

**Tribhuvan University**

**Reflection of Nineteenth Century French Society in Guy de Maupassant's Selected  
Stories**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Ms. Sumitra Koirala has completed her thesis entitled “Reflection of Nineteenth Century French Society in Guy de Maupassant’s Selected Stories” under my supervision. She carried out her research from 2073/09/15 B.S. to 2074/02/21 B.S. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled “ Reflection of Nineteenth Century French Society in Guy de Maupassant’s Selected Stories” submitted to the Central Department of English, by Ms. Sumitra Koirala has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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# **Reflection of Nineteenth Century French Society in Guy de Maupassant's Selected Stories**

## **Abstract**

*This research entitled Reflection of 19<sup>th</sup> Century French Society in Guy de Maupassant's Selected Stories focuses on the role of matter for the cultural construction of 19<sup>th</sup> century France, utilizing the theoretical concept of Raymond William. Maupassant illustrates the difference and tension between the upper and lower class in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century French society. A basic belief of the period was that a person is born into a class and that no one can move from one class to another. Maupassant, on the contrary, believes that personality, culture and class are not defined by birth. Instead, such categories are constructed based on power, position, and money. Even morality and marriage are determined by material interest. As to Maupassant, the barriers between classes are not natural and can be broken down. He looks at middle class morality and upper-class superficiality, and reflects the social ills of nineteenth century France and attests that all people are worthy of respect and dignity.*

## **Keywords:**

Class Conflict, Matter, Money, Culture, Base structure, Super Structure

The present thesis analyses Guy de Maupassant's short stories in the light of the theories of social criticism. Guy de Maupassant is French short story writer. 19<sup>th</sup> century France was a time where the bourgeoisie held all of the power and there was no way to work up in society. He made a large imprint upon the politics of society of his time without inspiring a revolution or even directly being the author of a reform. What he did was to examine the platitudes by which his fellow countrymen lived in such a way as to cause others to reconsider them. Maupassant is able to critique and comment on society through narratives, leaving his imprint on the very fabric of society.

“The Diamond Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant, first published in 1884, tells the story of a young French middle class couple named Loisel. Monsieur Loisel works for the Board of Education; he is content with his simple life and loves his wife very much. Madame Loisel is quite the opposite. She feels she was born into the wrong family and longs for the life of the upper class. Every time she looks at her small apartment or plain clothing she imagines extravagant things. One evening, her husband returns from work in a great mood. He has worked very hard to obtain invitations to a fancy ball held by his superiors. For Madame Loisel, class is everything. She is so envious of the upper class, she can't bear to visit her old friend from her convent days because the friend represents everything she doesn't have. At the end of the story, class structure is turned on its head. We learn the necklace that Madame Loisel borrowed from her wealthy friend is worth only 500 francs, not 36,000. Like the necklace, the rewards of aristocratic life are in illusion. After a lifetime of yearning for it, Madame Loisel is confronted with an upper class that isn't what it was supposed to be in her vision.

“The Jewelry” revolves around M. Lantin and his wife. He really loves her

and they have a wonderful marriage. Husband works hard where as the wife loves false jewelries . He tells her that he does not like the fake jewels, but she does not stop to wear. One cold night attending the theater, M. Lantin's wife becomes ill and 8 days later she dies. After her death, he is grief stricken and he can't bear to look at the fake jewels. In need of money, he decides to sell the jewels and takes them to a merchant who tells him that the jewels are real and very valuable.

Likewise, In ‘‘Boule de Suif,’’ Guy de Maupassant tells the tale of Boule de Suif, a short, plump, inviting French prostitute, who is fleeing the advancing Germans during the Franco–Prussian War. Although seemingly immoral by profession, Boule de Suif actually adheres to a code of ethics. By the very nature of her profession, Boule de Suif feels as though she is spreading happiness through her service: Her clientele leaves with a greater level of satisfaction, thus adding to the greater good. In addition, Boule de Suif has several imperatives that she makes her best attempt to stand behind. Boule de Suif believes that these axioms should never be broken, namely that there should always be a different means to achieve the same end that would not require doing acts in opposition to her imperatives. Unfortunately, Boule de Suif, by following two codes of ethics—one utilitarian, the other ontological— lands herself in the ethically uncertain apex between these two opposed moral philosophies.

