

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN JOHN STEINBECK'S "THE PEARL"

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## Abstract

This study examines the characteristics of main characters of John Steinbeck's work "The Pearl" through the theory of Erik Erikson's psychosocial growth phases. It investigates how the characters navigate these stages against the backdrop of societal forces and personal goals. The study explores how personal goals and ambitions influence the characters' progression through these stages, shaping their identities and interactions within the narrative. As the characters discover a precious pearl, their journey mirrors Erikson's stages, from trust to mistrust to integrity to despair. Each stage is characterized by conflicts and obstacles that develop characters' personalities and interactions. This study uses qualitative analysis to explore the significant psychosocial processes represented in "The Pearl," resulting insights into psychosocial characters' development and the complexity of their progress in a social context.

**Keywords:** the pearl, psychosocial stage, development

## INTRODUCTION

In John Steinbeck's novel "The Pearl," the protagonist's journey mirrors the psychosocial stages outlined by Erik Erikson, illustrating the profound impact of external circumstances on personal identity and development. Steinbeck's portrayal of Kino, the pearl diver, reflects Erikson's psychosocial theory. As Kino grapples with trust, pressure, and identity, we witness the interplay between individual growth and societal forces. The pearl itself becomes a symbol of both promise and peril representing the tension between

personal desires and external pressures. By examining Kino's choices and conflicts, we gain insight into the universal struggle for self-discovery and the complexities of navigating cultural norms and expectations.

Erikson's psychosocial development theory introduced in his seminal work in 1950, is a cornerstone in understanding human growth and maturation. Erikson's model extends beyond traditional psychosexual theories encompassing social and emotional aspects of an individual's growth, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex

interplay between personal identity, relationships, and societal contributions. These theories emphasize the importance of successfully resolving conflicts at each time to achieve a healthy and variety development. Erikson proposed a lifespan perspective that delineates eight stages of psychosocial development and the stages are as follows:

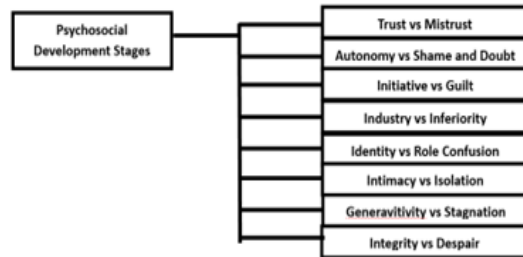


Figure 1. Psychosocial development stages proposed by Erikson (1950)

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development outlines eight critical stages that individuals navigate throughout their lifespan, each marked by unique psychosocial challenges crucial for healthy development and identity formation. This model illustrates the dynamic interaction between biology and the social environment, illuminating the intricate process of human maturation.

### **Trust vs. Mistrust**

In the foundational stage of Trust vs. Mistrust, individuals grapple with the fundamental question of whether the world is a safe and reliable place. Trust is a feeling where we feel confident in the circumstances around us so that we create a sense of security and comfort in that feeling. Kramer underscores the vulnerability inherent in trust, emphasizing its significance in social dynamics and interpersonal relationships (Kramer, 2009). The opposite is mistrust, which is when something makes us feel anxious and gives rise to feelings of suspicion and distrust which result in a person experiencing problems trusting those around

him. Dunn's exploration of mistrust sheds light on its pervasive impact on interpersonal dynamics and societal well-being. These insights underscore the implications of trust and mistrust in shaping early experiences and laying the groundwork for subsequent stages of development (Dunn, 2015).

### **Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**

Transitioning to the stage of Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, the characters embark on a quest for self-governance and independence. Autonomy itself refers to the ability of an individual or entity to govern itself independently, free from external control or influence. Anderson explains autonomy as the capacity to make independent choices and pursue goals within social and political contexts, highlighting its role in fostering individual agency (Anderson, 2017).

On the contrary, Shame and doubt is the feelings of inadequacy and self-criticism, often stemming from a fear of failure or rejection, leading individuals to question their worth and abilities. Top of Form Edward Deci's examination of shame and doubt underscores the detrimental effects of feeling inadequate or incompetent, emphasizing the importance of environments that nurture autonomy and competence. Through the interplay of autonomy and shame, individuals navigate the delicate balance between asserting their independence and grappling with self-doubt, shaping their emerging sense of self (Deci, 2017).

### **Initiative vs. Guilt**

The subsequent stage of Initiative vs. Guilt heralds a period of exploration and moral development. Initiative involves the identification of tasks or opportunities and taking action to address them without wai-

ting for direction from others, reflecting a sense of responsibility and self-motivation. It explored the readiness to seize control of situations, exhibit leadership qualities, and drive progress towards desired outcomes. Initiative involves taking proactive steps to identify and capitalize on opportunities. According to Grant, individuals who demonstrate initiative are more likely to recognize and act upon promising possibilities that others might overlook or hesitate to pursue. By embracing initiative, individuals position themselves to seize opportunities for growth, advancement, and innovation within their professional domains (Grant, 2016).

