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Marxist Feminism in Guy De Maupassant's *The Diamond Necklace*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out how Marxist feminism is depicted in the short story The Diamond Necklace by Guy De Maupassant. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to obtain and describe data on how Marxist feminism is depicted in the short story. In this analysis, it is found that there is Marxist feminism, which covers two aspects, namely economy and society. The economic aspect of Guy de Maupassant's short story The Diamond Necklace is the debt and poverty that Mathilde and her husband face after losing the necklace they borrowed, and the society aspect is social injustice and class inequality. This research shows that there is an impact of Marxist feminism on the main character's life, which makes her a victim of economic and social pressure due to the patriarchal and capitalist systems. Her dissatisfaction with her social status, her desire to be accepted in high society, and ultimately her suffering as a result of her attempts to fulfill social expectations, all reflect the destructive effects of class and gender oppression. In this study, the author hopes that readers will read the literary work to understand how the influence of Marxist and capitalist feminism is manifested in the story.

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1. Introduction

Feminism is a movement of women to achieve full equality or equal rights and autonomy or freedom to determine themselves (Nuraeni 2017: 125). Feminism seeks to eliminate conflicts between groups that are considered stronger and groups that are considered weaker, with efforts to build a more inclusive and just society. In addition, feminism rejects injustice as a result of patriarchal society and rejects the history of philosophy as a male-centered discipline (Precillia 2023: 366).

Throughout history, women have faced discrimination and inequality in various aspects of life. Feminism emerged as a response to these injustices and seeks to challenge and change the social, economic, and political systems that perpetuate gender inequality. Feminism is an ideology that advocates for equal rights between men and women in politics, decision-making, careers, and family planning. It encompasses various social, cultural, and political movements that strive for gender equality (Widya and Asnani 2020: 9).

One of the streams of feminism is Marxist feminism which is a form of feminist thought that stems from the thoughts of Marx and Engels. According to Tong, Marxist feminism explains how the economic power of capital creates an operating system for subordinate groups (Danadharta 2019: 57). According to Marxist feminism, women's work not only affects the way women think, but also shapes their nature. They also believe that capitalism is a system based on power relations and exchange. (Wiyatmi 2017: 18) argues that economically, it is men who produce material, while women, despite expending energy and spending almost all of their time working at home, do not receive any income. In fact, women

who are housewives are economically dependent on men's income. They have no control over property or money because they do not earn their own income as housewives.

This research is to analyze about the aspect of Marxist feminism, and its impact to the protagonist's life in short story The Diamond Necklace by Guy De Maupassant.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Basic Concepts of Feminism

According to Darma, the term feminism emerged in the 17th century. In the 18th-19th centuries, feminism emerged as a homogeneous movement, views and strategies (Hidayatulloh 2017: 17). In other words, in the 18th-19th centuries feminism became more organized and structured into a movement with relatively uniform views and strategies. This reflected a concerted effort to achieve a common goal of fighting for women's rights and addressing gender injustices in society. According to Darma, etymologically, the term "feminist" comes from the word "femme," which means woman in French. Feminism is an understanding of women that seeks to fight for the rights of women as a social class in society. This shows that feminism recognizes the injustices experienced by women not only as individuals, but also as a social group with a common interest in achieving gender equality and justice in society. According to Hodgson-Wright, as cited in Suwastini (2013: 199) feminist struggles took three main forms. First, feminists sought to challenge and revise the subordinate position assigned to women in church doctrine. Second, they opposed various behavioural manuals that restricted women's roles and conduct during that period. Third, they fostered solidarity among women writers. This solidarity helped build women's confidence and provided financial support, thereby strengthening their position in the literary world.

According to Mohajan in Soleman (2023: 217), in his journal, feminism is a mass movement commenced by women of all groups to eradicate all forms of feminist oppressions by men that are prevailing in a patriarchal society. He also states that feminism movement has always fought against all forms of oppression against women. It is a procedure that seeks to understand and formulate gender roles and encourage the improvement of women's roles in the social structure.

According to Darma in Ariaseli and Puspita (2021: 533), the struggle of the feminist movement developed more broadly with demands to achieve equality and equality of dignity and women's freedom of choice in managing their lives and bodies both in the domestic and public spheres. Therefore, this movement marks the birth of feminism. Feminism is a women's movement that emerged around the 1960s, which is a movement of women's struggle to fight against the objectification of women and to end injustice or discrimination against women.

2.2 Types of Feminist Movements

According to Tong in Lisa (2017: 28), there are several types of feminism, including:

1. Liberal Feminism

Their argument emphasized that men should deny women opportunities if women themselves were unwilling to grant men access to participation in politics and education. The movement aimed to advocate for equal rights in multiple spheres, including politics, law, education, freedom, and socio-cultural spheres.

2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminism views patriarchy and sexism as the central pillars of women's oppression and considers these systems to be pervasive and deeply rooted in society. This perspective disregards other social hierarchies such as race, age, culture, caste, and class, viewing them as secondary to the overarching influence of patriarchy and sexism. Radical

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feminists argue that patriarchy, a system in which power is predominantly held by men, perpetuates gender inequality and serves as the basis for various forms of oppression experienced by women.