These three stories use the classic Maupassant twist, ‘‘dark ending and share the similarity of being closely tied to social class’’ ( Emily Cappel 78). Guy de Maupassant’s reputable pessimism clearly comes through: these stories deal with pessimistic events and emotions and his characters are victims of ironic necessity (faced with madness or other tragic events). For the purpose of this project, pessimism is defined as including attributes of ,helplessness, general negativity, and situations where the literary characters or the author impose a ‘‘glass is half empty’’ outlook. The

question ensues as to why Maupassant chooses to depict such gloomy stories. Does Maupassant aim to use dark stories to entertain his audience, or is there a deep, philosophical message to the readers behind his storylines? Is there a social justice agenda Maupassant is trying to push? Maupassant's writings may be a natural reaction to the issues facing the Third Republic after it was established in 1870 as the new government. Perhaps Maupassant's pessimism is related to the realism present in late 19th century literature, which favored science and rationality and viewed the Church as an obstruction to human progress. Maupassant could have imply been a proponent of naturalism, a literary movement seeking to depict believable everyday reality. Regardless, a thorough understanding of Maupassant's life, work, influences, and writing style is important to understand why he chooses to write pessimist,stories and how his brand of pessimism depicts social awareness and inspires social change.

literary realism is written from an objective perspective that simply and clearly represents the subject matter of the story, even at the expense of a well-made plot with social criticism. Nineteenth-century realist writers addressed social, economic, and political concerns through their depictions of various aspects of life during that time, and they strove to accurately represent contemporary culture and people from every echelon of society. Realist fiction often had a documentary quality in that these authors accurately reported the details of a specific historical era. In their portrayals of love, marriage, and family, realists explored social and psychological factors contributing to conflicts in nineteenth-century domestic life. In fact, many are noted for their attention to the complexities of human psychology and the numerous factors contributing to individual motivation. Several realist authors have been praised for their ability to capture regional dialects as well as differences in the speech patterns of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Realist writers also addressed

themes of religion, philosophy, and morality in their works.

Maupassant's ability to write about many sorts of people and conditions is often attributed to his sensitive personality. For example, he explores the connection of madness with his audience, and fundamentally asks, "who is mad and who is sane?" Maupassant personally struggles with madness, but finds a way to relate with his audience through the relatable madness of his characters. Wallace explains, "Maupassant was able to conceive of that little bit of madness in us all because he was a little more than "normally" mad, and his characters have that human degree of madness which gives the reality and causes us to identify with them" (Carr103). In this way, Maupassant combines his abilities of understanding people with his own autobiographical moments to create authentic yet relevant stories. In his narratives he relates he dictates critiques through his characters, "there is a notable tendency to make the narrator and one or two personages the transparent mouth-pieces of certain clear-cut opinions on women's rights ,sexuality, patriotism, and conjugal morality" (MacNamara 294). Since he creates such relatable yet unpredictable characters, one wonders if the character is sane, if the author is sane, or if the reader himself is sane, and whose opinions Maupassant writes on. This curiosity inevitably leads to questions about society and social justice. In speaking of the human condition, questions of justice and fairness come into play. Gerald Prince speaks on the theme of destiny in Maupassant's work. Prince argues that Maupassant creates unfavorable circumstances for his characters but gives them agency to interact with events. In this way, he gives his characters agency despite social circumstances, and much comes down to the characters' choices.

Another key element of research to understand Maupassant is in the field of history, culture, and economy. Katherine Lynch highlights specific socioeconomic

practices present in Early Industrial France. Lynch provides information on the class, ideology, and social policy of French culture (15). She specifically highlights the class differences between the bourgeoisie, the working-class, and the peasants. Lynch's exposé of the local and national policies of the time in regards to abandoned children and orphans quantifies the issues Maupassant seems to have about the societal structure involving orphaned or abandoned children in *Le Gueux* (114). With the different factions of the government in constant tensions, it was difficult to create and fund social policy. Furthermore, with the Catholic Church being involved in social programs, there was always a question about who should carry on such programs, the church or the state. In ideology, there two main groups in tension: moral economists and Social Catholics. Moral economists "tended towards a view of the world that advocated limited state intervention into public and private spheres in the interests of creating a moral and stable industrial society" (34). While Catholics "were more ambivalent about state intervention, preferring the use of voluntary lay associations of believers in the movement to create a more solid and moral working-class family (Lynch 3). Since no one could effectively decide on which group should take care of the disenfranchised, the marginalized often remained that way, or received help that did not truly remedy the broken system.

