

## The Main Character Problems Occurred on Short Story the Diamond Necklace by Guy de Maupassant

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### Abstract:

This study aims to discuss and find the problems experienced by the main character, Mathilde, in the short story The Necklace by Guy de Maupassant. This study uses Marxism theory, which focuses on the main character's problems in dealing with how someone is treated differently by the implementation of social classes in society. The researcher uses the short story source The Necklace, reads it carefully, understands, and then concludes the problems and takes data that can be taken through the short story file. The researcher found several problems in this short story, such as differences in treatment according to the social caste of society, the main character's endless desire to feel upper class, and the consequences of the greed experienced by the main character in achieving her desires. Thus, the researcher can discuss these problems using Marxism theory, where differences in social castes often become problems related to envy and jealousy that arise when there is a different treatment between one social caste and another.

**Keywords:** society problems; marxism; social caste; social classes

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas dan menemukan permasalahan yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Mathilde, dalam cerpen The Necklace karya Guy de Maupassant. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Marxisme, yang berfokus pada permasalahan tokoh utama dalam menghadapi bagaimana seseorang diperlakukan secara berbeda oleh penerapan kelas sosial dalam masyarakat. Peneliti menggunakan sumber cerpen The Necklace, membacanya dengan saksama, memahaminya, kemudian menyimpulkan permasalahan dan mengambil data yang dapat diambil melalui berkas cerpen tersebut. Peneliti menemukan beberapa permasalahan dalam cerpen ini, seperti perbedaan perlakuan menurut kasta sosial masyarakat, keinginan tokoh utama yang tidak ada habisnya untuk merasa sebagai kelas atas, dan akibat dari keserakahan yang dialami oleh tokoh utama dalam mencapai keinginannya. Dengan demikian, peneliti dapat membahas permasalahan tersebut dengan menggunakan teori Marxisme, di mana perbedaan kasta sosial sering kali menjadi permasalahan yang berkaitan dengan rasa iri dan cemburu yang muncul ketika terjadi perbedaan perlakuan antara satu kasta sosial dengan kasta sosial lainnya.

**Kata kunci:** permasalahan masyarakat; marxisme; kasta sosial; kelas sosial

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

In our world, there are many different kinds of people with various lives that they live and experience. It creates a difference between one human being and another, just like the emergence of social classes. The social class itself has existed for a long time since our earlier ancestors, as an example of the social caste of adherents of Hinduism with four types, namely the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra castes. Then, with this social class, people will have many different feelings about their class conditions. The lower class feels oppressed, depressed, ashamed, and humiliated. It also makes the upper class feel proud, can do whatever they want, and feel the luxury around them. It creates the existence of "injustice" between social classes. The social class system is found in the Marxist theory put forward by Karl Marx. He explained that social classes are divided into two classes, namely "the ruling class (bourgeoisie) who own the means of production (factories, for example) and the working class (proletariat) who are exploited (take advantage of) for their wage labor" RSA, (2015, p. 11).

Karl Heinrich Marx created the theory of Marxism in the 19th century or at the end of 1844. Karl Marx created this theory based on his protest against the bourgeoisie or the upper class, which had capitalism as a basis. This is based on when the bourgeoisie collects as much money as possible from the hard work and sacrifices of the proletariat. The proletariat or workers who were working desperately and without stopping had to experience the misery of the bourgeoisie; not only that, the results of the proletariat were also forcibly taken and enjoyed arbitrarily by the bourgeoisie. Ultimately, the proletariat, who felt oppressed, revolutionised by trying to overthrow the bourgeoisie and their understanding of capitalism. "He wrote that constant class struggle leads inevitably to the proletarian revolution in which the proletarian class will win and a non-class society will spread." Helemejko, (2012, p.9) Thus, the theory of Karl Marx, which strongly supports the proletariat, is very much applied and begins to be instilled in them.

