

Chapter 1

Steinbeck's *The Pearl*: Issues and Context

Individualism and private property system bases on the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin. In such a system existence is a struggle and free competition between human beings in which only the fittest survives. One tries to be fit by applying tricks, treachery, deception, corruption, fraudulence, cruelty, violence, etc. It promotes obsession for property in the individuals which gives rise to struggle, strife, competition, tension, flattery, exploitation, murder and such like activities of violence, which deteriorate human quality of life.

On the contrary, denunciation and abolition of private property avoid such negative aspects of human values. Socialism proposes to abolish private property and avoid the evils of property by state ownership of property and thereby enhance the quality of life. There are writers, thinkers and philosophers who have expressed their views about the denunciation and the abolition of the system of private property. John Steinbeck is one of such writers. His novel *The Pearl* is directed toward this end. It demonstrates the evils of property in the society it depicts with its implication that abolition of the system of private property is essential to save human beings from those evils.

This study tries to explore how this novel presents the poverty-stricken situation of the protagonist, his struggle for survival, acquisition of property with hard labour, fight for it and the ills that result due to it. It also presents the suffering of his wife, death of his only child due to his property and the tension it creates in the society for earning property. Finally, it reveals how the protagonist and his wife are disillusioned with the system of owning private property and how they denounce their hard-owned wealth. On the whole, this study discusses and analyses the protagonist

Kino's move from acquisition to denunciation of property and the author's message for the abolition of the system of keeping private property.

The theoretical model for this study is Marxism. It especially depends on Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*, which focuses on the abolition of private property and establishment of classless and stateless society. It does not take into consideration of all the aspects of Marxism. It discusses and analyses the evil aspects of the private property system as stated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels with a view to analyzing the concerned text of study.

It is hypothesized that John Steinbeck in *The Pearl* focuses on the evil effects of private property owning system or individualism and capitalism, showing the adverse effect of that system not only in the protagonist of the novel but also in the society as a whole and, implying the abolition of private property by establishing socialism and then by communism as proposed by Marxism.

The research problems that this study deals with are as follows:

1. Why do Kino and his family suffer financially or for existence although they labour hard? Why does their situation not improve, but worsens, even after Kino fishes out a precious pearl?
2. Why is there disparity in the living condition of the people and why do anxiety, struggle, trick, deception, cruelty and murder prevail in the society that the novel depicts?
3. How does this novel comply with Marxism, especially with *The Communist Manifesto*? And why does Kino throw the precious gem back to the sea wherefrom he has fished it out? And, finally
4. What message does the novel convey by presenting people's anxiety, trick, struggle, deception, cruelty and murder for wealth; and by dramatizing Kino's

poverty, struggle for survival and his denunciation of the gem?

The objectives of this study are to find answers to the questions or problems raised above.

John Steinbeck, His Time and *The Pearl*

Steinbeck has unique identity among the contemporary writers. He spent most of his time with working class people and wrote about them. He had unique characteristics that made him national celebrity but he did not like to be the man of media. Not only in the United States, but also in the international arena he is equally famous for his works. He struggled hard and became successful writer of the age. The 1930s was the time of great depression. Due to World War I and other wars in many countries, people had become hopeless. Writings were full of depression and despair. There was scarcity of the food material. Wealthy people stored foods, which created problem. Steinbeck also became the victim of it. Writers who were involved in the First World War wrote about the worthlessness of war and their depression.

Tessitore, in his *Extraordinary American Writers*, describes Steinbeck and the period of 1930s in the following words:

The depression was one of the nation's greatest trials in U.S.A. For ten years following the stock market crash of 1929, the U.S. economic staggered. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and lived in poverty. The southwestern farm regions were hit particularly hard. All these disasters of the country touched Steinbeck too. First as a worker and later as a reporter, he lived among the farmers who were too poor to own land during 1930s and who were forced to migrate from region to region looking for work. He turned their experiences into fiction. (200)

Tessitore opines that Steinbeck has first-hand experience about the problems of the

people and has depicted contemporary depression in his works. Steinbeck lived and developed his writing career in that critical time. On the one hand, he was writing during Great Depression and on the other hand, he had to lose his mother in 1934. The time was very critical for him. The current socio-political state of the nation directly affected his writing. It was very hard for him to remain far from these aspects. He also worked in factory where the temperature frequently climbed over the hundred- degree Celsius. He lived the life of workers, farmers and proletariat groups.

John Steinbeck is one of the best known American novelists of the mid twentieth century. He was awarded the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature. His novels can be classified as social novels dealing with the economic problems of rural labor. His literary background brought him into close collaboration with leftist authors, journalists, and labor union figures, which may have influenced his writing. He writes basically about the proletariat people. His ideas are definitely sympathetic to the left politics.

Steinbeck worked with his peers who were Marxists and he also raised political views. Steinbeck collaborated with Labor Union which is a continuous association of wage-caners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the condition of their employment. He had a link with the communist party of the United States. It played a defining role in Labor Movement of 1920s and 1940s. It defended the rights of African American throughout that period. 1960s was largely eclipsed by the new left American civil rights movement.

About Steinbeck's writing and his social activities John Tessitore in his *John Steinbeck: A Writers life* writes, "In his later life and work Steinbeck would prove sympathetic to the nation's minorities and advocate the expansion of civil right...his sympathies lay with his co-workers, not with men like his father who controlled the

government and economy” (47). From this statement, it becomes clear that he was a Marxist writer who always supported the common workers. Tessitore adds, “For years Steinbeck had been the subject of investigation by California State Officials because of his involvement with socialist and communist organizations” (120). It shows that Steinbeck struggled for the common people objecting the contemporary capitalist domination in the United States.

He knew that capitalism is the cause for the sufferings of the farmers and industrial workers in the country. Steinbeck followed the path of Marxism and his writings were based on Marxist philosophy. He believed that literature reveals injustices and gives people hope. He did not change his political views throughout his life. He always supported the socialist moment of the United States. He did not leave his stance and stayed in the country even in the time of Great Depression whereas many of his fellow writers left the country. Those years were the years of hopelessness and chaos.

Throughout the period people were in disillusionment but he did not change his mind. He lived with his co-workers, farmers in California, where he collected materials for his writing. So he was great determinant and different from other writers of his age. Tessitore stresses this fact in his commentary, as:

In the late Twenties, many of the American writers who came of age during world war I- the Lost Generation that included Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald- settled in Paris. Their break through year was 1925: Hemingway published *In Our Time*; Fitzgerald released *The Great Gatsby*. But John Steinbeck would always follow a different path from his peers and during the summer of 1925 he lived as far from Paris as he possibly could. (25)

Tessitore holds that Steinbeck followed a path different from his contemporaries who were called the lost generation. He had strong determinacy unlike the other writers of his time.

The Postwar disenchantment led a number of American writers to become expatriated or exiles. Many writers settled in Paris and they were influenced by Gertrude Stein. Hemingway and Fitzgerald are the best known of the expatriates or exiles. After the war, Hemingway had a difficult time readjusting his life in the United States. Hoping to find personal contentment and establish himself as a writer, he went to Paris. In *The Sun Also Rises* he writes about the expatriates searching for sensation that would enable them to forget the pain and disillusionment they associate with life in the modern world. Similarly, Fitzgerald also went to Paris and became friend of Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Hemingway and other expatriates and writers. Ezra Pound spent most of his adult life in England, France and Italy. T.S. Eliot, born in St. Louis, went to Europe in 1924 and did not return to the United States until 1932.

The Great Depression touched Steinbeck too but he did not go for exile by being frustrated. His works depict the depression. His *The Grapes of Wrath* published in 1939 vividly describes the farmers who left the Midwest for California in search of jobs during the Great Depression. A new literary age was also dawning in northern Manhattan, Harlem. Black writers, mostly new comers from the South, were creating their own renaissance which is called Harlem Renaissance.

Although many of his characters suffered tragic fates, they almost always managed to retain a sense of dignity throughout their struggles. Like other great writers, Steinbeck also got Nobel Prize for literature in 1962 and he lived with his contemporaries, like Hemingway, William Faulkner, T.S. Eliot, Pearl S. Buck, Eugene O'Neill, and Sinclair Lewis who also were the Nobel Prize winners.

Steinbeck's frequent topic was the plight of misfits, the homeless and the hopeless in a fast changing America. He was famous for his style of writing too. He was not only famous for his themes but also for his unique style.