On the other hand, Guilt is an emotional state characterized by remorse or self-blame resulting from the belief that one has committed a wrongdoing or failed to meet their own moral standards. It often leads to feelings of regret and the desire to make amends for the perceived transgression. Tangney's research on guilt illuminates its role as a moral compass, guiding individuals towards acknowledging and rectifying their transgressions. In navigating the tension between initiative and guilt, individuals cultivate a sense of agency and ethical responsibility, shaping their moral identity and interpersonal relationships (Tangney, 2015).

### **Industry vs Inferiority**

As individuals progress to the stage of Industry vs. Inferiority, they confront the challenge of mastering tasks and developing a sense of competence. Industry plays a crucial role in laying the groundwork for the next phase of identity development and building self-assurance in life. Achieving success in this phase fosters a sense of competence and goal-setting in life. It is crucial for individuals to strike a balance between perfection and accomplish-

ment. As to Dweck (2017), people can acquire industry-specific skills and attitudes that result in increased drive and accomplishments in life by cultivating a growth mindset that is marked by hard work, perseverance, and faith in one's ability to learn and progress.

At the opposite, Inferiority is when you believe that you are less intelligent or physically strong than other people, whether or whether this perception is supported by reason, you can experience persistent feelings of inadequacy or insecurity in your daily activities. According to Adler, feelings of inferiority arise from early experiences of inadequacy or perceived weaknesses, which can lead individuals to strive for superiority or compensate for their perceived shortcomings (Adler, 2014).

### **Identity vs Role Confusion**

Transitioning to the stage of Identity vs. Role Confusion, the characters embark on a journey of self-discovery and identity formation. Identity involves the events, relationships, attitudes, beliefs, and memories that mold a person's subjective sense of self are all part of identity. This makes it easier to construct a stable self-image that holds steady over time, even as new characteristics of oneself emerge or become stronger. Anthony Giddens elucidates the role of identity in shaping behaviour and fostering social cohesion, emphasizing its construction through interactions with others and institutions (Giddens, 2018).

In contrast, Individuals who are restricted from exploring and experimenting with different identities may find themselves grappling with what Erikson termed as role confusion, which can lead to uncertainty about one's identity and sense of belonging, causing individuals to drift between jobs or relationships without a clear direction or purpose. This sense of uncer-

tainty and lack of fulfilment can leave individuals feeling disappointed and confused about their place in life, highlighting the importance of identity exploration and development during adolescence and beyond.

#### Intimacy vs Isolation

As individuals progress through adulthood, they confront the stage of Intimacy vs. Isolation, marked by the pursuit of deep emotional connections and relationships. Intimacy is the profound capability of establishing close bonds with others, predicated on emotional vulnerability, mutual reliance, and a profound sense of interconnection. This capacity extends to various types of relationships, encompassing not only romantic partnerships but also platonic friendships, familial connections, and professional collaborations, wherein individuals cultivate deep levels of understanding and closeness. John Gottman underscores the significance of intimacy in fostering fulfilling relationships and emotional well-being (Gottman, 2015).

Conversely, Isolation denotes a state characterized by the incapacity to establish meaningful connections with others, resulting in a profound lack of emotional bonds, mutual trust, and a sense of belonging. This condition manifests as an individual's struggle to engage in fulfilling relationships, both romantic and non-romantic, leading to a pervasive sense of detachment and social disconnection from others. Research by Lunstad highlights the adverse effects of social isolation on mental health and well-being. Through the interplay of intimacy and isolation, individuals cultivate meaningful connections and navigate the complexities of intimacy, shaping their capacity for love and connection (Holt-Lunstad, 2017).

#### Generativity vs Stagnation

In the stage of Generativity vs. Stag-

nation, individuals grapple with questions of purpose and legacy. Generativity encompasses the meaningful endeavor of leaving a lasting impact on the world through acts of caring for others and the pursuit of creating and achieving endeavors that contribute positively to society and the broader global community. This concept involves not only nurturing and supporting individuals but also actively engaging in endeavors that promote social welfare, innovation, and progress, thereby enhancing the collective well-being of humanity and future generations. Sternberg's emphasis on generativity as a pivotal element in personal development and societal advancement encapsulates a profound understanding of human potential and purpose. Generativity, in essence, refers to the drive to contribute meaningfully to the world, whether through creative endeavors, productive work, nurturing relationships, or other forms of constructive engagement. It represents a fundamental aspect of human nature, rooted in the desire to leave a lasting legacy that transcends individual existence (Sternberg, 2016).

On the opposite side, Stagnation is the condition of being unable to find meaningful things for contribution and engagement within one's community or society at large. Individuals experiencing stagnation often grapple with feelings of disconnection and a sense of being uninvolved or detached from societal dynamics and communal endeavors. This state of disengagement may lead to a lack of fulfilment and purpose, as individuals struggle to identify and actively participate in activities that contribute positively to their community or broader social fabric, thereby impeding personal growth and collective progress. Research by Ryff emphasizes the detrimental effects of stagnation, characterized by a lack of growth and engagement with

life's challenges. Through the interplay of generativity and stagnation, individuals reflect on their contributions to society and cultivate a sense of purpose and fulfillment (Ryff, 2014).