Different critics have given multiple criticisms to this Maupassant's stories. Critics have not left a stone untouched to criticize the book which shows the universal recognition of the book. The critic Zadie Smith says:

opens with a chapter so crafty (and complete as a story), that the rest of the Maupassant must inevitably disappoint, following a kind of thermodynamic law of literature. Chapters two through twenty four (plus appendices) comprise a very long epilogue, reversing

Maupassant's usual trick of making the first two-thirds of a book a prologue of red herrings, whopping you with a left-field climax irrelevant to the buildup. And the trick usually works. (12)

Here, Smith sees the very bonding of the Maupassant. She analyzes the patterning, chaptering and other multiple fractions of the Maupassant. Smith praises the trick of the writer to make the first two-thirds of a book a prologue. George Daniel looks the Maupassant as one of the best and an excellent Maupassants of the literature. He is enchanted by the magical language of the Maupassant. He appoints:

Though is only two-thirds of an excellent Maupassant, the book as a whole has a lot to recommend it: an abundance of vivid character detail and insights, wonderful language, and Maupassant's scary ability to walk a grueling mile in very strange shoes indeed. (Readers of "The Child In Time" and "The Innocent" will find themselves half-convinced that Maupassant herself once lost a child in an unexplained kidnapping, or that he personally spent some sweaty hours dismembering a corpse.(2)

The Maupassant has touched the multiple aspects of modern life. In one vein it displays the characteristic of immortal and true love in other sense it talks about the varieties and change in the nature of love in the span of time. Kermit Lansner is of the view that He possessed a rare ability to understand the small, almost unnoticed episodes of human experience, and to so enhance them by his art as to make other men understand both the pettiness and the nobility of all human endeavor. He asserts:

What strikes me about this book is the lasting impression it's left on me. I read it last summer and still find myself thinking about it and

talking about it a year later. I recently finished another book and my wife asked me to compare it to any two others as a point of reference. Better than one book we'd both read, I said, but not as good as . For contemporary fiction, this one sticks with you. (13)

Although Maupassant desires to stray from realism, it bleeds through his writings largely due to the influence of contemporary socio historical contexts of France in the measure of the novelist's more and more profound investigation of life, he imperceptibly and to a certain degree substituted psychological study (Roz 7).

Although all these critics have raised different issues in the writing of Maupassant, the issue social criticism is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries.

The present research adopts Raymond William's concept of class construction model to explore pros and cons of listed short stories of maupassant. For Raymond William Society, economy, and culture are three concepts whose meaning has changed recently, each change in one affecting the meaning of the other two as well. In short, each concept has conformed to a bourgeois model: society, for instance, previously referred to active fellowship or company but in a bourgeois context refers to "civil society," or commercial society (56). The meaning of economy has changed from management of household and community to the system of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of modern capitalism. "Culture has also taken its particular place within the bourgeois model": previously referring to the process growth and tending of crops, animals, and eventually human faculties, it responded to changes in the other two concepts to become equated with the concept of civilization in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (56). The concept of culture is for Williams emblematic of the condition of literary theory. It is a concept with a long development through complicated and even contradictory uses, and is undergoing a crisis in its

stability and univocity as a concept:

When the most basic concepts – the concepts, as it is said, from what we begin – are suddenly seen to be not concepts but problems, not analytic problems either but historical movements that are still unresolved, there is no sense in listening to their sonorous summons or their resounding clashes. We have only, if we can, to recover the substance from which their forms are cast. (11)

Civilization itself underwent a crisis at this time, severing its links with the concept of “civil society” which had an exclusively commercial and economic meaning and instead "expressed two senses which were historically linked: an achieved state, which could be contrasted with ‘barbarism’, but now also an achieved state of development, which implied historical process and progress (45)".

Three stories of Guy de Maupassant are analyzed in this research with his concern of class construction. "The Jewelry." The story is about a man of modest means Monsieur Lantin who is madly in love with his beautiful wife. He had met the young girl at a reception at the house of the second head of his department, and had fallen head over heels in love with her. She was the daughter of a provincial tax collector, who had been dead several years. She and her mother came to live in Paris, where the latter, who made the acquaintance of some of the families in her neighborhood, hoped to find a husband for her daughter. They had very moderate means, and were honorable, gentle, and quiet. He is sure of his beloved wife's fidelity and virtue, but he is completely miserable because she has a violent temper. He was happier with a woman who was unfaithful and dishonest, although he didn't know it, just as he didn't know that her false gemstones were actually the real thing. Finding what he thought would make him happy, he actually had a worse life.

“Boule de Suif” has its setting in Rouen, France, at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. The title is also the nickname of the main character, a prostitute. She is not introduced until late in the story. The author shows, in this story, that war is absurd; that most soldiers are men with other responsibilities and desires than those which concern war. The reader is emotionally involved in the feelings of the Prussian soldier and is delighted with the fact that Walter Schnaffs was able to attain his goal and can be optimistic about his safe return to his homeland.

