

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE PEARLY: THE CONFLICT BETWEEN WEALTH AND HAPPINESS

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the work of the American writer John Steinbeck “The Pearl” and highlights its main ideas and problems. The work focuses on the life of a simple fisherman Kino and his family, and through their fate, the author reveals the issues of inequality, poverty and human values in society.*

The article analyzes the problem of social injustice through the events at the beginning of the work - the sting of Coyote by a scorpion and the doctor's failure to help the poor. It also extensively covers the symbolic meaning of the huge pearl found by Kino. While the pearl is initially interpreted as a symbol of hope, salvation and a prosperous life, it is shown that as the events develop, it becomes a source of greed, envy and evil.

The abstract particularly focuses on the issue of the influence of wealth on the human psyche. Using the example of the character of Kino, it analyzes how a person's inner world changes, the process of his transformation from a kind and simple person to a suspicious and aggressive person. Through this, the author emphasizes that wealth does not always bring happiness, but rather can lead a person to a spiritual crisis.

Keywords: *Pearl, Movie character, Juana character, Coyotito, poverty, wealth, greed, envy, evil, hope, tragedy, social injustice, criticism of society, human spirit, values, family, dream, symbolism, life lessons, fate, conflict, spiritual crisis, concept of happiness, moral problems.*

The Pearl, by American writer John Steinbeck, is a short but profound literary masterpiece. This story explores the inner world of man, the injustice of society, the nature of wealth, and the complex relationship between dreams and reality. The work leads the reader to great philosophical conclusions through a simple story.

Although this work quickly captivates the reader with its simple plot, extremely complex ideas are hidden in its inner layers. The author shows common human problems using the example of the life of a simple fisherman: inequality, greed, the struggle between hope and despair. In this regard, the work can be interpreted not only as the story of one family, but also as an echo of the entire society

The work reveals the subtleties of the human soul in an extremely touching way. The emotions, fears, dreams and inner experiences of the characters are conveyed to the reader not through images, but through the development of events. This makes the work more vivid and believable. The reader rejoices, suffers and hesitates before decisions along with the hero. The author pays special attention to the concept of wealth. Initially, wealth appears as salvation, but as events develop, it becomes a force that tests human qualities. Through this, the writer reveals the contradiction between material wealth and spiritual values. What does a person choose - material well-being or spiritual peace - this question is at the heart of the work.

Another important aspect of the work is the depiction of society. It shows that relationships between people are built on the basis of interests, and the strong and rich have a dominant position. The poor are often ignored. This clearly illustrates the problem of social inequality. The author thus encourages the reader to think about injustice in society.

In addition, symbolic images play an important role in the work. Each detail - natural landscapes, objects, events - carries a certain meaning. In particular, the image of a pearl is interpreted differently at different stages.

Initially, it is a symbol of hope and dreams, but later it appears as a sign of danger and destruction. This reflects the dual nature of human desires.

The protagonist of the story is Kino, a simple fisherman who makes a living by working at sea. As depicted in *The Pearl*, he lives in a small coastal village with his wife Juana and their son Coyotito, who is just getting to know life. Although their life seems very modest from the outside, their inner world is full of love, loyalty and peace. The rhythm of life that begins every morning with the sunrise, the quiet breath of the sea and harmony with nature make their daily life beautiful and meaningful.

Kino was perfectly happy with his family. He did not pursue wealth, but lived in gratitude for what he had. Juana, a symbol of wisdom and patience, served as the spiritual pillar of the family. Their relationship was based on respect and trust, and it was this inner unity that was the greatest asset for this small family. Coyotito, on the other hand, was at the center of this loving environment - he was his parents' hope, future, and purpose in life. But the calm flow of life is disrupted by an unexpected event. The bite of a poisonous insect on a baby sets a whole chain of events in motion. This seemingly simple coincidence actually reveals deep social problems. As Coyotito's condition worsens, the parents' anguish increases, their inner peace is disturbed. From this moment on, the story takes on a sharply dramatic turn.

One of the most difficult aspects is the process of seeking help. Kino and Juana turn to society in the hope of saving their child, but they do not find the help they expected. Here, John Steinbeck reveals the problem of social stratification in a very clear and sharp way. The lives of the poor seem insignificant to the rich, and human value is measured by material means. This is one of the most painful in this situation, Kino feels helpless. As a father, he wants to protect his child, but his options are limited. This internal conflict - the struggle between responsibility and impotence - deeply shakes his mental state. Juana, on the other hand, tries to withstand this difficult test with her inner

strength, but the anxiety in her heart also grows stronger in full points of humanity.

Through this incident, the author shows the true vulnerability of a person in life. The fact that even the simplest and most innocent creature - a child - can become a victim of injustice in society makes the reader think deeply. At the same time, this episode also illuminates the inner strength of a person, parental responsibility and the power of love. As a result, this part of the story not only gives impetus to the development of events, but also serves to reveal the main idea of the entire work. Ordinary life instantly turns into a complex test, and it is through this test that the true face of a person is revealed.

