

SUFFERING AS SEEN IN GUY DE MAUPASSANT'S *THE NECKLACE*

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Received: 15 Oktober 2023

Accepted: 25 Oktober 2023

Published: 12 November 2023

Abstract: This research was conducted to analyze Guy De Maupassant's short story entitled *The Necklace*. This short story tells of a beautiful woman named Mathilde who experienced suffering not only mentally but also physically. The purposes of the study were to reveal suffering in the short story *The Necklace* written by Guy de Maupassant and the factors that cause suffering to the characters in *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant. The writer chose this research to examine this study from the short story *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant by using qualitative research. The writer uses two forms of data collection: primary source, the source of information from the work itself, *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant. Secondary sources are the sources that help the writer complete the research through articles, journals, dictionaries, and the internet related to this research and provide information to support the research study. The result of this study shows that Mathilde Loisel is a dreamer, never grateful, selfish, and hardworking. She always dreams of luxurious things in her life, and she only loves them. Therefore, she is never happy with her life. Unfortunately, she doesn't realize that wealth is not everything in life. It happens when her best friend's diamond necklace is lost. She does not tell her best friend about the real incident. Instead, she kept the secret for ten years. She thinks that her best friend's diamond necklace is real, whereas it is fake.

Keywords: *Suffering, Discontent, Desire, Greed*

INTRODUCTION

Guy de Maupassant, a French writer, is the author of the short story "The Necklace". It was one of his most well-known compositions and was originally published in 1884. The story revolves around the themes of pride, materialism, and the consequences of deception. The story begins with Madame Mathilde Loisel, a beautiful but discontented woman who is unhappy with her modest and middle-class life. She

dreams of a more luxurious and affluent lifestyle and often daydreams about the finer things she believes she deserves. One day, her husband, Monsieur Loisel, brings home an invitation to a prestigious ball hosted by the Ministry of Education. Mathilde is excited about the opportunity to attend the ball but is distraught because she doesn't have an elegant dress to wear (Rani, 2020).

The relevance of this necklace by Guy de Maupassant to the life that is happening at the moment is to show that someone who is deceived by longing has experienced a complicated life. This case is experienced by Mathilde, the main character of this work. His actions that pushed him into a life of misery are described as follows: he always dreamed of becoming rich by doing nothing; he was endlessly jealous of other people's possessions; and he was either dishonest or afraid to tell the truth. On the other hand, she is actually a responsible woman, although she has to go through a tough life first before she brings out the better qualities in her. He learned something valuable from his past mistakes, even though they cost him dearly, and he had to sacrifice a lot to get them. Her husband gave her an invitation to a nice party, but she refused to join because she had nothing to wear. So, her husband bought her an expensive dress. The clear connection with today's life is about the lives of humans who are never satisfied with what they have and are always looking for ways to fulfill their worldly desires by all means, and this is reflected in the careless attitude of humans in today's world. We know someone who does corruption and shows off assets, which are the people's money that was confiscated unilaterally by them. In addition, those stories are reflected from women's role in society which according to Maru "The woman existence and their interaction with men as other part of society define the existence and continuation of society" (Maru, 2014); (Wagey et al., 2021); (Walanda et al., 2023).

In this case the gap found in this study is that the analysis of suffering is not only related to the content of literary elements in the short story as Tungka et al., (2021); Rorintulus, (2018); Rorintulus (2017) said that "a literary work reflects the social issues in a certain society", but also related to the reality that is happening in human life today. However, reading "The Necklace" is difficult. It's about the constant suffering caused by life's cruelties and coincidences, if you think about it. In the beginning, we meet Mathilde,

the typical unhappy housewife who spends her days lamenting how dull and boring her life is. When Mathilde attends a ball, she experiences one true joy, but fate is cruel. When she misplaces a diamond necklace she borrowed, the best night of her life turns into her worst nightmare. Then she and her husband experienced something completely different: the true agony of poverty. In the closing chapter of "The Necklace", Mathilde and her husband experience a decade of hardship as they try to pay off the huge debt they incurred as a result of losing the necklace. This suffering and the fact that Loisel lived on the "rue des Martyrs" suggest that Maupassant wanted readers to see Mathilde and her husband as different martyrs.

RESEARCH METHOD

The writer chose this research to examine this study from the short story *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant by using a qualitative approach. Berg and Howard (2012) characterize qualitative research as meanings, a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols, and a description of things. Creswell (2018) asserts that qualitative research methods show an alternative way to academic inquiry compared to quantitative research approaches. While the procedures are similar, qualitative approaches use different designs, have distinct data processing steps, and rely on text and image data.