3. Post-Modern Feminism

Post-modern feminism emerged around the early 1980s and is associated with the term "post-feminism," which indicates a critical stance toward various earlier feminist theories, especially those of the second wave of feminism. Post-modern feminism emphasizes that concepts such as gender identity, sexuality, and power are fluid and complex and cannot be understood through a single or universal lens.

4. Anarchist Feminism

Anarchist feminism addresses the role of state power and seeks to critique, re-imagine, and plan alternatives. In this perspective, anarchism and feminism are seen as attempts to achieve absolute freedom that does not need to be regulated or protected by laws or the state. Anarchist feminism emphasizes that women's freedom includes liberation from both patriarchal oppression and authoritarian state power structures.

5. Socialist Feminism

Basically, socialist feminism argues that the capitalist system reinforces and perpetuates gender inequality because the majority of power and wealth is held by men. Roles in society refer to specific positions or statuses held by individuals, both men and women. In this context, socialist feminism emphasizes how capitalist structures reinforce male dominance and perpetuate gender inequality.

6. Marxist Feminism

In the view of Marxist feminists, the existence of unfair treatment of women is not only caused by individual actions, but rather the result of the social, political and economic structures in which they live. They see that gender injustice does not only occur due to the decisions or actions of certain individuals, but also due to the norms, values and policies applied in a society dominated by the capitalist system or class system. According to Sujarwa in Urfan and Irma (2023: 222), Marxist and socialist feminists believe that operations against women are not the deliberate actions of a single individual, but rather the product of the social, political and economic structures in which they live.

Marxist feminism also views capitalism as a system of relationships and exchange relationships. According to Tong in Urfan and Irma (2023: 222) The goal of Marxist feminism is to promise that women and men can jointly build social structures and social roles that allow both genders to realize their full human potential. Based on the above opinions, feminism is a movement that aims to achieve equality between women and men, with a focus on achieving justice for women. According to Tong in Urfan and Irma (2023: 223), theories in the Marxist feminism school are divided into three theories as described in the following:

a. Marxist Economic Theory

Marxist feminism emphasizes the role of women's work in shaping women's thought and nature. They believe that the work given to women, both inside and outside the home, not only affects their experience and perception of the world, but also shapes their mindset and attitude to life (Tong, 2010: 143-144). The description of capitalism as a commodity or market society refers to the view that in the capitalist system, everything, including one's

labor power, is treated as a commodity that can be bought and sold in the market. In this context, capitalism is seen as a system in which market values and exchange become dominant in social and economic relations.

b. Marxist Society Theory

Marxist feminists view women in the collectivity of class teaching and class consciousness plays a big role in Marxist feminist thought (Tong, 2010: 147). In this perspective, women are seen as part of a collectivity that must learn and understand class dynamics and class consciousness. This is important because class structures not only affect the distribution of wealth and power, but also create different conditions for women from different walks of life. For example, women from the working class may experience oppression and exploitation differently to women from the bourgeoisie.

c. Marxist Political Theory

Marxist political theory also provides a framework of class analysis for Marxist feminism, which promises the liberation of women from the forces that oppress them. Marxist's thought aims to guide workers, both men and women, in their joint efforts to liberate themselves from class division. Women and men can work together to create social structures and social roles that allow both genders to realize their full human potential (Tong, 2010: 149-150). From the theory of Marxist feminism, it has several impacts, according to Heidi Hartmann (1979: 21-24), Marxist feminism emphasizes the importance of class and gender awareness in the analysis of oppression against women. Hartmann identifies that the combination of patriarchy and capitalism creates complex layers of oppression, which need to be solved through a comprehensive approach.

Silvia Federici (2004: 16-19) states that unpaid domestic work is one of the main forms of oppression faced by women. Federici emphasizes that in order to achieve women's liberation, there needs to be formal recognition of the value of domestic work and proper compensation. Federici also reconsiders how people understand women's contributions to society and to re-evaluate the social and economic structures that support these gender inequalities. According to Nancy Fraser in her article (2013: 1-3), Marxist Feminism emphasizes how capitalism has co-opted the feminist movement to support free markets and labor exploitation, shifting the focus away from economic and social equality

3. Research Method

Method of research is an important element in every scientific research. It shows the way how the researcher organizes a research. Method of research consist of study design, data collection, and data analysis as describe below**.** This research utilizes various readings and references pertaining to feminism. The research methodology employed is descriptive qualitative method, which presents data in the form of descriptions. Wina Sanjaya in Hafiya (2018: 44) defines the qualitative descriptive method as a technique that aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of social phenomena that have occurred in society. The method seeks to describe the character, nature, characteristics, and model of the phenomenon under investigation. It is important to note that this method is subjective. Descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that conveys its investigation process through words. It describes the characters obtained from the data and arranges them in a scientific setting, rather than using statistical procedures. Therefore, this research involves reading more references and short story manuscripts to produce data. In this research, the researcher obtains results by describing the meaning of each data point taken from short story excerpts.