"The Necklace" by Guy De Maupassant centers on Mathilde Loisel, a woman of modest means with a desire for wealth. Preparing for a party, Mathilde borrows a necklace from a rich friend, only to lose the jewelry that night. She and her husband take out loans to replace the necklace, spending a decade repaying them. Years later, Mathilde learns the necklace was fake and worth nearly nothing. Mathilde's husband works as a civil servant, which provides the couple with a modest, though not uncomfortable, lifestyle. As the story begins, Mathilde spends her days dreaming of luxuries that are out of reach. When her husband surprises her with an invitation to a prestigious party, she despairs that she has nothing to wear. She turns to her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier, who allows her to borrow a diamond necklace. Mathilde is the most beautiful woman at the party, but as the night ends, she realizes she has misplaced the necklace. Rather than admit this to Madame Forestier, Mathilde and her husband scrape together the money for a replacement, taking on loans they spend years repaying. After years of hard work and poverty, Mathilde's beauty fades. When she encounters Madame Forestier, her old friend does not even recognize her. Madame Forestier is shocked when Mathilde tells her story and reveals that the necklace she lent was only cheap costume jewelry.

Throughout the projections of different characters in three different stories

Maupassant wants to show the role of money to determine social classes, culture and family relationship. In a lot of different especially capitalist cultures there is an upper class rich, powerful and in control. Then there was a middle class, less comfortably off than the upper class, and certainly less powerful, but respected nonetheless. At the bottom there is the lower working class making up the majority of people, rarely having the necessities of life and never considered by other classes no matter how long or hard they work, they do not get satisfaction. Within the framework of cultural materialism, the research critically examines Maupassant's concern with society and the role of matter to determine its systems.

Adorno says that by looking at the past from our present form of catastrophe, namely capitalism and wage slavery, can "theory enable us to use the full weight of the history to gain an insight into the present." (94) This is a very historical materialist standpoint, and one that allows Adorno to look further into the two sides of the Marxist dialectic that has existed throughout history. The dynamism, the belief in action and practicality, is the side accepted by the ruling class and conservatives. It is the side of constant change that can mask the "untruth" of the past. The other side is the static side, the belief that the "ever-new is also the old," (95) the flip side of the dynamism. From here, Adorno sees this as part of what keeps the negation of history going, that progress is just like prehistory- "a constant source of new disaster" (95). Adorno comments on the shift of free-market capitalism towards monopoly capitalism, a shift that dominates class society. While it represents the classic view of class struggle, "extreme power" versus "extreme impotence", it actually blurs the lines of the existence of "hostile classes". (96) This invisibility of class can only gain momentum due to the present dichotomy of the exploited and exploiters. Class struggle in this system becomes idealism in the ideological sense. Trade union leaders

must speak of “slogans about tolerance and humanity”; they are the only ones who speak of a class war. (96) This is representative of the invisibility and omnipotence of repression. The masses have been divided into their respective jobs; the fact that they are aware of their oppression has even faded from memory. The subjective rule of the system is “set to survive the anonymous, objective form of the class” (97). Therefore, a new concept of class must be arrived at; it must be changed to overcome this class rule, in Adorno’s eyes. It must be “taken hold of” , because of the increasing solidity of the divided society, but also changed, because the exploited constitute the majority.

Maupassant, a self-proclaimed socialist, signifies that it is speech alone that makes the difference between a upper and lower classes, therefore endowing “this action line with a fine satiric thrust at the basic artificiality of social ranking” (Cappo, 57). He preferred social poise and considerateness to mere crudity, harboring even some "limited admiration for the dignified code of manners of the modern period," though he found some its artificialities cramping (Cappo, 143). Maupassant also uses his characters to evoke his own personal thoughts within the stories, making other satiric comments to the nature of the people" (57). In "The Jewelry." Monsieur Lantin, then chief clerk in the Department of the Interior, enjoyed a snug little salary of three thousand five hundred francs, and he proposed to this model young girl, and was accepted. He was unspeakably happy with her. She governed his household with such clever economy that they seemed to live in luxury. She lavished the most delicate attentions on her husband, coaxed and fondled him; and so great was her charm that six years after their marriage, Monsieur Lantin discovered that he loved his wife even more than during the first days of their honeymoon. He found fault with only two of her tastes: Her love for the theatre, and her taste for imitation jewelry. It is narrated as:

Sometimes, of an evening, when they were enjoying a tete-a-tote by

the fireside, she would place on the tea table the morocco leather box containing the "trash," as Monsieur Lantin called it. She would examine the false gems with a passionate attention, as though they imparted some deep and secret joy; and she often persisted in passing a necklace around her husband's neck, and, laughing heartily, would exclaim: "How droll you look!" Then she would throw herself into his arms, and kiss him affectionately. (78)

Lantin's wife portrays the symbol of upper class through her treatment of Lantin. She "antithetical to Lantin in all but her interest in linguistics" claims one critic (Nethercot, 216). Maupassant, he is immediately touched by "Her artificiality and self-made aristocracy" by offering to pay for her lessons himself (216). She appreciates Lantin, accrediting his treatment as a catalyst. "beginning of her happiness" (79). That is through out the innocence of Lantin.

