**The Good Man and the Monster**

A huge whale launched itself out of the sea with glittering spray; miraculous water shone like starry sky in the middle of the night; a hard trip on the sea together with a dangerous tiger. Having dazzling spectacle and amazing experience, *Life of Pi* is so popular among people all over the world. Before I wrote this article, I’d been searching on the internet to find out how other people think of this book. Most of them are just crazy about the scene, the experience and the intelligence and braveness that Pi had shown. But since I cared a lot about the second story that Pi told when asked by the Japanese journalists, I found profound connotations from the book.

In the second story, Pi replaced the dhole for the cook, the gorilla for his mother, and the zebra which had a broken leg was actually the Chinese sailor. It didn’t take so long that fear and hunger started to drive them crazy. The cook killed the sailor and the mother, and then the tiger, Richard Parker, killed the cook. Pi and Richard survived. From the words that Pi said in the end: The Richard Parker, companion of my torment, awful, fierce thing that kept me alive”, we can obviously see , Richard Parker, the tiger, was actually the fear in Pi’s heart that kept him fighting for living. The human Pi and Richard showed two parts of Pi one of which showed the divinity while the other showed the animal nature when Pi was threatened by death.

Divinity and animal nature, nobleness and mean, they are essentially contradictory. However, they do coexist in every of us. Sigmund Freud, the famous psychoanalyst, described them as superego and id. Modern civilization hasn’t given us opportunities to show our id, but has made us to conceal it by superego which basically appears as manners, religions or ethics. But once we were facing the threats from death, it could be very difficult for us to choose the side. To live like a monster or to die as a good man. Cruelly but realistically, the author chose the former. The Pi with superego was right there when Pi with id killed everyone and ate his mother’s body. He cried at the sky, scolding the God, but he wasn’t able to stop the tiger. He had no choice because he wanted to live. The conflict went to climax when the storm came, all the fears, the sadness of lose and the resentment at the God rolled over and mixed in Pi’s heart. He forced his id to trust the God, to trust the superego will do something to help, but apparently, there was nothing the superego could do. So the next day, Pi still had to eat the body, to struggle for living. As soon as Pi reaches the land, the tiger went away without any hesitation. Threats were gone; he was back into the arms of civilization again. Id disappeared silently.

Till the end of the book, the author hadn’t figured out a way to balance superego and id. He couldn’t. The way he gave Pi is to live like a good man, but with a monster inside. Ending the book in this imperfect way, we may feel sorry and helpless. But I think that’s exactly what the author wanted us to feel, to feel the contradictory in our own, and to see the ultimate question in our life.

(2015张悦祺)