Richard Brown finds autobiographical elements in his writing. He states, "Steinbeck emerged with a profound understanding of manual works or labors that manifest in many of his books" (967). Steinbeck brought materials for writing from his own experience that he had spent long time working as a labor. His fiction demonstrates the vulnerability of such people who can be uprooted by droughts and are the first to suffer in periods of unrest and economic depression. He presents the age in his writing. He draws the contemporary vulnerable picture of American society which was badly affected by the Great Depression.

Steinbeck took a political philosophical stand in his career. He stayed close with Marxist philosophy. He wrote about the simple people and their surroundings. Tessitore writes in *Extraordinary American Writers*, "Steinbeck also pursued his interests in writing for the stages and films. He adapted several of his works for the theater and wrote other especially for performance" (210). In writing he was in favour of common people. He took literature as a part of human life. In *John Steinbeck: A Writer's Life* Tessitore holds, "Steinbeck believed that literature is a necessity of human life at its best, it reveals injustices and gives people hope and he struggles to accomplish these things in his own work" (10). Tessitore means to say that Steinbeck remained ever close to people's heart.

His works give attention to the plight of migrant farmers. He wrote about a farm labor strike in *Dubious Battle* (1936). His best known work is the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) in which a poor Oklahoma family loses its farm during the depression and travels to California to seek work. The family suffers

conditions of feudal oppression by rich landowners. His novel *The Pearl* reflects the contemporary people's tension about property in the United States. It also portrays the clash between Mexican Indians and the white European settlers.

It presents the tale of a Mexican Indian fisherman, Kino, and his wife Juana, who lived their simple life with hard labor until their son is stung by a scorpion. The selfish town doctor does not treat the baby because Kino cannot pay the doctor's fee. In this anxious state, he becomes able to fish out a magnificent pearl which he hopes will improve his family's life and be able to get medical help for his boy. Calculating the price of the gem, Kino dreams of a better life, a grand wedding in the church, clothes, gun and education for the boy, but his dreams of lifting his socio-economic condition leads him to ruin. As he attempts to escape those people who want to take the pearl from him, he is tracked by professional hit men and tragedy ensues. No pearl is worth the price Kino and his wife pay.

When he realizes that the pearl is the real cause of his suffering as dacoits attack him at night for the gem and his tragic ruin, such as, his son's murder, burning of the house, and so on, he throws the pearl into the ocean wherefrom he had fished it out. The throwing of the pearl back into the ocean can be taken as throwing of the private property system which is the main cause of social inequality and suffering of people.

Review of Literature

Different critics have commented upon this novel from different critical angles since it was published in 1947. In *Extra-ordinary American Writers*, Tessitore comments, "In *The Pearl* Steinbeck explored the consequences of jealousy and greed in human relationships" (200). It shows that Steinbeck explores human greed for property and the evil effects of property holding system in the hands of the

individuals. There is the reversal of expectation in Kino's family due to human greed and jealousy.

Alexander Saxton reviews the novel in terms of evolutionary concept. He opines that "The main theme of the novel is struggle for survival" (24). His commentary is targeted to the existentialist analysis of the text. Kino's struggle is really a struggle for survival.

Likewise, Nicholas Morine also finds that this novel dramatizes the drawbacks of capitalistic system which gives rise to human greed, jealousy and exploitation:

John Steinbeck has long been understood to be a very intelligent author who infuses his work with a populist flavour that allows the reader to empathize with his protagonists, to live their struggles, and to ultimately draw a great deal of knowledge and reflection from the realm of fiction and literature. *The Pearl* is a stunning example of this capability – both in its capacity to appeal to pathos and beauty as well as in its cutting critique of capitalistic extortion and human greed. (10)

The above lines make it clear that the novel presents the ills of individualistic system in which human beings have inevitably to suffer. This excerpt also points to the fact that the novel is successful to arouse the feeling of pity in the readers towards the protagonist who becomes the victim of capitalism and of private property system.

Prof. Dr. Veena Malik Nare emphasizes on the novel's concern about the fight between the two races – the Spaniards and the native Indians:

The Pearl published in 1947 is a touching story of a Mexican Indian pearl diver, his wife Juana and their son, Coyotito. Kino's tribe has suffered at the hands of the Spaniards for four hundred years thus creating a major cultural and economic gap between the two races. (1)

Thus, Nare finds racial segregation in the novel - the cultural and economic gap between the Mexican Indians and the white Americans.

David Wyatt comments that this novel presents the story of human corruption owing to the system of material wealth:

The Pearl is a symbolic tale of a Mexican Indian pearl diver, Kino, who finds valuable pearl that changes his life but not in a way he expected. Kino sees the pearl as an opportunity for better life. He is soon surrounded by greedy priest, doctor, businessmen and finally throws the pearl into the ocean. So it is a story of corruption by material wealth and possessions. (32)

Wyatt tries to show that Kino is disillusioned with the evils of capitalist society which always gives tension to individuals for survival and people become greedy.

Although many critics have examined the novel from different aspects of the novel, they have not given enough concern about the writer's main message that private property system gives suffering to people and ruins the quality of human life; and therefore, it is to be abolished. This study based on Marxist perspective finds that individualistic society is full of greed, jealousy, corruption, treachery, struggle for survival, competition, violence, murder, exploitation, domination, etc. It explores that the society depicted in *The Pearl* is corrupted, frustrated, alienated and disintegrated by practicing capitalistic values. There is the failure of capitalistic way of life. When every individual has to struggle for survival and fight with each other, it cannot create a harmonious society. This research reveals how the working class Kino suffers in the hands of the doctor, the priest, the merchants and the trackers. It examines the protagonist's struggle against the evil forces of capitalism and their damaging effect on his family. It finds that no one in the society is satisfied, happy and in peace; it is

the defect of the system. Therefore, the main idea one may draw from it is that such a system is to be abolished and it is to be substituted by socialistic pattern of system to get rid of the evils of individualistic practice.

Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the study. It reveals the issues and the contexts of the thesis. Basically, it expresses the main objective of the thesis which is to critically examine the evil aspects of private property owning system as depicted in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. This chapter presents also the Steinbeck's time of the United States of America and the basic trends of literary writing of that period with a view to understanding the influence of the period on the author under study. It also discusses the features of the author's writing, especially how he actively participated in the politics of the communists and wrote about the working class people. Then, it presents a short review of the novel under study.

After this, it examines how literary critics have given their views about this novel. It helps the present researcher to pave her way by finding out what critics have already said about the novel and what remains untouched about the idea that this novel conveys. It also helps her to find out the gaps, the controversies, the inconsistencies, etc. in their study. At the last of this chapter, the organization of the whole thesis is presented.

The Second Chapter centers on the theoretical model - Marxism, on which this study is based on. It basically discusses the views of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels about the abolition of the system of owning private property and the establishment of exploitation-less society as expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*. This model is appropriate for the present study because the message conveyed by Steinbeck's novel

correctly matches with the *Manifesto*. This chapter outlines in brief the basic causes of class struggle in human history; that is, human greed for property and power. It also discusses how, before the establishment of classless and stateless society, socialism helps human beings to get rid of the evils of individualistic or capitalistic way of life.

The Third Chapter, which is the main part of the thesis, discusses and analyses how Steinbeck's novel dramatizes the evil effects of private property system not only in the life of the protagonist, Kino, and his family, but also in the whole society that the novel depicts. It shows Kino's poverty, his struggle for survival, his dreams, his acquisition of a precious pearl, his efforts to sell it for fair price, the tricks of the shopkeepers to make profit at the risk of his hard labour, the greed of the doctor who wants to grab the gem, Kino's fight with the thieves and the dacoits, the difference in the treatment of the clergyman of the church before and after Kino's acquisition of the pearl, the murder of Kino's only child at the hands of the dacoits and, lastly how Kino is disillusioned about the evils of the gem or property and how he denounces the gem and throws it back into the sea wherefrom he had fished it out.

The last chapter makes a brief review of the previous chapters and sums up the whole study along with its findings. It concludes the arguments and the explanations put forward in previous chapters. On the whole, it draws the message of the novel.

Chapter 2

Ideas on the Abolition of Private Property

The fundamental to the Marxist doctrine is that states are essentially evil because they are class products, and that they will therefore disappear with the classless society. The primitive man had lived under an order which was both communal and stateless. Karl Marx in *The Communist Manifesto* declares that the state is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie and that it concentrates property in the control of a few hands: “The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has... centralized means of production and has concentrated property in a few hands” (24). The natural consequence of this is that there is struggle between classes, and society finds itself into a state of barbarism.

