

Yann Martel

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Yann Martel

Born: June 25, 1963



Salamanca, Spain

Occupation: Novelist

Nationality: Canadian

Writing period: 1993-present

Debut works: The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios

Yann Martel (born June 25, 1963 in Salamanca, Spain) is a Canadian author best known for the Man Booker Prize-winning novel *Life of Pi*.

As an adult, Martel has travelled the globe, spending time in Iran, Turkey and India. After studying philosophy at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Martel spent six months in India visiting mosques, temples, churches and zoos, and then an entire year reading religious texts and castaway stories.^[1] His first published fictional work, *Seven Stories*, appeared in 1993 .

In 2001, *Life of Pi* was published and was awarded the Man Booker Prize in 2002. Soon afterwards, a dedication to Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar appearing in the preface of the novel began to elicit questions about the story's originality. It appeared that the premise of *Life of Pi* and some aspects of its plot had been borrowed from Scliar's *Max e os Felinos*, published in 1981. Martel admitted having been influenced, but accusations of plagiarism were defused after Scliar graciously declined to pursue legal action. The book was later chosen for the 2003 edition of CBC Radio's *Canada Reads* competition, where it was championed by author Nancy Lee. In addition, its French translation, *Histoire de Pi*, was included in the French version of the competition, *Le combat des livres*, in 2004, championed by singer Louise Forestier.

Martel spent a year in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from September 2003 as the public library's writer-in-residence. He moved to Montreal, Quebec and has recently collaborated with Canadian composer Omar Daniel, composer-in-residence at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, on a piece for piano, string quartet and bass. The composition, *You Are Where You Are*, is based on text written by Martel, which includes parts of cellphone

conversations taken from moments in an ordinary day.

In November 2005, the University of Saskatchewan announced that Martel will return and spend a year in the university's English department as a scholar-in-residence, where he is slated to stay until November 2007.^[2]

His upcoming book will deal with the Holocaust: it will take place between two talking animals on a man's dress shirt. He is also working on a project entitled 'What is Stephen Harper Reading,' where he is sending the Prime Minister of Canada one book every two weeks that portrays 'stillness' with an accompanying explanatory note. He is posting his letters, book selection and any responses to the website devoted to the project.^[3]

Yann Martel currently lives in Saskatoon.

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Books

- *Seven Stories* (1993)
- *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (1993)
- *Self* (1996)
- *Life of Pi* (2001)

Literary awards

- Winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize for Fiction
- Winner of the 2001 Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction
- Shortlisted for the 2001 Governor General's Award for Fiction
- Shortlisted for Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award
- His short story "The Facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios" was the winner of the 1991 Journey Prize

Notes

1. ^ Martel, Yann. How I Wrote Life of Pi. Powells.com. Retrieved on 2007-04-19.
2. ^ (U Sask Department of English homepage,

retrieved 16 April 2007,
<http://www.usask.ca/english/>)

3. ^ (What is Stephen Harper Reading,
retrieved 16 April 2007,
<http://www.whatisstephenharperreading.ca/>)

External links

- Yann Martel at www.contemporarywriters.com
- Online animated promo of *Life of Pi*

Man Booker Prize for Fiction winners^[hide]

1960s

1970s 70: Rubens 71: Naipaul 72: Berger

1980s 80: Golding 81: Rushdie 82: Keneally

1990s 90: Byatt 91: Okri 92: Ondaatje, Unsworth

2000s 00: Atwood 01: Carey 02: **Martel**

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