Qualitative research in literature, as outlined by John W. Creswell in (Suoth et al., 2023); (Wuntu & Rorintulus, 2022) involves the use of qualitative research methods to study various aspects of literary works, including themes, characters, narratives, and the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which literature is produced and consumed. Qualitative research in literature can take many forms, and researchers may employ a range of qualitative methods to explore different aspects of literary texts and their impact.

Qualitative research in literature is a multidimensional field that allows researchers to explore the intricate connections between literature, culture, society, and individual experiences. Researchers often employ a combination of these qualitative methods to delve deeper into the meanings and interpretations of literary texts and their significance

in various contexts. The choice of method depends on the research questions and goals of the study. (Creswell, 2012)

The writer used two forms of data collection: Primary Source, the source of information from the works itself, *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant. Secondary sources, the sources that help the writer to complete the research through articles, journal, dictionary and the internet related to this research and information to support the writer research study. The writer first read the novel and understands the story to find out the main ideas of the story.

An objective method is used when assessing the data. With an emphasis on the analysis of the work itself, this method is written from the reader's point of view. In other words, it essentially focuses on the work alone, treating it as a standalone unit made up of only its intrinsic components. According to Abrams:

“But there is also a fourth procedure, the objective orientation, which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being”. (Abrams 26).

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

"Suffering in the Necklace" is noticeable. When people consider it, they realize that it's about unending misery brought on by chance and the harshness of life. Mathilde, the archetypal unhappy housewife, is introduced in the first scene. She spends her days lamenting how dull and dingy her existence is. When Mathilde attends a ball, she experiences one brief moment of true happiness, but fate is unkind. When she misplaces the diamond jewelry she borrowed, her most wonderful night turns into her greatest nightmare.

Suffering reflected in Guy De Maupassant's *The Necklace*

Mental Suffering

Mental suffering, often referred to as psychological distress or emotional suffering, is an intricate and multifaceted experience that can manifest in a variety of ways. Experts

from various fields such as psychology, psychiatry, and mental health counseling have different perspectives on mental suffering (Grebe, 2023).

In Guy De Maupassant's *The Necklace*, suffering is a prevalent theme throughout the story. One quotation that illustrates the suffering endured by the primary figure, Mathilde Loisel, is the following:

"She suffered endlessly, feeling herself born for every delicacy and luxury. She suffered from the poorness of her house, from its mean walls, worn chairs, and ugly curtains."

This quote highlights Mathilde's emotional suffering and dissatisfaction with her current life. She yearns for a life of elegance and luxury, but her modest circumstances only lead to constant discontentment and a sense of unfulfilled desires. The description of her house as "poor" with "mean walls" and "ugly curtains" emphasizes the stark contrast between her current reality and the life she dreams of, amplifying her sense of suffering and discontent.

Mathilde suffers from envy when she sees her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier, with her luxurious possessions. This envy fuels her desire to appear wealthy and fashionable, leading her to borrow the necklace. The suffering is compounded when Mathilde loses the borrowed necklace and decides to deceive Madame Forestier by replacing it with a new one. This choice sets in motion a chain of events that result in severe consequences for both Mathilde and her husband.

"And, clad like a poor woman, she went to the fruiterer, to the grocer, to the butcher, a basket on her arm, bargaining, meeting with impertinence, defending her miserable money, sou by sou."

This quote depicts the financial suffering Mathilde endures after losing the borrowed necklace. Her situation forces her to live a life of poverty, struggling to buy the necessities and facing humiliation in her day-to-day interactions.

Mathilde's financial situation worsens after replacing the necklace with a replica. The debt they incur forces them into a life of poverty and hard work, sacrificing their comfort and well-being for many years. It's no secret that Mathilde can be difficult to like.

She can come out as conceited, materialistic, and superficial, especially in contrast to her spouse who goes to great measures to appease her. She's always wanting more, while he's content with what he has. She hardly ever expresses any kind of affection for him, whereas he seems to care deeply for her.

In Guy De Maupassant's "*The Necklace*" effectively portrays the suffering endured by Mathilde Loisel due to her discontentment, envy, and materialistic desires. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of chasing illusions and the importance of finding contentment and honesty in one's current situation.

