

THE QUALITIES OF WOMAN AS CHARACTERIZATION IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE PEARL*

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Abstract

This research aimed to (1) find out the qualities of woman as characterization portrayed in the main female character, Juana and (2) explain how they influence Kino's character development in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. To analyze the data, this research used qualitative method. The data of the research were the expression related to (1) the qualities of woman as characterization portrayed by the main female character, Juana, and (2) how they influence Kino's character development in the work of John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The results of this research show the qualities of woman portrayed by the main female character, Juana and how they influence Kino's character development. Juana, is portrayed as a woman having characterization such as being responsible, strong, loyal and caring, responsive (including the action she does) and etc. The qualities of woman possessed by Juana as her characterization in the novel seems to give more courage and motivation, convince him to do more as a husband, and offer such a strong intuition to deal with problems so that he could consider and reconsider the action he is about to take.

Keywords: *qualities of woman as characterization, new criticism, character and characterization, The Pearl, John Steinbeck.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A character in literature would always have its own significances in the story. In other words, it is definitely designed by author for particular reasons or qualities and these would seem to be unique to them. According to Birkert (1993: 47) in "*Literature the Involving Canon*", character is an imagined person in a story whom we know from the work we read on the page". There is a that has very strong relation to the character; that is characterization. These are two similar things, yet totally different. Related to that, authors would describe a character by using characterization. Jones argues that characterization is a depicting of a clear

image of a person and it means the real description of the characters participating in the story through their action (1968: 84).

Juana, in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, is a female character who holds such a strong characterization in the story and thus this character can be taken as a good example. *The Pearl* itself is a story about the pearl's diver family which gets a lot of trouble after finding the pearl of the world. The happy family changes into the horrible family. In this kind of situation, Juana as the wife should always obey what Kino says. If she does not, she will get punished and even slapped sometimes. However, in this novel, although she seems to be powerless, Juana depicts the characterizations that could actually be considered as the quality of women. In other words, Juana seems to show some qualities of women (as characterization) that can actually be put as consideration that women can be treated better, considering also that these aspects hold influences to the family in the story.

Related to the explanation stated above, there are two problems which are analyzed; those are (1) what qualities of woman as characterization are portrayed in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* through Juana as its main female character and (2) how these qualities of woman as characterization, as portrayed in Juana influence Kino's character development in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. Thus, the objectives of the study are (1) to find out the qualities of woman as characterization portrayed in the main female character, Juana, in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and (2) to explain how these woman qualities characterization portrayed by Juana influence Kino's character development in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research, the researcher uses A New Criticism Approach, a theory about The Concept of Character and Characterization, and an explanation about quality of woman. A New Criticism approach is an approach focusing only into the text as a self-sufficient. Dobie mentions in his book entitled *Theory into Practice* that the external aspects of the text such as politics, religion, social issue, and belief cannot be put into consideration in New Criticism (2012: 33). In other words, literature is not supposed to be related to the external aspects including background and even its connection to its authors. New Criticism was born as criticism opposing New Historicism in which it had more focused on the biographical and historical contexts. New Criticism holds several important functions when it comes to analyzing the text. New Criticism functioned to present opinions about literary work and to define the meaning of the work empirically. Cyraina (2009: 9) states that New Criticism helps the readers to understand that art and society are not the same. They are separated. In short, Cyraina wants to say that New Criticism is indeed used to differentiate the text as an art and the text as the reflection of society.

Furthermore, the researcher, based on New Criticism, used the ideas and all information concerning on the concept of character and characterization. In Literary work, there are several important elements holding significant roles. One of them is character. Bennet and Royle in their book entitled *Literature, Criticism, and Theory* state "Characters are the life of literature: they are the objects of our

curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation” (2004: 60). In a book entitled *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*, Hoffman and Murphy (1996: 36) mention that there are two types of character: round character and flat character. The round character is a character who tends to be contradictory in expressing varied characteristics. While, the flat character is defined as a character who tends to be stagnant in expressing varied characteristics.