### **Integrity vs Despair**

Finally, the stage of Integrity vs. Despair marks a period of reflection and acceptance as individuals confront the realities of aging and mortality. The stage of integrity versus despair entails a reflective examination of one's life experiences, where individuals assess their past and either experience a sense of fulfillment and contentment (integrity) derived from a well-lived life or confront feelings of remorse and disappointment (despair) stemming from perceived shortcomings, unfulfilled aspirations, and missed opportunities.

This critical phase prompts individuals to grapple with the overall coherence and significance of their life narrative, either affirming a sense of wholeness and acceptance or grappling with unresolved feelings of dissatisfaction and existential distress. Narvaez theory suggests that individuals who demonstrate integrity in their actions and behaviors not only uphold ethical standards but also experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment in their lives. Narvaez said the significance of integrity in ethical conduct and personal well-being, emphasizing the importance of consistency and honesty in one's actions and values (Narvaez, 2016).

Conversely, despair appears when people struggle with fundamental concerns about existence, such as the desire for meaning, purpose, and significance in life. A variety of circumstances might contribute to this despair, including painful experiences, loss, and a lack of purpose or direction. When people are detached from a sense of purpose or meaning, they may experience

deep feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, and existential distress. Through the theory of integrity and despair, individuals reconcile their past experiences and achievements, shaping their sense of wholeness and acceptance (Frankl, 2014).

Recent studies by Kroger (2015) and Waterman (2014) have explored the relevance of Eriksonian stages in adulthood underscoring the enduring significance of Erikson's stages across the lifespan. Kroger and Waterman have built upon Erikson's foundation, contributing to the evolving discourse on identity development. Kroger's explores the nuances of identity formation across the lifespan, offering insights into how individuals navigate the challenges posed by Erikson's psychosocial stages. Waterman, reflects on the evolving socio-cultural landscape and its impact on identity, shedding light on how contemporary influences shape the psychosocial development Erikson initially outlined. Moreover, recent research by Côté and Schwartz (2016) and Schwartz et al. (2011) provides empirical depth to Erikson's theories, emphasizing the importance of understanding identity within the broader context of human development.

These studies investigate identity theory and its application to emerging adults, examining both positive and negative psychosocial functioning. Kunnen and Bosma (2014) contribute further by exploring the role of ego-control and ego-resiliency in identity formation during adolescence and adulthood. Collectively, these scholars contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding Erikson's psychosocial development, highlighting its enduring relevance and adaptability to contemporary challenges.

Known for his exploration of emerging adulthood, Arnett (2014) explained a stage characterized by identity formation

and exploration, discusses the complexities of this transitional period in his book. Arnett's insights align with Kino's struggle for self-discovery in "The Pearl," as he navigates identity issues amidst newfound wealth and societal pressures. Furthermore, Harter's (2012) work provides insights into how individuals perceive and define themselves, which is closely related to identity formation and psychosocial development on self-concept development reflects Kino's internal conflict as he grapples with the consequences of his newfound wealth, mirroring Erikson's middle adulthood stage of generativity versus stagnation.

Additionally, Shanahan (2014) investigates various aspects of human development, including identity formation, as evidenced in his paper, which delves into how social, cultural, and economic factors shape individuals' trajectories of psychosocial development across different contexts. Relating Shanahan's research to specific elements in "The Pearl," Kino, a poor pearl diver in John Steinbeck's novella, embarks on a journey after discovering an immense pearl promising a better life for his family. This journey represents a critical phase in Kino's life, akin to Erikson's young adult stage (Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation), where individuals seek meaningful relationships and establish their identities. Shanahan's exploration of life course pathways aligns with Kino's choices and the impact they have on his psychosocial development.

The study of John Steinbeck's "The Pearl" alongside Erikson's psychosocial stages illuminates the interplay between individual development and societal influences. Kino's journey symbolizes the universal struggle for self-discovery, echoing Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. As we navigate the complexities of identity formation and psychosocial development, these studies underscore the

importance of considering socio-cultural factors and life course pathways. By integrating literature, theory, and contextual research, we gain deeper insights into the complexities of human growth and maturation, emphasizing the ongoing relevance of Erikson's pioneering work in understanding human experience.

## METHOD

The researchers conducted an in-depth qualitative study, recognizing the efficacy of such methods in unraveling the complexities of human experiences. Their focus on text analysis allowed for a nuanced exploration of character behaviour, cultural dynamics, and societal intricacies. By delving into the context and meanings conveyed within written and visual materials, they uncovered recurring themes, subtle nuances, and underlying patterns, shedding light on the intricate nature of human existence. Contextual understanding played a central role, as the researchers acknowledged the dynamic influence of plot, storyline, and social interactions on the embedded meaning within the text, emphasizing the continuous evolution and adaptation of meaning within changing socio-historical contexts.