Guy de Maupassant was a popular 19th-century French writer who was considered one of the founders of the modern short story. Guy de Maupassant was a popular French writer of the 19th century. He is known for his naturalistic and realistic writings and is best known for his short stories, which are believed to have greatly influenced much of modern literature. He is also considered one of the founders of the modern short story. Maupassant

had a bad imagination, almost paranoid. Therefore, Maupassant's short stories are often compared to the works of another American short story writer, Edgar Allan Poe. Maupassant's writing is characterized by objectivity, restrained language, directness and thoroughness, and occasional jokes. According to him, these works highlight small, neglected aspects of life. The main strength of Maupassant's story is not the "object of the story" but the "way the story is told". This paper examines whether the interpretation of Marxism towards one of Maupassant's famous short stories, "The Diamond Necklace", can help understand the short story as a whole or not relate it to Guy de Maupassant's background. The Diamond Necklace tells the story of Mathilde, a working-class girl who wants to look glamorous when invited to a party by The Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau. She borrows a necklace from a rich friend, only wanting to look like a wealthy woman, just as she always wanted. Mathilde lost the necklace and worked her entire life to pay for it, only finding out years later that it was worthless costume jewellery. Her sacrifice was in vain.

***Research Problem:***

The researchers analyze social class conditions and Mathilde's problems in this short story. There are several steps to analyze the data obtained, such as reading and understanding the data sources in the short story. Apart from that, researchers will also explain caste differences and the impacts experienced by each character in Guy de Maupassant's '*The Diamond Necklace*' using the theories of Marxism.

***Research Question:***

- How is the upper class describing in the Diamond Necklace?
- How does Mathilde struggle to be part of the upper class?

***Problem Significance:***

In this research, the researcher hopes that readers can understand the existence of differences of social class in our lives. This research will also explain caste differences and the impacts experienced by Mathilde in The Diamond Necklace by Guy de Maupassant.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Marxism

Karl Marx created the theory of Marxism at the end of 1844. This theory explains the differences in caste and social class around us. Marxism also opposes the ideology of capitalism, which always benefits the bourgeoisie and suffers the proletariat. This theory is commonly used to analyze and identify a problem regarding social class differences that exist in short stories, novels, poems and other literary works.

### *Previous Study*

Before conducting further research, there were several other researchers who had researched the same literary work, namely the main character in this short story, named Mathilde Loisel. However, they use different theories to carry out the analysis in their research. The related research that the researcher takes some references was written by: Handayani & Rahmawati, (2023) in their research paper analyzed Guy De Maupassant's short story, The Main Character in "The Diamond Necklace" by Guy De Maupassant. They focused on analyzing the main character, Mathilde Loisel. The analysis they carried out used psychology theory to identify the main character's characteristics. As a result, they mentioned several important things in their research, such as The Characters, Plot Structure (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution), conflict experienced by the main character, Setting, Point of View, Literary Devices, Theme and Symbol. This research paper aims to find the characteristics and conflicts directed at the main character so that readers will know the main problems in this short story.

Then, the second previous study was carried out by the researcher Ui (2019) in her analysis entitled A Feminist Analysis Of "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant. In her research, she focuses on the main characters described as shallow, materialistic, and manipulative so that the author applies the theory of feminism to deepen the object of analysis in her research paper. As a result, the author states that Mathilde thinks that every woman, to get beauty, must wear something nice and luxurious; in this story, Mathilde is very greedy for fancy clothes and diamonds that she will wear to attend parties. The author also wrote that Mathilde used diamonds and luxurious clothes so she could feel equality with men.