Williams opposes his understanding of language to a vestige of linguistic idealism, structuralism.. Williams' criticism of structuralism is, in brief, that it gives temporal priority to a system of values (in the Saussurian sense) over empirical "utterances," which are considered derivative from the structure of a language which is seen as given. For Williams, this relationship between structure and utterance embodies a political relationship between observer and observed, "where the 'language-habits' studied, over a range of speech of conquered and dominated peoples to the 'dialects' of outlying or socially inferior groups, theoretically matched against the observer's 'standard', were regarded as at most 'behavior', rather than independent, creative, self-directing life." (27) By privileging structure over utterance structuralism participates in an imperialist project, taking over from 19<sup>th</sup> Century linguistics the objectification of languages, particularly "foreign" languages or

“provincial” dialects. Treating language as a stable object that is constitutive of individual thinking and communication denies individual agency and creativity. For Williams, any understanding of language as constitutive of humanness must take into account its indissolubility from acts of self-creation and expression.

Lantin’s wife metamorphoses not only into the "duchess" Lantin promises, or the shop girl Eliza wants, but also rather into a self-reliant professional woman. She originates as the "incarnate insult to the English language," yet her personal evolution of character is dramatically shown by Maupassant (11). She says she dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies. "She learns that she is a human being with all the potential that implies," (Carr , 66).

Williams express that relationship between base and superstructure is vague. More centrally, base and superstructure are taken as objective categories that exist in some sort of a hierarchical relationship of importance favoring the base. As Williams and Marx both tried to demonstrate, institutions, forms of consciousness, and institutional and political and cultural practices are inseparable from economic relations and practices, such that the two cannot be treated as separate entities. Williams concludes that the neither the base nor the superstructure can be considered as separate objects, as:

It is one of the central propositions of Marx’s sense of history, for example, that in actual development there are deep contradictions in the relationships of production and in the consequent social

relationships. There is therefore the continual possibility of the dynamic variation of these forces. The 'variations' of the superstructure might be deduced from this fact alone, were it not that the 'objective' implications of 'the base' reduce all such variations to secondary consequences. (77)

Material production is for Marx only a subset of all productive forces, but it has been taken as representative of all productive forces in a society, such that production has been equated only with economic activity, in turn identified with the base that determines the superstructure (not in the sense of providing limits and pressures but in the reductive sense of reflection) thus giving rise to economism. Marx himself gives emphasis to material production because he is studying production under the system of capitalism, which sharply divides between material production and society, culture, and aesthetics, all of which could be considered types of production

"Boule de Suif" has its setting in Rouen, France, at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. The title is also the nickname of the main character, a prostitute. She is not introduced until late in the story. None of the characters is introduced initially. The story is introduced with descriptions of the battered and disorganized French forces, retreating before the advance of the victorious Prussian army, and of the worried, uneasy people of Rouen. As the sun rises in the story, the author reveals the identities of the passengers to the reader as the travelers discover among themselves exactly who they are. Six of the people are society couples, two are Catholic nuns, and the ninth person is a disreputable politician. The tenth person is the main character, Boule de Suif. There is little conversing of the passengers, but even that minuscule amount completely excluded the politician, Cornudet, and Boule de Suif. Then it is discovered that Boule de Suif continually watches something under her seat, which is revealed as

a basket of food. The others had not prepared for the long journey as she had, and though they did not ask her to share the food, she had pity on them and let them eat with her. All the food, which could have lasted through many meals, was eaten by the greedy companions. It was learned, after the food was gone, and the group then felt obligated to talk to her, that all passengers, besides Boule de Suif, had left Rouen for financial or political reasons. She, alone, left for patriotic reasons; she hates Prussians. Otherwise, she could have continued her prosperous business as she had done before. Thus, the author shows her as the only true patriot in the group. The generating circumstance is not given until the passengers have spent the night at an inn, which is to be their only rest stop. They discover that the Prussian soldiers who controlled the admittance and departure of guests at the inn, will not allow them to continue their journey until Boule de Suif responds favorably to the commanding officer's request that she sleep with him. The generating circumstance is not given until the passengers have spent the night at an inn, which is to be their only rest stop. They discover that the Prussian soldiers who controlled the admittance and departure of guests at the inn, will not allow them to continue their journey until Boule de Suif responds favorably to the commanding officer's request that she sleep with him.