At its core, "The Pearl" serves as a narrative lens through which universal themes of identity, ambition, and societal pressure are examined, offering insights into psychosocial development. Characters like Kino, Juana, and Coyotito illustrate the interplay between internal and external influences on individual growth. From the early stages of trust and autonomy to the later stages of identity and integrity, the novel presents a compelling exploration of the challenges and conflicts inherent in each phase of human development, prompting readers to reflect on the complexities of the human journey.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

“The Pearl” is a tale that intricately weaves character complexity into its narrative, offering readers a profound exploration of human nature and the conflicts that arise from desires and aspirations. At its core, the story revolves around Kino, a humble pearl diver, whose discovery of a magnificent pearl sets off a chain of events that exposes the intricate layers of his character. As Kino’s journey unfolds, from hope and ambition to greed and desperation, Steinbeck crafts a multi-dimensional portrayal that delves into the depths of his protagonist’s psyche. Moreover, the character of Juana, Kino’s wife, serves as a poignant contrast, embodying resilience and morality in the face of adversity. Through the complexities of these characters, Steinbeck aims to shed light on the universal human experience, confronting stages of ambition, morality, and the corrupting influence of wealth.

The purpose behind Steinbeck’s writing lies in his desire to prompt introspection among readers, urging them to reflect on their own identities and values. By presenting characters with relatable struggles and dilemmas, Steinbeck invites readers to consider the consequences of their actions and the importance of maintaining integrity amidst the temptations of the world. In essence, “The Pearl” serves as a mirror through which readers can explore their own identities and navigate the complexities of the human condition. And in navigating identity and psychosocial in the story, the researcher discovered Erikson’s theory in social development stages that divide into eight stages which is reflected in this paper.

### **Trust vs. Mistrust.**

The stages of infancy, as characterized by Erikson’s psychosocial theory of

Trust versus Mistrust is vividly portrayed through the experiences of Kino and Juana, the central characters. Initially, their family unit is depicted as harmonious and content, reflecting a strong sense of trust and love. Juana Sang’s act demonstrates the dynamic trust that exists within Kino’s family. The data of this scene can be supported by this excerpt:

*Juana sang softly an ancient song that had only three notes and yet endless variety of interval. And this was part of the family song too* (John Steinbeck, 1947). Juana communicated of the importance of interpersonal ties between trust and harmony in Kino’s family, highlighting the vulnerability that comes with trust as expressed by the prior framework. And when individual sing, they often express emotions, stories, and cultural heritage through their vocal performance. This act of singing can be viewed as representing the trust of family for a reason. Singing within the family setting often involves sharing personal experiences, feelings, and traditions. It requires vulnerability and openness as individuals express themselves through melodies and lyrics. In this sense when someone sings in front of their family, they are implicitly trusting their loved ones with their emotions and stories. To support this argument, we can refer to scholarly research in the fields of psychology and sociology.

Studies have shown that familial bonds are crucial for emotional well-being and that activities like singing together can enhance these bonds. For instance, research by Kramer (2009) emphasizes the importance of trust in social dynamics and interpersonal interactions while highlighting the vulnerability that comes with it. And more from Dingle et al. (2013) in the Journal of Family Psychology suggests that shared musical experiences within families contribute to emotional closeness and co-

hesion. This trust is essential for fostering strong familial relationships and preserving cultural heritage.

Steinbeck's portrayal of mistrust is shown when Kino and Juana's desperate attempt to seek medical aid for their son, Coyotito, vividly exposes the harsh reality faced by marginalized communities. The dialogue "*Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for 'little Indians'? I am a doctor, not a veterinary.*" (John Steinbeck, 1947) shows the doctor's callous refusal to provide treatment due to their background shatters Kino's trust not only in the medical establishment but also in the societal structures perpetuating economic discrimination. This pivotal moment serves as a catalyst, introducing a profound sense of mistrust towards both the doctor and the broader community, highlighting the stark inequality in access to basic healthcare based on socioeconomic status.

Research by Dunn (2015) and Danziger (2016) illuminates the pervasive impact of poverty on societal trust, providing evidence for the argument that economic marginalization breeds mistrust. Dunn's exploration of mistrust underscores its detrimental effects on societal dynamics and well-being, while Danziger's work delves into the intersection of poverty and social trust, elucidating mechanisms such as economic insecurity, perceived injustice, and social exclusion. Through Kino and Juana's experience, readers are prompted to reflect on the implications of betrayal and the resilience needed to navigate a world rife with inequality, underscoring the profound significance of the Trust versus Mistrust stages in infancy.

