

## Critical Analysis of the Novel *Jonathan Livingston's Seagull* by Jonathan Bach in Relation with Avian Literature

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### Abstract

This dissertation is an attempt to provide a comprehensive review of avian literature. To trace the under-represented Idea of avian literature and its role in all kinds of literary work into the book of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach, which explores themes of self-improvement and spiritual awakening through the life of a seagull. To bring out an insight into the importance or relevance of avian literature in all the fields which is often being neglected. Birds have been a source of inspiration and symbolism in literature across various cultures and time periods. Avian literature spans a wide range of genres and cultural influences, demonstrating the enduring fascination with birds in human storytelling. Avian literature has a prominent place in Indian literature, with birds often being used as symbols, metaphors, and central characters in various literary works.

**Key Words:** Seagull, Symbolism, Avian literature, cultural

### Introduction

In Oak Park, Illinois, Richard Bach came of age in 1936. After his first aeroplane trip at the age of fifteen, Bach's life was forever changed, and he became obsessed with the freeing phenomenon of flight. Bach had served in the U.S. Navy and National Guard as a fighter pilot when he was younger. He went on to work as a writer and editor at flight centric publications and aircraft companies, following his time in the service. Bach's life changed again in 1970, when he sold the manuscript of his novel, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, to Macmillan Publishers. In 1972, the book became a bestseller, selling more than one million copies worldwide. Bach's further writing explored themes he touched on in *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, and in 1977, he published a book called *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah*. In 2012, Bach was involved in an accident while landing his aircraft—the near-death experience and his subsequent four-month hospitalization inspired him to retool the unfinished fourth part of his first book, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, and the new

“complete” edition was published in 2013. In the wake of his accident, Bach also wrote a follow up to *The Illusions*, and the new book included stories of his recovery.

*Jonathan Livingston Seagull* was written in the late 1960s and published in the early 1970s to great success. Transcendental Meditation is a silent mantra meditation practice and technique for self-empowerment and getting in touch with your inner spirit that originated in India in the 1950s. Transcendental Meditation was extremely popular in the 1960s, and became popular when celebrities such as the Beatles took part. Characteristics associated with the hippie counterculture of the 1960s, such as the use of psychedelics and hallucinogens aimed at unifying mind, body, and soul, encouraged people to connect with their inner world and push the limits of their bodies to overcome. It heralded the arrival of a new era of expansion. *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* was written at the height of this new era, when people were eager to connect with deeper parts of their hearts and test the limits of the mind-body connection. Therefore, this book deals with the theme of self-determination through the connection of mind, body, and soul. However, this book also discusses the dangers of clinging too tightly to doctrines and doctrines, allowing the teachings of others to get in the way of this self-exploration.

In Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, the story starts with a youthful seagull named Jonathan who incorporates a solid want to ace flying. Not at all like other seagulls who fly fair to accumulate nourishment, has Jonathan valued the craftsmanship of flying for its possess purpose. He spends endless hours honing, pushing his impediments to attain uncommon speeds and aerobatic moves. Be that as it may, his energy for flying is misjudged by the rest of his run, who consider it absurd and untrustworthy. Jonathan's fixation with authority goes to such a degree that he gets to be distanced from the run. Disregarding the primal encourage for nourishment, Jonathan is considered as a revolt, a disrespect to the gather. Definitely, he is expelled from the run, and constrained to spend his life in isolation. By the separation doesn't prevent him. He remains cantered and proceeds with his flying hone, realizing that he is presented with a blessing that rises above the conventional.

In isolation, Jonathan accomplishes colossal advance in his flight abilities, opposing all primordial set confinements. One day, he's gone to by two brilliant gulls who escort him to a better plane of presence, known as "the other side". Here, he meets other gulls like him, who esteem flying as he does. They direct him, instructing him almost adore, thoughtfulness, and the reason of life. It's here that Jonathan really finds his potential and learns that paradise isn't a put, but a state of being. Having learned and advanced, Jonathan is filled with and strongly crave to share his illumination. He wishes to return to his ancient run and direct other misjudged gulls. After sharing his thought with the older folks, in spite of the fact that they discover it perilous, they do not stand in his way. In this way, Jonathan sets out on a modern travel, clearing out his recently discovered heaven to serve a reason more noteworthy than his individualistic interest.