There is unrest in the society due to property and antagonism between classes, which will vanish with the abolition of private property in communism. Marx gives a list of different classes which were in confrontation in human history, which he holds to be the history of class struggles:

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight.... In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild masters, journeyman, apprentices, serfs.... The modern society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class antagonism. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle.... Society as a whole is more and

more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (21)

Individual or private property system is the cause of all this.

With the development of the capital, the proletariat develops, in the same proportion and the situation of the labourers is like that of a commodity. Marx points to this fact in the following words: “In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e. capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat...developed.... These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition”(25). Thus, the working class people in the capitalist system lose their freedom and become an object to be sold in the market.

Contrary to the individualistic system, the workers lose their individuality and charm because they become a part of the machine, enslaved by it and the bourgeois class. Marx states, “Owing to the extensive use of machinery... the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine... a workman is restricted almost entirely to the means of subsistence... they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine” (25). Moreover, they are exploited by the manufacturer, the over-looker, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

Likewise, the lower middle class - generally, the small traders, the peasants, the handicraftsmen – sink gradually into the proletariat. About the reason why these people sink into the proletariat, Marx explains that it is “partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production” (26). The result

of this all is that the lower middle class fight against the bourgeoisie to save from extinction.

Throwing light upon Marxist assumptions, Chris Rohmann states:

Marxism tends to certain assumptions; these include the proposition that capitalism is based on the exploitation wage labor, which alienates people from their capacities and from each other; that social, political, and cultural systems are shaped by exploitative economic relations, which create and perpetuate mutually hostile class divisions; and that class conflict and the system's own contradiction will lead to overthrow and replacement by a more equal and just socialist society. (205)

Marx proclaims in *The Communist Manifesto* that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles and appeals the working class people to unite and wage revolution against the bourgeoisie rule. Marxist literary criticism approaches text in terms of their ideological assumptions and historical contexts and generally holds that a work of art always serves a social purpose, implicitly or explicitly supporting or condemning prevailing condition.

The concept of ideology is crucial in Marxist literary theories. It generally means a collective representation of ideas and experience. The conflict of social classes establishes the ground upon which ideological conflicts arise. Marx reverses the traditional formulation and argues that all ideological systems are the products of real social and economic existence. It is the material interests of the dominant social class that determine how people see human existence. For Marxists, social reality is distinct background out of which literature arises and it blends and has a definite shape. This shape is nothing but a series of struggles between antagonistic social

classes and the types of economic production they are engaged in. Marxism argues that literature and the work of art should reflect the society. They should not be mere analysis but whole representation of social reality.

Marxism sees the social reality through the eyes of the proletariat. It focuses on matter which forms the consciousness of human being. According to it, the production of ideas, conceptions, and consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of man, the language of real life. Marxism has given the ideas to change the world. It argues that Art, an expression of consciousness, thus, is also determined by social being and is usually characterized by struggle in which the differences and conflicts within a society are fought out. Marxism sees the exploitation of society. It wants to dissolve the hierarchy and make a new society where there will not be any division. It tries to bring the marginalized into the mainstream of nation.

And to bring them into centre, it evokes revolution where people are united and fight together against the oppressors and they will become able to abolish the rule of capitalists and bring freedom and prosperity to the people. Marxism takes class conflict as a national phenomenon. That means it occurs everywhere and it always remains in any society. According to it, society is constructed between two structures: base and super. The superior class always rules the base but the economy depends upon the base. Marxism offers revolution as inevitable for demolition of the hierarchy. It proposes equalitarian society where there is no division among people either of race or gender or economic class. Marxism holds that revolution and even violent action are inevitable for the change in society.

Marx came into conflict with Russian authorities because of his radical views, and after a period in exile in Paris, he was forced to live in Brussels. After several

more forced moves, Marx found his way to London, where he finally settled in absolute poverty. Marx was co-founder of Marxism (with Engels). He is best-known for his theories of socialism, best expressed in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), which, like much of his important works, was written with Engels. Vladimir Lenin was a disciple whose triumph in the Russian Revolution of 1917 catapulted Marx to the forefront of world thought. Since 1917, Marx's thinking has been scrupulously analyzed, debated, and argued.

Marx was a great thinker, philosopher, economist, and social theorist. He had great influence on Literature. He considers literature as a sociological phenomenon. Hazard Adams comments, "Not only did Marx have a very broad doctrinal influence on critics and writers, he also helped to inform a movement that considers literature a sociological phenomenon to be treated similarly to other such phenomena. Literature becomes analyzable as a symptom of social situations" (624). Marx calls literature a sociological phenomenon and brings social conflict into it.

He sees the conflicts in society and argues that literature should show or present the conflicts. He analyzes history in terms of class struggles. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx writes, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (21). Marx's notion of class conflict has nothing to do with heredity or caste. He describes that an economic class is defined by the relationship of the means of production. Marx talks mainly about two classes: the vast majority of population, the proletariat, and the bourgeoisie. He points out that the members of each of the two classes have interests in common. These class or collective interests are in conflict with those of the other class, as a whole. This in turn leads to conflict between individual members of different class.

Literature, legal system, or religion of a particular period of history reflects the

dominant class interests of that time. Marx's thought is basically centered on the concept of ongoing class struggles between those who owned property - the bourgeoisie - and those who owned nothing but whose work produced wealth - the proletariat. So he found the hierarchy in the society where the proletariat stands on its base and are always dominated and suppressed. When the proletariat tries to raise their voices against domination and hierarchy then the conflict occurs.

Marx and Engels identify a series of historical stages corresponding to the progressive developments in material production - beginning with primitive communism and advancing through slavery and feudalism to capitalism, which is destined to be supplanted by socialism and finally by advanced communism. Each stage had been marked by an antagonistic division between the ruling class, which controls the mode of production, and the working class, which is exploited by it. Inevitably, this friction creates problems of contradictions which the prevailing system cannot solve; the system becomes destabilized and is ultimately overthrown by the exploited class, who becomes the new masters of society. Thus, the bourgeoisie, who had superseded the feudal nobility with the rise of industrialism, would in turn be ousted by the urban proletariat.

Marx has brought radical breakthrough in the development of philosophy by saying that, the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, and the points are to change it. Marx's early influences included the French socialist, Claude-Henri Saint-Simon, and the radical young Hegelians, especially Ludwig Feuerbach, who stressed the social materialist nature of humanity over Hegel's spiritual idealism.

Marx's theory is basically in favor of workers or lower class people and as a whole in favour of humanity. He opposes exploitation, suppression, domination as well as division in the society. In this regard, Rohmann writes:

While accepting the labor theory of value propounded by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, which states that the value of a commodity is determined solely by the amount of labor put into it, Marx turns it into an indictment of capitalism. Under the capitalist system, he argued, workers are paid less than the value their labor adds to the manufactured products, giving rise to surplus value in the form of profit the capitalist can reinvest this surplus, producing even more profit while the laborer's wages must be spent on the necessity or material existence. (249)

Marx analyses the suppression of labour in the capitalist world. Capitalists make profit at the cost of the workers' wages.

Marx depicts the problems of labor, evils of private property system and also provides the solution to it. He states:

Trapped in this exploitative relationship, with no stake in the fruits of their labor, workers become alienated, not only from their work but from their true creative potential. The capitalist system therefore by its nature, breeds conflict between working and owning class. This conflict will inevitably spark a revolution leading to socialism, under a dictatorship of the proletariat and ultimately to communism, a classless society in which the state will wither away. (249)

Just as Darwin discovered the law in organic nature, so did Marx discover the law of evolution in human history. Marx holds that just as the merchants and craftsmen were able to challenge the feudal lord of the later Middle Ages, so will the wage-earner challenge the capitalist and wrest economic power from him.

Marx proposes the abolition of private property. As to the reproach against the

communists for abolishing the right of hard won, self-acquired and self-earned property, Marx answers that there is no need to abolish the property of the small peasant, the petty artisan and such like small worker, because the development of industry has already destroyed it. It is the property of the bourgeois that he proposes to abolish because they create capital by exploiting the wage labour. Marx argues:

We communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of...the fruit of a man's own labour... the ground work of personal freedom, activity and independence.... Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of small peasant...? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry ...has already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily. (28-29)

Thus, Marx postulates that it is the modern bourgeois private property that he proposes to abolish because it is created by exploiting the wage labour. Wage labour does not create any property for the labourer.