The story has as its theme the inhumanity of the bourgeoisie and the total indifference of the church towards the lower classes as seen through the eyes of the author. "Boule de Suif" is valued for the accuracy of the descriptions of war-torn Rouen and of human behavior. The negative aspects of behavior over-shadow the positive aspects in this story, for the reader is persuaded, by the actions of the other characters, to pity Boule de Suif.

For Adorno, bourgeois sociology of the revisionist won out—the class war was denied, and progress was praised. Class was now seen as a "pedagogic tactic"; facts

were needed to back up the theory. (102) Class was looked upon as having oligarchic features, contrary to the monopolists' views. Therefore, formal sociology denied its existence. This unity with the ruling class "demotes human beings into objects", a demotion caused by the system. (102) Adorno sees no help coming from mainstream sociology with the problem of class in society. Adorno summarizes and brings together many of the points he has discussed. While the improvement in standard of living of the proletariat was not foreseen by class theory in the traditional Marxist sense, the exploitation and impotence was. This was earlier identified as "dehumanization." But the disappearance of the bourgeois individuality and the market economy by monopolization also destroys the previous dehumanizing concept of those "rejected by society" (67). According to him social class is not static and it goes on changing.

Boule de Suif is shown as benevolent, in that she shared her food with her companions; as patriotic, in that she left Rouen only because of her hate for the enemy of France; as unselfish, in that she slept with the Prussian officer, solely for the welfare of the group; as having morals in that, even though she is a prostitute, she did not like to entertain enemy troops; and as sensitive, in that she cried when the group did not appreciate the sacrifice that she made for the welfare of the group.

Maupassant compares the middle class and lower class mannerisms using Boul de Suif. Maupassant's view of the middle class begins at the start of the story, when Suif has difficulty getting a cab, thus symbolizing the economic predicament and their problems in functioning on a level of society accustomed to using cabs. Maupassant's view of the lower class, again, is portrayed through the brute necessity prompting Suif to "wheedle a few last coins from the opera-goers" at Covent Garden (Crompton, 142). Crompton comments on Suif, "All the time [Maupassant] is treating us to Suif's plangent diphthongs she is also dissecting the manners of the girl in the

middle-class family" (143).

Typification has in fact become very popular in Marxist cultural theory which has searched for figures who represent dynamic social processes, "the elements and tendencies of reality that recur according to regular laws, although changing with the changing circumstances." (Lukacs102). The idea of being a representative example of something, such as an ideal type, though, presumes a reality, a something of which the ideal type can be an example and against which it can be verified, reintroducing the dualism and objectification of social reality, on the other hand, is distinguished from the concept of correspondence, which can refer to either resemblances between seemingly different practices based on their growth form a shared social process, analogies between the activities, or displaced connections in Adorno, where "while the immediate evidence is direct, the plausibility of the relation depends not only on a formal analysis of the historical social processs but on the consequent deduction of a displacement or even an absence." ( Lukcas104) All these senses of correspondence refer to similarities between appearances, whereas homology refers to similarities between forms and structures of things, or in origin and development. So the homology between different events or objects demonstrates the form of social and historical development by which they are organized, On the other hand, 'correspondence' and 'homology' can be in effect restatements of the base-superstructure model and of the 'determinist' sense of determination. Nalysis begins from a known structure of society, or a known movement of history. Specific analysis then discovers examples of this movement in cultural works. [. . .] The most evidence practical effect is an extreme selectivity. Only the cultural evidence which fits the homology is directly introduced (106).

In the story, "Boule de Suif" , the three society couples, M. et Mine. Loiseau,

M. et Mine. Carré Lamadon and le Comte et la Comtesse de Br&ille are characterized as haughty members of the bourgeoisie who are leaving Rouen for financial reasons. They treat Cornudet, the politician, and Boule de Suif with scorn and contempt. They are the greediest eaters of Boule de Suif's lunch, the most insistent that she sleep with the officer--so that they can leave the inn, the least willing to converse and they are completely self-centered. Following lines elaborates their nature of nun:

I love the night passionately. I love it as I love my country, or my mistress, with an instinctive, deep, and unshakeable love. I love it with all my senses: I love to see it, I love to breathe it in, I love to open my ears to its silence, I love my whole body to be caressed by its blackness. Skylarks sing in the sunshine, the blue sky, the warm air, in the fresh morning light. (870)