Knowing that round and flat are terms closely related to character, there is one more term which also can be uttered so; that is characterization. In short, a character can be defined as a person existing in a novel, play, etc, but characterization is defined as a distinctive description of a character in a novel, play, etc. Martin, related to the definition above, states “When I speak of characterization I am speaking of stylistic and narrative techniques for the representation of human features, actions, intentions, desires and traits in the novel form and how these interact with reader’s cognitive strategies for recognizing and developing knowledge (2004: 10)”. Furthermore, characterization is divided into two kinds; direct characterization and indirect characterization. Patmarinanta and Ernawati (2016: 28) state, “There are two kinds of characterization; there is direct characterization and indirect characterization. Direct characterization tells the audience what the personality of the character is whereas indirect characterization shows things that reveal the personality of character”.

Indirect characterization needs the author to put such media to reveal the distinctive description of the character. The media can be taken from many sources. Based on Reams (2015: 4), there are five primary sources the researcher can consider to describe the behavior of the character; those are physical descriptions (identifying the height, skin color, eyes, appearance, hair, facial expression, or other things which can physically be seen), actions (describing a character’s behavior description can be done by doing an analysis toward what is done by the character when he/she is confronted to a certain situation), reactions (concerning at how the character reacts or treat toward others), thoughts (concerning through the thought needs the researcher to take deep attention into the story and the point of view), and speech (paying attention into what is expressed by the characters). But on the analysis, the researcher only finds two sources, those are action and reaction.

The last explanation employed in this research is the concept of quality of woman as characterization. Characterization deal with description instead of single word. In certain novel, a character must have different characterization compared to other characters. Thus, those different characterizations possessed by different characters could be considered as a self-quality had by each character. For instance, in a work by F. Scott Fitzgerald entitled *The Great Gatsby* (1925), there are several main characters and one of them is Daisy. Daisy is portrayed to possess several characterizations such as beautiful, charming, intelligent, irresponsible, and selfish. Thus, beautiful, charming, and intelligent can be said as Daisy’s quality as a woman.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research design that provided textual descriptions of the phenomena observed in the research considering this research focuses on the interpretation of the text instead of calculation or measurement. Hancock (2002: 6) arguing that qualitative research design is a research design concerning to develop an explanation about social phenomena. Yin (2011: 8) also gives his supportive argument saying that qualitative research covers contextual condition—the social, institutional, and environmental condition within which people's lives take place.

The main data source of this research was John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* published in 1947. The data used was expressions, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences related to the trait possessed by the woman main character of the novel that is Juana, which are used to show then quality she had as her characterization in the story. To collect the data, the researcher in this research used several steps. The first step is to read the main data source. The second step is to re-read the novel extensively. The third step is to collect the data related to quality of woman employed in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The fourth step is to re-write them in the form of significant expression.

Since the researcher only focuses on the intrinsic elements, New Criticism approach concerning on the theory of character and characterization was applied in this research. After the researcher had comprehended all necessary information mentioned above, the researcher used some steps to analyze the data. First is reading and re-reading in detail the main source of the data. Second is noting the significant expression such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences related to the qualities of women portrayed by Juana. Third is identifying the suitable data based on the research questions. Fourth is preparing the collected data that were obtained by listing the data. Fifth is writing down the collected data based on the research question. Sixth is interpreting and analyzing the data. Seventh is making a report of the data analysis by describing a finding in a form of narrative text.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 The quality of woman portrayed in the main female character, Juana, in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*

4.1.1. Action

Thus, action in this case could be defined as things which are done by certain character as the primary act.

His blanket was over his nose to protect him from the dank air. His eyes flicked to a rustle beside him. It was Juana arising, almost soundlessly. On her hard bare feet she went to the hanging box where Coyotito slept, and she leaned over and said a little reassuring word. Coyotito looked up for a moment and closed his eyes and slept again. (Steinbeck, 1947: 2)

It could be concluded that Juana is a very responsible mother and lover. The things she does should definitely be done by a mother and a lover. In

short, it could be considered that being responsible is Juana's quality as a woman which can be known from the analysis toward characterization using action as the medium.

She could stand fatigue and hunger almost better than Kino himself. In the canoe she was like a strong man. And now she did a most surprising thing. (Steinbeck, 1947: 7)

After all, Juana is indeed a strong woman. No matter how hard her life is, she never gives up on a thing. She always does her best for the family. In conclusion, for the actions Juana has done all this time for the family, she is considered as a strong woman and that is another quality possessed by Juana.