From the previous studies above, the researchers were able to find this gap. Both of these studies used the same object for analysis, namely a short story by Guy De

Maupassant entitled *The Diamond Necklace*. However, both use different theories with different analytical focuses. Handayani & Rahmawati (2023) in their analysis, they focus on main character analysis using intrinsic and extrinsic elements. They also mentioned “Feeling Inferiority” and “Striving for Superiority” based on the psychological theory experienced by the main character. On the other hand, Ui (2019) carry out an analysis that focuses on finding the feminism that exists in the main character. The writer mentions that the main character must wear a luxurious dress and a necklace of jewellery to look beautiful and charming. Those two studies are different from this research, because in this research, the researcher analyzes every problem experienced by the main character, namely Mathilde, in realizing her desire to become part of the upper class and the consequences she must accept, using Marxist theory by Karl Marx.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive methodology to collect data. This method is used when the research problem is unclear and still vague. Researchers read and interpreted the contents of the short story. This research will also be carried out by analyzing one of Guy de Maupassant's best and most famous works, the short story *The Diamond Necklace*. Researchers focus on analyzing social class conditions and Mathilde's problems in this short story. There are several steps to analyze the data obtained, such as reading and understanding the data sources in the short story. Apart from that, researchers will also explain caste differences and the impacts experienced by each character in Guy de Maupassant's 'The Diamond Necklace' using the theories of Marxism.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Marxism Analysis

This short story tells about a woman named Mathilde who lives in a poor family. This makes his life very miserable and depressed. We can see it in the sentence "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." De Maupassant (1884, p. 1) Later, because she was born into a poor family, she always wanted to experience what it's like to be rich and live a luxurious life. "She imagined delicate meals, gleaming silver, tapestries peopling the walls with folk of a past age and strange birds in faery forests; she imagined delicate food served in marvelous dishes,



murmured gallantries, listened to with an inscrutable smile as one trifled with the rosy flesh of trout or wings of asparagus chicken." De Maupassant (1884, p. 1) from the explanation above, we can see that Mathilde lives in two different social caste conditions: upper- and lower-class castes. Mathilde was born into a lower-class caste, which made her suffer greatly and was tormented by her social situation. He longed for what it was like to be a member of an upper-class family, from imagining the condition of a luxurious house, the silver lining the rooms, to eating a trout or asparagus chicken wings. Mathilde had a good friend from her old school; however, she never saw her friend again due to her low social class. "She had a rich friend, an old school friend whom she refused to visit, because she suffered so keenly when she returned home. She would weep whole days, with grief, regret, despair, and misery." De Maupassant, (1884, p. 1) , we can understand that being born in different social class conditions impacts our behaviour, friends, and the people around us. As described by Karl Marx, human social conditions are divided into 2: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In this story, Mathilde and her husband are working class (Proletariat), where it is often depicted that a working class is a lower-class person who has to work hard to meet their daily needs. As for the upper-class people, The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponneau are owners of capital (bourgeoisie) who are described as rich and have power over everything.

### **Describing the Upper-Class Conditions**

In this short story entitled 'The Diamond Necklace', society is described as having two social caste conditions, low social caste and high social caste. These two social conditions have differences and influence on a person's economic aspects and status. Andersson, (2023, p. 3) stated that "These differences are shown through unequal social and economic conditions, such as status and wage." Mathilde was born into a low social caste. This makes her seen as an inferior person and impacts her future life. When she wanted to get married, because of her low social class, she could not choose a man who was rich, elegant, and luxurious. However, she could only accept marrying an ordinary working man. This makes her very depressed and stressed because, for her, a woman who has beauty like Mathilde should have luxurious and elegant social conditions. So, Mathilde kept imagining herself in luxury. Then the next topic is about high social castes in society. In this case, high social caste is the pinnacle of a social condition in society. This social caste is often described as a person or group of people with power, wealth and



the will to do what they want. Being at the top of the social caste impacts all things and aspects of society, such as getting anything easily or making it easier to gain respect from other people. Cohen et al., (2017, p. 2) explain that "Caste affects income, access to education, and interpersonal deference." Therefore, many people try to reach the top of a social caste because of the advantages and privileges that only exist in the highest social caste. In this short story, the upper social class is described as a group of wealthy people who enjoy everything they have. They are also described as liking to throw big parties as a celebration or to have fun. People with power will also be present at the party, so they also like to gather together in one place to talk. Upper-class people are also described as liking to wear luxurious and glamorous clothes, especially women who want to show their "beauty" not only through their facial features and physique but also through the jewellery and items they wear so that "luxury" can be described as a form of beauty in a woman. This is something very important because "luxury" also shows their social status.