The two nuns are extremely un-talkative. They speak, politely, to the society couples and spend most of their journey in quiet prayer, saying nothing to the prostitute and the politician. They do not forestall the three couples when Boule de Suif is urged to sleep with the Prussian and actually participate in that argument. They do not insist that she uphold the Christian principle of not indulging in extramarital sex. Cornudet is Boule de Suif's only close companion. He converses with her quite freely and is not insistent upon her sleeping with the Prussian until he is urged to do so by the society couples. It is then that even his attitude changes. He is regarded as the hero who frees the group from their two day confinement at the inn because of his part in convincing Boule de Suif to do her 'duty' for the group. He is finally accepted as a peer of the others and then he, too, treats Boule de Suif with scorn.. Maupassant's distaste for profanity provoked him to overuse the word in order to ridicule Suif's naiveté.

Eliza's reaction to her transformation differs from that of nuns, Alfred, due to

their contrasting circumstances of rising into higher classes. Suif possesses better than average, if not superior, intellectual qualifications, though with questionable moral proficiency. The latter characteristic translates to her unique brand of rhetoric, an unembarrassed avocation of drink and pleasure at other people's expense. Suif's character incorporates Maupassant's aim to expose the "vanities of philanthropy" for he shows how a man's behavior is a consequence not of his character, but of his situation (Crompton, 144). Suif differs from nuns in this aspect, for she is thrust into a higher social class, not by money but updated speech or manner.

William could be described as "literature of the people", as it "attempts to relate literature to the social and economic history within it has been produced" (67). He tries to break off traditional ties, and emphasise social and economic limitations that surrounds literature. He argues:

It is true that Cultural materialism has always been embedded in our society, however it only became more widespread with the emergence of industrialisation and the bourgeoisie, as "bourgeois society was created by a capitalist mode of production. Culture is a process of surplus value, which will always be controlled by social and economic factors, however without it, our society would never develop. (67)

Obviously, the relationship between literature and society must have been conceived of as intimate for the methods of one discipline to seem applicable to the objects of another: literature was embedded in social practices, was itself a social practice, yielding representations of other social phenomena, and could be analyzed as the worldview of a class, an ethnic group, a nation, or a gender at a particular historical moment. Most of these "approaches" assumed that in the related dyad literature/society, "literature" was the representational, symbolic, or signifying entity,

while "society" was the set of human relationships and conditions informing the lived experience of the readers and writers. No matter how intertwined literature and society were imagined to be, however, the relationship between literary and social studies in those days in America was essentially nonreciprocal.

Maupassant is shown to be critical of society and its conforming classes, both lower and upper statuses. Those unfortunate enough to have grown up in the slums of France give away their lowly origins due to their distinct mannerisms and accents. For comical use, Maupassant implements these characteristics in his characters, only to emphasize their manner. Maupassant also takes care to use this judgment solely on language to ridicule the superficiality of upper class as well as lower class.

"The Diamond Necklace," Maupassant describes an unhappy woman named Mathilde, born to a poor family and married to a poor husband, who suffers "ceaselessly" from her lower-class lifestyle, "[. . .] feeling herself born for all the delicacies and all the luxuries" (Maupassant 524). Mathilde's character is consistently unhappy with her own life and her own possessions, always longing for more than what she has. When her husband brings home the invitation to the ball, hoping his wife will be thrilled at the chance to attend such an exclusive gathering, she instead "threw the invitation on the table with disdain," because she had nothing to wear. At her husband's suggestion of wearing her theater dress, she simply cries with grief. When the dress dilemma is resolved, Mathilde is "sad, uneasy, [and] anxious" (Maupassant 525). Her lack of fine jewelry and gems makes her feel that she "should almost rather not go at all" (Maupassant 526). Clearly, Mathilde's character is one with an insatiable greed for what she does not have. Later in the story, after the precious necklace has been lost, Mathilde's character appears to change, taking on the role of a poor woman with "heroism." As she is forced to scrub dishes,

wash laundry, and bargain with their “miserable” money, the reader would assume Mathilde has been humbled by her greed and the price she paid for insisting on wearing the diamond necklace. The reader questions the extent of Mathilde’s transformation when Mathilde sits at her window and ponders the evening of the ball, remembering her beauty and the attention she received. Madame Forestier’s characterization is important to the reader to demonstrate a sensible woman in a position of wealth. To Mathilde, she is nothing but an enviable picture of wealth and prominence. She allows Mathilde to borrow her necklace, but sensibly lends a fake necklace. She seems stable and happy throughout the story.

