

# MARXIST READING IN JOHN STEINBECK'S THE PEARL

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## ABSTRACT

This paper on literature of capitalism focuses on the aspect of Marxism in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The idea is class division among human beings, analyzed the concept of class conflict. How man is concluded by his class and society in the world. Class plays dynamic role at each and every step of man's life no matter how dark is inside or outside. The capitalist world does not give value to anything suppose the belongings. John Steinbeck's *the pearl* is a social-economic analysis of the village of La Paz which situated at the far end of the Baja Peninsula. The entire theme of the novel addresses a struggle between rich class and poor class. Capitalist ideology foregrounds in utilize of the proletariat in the pearl. The protagonist Kino and his race held certain views which are evidently capitalist ideology. It describes the reality that how insignificant group of capitalist controls and utilize the significant mass of poor through practicing the social system of capitalism. This class division is the essential part of capitalism. Both the classes have been juxtaposed in the novel; the class conflict is the main characteristic of capitalism. Marxism wants to bring down this imbalance in society of the novel *The Pearl*. In twentieth century writers and critics are interested in the class conflict between rich class and poor class in the society. *The pearl* also highlighting the inequality of the poor class of society ineffective of capitalism.

## Keywords:

Class conflict, Marxism, Capitalism.

The novel deals with the capitalist activists as cities and towns are usually associated with economic of the capitalist and exploitation of the poor and marginalized class of society. *The pearl* explores from the life of a fisherman, Kino. He was a strong person and his lovable wife Juana was a brave lady and loving mother of infant son Coyotito. This indigent family lives in a small brush house along the Gulf of Mexico by the town of La Paz. But one day a scorpion bites his son, Coyotito. Kino and Juana wish their son be treated by the doctor but he refuses to treat the baby because Kino can't pay the doctor's expenses. Kino goes to the sea with a desire to find a pearl.

Kino the secret melody of the may be pearl broke clear and beautiful, rich and warm and lovely, glowing and gloating and triumphant. (P.26)

Luckily, he finds great pearl. People of the town instantly come to know about *The Pearl*. They start scheming to rob Kino. In that moment Coyotito recovers from the scorpion bite. In day dreams Kino thinks of marrying Juana in a church, buying a rifle, and sending his son to school. The pearl attracts the doctor to see Kino's brush hut so he comes to treat his son. After treatment of the baby was recovering and clicking his eyes, the doctor asks about *The Pearl*. Kino unwillingly reveals the hidden pearl by gazing to another place. The same night, a stealer knocks into Kino's brush hut and digs the place which Kino gaze has pointed out to the doctor. The next day, Kino goes to sell the pearl in town. The dealers approached Kino and asked for the pearl saying that they would give him the best price. The sellers tried to cheat Kino and have the pearl. But says the pearl will be sold for a big offer only. He was helpless and protect himself. Juana warns Kino,

Kino, this pearl is evil. Let us destroy it before it destroys us. Let us crush it between two stones. Let us through it back in the sea where it belongs. Kino it is evil, it is evil. (P, 70)

Juana secretly steals the pearl and takes the sea route to throw it, but Kino senses her movement across her. He slaps and pulls get the pearl, way back to his hit, Kino is attacked and he also lost his self-defense. As Kino comes out of the house with his family and sets their house on fire. Their goes Kino's brother's house during the day time. They start journey to other city in the darkness. After a half day journey they rest under shed. Kino finds that trackers are in search of them. Kino knows the consequences if they are caught by them. They run away to the mountains where they hide in a cave at dusk. The trackers also culminate their journey just below their cave in search of them. Kino sneaks down in the dark to get rid of the trackers, but before he can attack them, Coyotito cries out. The trackers take it for the cry of coyote and fire at the direction. As the shot is fired, Kino springs on the trackers and kills all. Unfortunately, Coyotito is struck but the gun shoot and Kino's journey with the pearl ends in tragedy. Feeling that the pearl is cursed and destroyed his family. Kino and Juana take their way back to La Paz with the dead body and the rifle of the trackers and throw the cursed pearl into the sea.

“Marxism getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and Political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, and the media and so on. Thus economics is the base on which the superstructure of social, political and ideological realities is built.”

The novelist deals with the capitalist activities as cities and towns are usually associated with economic competition of the capitalists a d exploitation of the poor and marginalized class of society. The characters of the novel strictly comprises of two groups that is bourgeoisie or the haves and the proletariat of the have-nots. The darkness of the capitalist system and Kino's resistance to it its evident from the start of the novel, the author juxtaposes the living condition of the both the haves and have-nots which prove that the 'haves' exploit the 'have-not' for their mortal pleasure. Kino lives in a small “brush house” while the doctor and other aristocrats or members of bourgeoisie reside in city. But the doctor didn't come the hut. Because the two class of society more evident when Kino's son Coyotito is stung by a scorpion and Juana asks for the services of the doctor of the locality.

Steinbeck's has depicted Kino and his family realistically. He has emphasized their wretched economic condition of Kino. The novelist has amply clarified the poverty-stricken situation of the family members in a pathetic and heart-rending way and the characters who represent one class of the society: the oppressed, the exploited, and the victims. In Marxist theory, they are known as workers or proletariat. All these are the dire consequences of the nineteenth century industrialism and the resultant capitalism. The background of the novel is Kino as protagonist on one side, while the opposing forces of the society as antagonist on the other side. The society has been segregated on economic bases, and the "economic base" has been described as the "starting-point" in Marxism.

Kino and his race were colonized by the capitalists of La Paz from the past. They were marginalized, exploited and alienated by the bourgeoisie. Due to the fear of oppression and harassment, psychological disorders can also be traced in them. Their only defense is to shut or squint their eyes against the harsh realities.

Capitalists use force to gain their interests. So oppression and capitalism go side. Kino and Juana with their baby leave for another city in the dark to escape the persecution of capitalism. They are escaping in the trackers and reach the mountains. The trackers also reach the mountain dusk. Then Kino decided to take refuge, he plans to attack them in dark. While he is going to attack, Coyotito screams in the entrance of the cave. The trackers took it for Coyotito and fired at the way of the screamed. Coyotito was died. Kino attack and kills the trackers. The Coyotito death also significance. The end of the novel represent that Kino will still suffer from persecution of capitalism. Though he abandoned the pearl but he had killed the four men from the bourgeoisie class the capitalist will never forgive him for the violation of their rules. So Marxism critiques the class distinction and exploitation of the down trodden class of society.

The pearl is a Marxist critique of capitalism by John Steinbeck. He is a noble prize winner, juxtaposes the classes of society; the capitalist and proletariat are contrast in the novel. Steinbeck's pictures the quality of society and the inadequacies of capitalism. The novel is an exposition of the poor class society in America. There are three problems being discussed in the

novel. The first class struggle is reflected in the main character in the novel. The second is the causes the protagonist struggles in the novel. And the last is the impact of struggle towards the main character in the novel. The pearl is a sociological approach. This term uses Karl Marx's theory especially of class struggle. Steinbeck gave the explanation of the lower class cannot do anything against capitalist system. In this novel, Kino just gives up and cannot do anything as he realizes that he is always controlled by the bourgeois. This is proven by Kino's failure in struggles in achieving his great future.

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