### **Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt.**

Through Kino's experiences, the stage of Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt is realistically presented. In a crucial episode,

Kino's independence of thought and commitment are demonstrated. "

*Kino, my husband, it will destroy us.*" And in the firelight her lips and her eyes were alive with her fear. But Kino's face was set, and his mind and his will were set. "*This is our one chance,*" he said (John Steinbeck, 1947). The line "*His mind and his will were set*" in this scene is prove was initially driven by his determination to protect and provide for his family. Kino is adamant about keeping the pearl since he sees it as their last opportunity for a better life, despite Juana's pleas for him to throw it away because she thinks it will hurt their family. This section demonstrates Kino's unyielding will to follow his goal of wealth and stability for his family, demonstrating his independent thinking and reluctance to be influenced by the worries or judgments of others.

Kino's pursuit of the valuable pearl serves as a manifestation of his desire to secure his family's future and assert his autonomy. His actions reflect a deep-rooted sense of responsibility and self-reliance, essential aspects of the autonomy stage. According to Anderson (2017), autonomy is crucial in promoting free will, defined as the ability to make independent decisions and pursue objectives within social and political circumstances. It also aligned with the sentence from Purnomo and Widiyaningrum (2023) in living their life, humans have the right to determine what is best for them selves. This should be done by the humans themselves without any element of coercion from others, because the person who will undergo it is the humans themselves. This narrative arc underscores the complexities of autonomy and its role in shaping individual agency amidst external pressures and societal expectations.

Kino's descent into obsession with the pearl illustrates the transition from autonomy to shame and doubt, a poignant



moment in his character arc. This shame is shown in the passage of the novel “*For Kino was a well-liked man; it would be a shame if the pearl destroyed him*” (John Steinbeck, 1947). Initially well-liked within his community, Kino’s sudden wealth brings about shame and uncertainty as his neighbours fear the corrupting influence of the pearl on his integrity. This transformation highlights the fragility of autonomy and the profound impact of greed on Kino’s psyche, as he neglects familial responsibilities and grapples with the consequences of his pursuit.

The complexities of this transition are underscored by Erikson’s psychosocial stages, wherein Kino’s struggle reflects the interplay between autonomy and shame. Deci’s (2017) examination of shame and doubt further emphasizes the negative effects of feeling inadequate or incompetent, highlighting the significance of circumstances that foster competence and autonomy. Through Kino’s journey, both of the stages are shown with the balance between claiming independence and wrestling with self-doubt, shaping his evolving sense of self amidst the pressures of newfound wealth and societal expectations.

### **Initiative vs. Guilt.**

Kino’s journey mirrors Erikson’s psychosocial theory of Initiative versus Guilt, as he demonstrates remarkable initiative in his pursuit of a better life for his family. Initially motivated by noble aspirations to provide his son Coyotito with education and a brighter future, Kino’s discovery of the priceless pearl serves as a catalyst for his proactive approach to changing their circumstances. The excerpt “*I will fight this thing. I will win over it. We will have our chance.*” (John Steinbeck, 1947) vividly captures Kino’s resolve and determination as he adamantly declares his intent to confront the challenges ahead, symbolizing his

unwavering commitment to securing a better fate for his loved ones. Despite the risks and challenges he faces, Kino’s unwavering determination to fight for his family’s chance at a better life reflects the essence of Erikson’s concept of initiative, marking an important moment of empowerment in his personal journey.

Kino’s decision to defy the local buyers and pursue the sale of the pearl in the capital underscores his initiative to break free from the constraints imposed by his village and the oppressive forces of colonialism. This strategic move not only showcases Kino’s resourcefulness and resilience but also signifies his refusal to succumb to the exploitation and manipulation perpetuated by those in power. By seizing control of his family’s destiny and venturing into unknown territory, Kino exemplifies the transformative power of initiative in transcending adversity and creating opportunities for growth and advancement. Grant (2016) perspective further reinforces the importance of initiative in navigating challenges and fostering innovation, emphasizing its pivotal role in laying the foundation for personal and collective success.

Yet as Kino’s pursuit of the pearl unfolds, guilt gradually creeps in as he confronts the tragic consequences of his actions. The pearl, once a beacon of hope, becomes a catalyst for misfortune and destruction. Kino grapples with overwhelming guilt, Kino experiences a profound sense of guilt after particularly over Coyotito’s death. Kino’s descent into guilt and despair as he confronts the consequences of his actions. The imagery of the pearl transforms from a symbol of hope and prosperity into a haunting reminder of the tragedies it has brought upon him. As Kino gazes into its surface, he is confronted with a chilling reflection of the suffering and destruction that have ensued, including

the death of his son Coyotito. The line of Kino's regret showcased by Steinbeck (1947):

*"And in the surface of the pearl, he saw Coyotito lying in the little cave with the top of his head shot away. And the pearl was ugly; it was gray, like a malignant growth* (John Steinbeck, 1947). The colour of the pearl's once alluring luster now appears tainted and grotesque, symbolizing the corrupting influence of greed and ambition that caused his son death. This moment of reckoning marks a significant turning point for Kino, as he grapples with the realization of the pearl's malevolent power and the devastating impact of his pursuit of wealth.