Although some may argue that this short story victimizes women and makes them vain and selfish, Coppo provides an alternate view where she is characterized as a functioning example of a virtuous woman as she lives within her means and social status. Maupassant uses Mathilde and her inherent contrast to Madame Coppo to critique social shallowness and greed. Mathilde is in conflict with herself, with others, and with society. She wishes to deny where she comes from and become a princess in her own mind, leading to her downfall. She further describes her as:

She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning and carried up the water, stopping for breath at every landing. And dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, a basket on her arm, bargaining, meeting with impertinence. (78)

Maupassant creates his protagonist Mathilde into a very serious and yet very ridiculous woman. She wishes for what she can’t have, and even when she is stripped of everything, she creates circumstances in her mind, which deem her powerless.

Maupassant allows her to have negative events surrounding her to understand how Mathilde will react, yet she does not use the autonomy Maupassant gives her to elevate her mental status. Instead, Mathilde uses her choices to revert back to old patterns of wishing and wanting.

In his preface to *Cultural Materialism* Marvin Harris wrote that culture and class are not natural “based on the simple premise that human life is a response to the practical problems of earthly existence.” His theory of cultural materialism prioritizes material conditions as more likely than ideas to be causal in human societies. He asserts:

Under infrastructure modes of production (technology of subsistence, techno-environmental relationships, ecosystems, and work patterns) and modes of reproduction (demography, mating patterns, fertility, etc.). Under structure domestic economy (family structure, domestic division of labor, socialization and education, sex roles, etc.) and political economy (political organization, taxation, division of labor, class, hierarchy, control, war, etc.). Under behavioral superstructure art, music, dance, literature, rituals, sports, games, and science . . . (87)

Harris asserts the principle of infrastructure determinism, namely, that “the etic behavioral modes of production and reproduction probabilistically determine the etic behavioral domestic and political economy, which in turn probabilistically determine the behavioral and mental emic superstructures” (55-56). He acknowledges that the emic superstructure has influence, but he wants to explore fully the influence of the etic infrastructure and structure before considering the influence of the emic superstructure (56). He finds that the interactive exchanges that occur among the superstructure, the structure, and the infrastructure are important in sustaining,

accelerating, or deflecting the direction and pace of transformational processes initiated within the infrastructure (160).

The characters in all the selected stories of Maupassant outlines his views of the middle-class and the undeserving poor. In light of an unequal class system, Maupassant creates pessimistic yet highly realistic short stories that mirror and criticize current social trends, “Maupassant looks at life with a fearless, unflinching gaze, much of what he sees inspires movingly compassionate words. He was a true democrat in his defense of the weak, the humble, the mistreated” (Artinian 7).

Maupassant’s compelling narratives do not only recount factual or even embellished stories: Maupassant shares necessary stories that show the poor and disenfranchised; he shows the humanity in the suffering. This leads the reader to recognize privilege and have a greater understanding for “the other”, or those different than themselves. This project contributes academically by providing a greater understanding and appreciation of Maupassant’s methods and literary contributions, which could be reproduced by modern writers to expose similar issues by intentionally influencing readers in favor of social awareness through dark prose.

Maupassant's representation of the social reality associating with the role of money. Maupassant presents these themes with the help of different characters from working class to upper class. The modernist practices of materialism institutionalized during the period that stories were written. We observe a society divided, separated by language, education, and wealth. Maupassant gives us a chance to see how that gap can be bridged, both successfully and unsuccessfully. As he portrays it, French society cannot simply be defined by two terms, "rich" and "poor." Within each group there are smaller less obvious distinctions, and it is in the middle, in that gray area between wealth and poverty that many of the most difficult questions arise and from which the

most surprising truths emerge. Maupassant also represents the issue of females. Maupassant's depiction of women and attitudes toward them is impressively and sometimes confusingly varied. They are shown in conventional roles as mothers and housekeepers and as strong-willed and independent. He pays special attention to the problem of women's place in society. He shows the desires of females to surpass the social boundaries but many come as barriers for their progression.

Maupassant forces us to think through social and gender issues. Maupassant achieved a great deal in the realm of art. He made a large imprint upon the politics of society of his time without inspiring a revolution or even directly being the author of a reform. What he did was to examine the platitudes by which his fellow countrymen lived in such a way as to cause others to reconsider them. Some characters want to change who they are, others don't want to change at all. Things get even more complicated when identities are made up, constructed. He wants us to justify the fact that culture is the construct of matter and it is not a permanent phenomenon. Maupassant is able to critique and comment on society through narratives, leaving his imprint on the very fabric of society.

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