### **Mathilde struggle to be part of the Upper-Class**

Mathilde is someone who was born into a low social caste. She was born in simple circumstances. Starting from simple home furnishings and ordinary home conditions, even to the point where she gets married, she can only marry an ordinary person and has a low social class. This made Mathilde always imagine how good it would be to taste luxurious food, have antique furniture, tableware made of silver, waiters ready to serve her, and even sparkling jewellery. Realizing this was just her imagination, Mathilde could only accept the real situation. However, one moment changed Mathilde's life, namely when her husband came home with an envelope containing an invitation letter from high-ranking officials, the Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau. Immediately, Mathilde made various efforts to look beautiful and charming when attending the party. Starting from buying nice and newest dresses, even being willing to borrow jewellery necklaces from friends. This illustrates that beauty is not only through physical appearance but also through the luxury of our items. After arriving at the party, Mathilde achieved the success and desires she had always wanted. She looked stunning and elegant, and all the men wanted to get to know her, to the point that the minister noticed her presence as if they saw the most beautiful person among them. Mathilde felt pleasure she had never felt before. She danced and was drunk with happiness, without thinking about anything, just wanting to have fun while enjoying the feeling of being part of the upper class. However,



this pleasure is only temporary, and this will make Mathilde realize how big the risk is when we own luxury goods. After returning from the party, she still wanted to show off his luxury to the people passing by the party. She did not want people to know that she was just an ordinary girl from a lower class. Then, when Mathilde and her husband arrived at her house, Mathilde realized that the Diamond Necklace she was wearing and was proud of was missing. Mathilde and her husband panicked; they started tracing every street and direction they passed, from the party venue to the front of their house, but this was in vain because the diamond necklace was still not there. The next day, Mathilde did not want to tell her friend about the disappearance of the diamond necklace. She also took the initiative to visit several existing jewellery shops, hoping one of them would sell the same jewellery as the diamond necklace. They searched individually and found a shop selling diamond necklaces exactly like the one he had lost the previous day. The shop seller also gave a high price for someone as simple as Mathilde and her husband. They also struggled to the death, starting from her husband, who worked hard and often made extra money by selling page photocopying services, to Mathilde, who felt the burden was very heavy. She borrowed money from several people, entered into several agreements, and borrowed money from money lenders to pay for the Diamond Necklace. Not only that, Mathilde also has to pay the loan by working according to Mathilde's agreement. Starting from doing tiring household chores and kitchen tasks. She washed the dishes, scraping her pink fingernails on the rough pottery and bottom of the pan. She washed dirty linens, shirts, and dishcloths, then hung them to dry on a line; every morning, he threw the trash can out onto the street and brought water. Wearing shabby clothes, he went to the fruit man, to the grocer, to the butcher, with a basket in his arms, haggling, insulted by everyone present, only to fight for every half cent of his money. All of this went on for 10 years. After all the debts and all the agreements had been paid, Mathilde's appearance changed drastically. Mathilde looked very old, had messy hair, her hands had turned red, and her voice had become shrill. This was only because of her hard work replacing the lost diamond necklace. Ultimately, this greatly impacts appearance, health, and sacrifices much time.

## CONCLUSION(S)

The short story "*The Diamond Necklace*" shows the existence of social classes in society. High society generally believes that they are more respected. They also have the

power to address perceived social and class scope. Therefore, even though there are social classes in society, they should be able to live harmoniously and help each other regardless of their social status. In this way, it is hoped that society will not always look at each other's status and create harmony.

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