Tangney (2015) insights into the nature of guilt further underscore this interpretation, emphasizing its role as a moral compass that guides individuals towards recognizing their wrongdoing and taking steps to rectify it. Kino's journey from hubris to humility serves as a cautionary tale about the perils of unchecked ambition and the importance of moral introspection in navigating life's complexities.

### **Industry vs Inferiority**

The stage of Industry, wherein individuals strive to master tasks and develop competence, as Kino faces challenges head-on to achieve success and build confidence in his abilities. Industry plays a crucial role in laying the groundwork for the next phase of identity development and building self-assurance in life. Kino's relentless pursuit of success in pearl diving serves as a testament to his determination and drive to master his craft and provide for his family. His dedication to gaining competency and creating a better future is highlighted in a scene where he dives for pearls with unwavering focus and skill.

*Kino, in his pride and youth and strength, could remain down over two minutes without*

*strain, so that he worked deliberately, selecting the largest shells* (John Steinbeck, 1947)

The quotation above demonstrates "pride, youth, and strength" that Kino works deliberately selecting the largest shells, showcasing his goal-setting behaviour and performing the excellence in his profession. Kino's unwavering dedication aligns with Dweck's (2017) growth mindset theory in term of industry, portraying his belief in his ability to learn and progress despite obstacles. Through his determination and resilience, Kino embodies the qualities associated with a growth mindset, remaining committed to acquiring industry-specific skills and attitudes to enhance his drive and achievement in life. This narrative arc emphasizes the importance of perseverance and belief in oneself as essential components of personal and professional growth.

Kino's encounter with the affluent doctor illuminates the pervasive theme of social inferiority that haunts him despite his resilience in the face of adversity. As Kino seeks medical treatment for his son Coyotito, the reluctance of the doctor to offer assistance becomes a stark reminder of the gaping divide between the privileged and the marginalized. The repeated refrain, "He would not come," (John Steinbeck, 1947) echoes throughout the scene, embedding itself in Kino's psyche and amplifying his feelings of inadequacy. This rejection from a figure of authority reinforces Kino's internalized perception of his social standing, underscoring the systemic barriers that prevent him from accessing the same level of care and respect as the upper class.

Adler (2014) theory of the inferiority complex provides a lens through which to understand Kino's emotional turmoil in this moment. Rooted in early experiences of perceived weakness or inadequacy, Kino's encounter with the doctor serves as a triggering event that exacerbates his

existing feelings of insecurity and powerlessness. The disparity in treatment based on social status intensifies Kino's struggle for dignity and recognition in a society that systematically devalues him. As he grapples with the implications of this encounter, Kino is compelled to confront the unequal power dynamics that perpetuate his sense of inferiority, driving him to either internalize his perceived shortcomings or strive for avenues of empowerment.

### Identity vs Role Confusion

Kino's journey in the novel prompts questions about his evolving identity and the complexities of his trajectory. As he becomes increasingly consumed by the allure of wealth offered by the pearl, his sense of self undergoes a transformation fraught with internal conflict. This shift is exemplified in a pivotal passage where Kino's inner turmoil is palpable as he grapples with conflicting emotions while gazing into the pearl. The pearl, once a symbol of hope and prosperity, begins to take on darker connotations, reflecting Kino's growing paranoia and fear fueled by the allure of riches.

*"In his mind a new song had come, the Song of Evil, the music of the enemy, of any foe of the family, a savage, secret, dangerous melody, and underneath, the Song of the Family cried plaintively"* (John Steinbeck, 1947)

The new song that entered Kino's mind "*music of evil*" and the "*music of the enemy*" as the above excerpt mentioned is strongly underscoring Kino's internal struggle, highlighting the psychological toll of his obsession with wealth. Kino's attachment to the pearl is depicted as so profound that it threatens to overshadow his original identity as a contented father and provider. The clash between his desire to secure a better future for his family and the destructive influence of the pearl creates a

sense of inner turmoil, leading Kino down a path of desperation and moral conflict.

Contrary to Giddens (2018) theory, which emphasizes the role of interactions with institutions and others in shaping identity, Kino's struggle with identity is portrayed as an internal battle rather than a product of external influences. Despite Kino's efforts to provide for his family, the relentless pursuit of wealth ultimately leads to a sense of disorientation and dissatisfaction, blurring his sense of purpose and leaving him adrift in a sea of moral ambiguity. This passage sheds light on Kino's evolving identity and the profound psychological impact of the pearl on his sense of self, ultimately culminating in tragic consequences for himself and his loved ones.

### Intimacy vs Isolation

Adulthood In the stage of Intimacy vs. Isolation, Kino embark on a journey to establish meaningful connections and cultivate deep emotional bonds. Intimacy, characterized by emotional honesty, trust, and profound connection, becomes the cornerstone of relationships during this stage. An illustrative scene portrays a fleeting moment of connection between them, where Kino's tender gaze and gentle touch convey a sense of intimacy.