He adds that the capitalist society has already done away with the abolition of private property for nine-tenths of the population. Therefore, there is no question of the abolition of the property of the immense majority of society because there is non-existence of any property for them. Communism provides everyone with the opportunity for the appropriation of the property of the society or of the state in socialistic pattern of production and distribution. It deprives one of "the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation" (29). Thus, Marxism intends to guarantee the equal distribution and consumption of property to all and to avoid the exploitation of labour by the filthy rich, then, thereby, make the working class people free from suffering.

Marx appeals to the workers of the world to unite for the forcible overthrow of

all existing social conditions by revolution. He stresses that “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. And they have a world to win” (33). Thus, the final emancipation of mankind will be brought about. But to accelerate this process, the class-consciousness of the worker must first be developed, that is, he must be made to realize his class interest.

The Communist Manifesto is a declaration of war against capitalist or the individualist society, which the workers are to overthrow by violence; and Marxists hold that any means are permissible which contribute to this end. However, Lenin condemned terrorism. In his *Left-wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder* (1920) Lenin condemned political assassination. It is “because the Bolsheviks held at the time that it weakened the proletarian movement by encouraging the masses to believe that the revolution could be won for them by a few heroic individuals, whereas it was their duty to carry it out for themselves” (Hunt 109). Communist revolution is not a revolution of some heroic individuals, but it is a mass movement or a united rebellion of the workers of the world.

Chapter 3

Move from Acquisition to Denunciation of Property in *The Pearl*

John Steinbeck depicts the issues of poverty; desire, struggle, exploitation, oppression, cruelty and violence for wealth; and unjust society due to be the system of private property in his novel *The Pearl*. Kino, the protagonist of the novel, represents the working class who is very poor and has to struggle for survival, whereas the doctor, the priest and the pearl buyers represent the upper class who cast their evil eyes upon Kino's property. There is a huge gap between these two classes and each group puts its fight for wealth. Every time and everywhere, the poor are exploited and the rich are dehumanized due to their obsession for wealth. The discrimination of the working class people can be seen in the doctor's treatment of people. He does not treat Coyotito, Kino's baby son, as he is an Indian and cannot offer substantial fee to the doctor. He treats them like an animal. When the doctor uses the words "I am a doctor not a veterinary" (17), he means to say that the poor are animals, so he will not treat them as he treats to humans. Hence, the agents of capitalism ill-treat the poor people, and there is no service for the poor people like Kino in the world.

It also shows the loss of humanistic feeling under the individualistic system or capitalism where private property is much focused. Capitalism has made lower class people like a commodity. The workers do not get appropriate wage for their work but the capitalists make profit out of the workers' sweat. Kino takes his pearl to brokers but they offer him so little as if it was a valueless pearl. Kino senses the dishonesty of the pearl buyers and tries his best to get the appropriate price for his gem or his labour. The worker produces but capitalists take away the product. They create profit for themselves and loss for the workers. This is obvious in the novel. Kino and his people go to the sea, collect pearls, and go to sell their pearls to the buyers but they

are badly cheated.

In the capitalistic society, all the expectations of the poor go in vain. Kino's expectations of happy future life, his son's education, security, etc. become useless. On the contrary, his wealth brings suffering in his life. It is because of capitalistic system which promotes obsession for property in every individual of the society. He wants to do some good for the improvement of his condition but his dream is destroyed due to the greed of people in his society. He is completely trapped by the chains of capitalistic society where selfishness, cruelty, competition, murder, corruption, violence, etc. dwell. Steinbeck presents Kino as a character to resist such negative aspects of human tendency through his struggle but it is all in vain. Presenting the bitter treatment and the suffering of the protagonist, the author wants to present the evils of capitalistic society where everyone is engaged in cut-throat competition and no one is happy. They do different kinds of activities, even crime. Such activities show that people will not be happy until and unless people uproot the capitalistic system and free themselves from exploitation and dehumanization.

Kino's Pearl and Fight for It

The Pearl narrates the life of a fisherman, Kino, and his wife whose suffering reaches the climax with the murder of their only son during the struggle for wealth. They live a simple life. But one day a scorpion bites their son, Coyotito. They wish their son to be treated by the doctor but he refuses to treat the baby because Kino cannot pay the doctor's fees. Kino goes to the sea with a desire to find a pearl. Luckily, he finds a great pearl. People of the town instantly come to know about the pearl and they start scheming to rob Kino. In the interim, Coyotito recovers from the scorpion bite. In day-dreams Kino thinks of marrying Juana in a church, buying a rifle, and sending Coyotito to school. The pearl attracts the doctor and he comes to

Kino's brush hut with the pretext that he wants to treat Coyotito. Juana's poultice has already healed the baby. The doctor claims that Kino's son is temporarily healed and poison might take his life. After feigning the treatment of the baby, the doctor asks about the pearl. Kino unwillingly reveals the hidden pearl by gazing to the place. After the doctor's departure, Kino keeps the pearl in another place. The same night, a thief knocks into Kino's brush hut and digs the place which Kino's gaze had pointed out to the doctor. The next day, Kino goes to sell the pearl in town. The pearl buyers hatch a scheme to deceive Kino that his pearl was not valuable because "it is too large" (56). Kino suspects their conspiracy and refuses to sell the pearl to them. He decides to take the pearl to the capital in order to sell it for fair price. His brother, Juan Tomas feels that Kino's plan is foolish because it defies the tradition and puts his family in danger. But Kino acts courageously.

Juana warns Kino that "this pearl is evil," and she suggests, "let us destroy it before it destroys us" (64). But he rejects Juana's warning and says bravely, "I will win over it. We'll have our chance" (65). That night, Juana secretly steals the pearl and takes the sea route to throw it, but Kino senses her movement and accosts her. He slaps her in the face. On his way back to his hut, Kino is attacked by a dacoit and he kills the man in self-defense. Juana goes to gather things from the hut to escape. As Juana comes out of the hut, someone sets their house on fire. Kino and Juana with their baby take refuge in Juan Tomas's house during the day light. They start their journey to other city in the darkness. After a half day journey, they take a rest under a shade. Kino senses that some trackers are in search of them. He knows the consequences if they are caught by them. To get rid of their hold, they run away to the mountains where they hide in a cave at dusk. The trackers also continue their journey and reach 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 that direction. As the shot is fired, Kino springs on the trackers and kills all the three of them. Unfortunately, Coyotito is struck by the gunshot and he is killed. Now Kino's journey with the pearl ends with the death of his beloved son. Feeling that the pearl is accursed and it has destroyed his family, as Juana forewarned, Kino and Juana take their way back to La Paz with the dead body of their son and the rifle of the trackers. Finally, they go to the sea and throw the accursed pearl into the sea wherefrom he had fished it out.

Writers and philosophers have expressed their views about the evils of private property system and individualism, highlighting the inequality in the society and inadequacies of capitalism. Steinbeck is one of them. In this novel he has exposed the selfishness and greed of people in such a system which creates suffering to all whether they are rich or poor. Conflicts are inevitable in such a system.

In this respect in *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels give a list of different classes which were in confrontation in human history, which they hold, to be the history of class struggle:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of contending classes. (21)

Private property system is the cause of all the conflict, struggle and revolution.

The crux of the novel is the proletariat's short term glory, for finding some

wealth which cannot stay for long in their hand and, its decay at the hands of aristocracy or the capitalists. The very opening words of the prologue of *The Pearl* indicate that the entire story is woven around the central idea of achieving economic glory for a short time (finding of the great pearl) and then the crumbling of that glory at the end (extreme suffering of Kino's family and death of Kino's baby son Coyotito due to the gem). Thus, the phrases "the great pearl...was found... and ...was lost" (Prologue 2), indicate that the main happenings of the story have a direct relation with the economic life of the characters and their suffering.

Moreover, the very first words, "in the town" in the Prologue, imply that the novel deals with the capitalist activities as cities and towns are usually associated with economic competition of the capitalists and, exploitation of the poor and marginalized class of society. In the same Prologue the words "...there are only good and bad things and black and white things and good and evil things and no in-between anywhere" (1) indicate that the text has been woven around a class-ridden society wherein a sharp separation of good and bad things and inhuman discrimination on the grounds of black and white things could be observed. 'No in between' also indicates that the characters of the novel strictly comprise of two groups, that is, Bourgeoisie or the-haves and the Proletariat or the have-nots.