Upon returning to his ancient run, Jonathan begins educating his information to others. He starts with Untouchables and Bummels who were too expelled from the run. He trains them to try for more than simple survival and to involvement the bliss of unhindered flight. This draws consideration, drawing in other gulls from the run who set out to address similarity and the set standards. Be that as it may, the street to giving information isn't simple. The endless larger part of the run considers Jonathan and his understudies as a

danger to the societal develops, remaining stuck in their ancient ways of living. In spite of the resistance, those who get it and guzzle Jonathan's lessons impressively upgrade their flying abilities and involvement life much wealthier than some time recently.

The book closes with comparative designs rehashing. The run expels Jonathan's understudies, fair as they had done with Jonathan. Be that as it may, they, guided by Jonathan's lessons, proceed seeking after their adore for flying. The cycle of seeking after dominance, encountering edification, educating, and confronting oust, focuses towards the persistent battle against similarity. In conclusion, Jonathan Livingston Seagull may be a wealthy allegorical story approximately an individual's interest of brilliance, want for information, and assurance to educate against routine boundaries. It educates us around self-realization, breaking standards, finding reason, and the interest of flawlessness for individual fulfilment past societal acknowledgment.

*"Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom and fear and anger are the reasons that a gull's life is so short, and with these gone from his thought, he lived a long fine life indeed." (Bach 26)*

The story of Jonathan reminds me of the millions of individuals around the world who have inconvenience increasing in value life and living it to the fullest. It's simple in a nation of extravagance and plenitude to discover yourself in a trench of day-to-day exercises and increasingly challenging to appreciate what you've got. It's common for individuals to be irate approximately their circumstances or fair acknowledge their circumstance in life. And its no astonish that numerous individuals need a few sort of alter but fear making a move for something superior or diverse. When Jonathan was cast out of his run, he was now not in threat of getting stuck within the day-to-day boring life that he saw the other gulls living. He had no fears and he chose to live a life where he challenged himself, and hence was never bored indeed in spite of the fact that he was a single fowl. The best lesson that I can learn and possibly the hardest one to put into practice, will be to eliminate fear, boredom, and anger from my life as much as possible. Jonathan found the freedom to let go.

*"You don't need me any longer. You need to keep finding yourself, a little more each day, that real, unlimited Fletcher Seagull. He's your instructor. You need to understand him and to practice him." - (Bach 90)*

When Jonathan came back to soil, he made a difference numerous gulls who had been like him break from the congruity of the run. They came to depend on him to lead them but there are two lessons we are able learn from Jonathan around administration. Numerous individuals require a kick-start from a pioneer for direction and a bump to urge out there and take the primary steps. The primary lesson is to lead and empower others to form the move to do something diverse. The moment lesson is to donate them proprietorship of where they are going. As Jonathan does with Fletcher Seagull, once they have begun they can be their pioneers, their instructors, and they can develop themselves and others.

## **Conclusion**

*Jonathan Livingston Seagull* stands as a seminal work in avian literature, though its

Departure from traditional ornithological narratives is notable. Richard Bach's novella transcends the genre's conventional boundaries, offering readers a profound exploration of existential themes through the metaphor of a seagull's journey. While avian literature often focuses on the natural history, behaviour, and ecological significance of birds, "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" delves into the realm of philosophical inquiry, personal growth, and spiritual enlightenment.

At its core, the story follows the protagonist, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, a

Non-conformist who yearns for more than the ordinary life of his flock. Jonathan's relentless pursuit of flight mastery symbolizes the human desire for self-actualization and transcendence. Through his journey, readers are invited to contemplate themes of individuality, perseverance, and the pursuit of excellence, which resonate beyond the avian realm into the depths of the human experience.

Bach's narrative style blends allegory with naturalistic detail, creating a compelling narrative that captivates readers while offering profound insights into the human condition. By personifying seagulls and imbuing them with complex emotions and aspirations, Bach challenges readers to reconsider their preconceptions about the avian world and, by extension, their own lives.

In contrast to traditional avian literature, which tends to focus on factual descriptions and scientific observations, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* prioritizes metaphorical exploration and philosophical inquiry. This departure from conventionality enriches the genre, expanding its scope to encompass broader themes of identity, purpose, and transcendence.

Ultimately, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* serves as a testament to the power of storytelling to transcend boundaries and provoke introspection. Its enduring popularity and influence in both literary and spiritual circles attest to its significance not only as a work of avian literature but also as a timeless allegory of the human quest for meaning and enlightenment.

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