*"Juana, glancing secretly at him, saw him smile. And because they were in some way one thing and one purpose, she smiled with him"* (Steinbeck, 1947)

The quotation above proves the intimacy of both characters. The mutual display of emotion by both Juana and Kino is demonstrating by the way they are "glancing secretly" towards each other is indicative of the intimacy shared between them. Despite the encroaching influence of the pearl, they share a peaceful moment together, revealing glimpses of the truthful love and friendship that underpin their re-

lationship.

The depiction of Kino and Juana emotions not only highlights Kino and Juana's deep connection but also emphasizes the significance of intimacy in nurturing strong relationships. Their shared sense of peace amidst life's struggles serves as a testament to the enduring power of genuine love and companionship. Moreover, Gottman's (2015) insights further underscore the importance of intimate closeness in family dynamics, suggesting that it fosters profound bonds and feelings within familial relationships. Thus, despite the challenges they face, Kino and Juana's relationship is anchored in moments of intimacy and mutual understanding, offering solace amidst the turmoil stirred by the allure of the pearl.

As Kino's escalating obsession with the pearl in John Steinbeck's novel underscores his increasing isolation from Juana and their community. In a pivotal scene, Juana, expressing her fear for their safety, Juana said *"I am afraid. A man can be killed. Let us throw the pearl back into the sea."* implores Kino to reconsider their pursuit of the pearl and suggests returning it to the sea. However, Kino's response is characterized by a fierce assertion of his masculinity and independence by saying *"I am a man. Hush."* (John Steinbeck, 1947) dismissing Juana's concerns and silencing her with his commanding voice. This interaction highlights Kino's growing detachment from Juana as he becomes consumed by his desire for the pearl's riches, signalling a rift in their once close relationship.

As Kino becomes fixated on accumulating wealth, he withdraws emotionally and turns away from interpersonal relationships, including those within their village community. His singular focus on material gain blinds him to the importance of familial and communal ties, leading to his

increasing alienation from Juana and their support network. The parallels drawn with Lunstad (2017) research on social isolation underscore the universal implications of Kino's journey, illustrating how the pursuit of material wealth can erode interpersonal connections and ultimately leave individuals isolated and adrift. This depiction serves as a poignant stage of the consequences of prioritizing greed over the bonds of love and community.

#### Generativity vs Stagnation

Kino's Throughout the narrative, Kino's journey from initial generative energy to eventual stagnation is poignantly depicted. In a particularly poignant chapter, Kino's inner turmoil is laid bare as he grapples with the realization of the pearl's detrimental impact on his family's well-being. In a dream sequence, Kino envisions a future where his son Coyotito can read, breaking the chains of illiteracy that have bound their family for generations.

*"Kino's brain burned, even during his sleep, and he dreamed that Coyotito could read, that one of his own people could tell him the truth of things"* (John Steinbeck, 1947).

The above excerpt illuminates the origins of Kino's generative energy, ignited by the hope and promise brought forth by the discovery of the pearl. In this vision, Kino yearns for a brighter future, where his family can transcend their current circumstances and access opportunities previously denied to them. The excerpt resonates with Sternberg (2017) theory of generativity which posits that the desire to make a meaningful contribution to society is inherent in human nature. Kino's aspirations for his family's advancement reflect this innate drive for constructive engagement and relationship building. However, as the narrative progresses, Kino's initial optimism gives way to disillusionment as the pearl's allure leads to greed and corruption. This

transformation underscores the tragic consequences of unchecked ambition and the erosion of Kino's generative energy, serving as a cautionary tale about the dangers of prioritizing material gain over familial and communal well-being.

As the story unfolds, Kino's initial hopes for a brighter future become overshadowed by the sinister influence of the pearl. Once viewed as a symbol of hope and opportunity, the pearl now embodies a malevolent force, entangling Kino's spirit in a web of greed and despair. This transformation is evident in Kino's fixation on the pearl as the key to escaping poverty and achieving prosperity. The transformation is highlighted by Steinbeck (1947) through his narration: "*Kino wanted: a harpoon to take the place of one lost a year ago, a new harpoon of iron with a ring in the end of the shaft*". Through the aforementioned excerpt, Steinbeck reflects Kino's thoughts that are consumed by the material possessions he desires such as a harpoon and a rifle and all made possible by the wealth promised by the pearl. This fixation not only demonstrates Kino's deep-rooted desire for financial security but also highlights the extent to which the pearl's allure has clouded his judgment and stifled his capacity for generativity.

Kino's obsession with the pearl traps him in a state of stagnation, preventing him from pursuing more meaningful endeavours and perpetuating his cycle of poverty. Despite the potential for personal growth and community development, Kino's focus remains solely on the material wealth that the pearl represents. This narrow-minded pursuit blinds him to the true value of his relationships and community, leading to tragic consequences as his greed and paranoia spiral out of control. Ryff (2014) research on stagnation aptly characterizes Kino's predicament, as his fixation on the pearl prevents him from

seeking alternate avenues for enhancing his life beyond material prosperity. Instead of investing in his family's well-being or nurturing meaningful relationships, Kino becomes ensnared by the illusion of success embodied by the pearl, ultimately leading to his downfall.