The darkness of the Capitalist system and Kino's resistance to it is evident from the start of the novel. After the Prologue, the opening of the novel notes, "Kino awakened in the near dark." It implies that the protagonist is the inhabitant of the man-created darkness and he will have to fight against this darkness. When he opens his eyes, first of all he sees "the lightening square which was the door" (1). It points to the fact that the protagonist is not a blind but is going to be conscious about his exploitation and the evils of the system he is accustomed to. Moreover, his looks for

light indicate that he will try to liberate himself from all kinds of darkness. That is, he will be disillusioned with the ills of property system and will take a step to denounce it.

Kino's looking towards the door also implies that he will continue his efforts to get rid of various bondages and restrictions imposed upon him by various persons and institutions of his society. He is a representative of the have-nots.

Disparity in the Living Condition of the People Due to Wealth

In the very first chapter, the author juxtaposes the living conditions of both the rich and the poor which demonstrate that there is disparity in the living condition of the two classes of people. This disparity is owing to the unequal distribution of property in the society. Kino lives in a small brush house while the doctor and other aristocrats or members of the bourgeoisie reside in city. The narrator describes, "The city of stone and plaster..., the city of harsh outer walls and inner cool gardens where a little water played and the bougainvillea crusted the walls with purple and brick-red and white. They heard from the secret gardens the singing of caged birds and heard the splash of cooling water on hot flag stones (9-10)." The "caged birds" in the doctor's house suggest that the aristocrats of Kino's society not only maltreat their fellows, but also imprison the innocent creatures of the nature which they use for the decoration and self-pleasure. Further, it also suggests that the aristocrats are getting pleasure out of others' pains.

Moreover, the cage is a mini-prison cell. Prisons are used, rather misused, for the confinement of men, while cages are used for the confinement of birds. Both are misused for the same purposes and the persons or institutions who use such things consider themselves authoritative. In the case of human beings, such institutions like prisons are used to impose various restrictions on them by the persons who belong to

the ruling class and who control the economy. Such tools or social institutions have been named as repressive state apparatuses by Louis Althusser in “Ideology and the State, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.” Althusser lists Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. as the repressive state apparatus which functions by violence.

The extents to which the poor in the novel have been deprived of the basic necessities of life are implied from the wretched conditions of the beasts on the near side of the ghetto. The condition of the pigs is described as follows: “...the early pigs were already beginning their ceaseless turning of twigs and bits of wood to see whether anything to eat had been overlooked” (1). The pigs are entirely dependent upon the inmates, while the inmates do not give any attention to the wretched conditions of those pigs that are starving from hunger. The poor have the similar situation to face.

Likewise, about the situation of the ants the novelist writes: “The ants were busy on the ground, big black ones with shiny bodies, and little dusty quick ants. Kino watched with the detachment of god while a dusty ant frantically tried to escape the sand trap, an ant lion had dug for him. A thin, timid dog came close...” (3). The ants are considered as the meek and hard working creature of earth. The black ant with shiny body is suggestive of the rich exploiters and the dusty ant represents the poor workers. The hard working poor people are associated with the dusty quick ants. Thus, the dusty ant symbolizes Kino and his race, who labour hard but their life is always at risk and in wretched condition like that of the ants. It is because of property. Like the dog’s watch, if a poor person escapes one risk, he or she falls into another trap or the evil eyes of the other.

The trap of the lion ant symbolizes the exploitation of poor by the rich and

powerful capitalists. Moreover, it is depicted that most of the beings in the novel are pining after the basic necessities of life but the living conditions of Kino and his race are not much different from these ants. The wretched conditions of the pigs and their “ceaseless turning of twigs and bits of wood to see whether anything to eat,” the ants who “frantically tried to escape the sand trap,” and the “thin, timid dog,” all these things anticipate the high-handedness of the opposing forces of the society. It indicates that the society of *The Pearl* is economically divided into groups, the oppressor and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the deprived. The latter groups are the victims of exploitations.

Most of the animals of the locality, mentioned in the text, are engaged in an undeclared war against each other, apart from the ants and the ant lions. The novelist further writes, “Near the brush fence two roosters bowed and feinted at each other with squared wings and neck feathers ruffed out. It would be a clumsy fight” (4). This fight symbolically predicts Kino’s fight with the people engaged in their fight for property and the socio-economic forces.

Through the wretched condition of the animals of the locality the novelist exemplifies the worst condition of Kino’s race. In the beginning of chapter two, the writer mentions, “on the beach the hungry dogs and the hungry pigs of the town searched endlessly for any dead fish or sea bird that might have floated in on a rising tide” (15). It signifies the miserable condition of the animals of the locality. The animals depend on the wasted materials on the beach. In the same way, Kino’s race is marginalized and it depends on the sea food, like fish or its clumsy pearls.

The gap between the two classes of society becomes more evident when Kino’s son, Coyotito is stung by a scorpion and Juana asks for the services of the doctor of the locality. The selfishness and cruelty for property is clearly depicted here.

The poor cannot think of medicine, doctor and treatment for their illness. The narrator comments, “A wonderful thing, a memorable thing, to want the doctor. To get him would be a remarkable thing. The doctor never came to the cluster of brush houses. Why should he, when he had more than he could do to take care of the rich people who lived in the stone and plaster houses of the town? (8). A doctor is not expected to come to the huts of the poor because they cannot afford for his treatment.

The Pearl is set in and around La Paz, Mexico, a coastal town marked by economic, social and racial divisions. Such divisions are also resulting from colonial domination of the local native population. In other words, people are colonized within a state. However, the rich or the colonizers also are not happy and in peace because they have always to play tricks and, put fights for property and power. They degrade themselves by indulging in cruelty and violence. All these things result in the loss of quality of human life for everyone whether they are rich or poor.

The novelist has depicted the poverty-stricken life of Kino and his family realistically. He has duly emphasized their wretched economic condition. He describes Kino’s break-fast, “... he squatted by the fire pit and rolled a hot corn-cake and dipped it in sauce and ate it. And he drank a little plaque and that was break-fast. That was the only breakfast he had ever known outside of feast days” (4). The poor are compelled to eat the same food everyday as they cannot afford for a variety of balanced diet.

At another place he portrays the economic situation of the family through their dress and other clothing in these words:

“And the newcomers, particularly the beggars from the front of the church who were great experts in financial analysis, looked quickly at Juana’s old blue skirt, saw the tears in her shawl, appraised the green

ribbon on her braids, read the age of Kino's blanket and the thousand washings of his clothes, and set them down as poverty people. (10)

The worn-out clothing of Kino and Juana demonstrate the poor living condition of the couple.

When Kino and Juana, along with the neighbours, go to "the city of stone and plaster" to get the services of the doctor for the treatment of their little Coyotito, most of the neighbours were keen to know "what the fat lazy doctor would do about an indigent baby with a scorpion bite" (11). This points out to the fact that the people are sure that the doctor will not treat the poor boy. The novelist has amply delineated the poverty-stricken situation of the poor family in a pathetic and heart-rending way.

Kino, his wife Juana, Juan Tomas, Apolonia and their neighbors living in the brush houses are the characters who represent one class of the society: the oppressed, the exploited, and the victims - the consequences of the nineteenth century industrialism and the resultant capitalism. The writer presents the evil effects of the private property system. The society has been segregated on economic bases, and the economic base has been described as the starting-point in Marxism.

Evil Effects of the Gem in the Society of La Paz

The finding of the great pearl arouses strange sensation in all people of La Paz and they start scheming about looting or getting profit out of the pearl. They start taking interest in Kino. Everyone tries to associate oneself with the business of the pearl. The priest of the church is the first who comes to know about the pearl and he starts day-dreaming about the alms that Kino may give to the church. Shopkeepers sitting in their shops examine the clothes with the prospect that Kino may buy clothes out of the pearl money. The doctor, who had refused to treat Kino's son before, now claims that Kino is his client and he is treating Kino's son for scorpion bite. The

doctor recalls his luxuriant life in the parish. All this happens as a result of the pearl which symbolizes wealth or money. These people show their greed and selfishness for property. The priest, the shopkeepers and the doctor who are from the bourgeoisie class want to snatch the pearl or its money out of Kino's hand which nature has bestowed upon Kino.

Accordingly, the local priest begins to take special interest in Kino. He visits Kino that night. The novelist writes, "The priest came in - a graying, ageing man with an old skin and a young sharp eye. 'Children' he considered these people" (31). It indicates the hypocrisy of the clergyman. He congratulates Kino that he is named after a great priest. He flatters Kino because of his pearl.

The beggars near the church are motivated by the news of the pearl and hope of alms. They celebrate their happiness. The narrator describes, "The news came early to the beggars in front of the church, and it made them giggle a little with pleasure, for they knew that there is no alms-giver in the world like a poor man who is suddenly lucky" (25). The beggars feel happy at the prospect of getting alms.