4.1.2. Reaction

The reactions could be noticed the moment somebody does something and another person shows the response toward that thing.

“I hope thou wilt remember to give thanks, my son, to Him who has given thee this treasure, and to pray for guidance in the future.” Kino nodded dumbly, and it was Juana who spoke softly. “We will, Father. And we will be married now. Kino has said so.” She looked at the neighbors for confirmation, and they nodded their heads solemnly. (Steinbeck, 1947: 28)

It could be said that Juana is a brave woman who has a courage to say such a word. She also is a persuasive woman who could successfully drive the neighbors to such a confirmation.

4.2 How Juana's qualities of women influence Kino's character development in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*

4.2.1. Giving More Courage and Motivation

In the story, Kino can be assumed as the superior one in the family. He sees and considers Juana as a fragile wife who can only do less compared to him. Everything such as making decision and an act are on him to decide and Juana seem to be powerless. However, it has been surprising for Kino to know the fact that Juana can be somebody that he has never expected when put into a corner or in an unpleasant situation. This is shown in the quotation below.

“Kino had wondered often at the iron in his patient, fragile wife. She, who was obedient and respectful and cheerful and patient, she could arch her back in child pain with hardly a cry. She could stand fatigue and hunger almost better than Kino himself. In the canoe she was like a strong man. And now she did a most surprising thing (Steinbeck, 1947: 7)”.

The quotation even clearly mentions that Juana could deal with hunger and fatigue better than Kino himself and is like a strong man. This has made Kino to think and rethink about his existence as husband and triggered him to do even more as a husband in the story.

4.2.2. Being Convinced to Convince

In the story, when it seems impossible to ask the doctor to save Coyotito's life, Kino seems to just give in. He quickly assumes that the doctor would not come to see Coyotito. However, as a parent, Juana is capable of showing such a strong determination to save her son better than Kino himself. This then results him to rethink about giving in and think that it is still possible to save Coyotito. This is shown in the quotation below.

“The doctor would not come,” Kino said to Juana. She looked up at him, her eyes as cold as the eyes of a lioness. This was Juana's first baby— this was nearly everything there was in Juana's world. And Kino saw her determination and the music of the family sounded in his head with a steely tone. “Then we will go to him,” Juana said...(Steinbeck, 1947: 7)”.

In the quotation above, Juana is portrayed to have the eyes of lion when she said “Then we will go to the doctor”. Seeing her determination to save Coyotito has then strengthened him. This has then resulted him to becoming more convinced that Coyotito, whatever it takes, needs to be saved. If the doctor would not come, they would go and see the doctor themselves to save their son. In short, seeing how convinced Juana is has made Kino becomes even more convinced to save his son's life.

4.2.3. Offering Strong Intuition to Deal with Problems

Since Kino is such a stubborn person when it comes to what he desires, he does not want to let the pearl go even if their life is put at stake. Fortunately, Kino has Juana alongside him as she has such a strong intuition to look for good solution. This has been shown in the quotation below.

“Perhaps I should let them take me.”

Instantly Juana was on her feet and her hand lay on his arm. “You have the pearl,” she cried hoarsely. “Do you think they would take you back alive to say they had stolen it?”

His hand strayed limply to the place where the pearl was hidden under his clothes. “They will find it,” he said weakly.

“Come,” she said. Come!”

And when he did not respond, “Do you think they would let me live? Do you think they would let the little one here live?”

Her goading struck into his brain: his lips snarled and his eyes were fierce again (1947: 75)”.

In the quotation above, Kino is about to sacrifice himself for Juana and Coyotito. However, as it can be seen from the quotation, Juana explains the situation quite well. She explains that even though Kino was being taken away, the trackers would never let the rest of the family go as long as the pearl is still with them. Juana explains his intuition to Kino carefully

and results Kino to believe and take another way to deal with the situation. By the end of the story, those who read the novel would know that Juana's intuition about that particular situation, presented in the quotation above, is true.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Juana in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* possessed several positive characterizations which make her be a woman with quality. Those qualities are gained through two sources; those are action and reaction. Thus, Juana's quality also affects her husband, Kino. Those qualities trigger the development of Kino's characterization. The development of Kino's characterization is classified into three clusters; those are giving more courage and motivation, being convinced to convince, and offering strong intuition to deal with problem.

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