Why Did the Person Board The Plane?

The story begins in the 1973, Liverpool, United Kingdom in front of a small apartment. Yakov Vissarionovich stepped out of his house for the final time he wondered if this was the right move, his mind told him to stay but his body willed him to go. The bullets of rain piercing his skull as they fell from the sky. As he entered the cab the driver inquired about Yakov’s lack of luggage, Yakov responded to the question claiming that “Where am going I require no material possessions to establish my **social status**, I need not conform to your bourgeois standards”(**Conflict Theory**). The driver still confused with Yakov’s hostility, questioned further asking “where are you going?” Yakov with disdain told him that he was going to Irkutsk Oblast. They did not speak for the rest of the drive, for Yakov dreamed of his time in Irkustk Oblast. Yakov was born in Irkustk sometime in the mid-1940s, he does not remember his parents for they abandoned him when he was very young. Yakov was picked up by a small wolf tribe and hunted small rabbits for food. Yakov thrived in this society, he could climb trees, he could run quickly and jump farther than the rest of the pack. This was great for Yakov because it was those who were the most talented would rule the pack (**Meritocracy**). Yakov dreamed of this society which favored society’s **collective** goals over the human’s selfish **individualistic** mindset. In Yakov’s pack everyone worked together, in the human’s world everyone worked against each other. Every time he dreams of his time in the tribe he remembers when he was “rescued” when he was taken from his society and brought to the **Resocialization** Institute where he was told he was a **Feral Child,** that he was lesser and that he must **conform** to society. It took Yakov many years to recover from this social conditioning, to realize how they **dehumanized** him, they made him feel worthless and forced him to conform to their ideals. Though Yakov had his doubts about leaving these human’s world he longed to return to his people in Irkustk Oblast he was **alienated** in this society where as in his pack he was welcomed. The cab stopped at the airport and Yakov exited the cab. While in line Yakov looked around, he saw all different type of people from all different types of places. To Yakov he was the one unacceptable minority in this “accepting” **multicultural** society, he was **ascribed** this status, he did not earn it, he did not deserve this. Yakov was now completely ready to leave, finally realizing the issues with this society he was ready to return to his brethren. He took a deep breath, hoping this was the right decision. He showed the flight attendant his pass, boarded a plane to the faraway place, and was never heard from again.

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| Concept/Theory | Social Science | Sub-Discipline | Textbook Chapter and page | Relevance to Story |
| Conflict Theory | Sociology |  | Chapter 3, Page 105 | In the story Yakov is very critical of those of a higher social status of him. He even points out the irony that the bourgeois who control the distribution of material goods impose the idea that social class is marked by one’s quantity of material goods. |
| Feral Children | Sociology |  | Chapter 3,Page 122 | Yakov was abandoned as a young child and was adopted by a wolf tribe, which makes him a “feral” child. He appears to have taken the identity of an animal and shares the values of the wolf tribe. This is also evident because since Yakov lacked the social experience of interacting with humans he is socially inept and especially defensive when talking to people. |
| Resocialization | Sociology |  | Chapter 3,Page 119 | Yakov was “saved” as a child when he was taken from the woods and brought to the modern world. He was brought to a place called the Resocialization institute where he was taught that his culture was inferior. The people at this institute broke him down to get him to follow modern society’s ideals. |
| Conformity | Sociology |  | Chapter 6,Page 262 | Conformity plays a very important role in this story. The ultimate enemy to Yakov is not the people but the people’s attempt to conform him to their ideals.Y akov accepts this conformity when he is young and in the Resocialization Institute however as he ages he breaks this conformity and learns to despise the people who forced him to conform. |
| Dehumanize | Sociology |  | Chapter 6, Page 292 | In the Institute of Resocialization, the employees dehumanize him. The employees teach him he is less than human that he is an animal and use this to justify their actions. Yakov is taught he is not human and that the only way for him to become “normal” and a “human” is to conform to modern ideals. |
| Meritocracy | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 430 | In Yakov’s wolf society those who were talented would gain social and political power. Yakov views this as a positive thing because somewhat selfishly he would gain power. |
| Collectivist Society | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 424 | Yakov appears to favor the collectivist society citing that under this society though the individual had less freedom, all of society’s needs were met. He also mentions that all the people in this wolf society worked towards their collective goals rather than their selfish individual goals. |
| Social Status | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 429 | Social status is extremely important in this story. Yakov sees the human world as separated by class with the privileged labeled the bourgeois and he is the lowest of the classes he is a “feral” person. He opposes this class system much like Marx and especially relevant due to him travelling to Russia the Bolsheviks. |
| Individualistic Society | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 424 | Yakov is extremely critical of the individualistic society. He views it as selfish that individuals attempt to meet their goals rather than society’s collective ones. He remembers how in the wolf pack all the wolves worked for one goal rather than everyone working separately. |
| Multiculturalism | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 425 | Yakov mentions multiculturalism near the end of the story. He sees multiculturalism as being limited in its implementation. For multiculturalism requires an acceptance of all cultures and beliefs. Yakov sees this implementation as acceptance of human’s culture however he sees that they refuse to accept his culture, he is ostracized and he is pegged at a lower social status. |
| Ascribed Status | Sociology |  | Chapter 9,Page 429 | Yakov sees his social status not as earned yet as given to him once he entered society. Once Yakov entered society he was pegged at the lowest possible social status, being that of inhuman. They see him as less than human which he sees as unfair. He sees that even though he has different values does not mean he should be determined to be of a lower class, he did not advocate or participate in the harming of anyone else why should he be punished |