The pearl buyers who used to buy pearls from the poor fishermen wait excitedly with the hope that Kino will fall into their trap. The narrator explains, "There were many agents for only one [pearl buyer], and he kept these agents in separate offices to give a semblance of competition" (25-26). The pearl buyers exploit the poor fishermen for their master to gain their commission out of the profit. Steinbeck writes, "They waited in their chairs until the pearls came in and then they cackled and fought and shouted and threatened until they reached the lowest price the fisher man would stand" (25). When Kino goes to sell his pearl in the nearby market, people follow him and a great procession is created. The novelist sketches the procession and the secret practice of the pearl-dealers in these words:

The news of the approach of the procession ran ahead of it, and in their little dark offices the pearl buyers stiffened and grew alert. They got out papers so that they could be at work when Kino appeared, and they put their pearls in the desks, for it is not good to let an inferior pearl be seen beside a beauty. (47-53)

Kino's imagination is also at work due the excitement of finding a good fortune. He sees the pictures of those things in the surface of the pearl which he thought in the past but gave up as impossible.

Now the pearl becomes an instrument to liberate him from the unseen prison constructed by capitalists of La Paz. The things which were associated with bourgeoisie seemed possible for him now. Kino in his imagination sees himself before the altar in the church and says to Juana, "We will be married – in the church." In the pearl he sees how they will be dressed, "We will have new clothes" (27-28). In the same way he innocently desires for many things he will do by the money of the pearl. But as long as he will not have a rifle, he will not be able to liberate himself from the slavery. But to wage war against capitalism is not an easy job. The writer remarks, "It was the rifle that broke down the barriers. This was an impossibility, and if he could think of having a rifle whole horizons were burst and he could rush on" (28). Kino thinks of liberating himself and his race from the domination of the ruling Spaniards.

Kino and Juana are reluctant to show the baby to the doctor when he comes to their hut. But when the doctor declares that it may be a temporary improvement, they consent to his treatment. The narrator describes the doctor's trick to convince Kino and his wife. He writes, "and he shifted his small black doctor's bag about so that the light of lamp fell upon it, for he knew that Kin's race love the tools of any craft and trust them" (34). In this way Kino is duped by the doctor to check the baby. The

doctor gives such medicine to the baby and the so-called medicine causes the baby to vomit. The tricky doctor tells them that it proves that the baby is ill. The doctor's demeanor shows the evil effects of property in him. He neglects the duty of his profession and runs after property.

The evil effect of property is highlighted in the novel time and again. Kino's neighbours believe that sudden wealth might make a poor man greedy, hateful and cold. They wish Kino to be safe from the evil effects of wealth. They imply that the rich become cold towards those who do not have any property. Money makes people be hateful.

After the first attack on Kino to steal the pearl, Juana suggests Kino, "This thing is evil. This pearl is like a sin! It will destroy us. Throw it away. Let us break it between stones" (52-53) but Kino is not ready in any way to this version of ideology. He thinks that the pearl in itself is not evil but it will change his situation. He still wants to try his luck and put a fight against the trackers.

When Kino kills a man in self defense, he makes his way to the beach to prepare his canoe for escape. But a hole was knocked in the bottom of his canoe. In utter distress Kino gives expression to his feelings which are installed by the repressive ideology of the capitalists. "The killing of man was not so evil, as the killing of a boat, for a boat does not have sons, and a boat cannot protect itself, and a wounded boat does not heal" (71). His boat was his only defense against hunger and extinction.

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 was to shut or squint their eyes against the harsh realities. The

narrator notes,

“The brothers, as they walked along, squinted their eyes a little, as they and their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers had done for four hundred years, since first the strangers came with argument and authority and gunpowder to back up both. And in the four hundred years Kino’s people had learned only one defense- a slight slitting of the eyes and a slight tightening of the lips and retirement. Nothing could break down this wall, and they could remain whole within the wall.” (52)

Capitalists use force to gain their interests. So oppression and capitalism go side by side.

Kino and Juana with their baby leave for another city in the dark to escape the persecution of capitalism. They have challenged the capitalist system of exploitation by their rejection of the unfair prices of the Pearl, and now they are like the criminals escaped from the prison-house. It was evident that they would be traced by the capitalists. While resting under the shade of a tree, Kino sees three trackers, one on horse- back with a rifle and the other two on foot. The man on the horse back with a rifle symbolizes the-haves and two trackers were his subjects to serve his interests. They are from the poor class. It reminds one of the doctor’s agent who comes to steal the gem at night. He is from the Kino’s race but is serving the doctor. Thus, everyone whether rich or poor is attracted by Kino’s gem and follow him in order to loot him. It is the evil effect of property upon every class of people.

The trackers miss the track and go ahead. But Kino senses that they will come back shortly. Therefore, he and Juana take their way to the Mountains. The trackers reach there after them at dusk. The trackers camp underneath the cave in which Kino

and Juana have taken refuge. Kino is sure that the dacoits will find them in the morning and will kill them; therefore, he plans to attack them in the dark. When he goes to attack the dacoits, Coyotito screams in the entrance of the cave. The rifle man takes it for a coyote and fires at the direction of the scream. Coyotito is now killed. Kino also kills all the three trackers. The crying of Coyotito and his death has some significance. To take a human crying for a coyote show that the bourgeoisie have no sense of distinction between Kino's race and animals. They are treated as animals.

Moreover, Coyotito's death is a kind of sacrifice for the liberation of his parents from the dacoits. It makes Kino realize the evil effects of the private property system and the capitalist's prison-house. Now Kino is disillusioned. But unfortunately he could not knock down the hard prison walls of capitalism. Kino will still suffer from evils of capitalism. He has killed the four men. Therefore, he will be punished and may be hanged. But he is ready to denounce the system and shows heroic rise.

Kino's Struggle against the Disparity

Kino fights for property, against poverty, disparity and suppression. His fight can be taken as his struggle against individualistic system, private property system and capitalism. He strikes the gate of the doctor when the latter is not ready to treat Coyotito after a scorpion bites him. The crushing blow given by Kino with his first at the doctor's gate can be taken as his voice against the discrimination and unkindness shown to him by the doctor. It is his protest against discrimination and domination.

When the doctor rejects to treat Coyotito, Kino goes to the sea in his old canoe which was the only thing of value he owned in the world. It was the property and source of food for him. It was the bulwark against starvation. Kino has to dive into the cold water to search the oysters to serve his family with food and other necessary things for the house hold. He has to support his wife Juana and his only child

Coyotito. His problem increases when his child is bitten by a scorpion. He has to buy the doctor for his baby's treatment. The doctor does not treat Indian people, since they are moneyless people. There is no service motive in the doctor but he works only for money. This is a system created by individualism and private property owning system.

As soon as Kino has found the pearl, the priest comes to the poor hut and changes himself to be kind in front of Kino. He uses a lot of polite words to him. Similarly, the doctor comes to his brush hut to treat his baby. It seems that they are changed, but the reality is different. They change their outer structure, not the inner heart. They look kind, polite and sympathetic to him in order to seize the pearl of Kino. It shows how greed for wealth makes people apply different tricks. In a money-minded society people are not attracted by the helpless condition of the poor people but they are attracted the property if someone earns. In this novel everyone in the society is attracted to the valuable pearl and tries to get it by hook or by crook. It is the capitalistic thought.

When Kino finds the pearl he sees himself in the pearl carrying a rifle. It was his desire. He thinks that a rifle could protect him and his tribe from the oppression. He takes the pearl as a tool to fight against it. Moreover, he wants to educate his son and make him know the reality of exploitation and domination and work accordingly. He says, "My son will read and open the books, and my son will write and will know writing. And my son will make numbers and these things will make us free because he will know and through him we will know" (36). This was the first time he had said so many words. It is his desire of freedom, his desire to escape from the chains and locks, his desire to live a free life. It is the desire of the Mexican Indian people's freedom.

When the doctor ill-treats and rejects treating his son, Kino feels being dominated by the doctor and he becomes aggressive. In his rage he strikes the doctor's gate with his fist and revolts against him. The narrator describes the event vividly in the following words:

For a long time Kino stood in front of the gate with Juana beside him. Slowly he put his suppliant hat on his head. Then without warning, he stuck the gate a crushing blow with his fist. He looked down in wonder at his spilt knuckles and at the blood that flowed down between his fingers. (18)

Kino gives vent to his anger but it will make no change in the doctor's behavior as he is too selfish. It is not only the doctor but also all other people try to follow, control and seize the pearl from him. The shopkeepers, the priest, the thieves, the dacoits, etc. try to control Kino and seize his pearl. When Kino finds the valuable pearl, all of them come close to him. Some of them try to convince him and attempt to show a kind of help or kindness but some try to loot him by force.

