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THE PROBLEM OF “OTHERNESS” IN “JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL” BY RICHARD BACH

Richard David Bach was born on 23 June 1936. He was born in Oak Park, Illinois. He attended Long Beach State University. He is known for his love of aircraft. Richard Bach served in a fighter squadron of the US Navy and the New Jersey Air National Guard. His books are mostly autobiographies inspired by events in his life. He also worked as a technical writer for Douglas Aircraft and Flying magazine.

Most of Bach's books are related to aviation in some way. Aviation was his passion, but his teachers at school made him realize his talent for writing. So he decided to capture his love and talent in book form. His early works were about flight, such as “Stranger to Ground,” and later flight was used as a metaphor; “Jonathan Livingston Seagull,” published in 1970, was a popular work featuring seagulls. The book tells the story of a seagull that flies because it prefers flying to foraging for food. The book was published by Macmillan because other publishers refused to publish it. “Jonathan Livingston Seagull” has beautiful photographs of seagulls in flight. The book became a number-one bestseller. In less than 10,000 words, “Jonathan Livingston Seagull” sold over a million copies in 1972, breaking the record set by “Gone with the Wind.”

To Be the “Other”

In our modern world, where we are constantly bombarded with how different everyone is, you would think that people would get used to the fact that other people have other views on the world, other ideas about projects, and other dreams... right?

Depending on which part of the world you live in, people around you enforce different ideals. Some despise the idea of being open-minded and wanting to blend in, while others hate ordinary people and cherish the unique and quirky ones. Most people are somewhere in between these extremes and the book of Richard Bach “Jonathan Livingstone Seagull” showcases an instance of a white crow.

A white crow is a person who differs from other people in his/her appearance, behavior, views, or interests. That is, he/she is a person unlike others. This expression has been used to denote any “otherness,” unusualness, uniqueness, or sometimes even eccentricity of a person. Otherness is not a bad thing. You and I are different. We may not be the same as someone around us, but we must recognize and respect others' right to exist and to have their own opinion.

Richard expresses the idea of a white crow finding others like him, thus making the white crow ordinary and accepted. Jonathan found “his” flock, and became part of it, no longer an exile. He was surrounded by like-minded souls, and among them he became ordinary. Once

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you find the right people who share your ideals and dreams then you can truly feel at home, feel like it's heaven. We believe that this is what one of the main messages of Richard Bach was, to find those who are similar but different from you. Such things will strengthen any relationship, friendship, romance, and so on.

“Other” Thoughts from the Book

The amount of symbols present in the story is remarkable, and if looked at by two different people they will say different things about most of the symbols. Because everyone understands this story in their unique way.

In the work of Richard Bach, it is said that many trials, disappointments, and even painful moments will await us on the way to the goal. During those moments you are given a chance to learn from them, for every person you meet, every challenge you beat, and every step you take leads you to a better version of yourself. It is also necessary to pass your knowledge on to others. Not only this is how the development of humanity, the development of culture, and development of civilization continue, but also the “development” of your relationships with the people around you, your loved ones, or your friends.

In this story-parable, we find Christian ideas of love, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice for the sake of others. But at the same time, some ideas of Eastern religions and philosophical teachings of Buddhism appear. The blend of all of these ideas is seamless and impactful in the story.

References:

Bach, R. (2014). *Jonathan Livingston Seagull: The Complete Edition*. Simon and Schuster.