before I could say the word Alone, I was alone again.” (p. 255)

Pi faces the ultimate challenge of survival in the face of overwhelming odds, and he finds himself experiencing moments of despair. In this passage, he realizes that he is still truly alone, despite his efforts to hold onto the companionship he had with Richard Parker. In this quote pi’s experience can be seen as a reflection of the human condition, the struggle to find meaning and purpose in a seemingly indifferent universe. His relationship with life can be seen as a metaphor for the larger human struggle to survive in a world that can seem cold, unforgiving, and meaningless at times. This quote also raises questions about the nature of companionship and the role it plays in our lives. How important is companionship in the face of adversity, and what happens when it is taken away? Is there meaning to be found in our struggles, or are we ultimately alone?

“The thought of leaving the island had not crossed my mind once since I had arrived. It has been weeks now - I couldn't say how many exactly- and they would stretch on. I was certain about that” (p. 280)

As I read this passage, it reminded me of a time in my life when I had a similar experience. I had moved to a new state with my parents and found myself living in an unfamiliar area. At first, I was excited about the adventure of exploring a new place and meeting new people. However, as time passed, I found myself becoming increasingly isolated. It took a couple of months before I was able to make new friends and find a palace. Reading Pi's words made me realize how easy it is to become comfortable in our isolation, even when we know it's not good for us. The longer we stay isolated, the harder it can be to break free from the routine and make a change. It also made me reflect on the power of our thoughts and beliefs. Pi's certainty that he would remain on the island, even though he had no idea how long he had been there, shows how our thoughts and beliefs can shape our reality.

“High calls low and low calls high. I tell you, if you were in such dire straits as I was, you too would elevate your thoughts. The lower you are the higher your mind will want to soar.” (p. 283)

This quote speaks of the human capacity for resilience and the power of the mind to overcome the most dire of circumstances. The passage "high calls low and low calls high" implies that in extreme situations, one's thoughts and perspectives can change dramatically. When faced with the prospect of death, Pi found that his thoughts were elevated, and his mind sought to soar to new heights. It's interesting to think that in the most challenging circumstances, our minds have the capacity to transcend our limitations and reach new heights of understanding and awareness. The quote also raises questions about the nature of the human psyche and the way we respond to extreme situations. What is it about our minds that allows us to elevate our thoughts in moments of crisis? Is it a survival instinct, or is it something deeper within our nature as human beings?

“Don’t you bully me with politeness! Love is hard to believe, ask any lover. Life is hard to believe, ask any scientist. God is hard to believe, ask any believer. What is your problem with hard to believe”(p. 297)

This quote speaks to the idea that there are certain things in life that are difficult to believe in, such as love, life, and God. Pi is saying that people dismiss these things as being "hard to believe" as if that diminishes their significance. This quote reflects on the nature of belief and the role it plays in our lives. Why do we find certain things hard to believe in, and what is the impact of this skepticism on our lives? It also raises questions about the relationship between belief and knowledge. Is it possible to know something without believing in it, or vice versa? How do our beliefs shape the way we view the world around us, and how do they impact our decisions and actions?

Isn’t telling about something—-using words, English or Japanese—-already something of an invention? Isn’t just looking upon this world already something of an invention?” (P.302)

This quote from Life of Pi speaks to the idea that our perceptions of the world are inherently subjective and shaped by the language and culture that we use to understand them. Pi is questioning the idea that we can ever truly understand the world around us, as even our attempts to describe it are inherently limited by the language we use.

This quote relates to the overarching themes of the book, particularly the idea of the power of storytelling and the importance of perspective. Throughout the book, Pi tells his story in multiple versions, each one slightly different depending on his audience and his own perceptions of what happened. The idea that language and storytelling are inherently limited underscores the importance of recognizing the subjective nature of our own perspectives and being open to different ways of seeing the world.

The quote also touches on the idea of invention and creativity. Pi suggests that even the act of describing something is an act of invention, as we must use language and metaphor to convey meaning. This speaks to the idea that creativity and imagination are integral to our understanding of the world and our ability to communicate with others.

Overall, this quote underscores the importance of recognizing the limitations of our own perspectives and being open to different ways of seeing the world. It reminds us that language and storytelling are powerful tools for shaping our understanding of the world, but that they are inherently limited and subjective. By acknowledging these limitations, we can strive to be more empathetic and open-minded in our interactions with others, and more creative in our own ways of seeing the world.

“When the sun slipped below the horizon, it was not only the day that died and the poor zebra, but my family as well. With that second sunset, disbelief gave way to pain and grief. They were dead; I could no longer deny it.”

This quote from Pi reflects the devastating moment when he realizes that he has lost his entire family. The imagery of the sunset, which is often seen as a symbol of closure and a new beginning, instead represents the finality of death for Pi. The use of the words "disbelief" and "deny" suggest that Pi had been struggling to come to terms with the loss of his family, perhaps holding onto a small hope that they might still be alive. It also highlights the theme of loss and grief in the novel. Pi experiences multiple losses throughout his journey, including the death of the zebra, orangutan, and Richard Parker. Each of these losses is felt deeply by Pi, and he must find a way to cope with his grief and continue to survive.

**5b**

6b

7b

9b

11b

14b

**15m**

**16-19**

19b

23b

24b

**26t**

**27m**

**28m**

**31tm**

**41t**

**44t**

**68b**

79m

78t

80m

**84m**

**85b**

87b

91m

—-------- pt 2

97m

101t

102t

107m

109m

110b

111m

**132**

**134 b**

137 b

139 t

147 b

**151 m**

**160 t**

**161 m**

**164 b**

175 b

**177 mid**

**183 bottom**

**185 bottom**

**189t**

**191b**

**199t**

**202b**

**209b**

258 top

260 mid

**263 top**

266 mid-bottom

267 bottom

**268 b**

269 b

271m

**273b**

280t

281b

282b

**283b**

284t

**285tmb**

Pt 3

291 t

292m

294 m

295t

**297b**

299t

**302m**

**311mb**

**317 mid**

319 b