Individualistic or capitalistic thought has been instilled in the people so the sense of humanity has lost its way. People have abandoned the motive of service but they are just guided by money. It directly has affected the quality of life of all the people.

When Kino finds the pearl, he hopes that the pearl can be his assistant in life and he can fight against the discrimination. He thinks that the pearl is his weapon to fight or to resist. The author writes, "His lips moved hesitantly over this (the pearl)" - "A rifle," he said, "perhaps a rifle. It was the rifle that broke down the barriers" (35). He dreams to fight against the agents of capitalism, the ruling class. He wants to break down the barriers between the working class and rich class.

Steinbeck presents the church as an agent of the oppressor group. The priest is from the higher class. Steinbeck's attitude toward the church as an institution is revealed in his characterization of the corrupt priest who attempts to exploit Kino's new wealth. The priest supports the monopoly of the pearl buyers by warning the fishermen to keep their places in life or risk the "punishment visited on those who try to leave their station" (61). He supports the status quo and does not want any change in the society. Kino wants to challenge the priest who admonishes, "Each one must remain faithful to his post and must not go running about" (62). Such an expression from the mouth of a priest is controlling power in the lives of Kino and his family because they have great faith in religious sermons.

Religion is an instrument of spiritual oppression, ideological enslavement of the working people and a means of strengthening the rule of exploiters. Religion is the opium for the innocent people who have no rational knowledge or ideas. It teaches people the lesson of submission to fate, non-resistance to evil and domination, and thereby paralyses the people's revolutionary energy and dooms to passivity.

The exploitation of the Mexican Indian tribe is visible when the novel presents how the people have been tolerating the suppression against them, "And in the four hundred years Kino's people had learned only one defense - a slight slitting of the eyes and slight tightening of the lips and retirement. Nothing could break down this wall, and they could remain whole within the wall" (62). This shows the history of those people who were always oppressed and that there is not any time that Kino's people are free. They have been chained all over the years. There is strong wall of discrimination which always obstructs Kino's people to go out or to be free from that.

All the pearl dealers reject to pay the price of the pearl and try to prove that Kino's pearl is valueless. It is injustice to the people. Steinbeck tries to present the

situation of injustice here. When Kino becomes conscious about it, he rejects to accept the pearl as valueless and he revolts. The narrator describes it in the following words: “‘I am cheated’ Kino cried fiercely. ‘My pearl is not for sale here, I will go, I will go perhaps even to the capital’” (69). Kino bravely revolts against the pearl buyers and wants to break the wall made by the white people for more than four hundred years. It is not simply his crying and fierce shouting. It is his understanding of the matter and coming to resist it. Thus, he is the hero of his tribe who becomes able to rebel against the exploitation.

The Pearl brings two things together in Kino’s family. At first, it brings some hope to improve his financial situation, meet the family needs and work for the emancipation of the tribe. But later on, it brings frustration and evil effects for the family. After he is disillusioned about the adverse effect of property, it gives him power to fight against the property system. Kino’s wife has already this knowledge that the gem is evil; therefore, she suggests throwing it away. The narrator describes, “Kino this pearl is evil. Let us destroy it before it destroys us. Let us crush it between two stones. Let us throw it back in the sea where it belongs. Kino, it is evil...” (75). However, he is not disappointed and wants to struggle. Therefore, in answer to her suggestion, Kino says, “No... I will fight ... I will win over it. We will have our chance...No one shall take our good fortune from us” (76). Here one can see Kino’s determination for his fight against the obstacles.

Juana, Kino’s wife, tries to get rid of the pearl. She takes the pearl as an evil thing. She knows it because she has seen and experienced the attacks on her family to capture the pearl. However, Kino is not tired and hopes to win, and he says, “I’m a man and to be a man is to be half insane and half-god” (79). Here one can see once again Kino as a determined character.

When Kino's family is attacked by the thief at night, he struggles fiercely. In the fight he kills a man but he loses his pearl. But later, Juana finds the pearl and gives it to Kino. As Marx says, class-struggle and class conflict is natural phenomena, and killing is not unnatural. It means killing is inevitable for Kino for his safety. Otherwise, he would be killed.

Kino takes the pearl as his soul. Steinbeck writes, " 'This pearl has become my soul,' said Kino, 'If I give it up I shall lose it up I shall lose my soul'" (90). He does not only take the pearl as his soul but also becomes ready to kill horsemen who come to seize his pearl. Kino wants to kill the horsemen and seize the rifle. Kino dreams to have a rifle to fight against the thieves and the racial oppression. He has to leave his house and go to jungle to save his life as he has no rifle.

The theme of novel is struggle for survival. Kino's struggle is for his survival and against the injustice. In the jungle where Kino is followed by the trackers and when he wants to kill them, the family song comes to his head which gives power to him. The narrator notes, "The family song was alive now and driving him down on the dark enemy. The harsh cicada seemed to take up its melody and the twittering tree frogs called little phrases of it" (112). When Kino and his wife Juana return back from the difficult night which they spend on the hill, they become star in the society. All the people watch them with attention when they walk in the city:

And as they walked through the stone and plaster city brokers peered at them from barred windows and servants put one eye to stilted gate and mothers turned the faces of their youngest children inward against their skirts. Kino and Juana strode side by side through the stone and plaster city and down among the brush houses and the neighbors stood back and let them pass. (117-18)

When Kino walks, his vision is changed and he sees Coyotito lying in the little cradle with the top of his head shot away. He finds that he cannot escape the social discrimination and the oppressors. He also feels that there are many others who are trying to capture his pearl. *The Pearl* portrays the themes of greed in private property system. As the story progresses, one can see the change in the character Kino. At first, Kino thinks that money is everything in life but gradually he realizes that it is not always the most important thing in life. He realizes the evils of property.

The scorpion in the novel is the symbol of the capitalists that suck the blood of the common people and kill them. Kino and his wife, even after getting the pearl, cannot make best use of their property because of human greed, cruelty and violence. Although he kills four persons who try to loot his gem, he is not safe. It is because of human greed for property and the private property system.

The social, political and cultural systems are shaped by exploitative social relations in the novel. The relation between the pearl-buyers, the doctor, the priest and Kino is shaped by, what the Marxism calls, exploitative social relations.

The town is presented as a symbol of capitalism. It is not simply a symbol but a part of capitalism which creates mystery and suppresses the proletariat. The writer describes it as, "A town is a thing like a colonial animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns so that there are no two towns alike" (30). As the novel progresses, the true nature of capitalistic society is presented in the character of the doctor. After checking Coyotito, he asks, "When do you think you can pay this bill" (48). In answer to this question, Kino says, "When I have sold my pearl, I will pay you" (48). The doctor shows more interest for money than to the treatment of his patient. So for the doctor, not the treatment and service but the money matters.

Kino's hope increases as the novel progresses. He says to his wife, "This is our chance. Our son must go to school. He must break out of the pot that holds us in" (53). Moreover, he becomes strong and gets energy for struggle against his tribe's enemy. Steinbeck writes, "For a long moment Kino looked out into the darkness and stepped outside" (74). When he is attacked by the robbers and urged to throw the pearl by his wife, he says, "In the morning, we will take our canoe and we will go over the sea and over the mountains to the capital, you and I. We will not be cheated. I'm a man" (76). He does not like to escape from the danger and his fight, but says courageously that he is a man.

To show the poor living condition of Mexican Indians, Steinbeck draws the clear picture of their houses. He writes, "The house of Juan Tomas was almost exactly like Kino's house: nearly all the brush houses were alike, and all leaked light and air, so that Juana and Kino sitting in the corner of the bother's house could see the leaping flames through the wall" (85). The houses of Kino's tribe are alike and they leak light and air. It is because of the fault of the system. The system is capitalist.

Kino's strong revolt against the hierarchy, social inequality, cruelty, greed and inhumanity is dominant in the novel. His inner voice "Our son must break out of the pot that holds us in" (53) is powerful in the text. There are different ways for fights against social injustice. Many of them have been used by Kino: sometimes audible voice, sometimes inner voice, sometimes fist and at other times he wants to use weapons.