When the life of a small child is in danger, the parents are forced to seek help in despair and fear. Their world instantly narrows and revolves only around the life of their child. But the problem they face is not limited to illness or lack of medical care. The most painful aspect is that the coldness, indifference and indifference of society to human life also aggravate this tragedy. Due to lack of money, they are denied or delayed the necessary help. Through this situation, the author sharply criticizes the environment in which human value is often measured by wealth. The reader involuntarily wonders: is human life really that cheap, or is society making it so? In these difficult circumstances, the main character dives into the sea in search of salvation. The sea here is embodied not only as a natural landscape, but also as a symbol of fate, trials and hope. Under water, he encounters an unexpected event - he finds a huge, rare pearl. This find becomes a turning point in his life. Initially, the pearl is perceived not as simple wealth, but as salvation, the door to a new life. He thinks that with this find it will be possible to cure his child, give him a decent education, and change the future of his family. At the same time, the work deeply expresses how pure, natural, and connected to life are human dreams. Like every parent, he wants the best for his child, and this desire determines all his actions.

But the wealth found does not bring peace. On the contrary, it becomes a source of great interest and admiration for those around it. The news quickly spreads, and the whole society becomes aware of this “miracle”. At the same time, people from different categories - merchants, brokers, priests, even doctors - try to use this situation for their own benefit. Each of them aims to gain wealth or prestige through the pearl. During this process, the true nature of human relations is gradually revealed. It becomes clear that many people who seem kind, helpful and caring on the outside are actually acting solely on the basis of self-interest.

The author thus sharply illuminates the hypocrisy in society, a system in which material gain is paramount. Instead of helping each other, people try to take advantage of each other's weaknesses. And the pearl becomes only a means of exposing these vices. In fact, it is not wealth, but a test.

Kino, the main character, gradually changes under the influence of these processes. At first, he is depicted as a simple, sincere, and contented person. For him, the greatest wealth was his family and a peaceful life. But after the pearl is found, internal and external pressures increase in his life.

He is no longer just a father, but a man who lives in constant danger, suspicious of everyone. In him, trust is replaced by caution, even fear. This change is not accidental, but the result of the direct influence of the environment.

The author thereby shows that the formation of personality is closely related not only to internal characteristics, but also to the external environment. No matter how pure a person is, if he falls into an unjust and cruel environment, he can gradually change. The example of the film depicts this change very clearly and painfully.

Over time, the initial idea that the pearl brings “happiness” begins to fade. It no longer becomes a salvation, but a source of problems, dangers and conflicts. Mental tension also increases within the family, and external pressure

increases even more. Everyone tries to get their share of this wealth, but no one thinks about humanity.

The deeper meaning of the work is that it emphasizes that true wealth lies not in material things, but in human values. Where love, trust, honesty and mutual respect are missing, even the greatest pearl cannot bring happiness. On the contrary, it can become a destructive factor in human life.

Thus, the work leads the reader to a deep philosophical conclusion: human dreams can be pure, but on the way to their realization, society and human nature itself become the greatest test. And most importantly, human value should never be measured by wealth.

In the work, the pearl appears not as a simple object or natural resource, but as a very powerful philosophical and social symbol. It changes its meaning several times throughout the story, thereby revealing the complexity of human life, dreams, and relationships in society. Initially, the pearl is depicted as a symbol of hope and salvation. It appears as the only way out for the hero, an opportunity to save his child, secure the future of his family, and improve his life. At this stage, the pearl is a symbol of pure goodness, representing the natural and pure intentions of human dreams. However, as events develop, the meaning of the pearl also changes. It gradually becomes a source of danger, anxiety, and trouble. The initial hopes are replaced by doubt, fear, and violence. In this sense, the pearl represents the dual nature of human dreams: goodness and destruction can come from the same source. That is, even a person's actions with the best intentions can sometimes lead to bad consequences. The author thus shows the complexity of life and how every choice can have unexpected consequences.

The work has a philosophical content that deeply illuminates human life, dreams, and social injustices in society. The main story revolves around the serious illness of a small boy and the desperate efforts of his parents to save him. Through this situation, the author criticizes how fragile and precious

human life is, but in society it is sometimes measured by money and benefits. The parents seek help, but are refused due to lack of financial resources. This reveals the indifference and coldness of society. The pearl is given as an important symbolic image in the work. At first, it seems to be a sign of hope and salvation, because it is believed that through it the child's life can be saved. However, over time, the pearl becomes not wealth, but a source of danger and problems. It sets people against each other, increases envy and violence. Through this, the author shows that wealth does not always bring happiness, but, on the contrary, can complicate human life.

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