### **Integrity vs Despair**

Kino's journey is a poignant exploration of integrity amidst despair, revealing his inner strength and moral character. Despite facing immense adversity, Kino's integrity remains steadfast, shining through in pivotal moments that underscore his commitment to honesty and fairness. One such instance occurs when Kino confronts the pearl buyers who attempt to cheat him by offering an unjust price for his prized possession. In a display of resolute integrity, Kino adamantly refuses to accept the deceitful offer, declaring, "*My pearl is not for sale here.*" (John Steinbeck, 1947). The refusal to compromise his principles for the sake of profit highlights Kino's unwavering dedication to truth and justice.

Kino's act of integrity in this scene resonates with psychologist Narvaez (2016) theory, which emphasizes the importance of integrity in ethical conduct and personal well-being. Narvaez underscores the significance of consistency and honesty in one's actions, qualities exemplified by Kino's refusal to yield to dishonesty despite considerable pressure. Through his unwavering commitment to fairness and honesty, Kino demonstrates the depth of his moral character and the resilience it provides him in the face of despair. His integrity serves as a guiding light, offering him strength and conviction as he navigates the tumultuous consequences of the pearl. As Kino grapples with the challenges presented by his newfound wealth, his steadfast integrity emerges as a beacon of hope and inspira-

tion, illuminating a path of righteousness amidst the darkness of greed and corruption.

As the narrative of "The Pearl" reaches its conclusion, despair emerges as a prevailing motif, marking the culmination of Kino's tumultuous journey. The final paragraph encapsulates the full extent of Kino's despair, "*And the music of the pearl drifted to a whisper and disappeared*" (John Steinbeck, 1947) symbolized by the fading music of the pearl, once a beacon of hope and potential. Initially, the pearl represented Kino's aspirations for a brighter future, resonating with the promise of wealth and prosperity. However, as the story unfolds and the pearl brings only tragedy and sorrow, its enchanting melody gradually diminishes until it disappears entirely. This metaphorical loss of music mirrors Kino's shattered dreams and dashed hopes, highlighting the stark contrast between his initial optimism and the harsh realities he faces.

The disappearance of the pearl's music parallels Frankl's argument about the corrosive effects of losing sight of one's purpose or meaning. Just as Frankl suggests that the absence of meaning can lead to existential despair, Kino's journey epitomizes the profound impact of dashed aspirations and unfulfilled dreams. Through Kino's trials and tribulations, the novel delves into the depths of despair, illustrating how the loss of hope can overshadow even the most optimistic ambitions. However, amidst the chaos and despair, there lies a glimmer of insight into the importance of acceptance and reconciliation. Kino's journey serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of finding meaning and purpose in life's obstacles, offering a pathway towards inner healing and redemption in the face of adversity.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of John Steinbeck's "The Pearl," becomes evident that the narrative intricately mirrors the protagonist, Kino's, progression through Erik Erikson's psychosocial development stages. This journey of self-discovery and societal interaction is threaded throughout the storyline, where Kino confronts an array of trials and tribulations that significantly mold his identity and dictate his engagement with the surrounding world. Initially depicted as a contented pearl diver, Kino embodies the essence of industriousness as he diligently plies his trade to sustain his family. However, the discovery of the illustrious pearl catalyzes a profound shift within him, igniting aspirations of material wealth and social elevation. This newfound ambition precipitates a tumultuous internal conflict, pitting his desire for prosperity against the values of integrity and familial obligation deeply ingrained within him.

As Kino's odyssey unfolds, he is beset by a succession of setbacks and betrayals, which serve to puncture his sense of self-worth and engender feelings of inadequacy. The pervasive greed and corruption surrounding the pearl sow seeds of mistrust and estrangement, forcing Kino to confront the stark realities of his existence and reassess his position within society's hierarchy. Moreover, the tragic loss of his cherished son, Coyotito, serves as a pivotal juncture in Kino's psychological maturation, compelling him to grapple with profound existential questions and reevaluate his place in the world. Through these trials and tribulations, Kino traverses Erikson's psychosocial development stages, navigating the intricate interplay between industry and inferiority, autonomy and doubt. His journey culminates in a profound epiphany, wherein he attains a deeper understanding of the intrinsic value of familial love and

human connection amidst the tumult of external forces. Through adversity, Kino emerges with newfound resilience and inner fortitude, transcending the confines of societal expectation to embrace a more authentic sense of self.

In essence, “The Pearl” is a compelling examination of Erikson’s psychosocial development theory, providing us with an insightful perspective on the universal themes of identity, morality, and the search for meaning in an adversity-filled world. Through Kino’s transforming journey, Steinbeck urges readers to reflect on the complex emotion of human experience, emphasizing the continuing importance of resilience, integrity, and compassion in the face of life’s many hardships.

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