Kino's Disillusionment and Denunciation of Property

At the beginning, Kino takes the pearl as his most important thing in life. He says, "Pearl has become my soul" (90). Later, he flings it into the ocean when he finds it as an evil thing and the narrator remarks, "He flung the pearl and looked it go"

(119). So, as he gains knowledge, he realizes the reality. He is disillusioned with the evils of property and denounces it.

Kino struggles against his poverty. He fights many times to save the pearl. He thinks that if he saves the pearl, he can save his son from the evil, he can save his family from ruin and he can save his tribe from famine and starvation. He kills the dacoits and he is ready to kill the enemies. The writer describes how Kino gets ready to murder the dacoits, "The trackers whined a little, like excited dogs on a warming trail. Kino slowly drew his big knife to his hand and made it ready. He knew what he must do. If the trackers found the swept place, he must leap for the horseman, kill him quickly and take the rifle. That was his only chance in the world" (98). It shows how in the private property system one has to take others' life in order to save one's property or one should be ready to lose it.

It also points to the fact that no one is safe and in peace in such a system. Therefore, the important message one can draw from it is that such a system is to be eradicated either by peaceful means or by violent action through revolution as Marxism suggests. Counter cruelty is no cruelty if it is designed for the welfare, peace and happiness of all. One has to fight for one's freedom - freedom from all the discriminations, oppressions, divisions and obstacles.

The throwing of the pearl can be taken as the throwing of the individualistic, capitalistic and private property keeping system and, the strong hatred towards it. By presenting the evils of the private property system, Steinbeck seems to suggest that the state should take the responsibility of the citizens' shelter, food, clothing, health, education, security and other basic needs. The abolition of private property abolishes corruption, deception, cruelty, struggle for survival or basic human needs, murder for property, and such negative aspects of human life which are found in abundance in

individualistic and capitalistic system. Before the establishment of classless and stateless society, as Marxism proposes, socialism is a way out.

Individualism or private property system bases on the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin. In such a system existence is a struggle and free competition between human-beings in which only the fittest survives. One tries oneself to be fit by applying tricks, treachery, fraudulence, corruption, cruelty, violence etc. It degrades human quality of life. But in socialism where the state holds the property and takes the responsibility of the basic needs of life of the individuals, it is possible to transcend the struggle for life. An individual has always to struggle for the perpetuation of life in individualistic society. Life has some purpose more than the mere perpetuation of life. Quality of life is more important than the quantity of property one may accumulate.

What is the value of human civilization if humans cannot transcend the struggle of the wild state? How can humans claim themselves to be rational and superior creature on earth if they always follow the system of the jungle? As C.E.M. Joad opines, "It is the business of civilization, by emancipating the individual from the exigencies of the bare struggle for existence, to put within his power the attainment of the highest quality of life" (52). Joad holds that quality of life depends on the ability to cultivate spiritual values, a certain level of physical and mental culture, an elevation of taste and a refinement of manners, which are elements in the good life. Socialism guarantees it, not individualism.

A good life requires leisure, knowledge and a financial competence. They can only be achieved in so far as humans are enabled to transcend the struggle for bare existence. It is only by means of the socialist state that this struggle can be transcended. Socialist state aims at a certain amount of cooperation and humans

become able to forget themselves in cooperation. Quality of life requires the pursuit of spiritual ends which are good in themselves. The quest of truth for its own sake, the making of beautiful things because they are beautiful, the doing of right things because they are right.

The socialist view of the state is that society is an association of human beings formed with the object of giving all its members the opportunity to satisfy their desires for spiritual freedom and good life. Regarding society in this way, the socialist naturally expects humans to work for it. Joad adds:

Once the capitalist is expropriated and the workers are the State, men will feel that in working for society they are working for themselves; they will consent to regimentation by the state, because they know that the regulations that they obey are inspired by a desire to further the common good; and they will do better work and do it more cheerfully, because of their knowledge that the fruits of their labour will not go to swell the profits of a private employer, but to enable men as a whole to live a fuller, a richer and a freer life. (53)

These can be achieved because socialism aims at substituting the motive of social service for the motive of private profit. It holds that men will do better work to make the good life, with the leisure and financial competence it requires, than they will work for a society which compels them to enrich the exploiters of their labour. It is possible because people think they are doing for a society which in the long run is themselves.

For securing a better distribution of wealth and the regulation of the social life of the community, the socialists have proposed various measures. The most important of them can be the following. (1) The private ownership of the means of production to

be abolished, and with this object, important industries and services to be brought under public ownership and control. (2) Industry and production to be carried on for the purpose of ministering to the needs of community, not with the object of making profit for individuals and, (3) the incentive of private profit to be substituted by the motive of social service. Thus, by applying such measures, socialism seeks to free the individual from the pressure of material cares and envisages quality of life.

Chapter 4

Steinbeck's Message of the Abolition of Private Property

Steinbeck's *The Pearl* has depicted the psychological and physical conflicts among the people of the society it depicts. The protagonist of the novel Kino, his wife Juana and the people of his tribe are poverty-stricken and they struggle for survival. They are fishermen by profession. The doctor, the clergyman of the church, and the shopkeepers belong to the higher class. They are rich people. However, they are also not happy with the wealth they possess. They are also engaged in the struggle for life and property. They try to seize the property earned with hard labour by the poor. There is discrimination and conflict among the rich and the poor. The cause of the discrimination and conflict is economic condition and greed for wealth. There is exploitative relation between the rich and the poor.

Trapped in this exploitative relationship, neither the rich nor the poor workers are in peace and happiness. It is the result of the individualistic and capitalistic system and practice in the society. Because of this people of any group become worried for earning money. They also become alienated, unsatisfied, unhappy and unkind. They have no time to think about spiritual quest. It has degraded quality of human life. The individualistic or the capitalistic system, where private property is much valued, deteriorates human values. Therefore, by its nature, it breeds conflict in the society between the working class and the property owning class or the haves and the have-nots. This conflict will have inevitably to spark a revolution, as Marx and Engels suggest, leading to socialism, under a dictatorship of the proletariat and ultimately to communism, a classless society in which the state will wither away.

John Steinbeck is actually retelling a Mexican folktale, the story of a poor fisherman, his wife and their only baby son. When the fisherman, Kino, finds an

extraordinary pearl, he hopes it will bring comfort and health to his family, but he realizes that the rare gem is, instead, a conveyer of greed, envy, selfishness, cruelty, violence, fraudulence, murder and suffering.

The extreme suffering of Kino and his family is the result of capitalist or the individualist society which always tries to dominate the common people. Steinbeck spent most of his time with working class people and has firsthand experience of it; therefore, he writes about them with authentic force. Most of his writings belong to that class. He speaks against domination and suppression.

In short, *The Pearl* is a Marxist critique of private property system or Capitalism. Steinbeck not only juxtaposes the two classes of society - the capitalists and the proletariats- which are in sharp contrast to each other, but also dramatizes the worried and unhappy life of both the group in the novel. The Capitalists exploit the have-nots in many ways. But they also are not in peace and happiness. It is the defect of the system. Therefore, such a system must be abolished. Moreover, education and awareness are essential to get rid of the capitalists' subjugation and a revolution is to be waged by the working class to establish their rule and to pave a way towards socialism.

Some researchers or critics may interpret Kino's throwing of the gem as a hermit's denunciation of property or the Buddha's renunciation. Likewise, others may explain it as a message similar to Henry David Thourough's *Walden* or as the idea of extinguishing desire expressed by Yudhisthira in answer to Dharmaraj's question in the *Mahabharata*. The present researcher finds that Steinbeck does not directly say anything. He has depicted the evil effects of the private property system and has left the readers to take it as they will. Kino and his wife have not decided to go to the jungle to live a life of seclusion as hermits live. They are not going to leave the

society but want to remain in their society as before.

Nor is their suffering a result of over-ambition. They struggle for subsistence or simple existence. Therefore, it is not a case for the extinction of desire on the part of the couple. They are working class people who suffer in private property system or individualistic or capitalistic practice of the society. What then does the novel imply? Steinbeck uses the sea as a symbol of primitivism or nature or the stateless and classless situation. The sea legally belongs to no one but to everyone from where the fishermen get their foodstuff for survival. It is like the state in the socialist system that provides opportunity for labour and food for survival. Therefore, the present study analyses or interprets Kino's passing of the gem to the sea not as the hermit's denunciation of property but as the hatred of the capitalist system, and in support of state ownership of the property of the individuals. From the state (here the sea) all individuals will benefit.

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