Physical Suffering

Physical suffering refers to the experience of distress, discomfort, or pain in the body. It can manifest in various forms and intensities and may result from a wide range of causes, including injuries, illnesses, medical conditions, or physical trauma. Physical suffering is a deeply personal and subjective experience, and its perception can vary from person to person. (Grebe, 2023) The suffering in the story is, to a great extent, self-inflicted. Mathilde's desire to maintain appearances and her fear of humiliation drive her to make dishonest choices, leading to her and her husband's misery. It is connected with the ultimate irony of the story lies in the revelation that the original necklace was a mere imitation, rendering all the suffering pointless. The story suggests that if Mathilde had been honest about the loss from the beginning, the suffering could have been avoided.

"The Necklace" is a poignant tale that delves into the consequences of pride, envy, and the relentless pursuit of material possessions. Through Mathilde's story, Guy de Maupassant explores the theme of suffering caused by the obsession with appearances and the cost of dishonesty."

The story serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of honesty, contentment, and the acceptance of one's circumstances.

Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace" opens with Mathilde Loisel feeling dissatisfied with her existence because she hasn't been content with her situation since almost her birth. Mathilde was raised in a lower-class environment with no opportunities, as the first lines of the story reveal. Mathilde Loisel aspires to be a beauty queen. She has an

obsession with rich, elegant, and beautiful goods, as well as the lives that go along with them. She was sadly not born into a wealthy family that could have supported her goal. Instead, she gets married to a "little clerk" and lives with him in an apartment so shabby it brings tears to her eyes (1). Mathilde, cooped up in the house all day, has no choice but to grieve over the tacky furniture and the amazing life she isn't living. She despises both her life and, most likely, her husband. She weeps "all day long, from chagrin, from regret, from despair, and from distress" (6) and dreams day after day about escaping it all. In the end, Mathilde is somewhat of a materialistic girl. She desires expensive things in life.

Is she being "greedy" because she wants to live the life of a fairy tale? Well, Mathilde isn't happy with the story for the first half. She is just thinking about the dress when her husband brings her the invitation. Upon receiving the outfit, her only thought was of the gems she was missing. Additionally, she isn't entirely happy with any of Mme. Forestier's jewelry collection when she arrives; she continues asking, "You haven't got anything else?" (46). At least until she spots the diamond necklace, which is the most stunning and costly-looking item of jewelry.

Consequently, Mathilde is most likely greedy by several criteria. However, the story doesn't finish with her greed. She desires other things in addition to material possessions. She also has a deeper motivation for her avarice, which is discontent. We can't help but believe that she wouldn't be daydreaming about a life she could never have if she was genuinely content with her life as it is (married, home, etc.).

The big celebration finally arrived. Madame Loisel achieved success. Of all of them, she was the most beautiful: graceful, kind, joyful, and full of smiles. Every man in the room was staring at her, asking to meet her and hear her name. Every cabinet attaché desired to dance with her. The minister observed her. (53) Despite her vanity, Mathilde isn't fooling herself about how lovely she is. Although Mathilde's conceit about the ball may seem excessive, consider this: as far as she is aware, the ball may be her only opportunity to live the life she has always imagined.

The Causes of Suffering to The Main Character in Guy De Maupassant's The Necklace

In "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, several factors contribute to the suffering experienced by the main character, Mathilde Loisel. These factors are central to the plot and themes of the story:

Ambition and Discontentment

Mathilde's intense ambition and discontentment with her social status and material possessions lead to her suffering. She constantly yearns for a life of luxury and elegance, believing that she deserves more than her middle-class background offers. Envy and Comparison: Mathilde's envy of the wealthy and the privileged lifestyle of her friend, Madame Forestier, further intensifies her suffering. She constantly compares her life to that of others, feeling inadequate and dissatisfied with her own circumstances. Dishonesty and Deception: Instead of being honest about losing the necklace, Mathilde and her husband, Monsieur Loisel, decide to replace it without Madame Forestier's knowledge. This act of deception deepens their suffering as they plunge into debt to buy a costly replacement. Financial Hardship: The cost of replacing the necklace with a replica diamond necklace puts Mathilde and her husband in a dire financial situation. They exhaust their savings and borrow money, leading to a life of hardship and struggle for many years. Social Isolation: After losing the necklace, Mathilde's social status declines, and she becomes isolated from her former friends and acquaintances. This social isolation adds to her suffering as she realizes the consequences of her actions.

The last chapter of "The Necklace," Mathilde and her husband strive to repay their massive debt resulting from the theft of the necklace, which causes them to suffer for ten years. It appears like Maupassant wants readers to see Mathilde and her husband as martyrs, albeit different kinds of martyrs, based on this suffering and the fact that the Loisel reside on "rue des Martyrs." Mathilde is a martyr for a cause; she believes that everything that seems pricey must be genuinely valuable, which is why she is drawn to symbols of riches. As a result, Mathilde views her pain as a deal where she paid the fee after spending a night in luxury, rather than as penance or a moral penalty for her avarice.

Put another way, Mathilde uses her steadfast belief that the necklace was worth 10 years of privation to justify and astonishingly tolerate her pain. Readers can perceive that Mathilde's suffering appears to be a direct result of her past selfishness and vanities, despite the fact that she claims to consider it transactional rather than moral. Mathilde felt impoverished and thought her life, her apartment, and her clothes were insufficient. She is now compelled to live "the horrible life of necessity," which teaches her what real poverty is like. The Breton servant who cleans Mathilde's house makes her feel uncomfortable in the early section of the novel. She is now compelled to live a working woman's life and do the chores herself. The desire of Mathilde to fit in with upper society drives the early section of the narrative. Upon arriving at the celebration in stylish attire, she is praised by ministers and cabinet officials. She goes to the market to haggle with insulting berries vendors, grocery stores, and butchers now that she is "dressed like a pauper."

The notion that pain might effectively serve as retribution for Mathilde's moral transgressions is undermined by the fact that That doesn't appear that Mathilde has learned a lesson from her turn of events. Mathilde's conversation with Mme. Forestier demonstrates her refusal to take accountability for misplacing or lending the jewelry. "I've had a hard life since I last saw you. And lots of misery... and all because of you!" Mathilde considers her misfortune and jewelry loss to be, at best, a stroke of ill luck. In the worst-case scenario, she assigns the guilt to the woman who lent her the necklace rather than to herself, the one who misplaced it. Furthermore, when Mme. Forestier discloses that the necklace is fake, Mathilde's notion that its value validates her suffering is shown as being false. Since Mathilde perceives the necklace to have transactional rather than moral worth, its low cost makes her suffering meaningless, which could be her real punishment.

On the other hand, Mathilde's spouse undergoes an alternative form of agony, and his martyrdom centers on issues of integrity, magnanimity, and selflessness. Throughout the novel, Mathilde's husband is known for his generosity, yet occasionally it looks like his more self-centered wife is taking advantage of him. For instance, Mathilde is aware of when to ask him for just the correct quantity of money, which is sufficient to buy a fancy garment but not excessive enough to cause "immediate refusal and terrified

exclamation from the frugal clerk." M. Loisel makes bigger and greater sacrifices because he puts his wife's petty wants ahead of his own happiness, until he is forced to take a huge risk in order to borrow the money needed to replace the necklace. Replacing the jewelry is a matter of honor for M. Loisel, and he is afraid to sign anything without knowing if he would be able to carry out his end of the bargain. Mathilde's spouse is a martyr since his good traits—most notably his generosity and kindness—were what ultimately brought him to ruin. According to Maupassant, giving freely might have disastrous results if done so carelessly.

Mathilde and her spouse bravely endure a life of hardship in order to repay their debt, accepting their fate in spite of their pain. Both turn into martyrs, but Mathilde's martyrdom is compromised since she believes that her suffering was worth it in exchange for the necklace, even if it was all in vain. Her spouse comes out as the real martyr since he gave his life to atone for an error that wasn't even his own because of his devotion to love and honor.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in "The Necklace," Guy de Maupassant skillfully portrays the several factors that caused the characters, such as: ambition and discontentment which reflected by specific characteristics like envy and comparison, dishonesty and deception, financial hardship, and social isolation. Furthermore, in "The Necklace," Mathilde Loisel's suffering is fueled by her ambition and discontentment with her middle-class life. Her envy of the wealthy and desire to appear affluent lead her to borrow a valuable necklace, which she later loses. The dishonesty in replacing the necklace with a replica sets her and her husband on a path of financial hardship, isolation, and regret. This cautionary tale warns against the dangers of greed, vanity, and the pursuit of outward appearances.

In addition, there were findings in suffering reflected from *Necklace* by Guy De Maupassant, it was divided into: mental suffering and physical suffering which all reflected by its character in this short story. Whereas, Maupassant showcases how human desires and a lack of acceptance for one's circumstances can lead to unnecessary suffering. The pursuit of superficial beauty and social status proves futile, as the

characters ultimately find themselves worse off than before. These cautionary tales underscore the significance of being content with what one has and the consequences of dishonesty and envy. "The Necklace" present valuable lessons about the human condition, illustrating the dangers of valuing material possessions and social status above genuine contentment and integrity. These timeless themes make the stories enduring and relevant works of literature that continue to resonate with readers, urging them to reflect on the choices they make and the true sources of happiness in life.

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