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4. Discussion

The discussion covers aspects of Marxist feminism in short story and the Impact of Marxist feminism on the protagonist's life.

4.1 Aspects of the Marxist Feminism School in the Short Story

4.1.1 *Aspects of Marxist's Theory of Economic*

The economic aspect in the short story is the debt and poverty that Mathilde and her husband face after losing the necklace they borrowed. After this incident, the Loisel family lived in poverty, they fired all the servants who worked in their house and moved to a smaller place. The misery lasted ten years, Mounseir Loisel works three jobs, while Mathilade spent her days doing heavy housework.

> The dreadful debt must be paid. He would borrow, ask for time, appeal to the emotions of others. He did borrow, his signature with that of his wife being necessary. They compromised with the usurers and had to repay more than half the value of the necklace. Then they worked very hard for ten years to repay the balance.

It reveals the economic aspect of the short story by showing the serious financial impact of Mathilde Loisel and her husband's decision to replace the lost necklace. This quotation shows the heavy debt burden that Mathilde and her husband have to bear. They had to compromise with the moneylender and ended up paying more than half the value of the necklace as interest or additional fees. Overall, this illustrates how the decision to replace the lost necklace caused a severe economic crisis for Mathilde and her husband, who had to work hard and make sacrifices to settle their debt, drastically changing their quality of life and well-being. Madame finally knows and feels the poverty and economic hardship due to paying off debts. Because of the economic hardship due to these debts, they had to fire the maid and move into a flat. Mathilda performs her heroic role by becoming a washer with the aim of paying her debts and to overcome economic hardship and take over all the heavy household chores.

> Look here, Mathilde,' he persisted. 'What would be the cost of a suitable dress, which you could use on other occasions as well, something very simple?' She thought for several seconds, reckoning up prices and also wondering for how large a sum she could ask without bringing upon herself an immediate refusal and an exclamation of horror from the careful-minded clerk. At last she replied with some hesitation: 'I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it on four hundred francs.' He grew slightly pale, for this was exactly the amount he had been saving for a gun, intending to get a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre with some friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

The dialog between Mathilde and her husband shows the financial limitations they face. Mathilde feels the need to have a suitable dress for a social event, but she is aware that the request might worry her husband due to their limited budget. Mathilde inquiries about the price of a suitable dress, carefully estimating the amount that can be requested without making her frugal husband feel surprised or worried. She finally mentioned the figure of four hundred francs, the amount her husband had saved up to buy a rifle for fun with his friends. When Mathilde mentioned the amount, her husband turned pale at having to sacrifice his savings that had been planned for recreational activities.

4.1.2 *Aspect of Marxist's Theory of Society*

Society is a structure that experiences organizational and developmental tensions due to conflicts between groups whose interests are differentiated (Karl Marx in Harruma 2022). Marx's view of society is not limited to social interaction, but also involves fundamental changes in economic and social structures to achieve justice and equality. However, the Diamond Necklace reflects several aspects of society, namely social injustice and class inequality. Mathilde's traits that refer to aspects of society include how she views social status, the desire to be recognized in a higher social environment, and her reaction to existing social norms. The following excerpts illustrate aspects of society in the short story:

> She was one of those pretty and charming girl was born, as though fate had blundered over her, into a family of artisans. She had no marriage portion, no expectations, no means of getting known, understood, loved, and wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and she let herself be married off to a little clerk in the Ministry of Public Instruction.

This describes Mathilde as a beautiful and charming girl, who as if by a twist of fate, was born into a family of ordinary workers. Mathilde had no dowry, expectations, or means to be known, understood, loved, and married to a rich and honorable man. As a result, she married a minor clerk in the Ministry of Public Education, which did not match her ambitions for a more luxurious and prestigious life. She feels that her lot should be better, and that she deserves a more luxurious and prestigious life. This dissatisfaction reflects the social injustice that exists in society, where people can feel dissatisfied and depressed with their social status.

> 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.

It describes the plight of Mathilde who felt she deserved to live in luxury and delicacy, but the reality of her life was far from it. Mathilde's desire to live in luxury and her dissatisfaction with her living conditions reflect her social discontent and aspirations. People like Mathilde, who feel they deserve an upper-class life, are often trapped in a lower social class with limited resources. Mathilde's desire for a luxurious life and her dissatisfaction with her dreary apartment show the materialistic values held by society. In this context, Mathilde's happiness and life satisfaction are highly dependent on material possessions and external appearance. The possession of luxury goods, and this pressure makes Mathilde feel miserable.

> Instead of being delighted, as her-husband hoped, she flung the invitation petulantly across the table, murmuring: 'What do you want me to do with this?

This quotation depicts various aspects of society, including high social expectations and gender roles. Her husband expressed his pleasure while they were having dinner because he wanted to give Mathilde a party invitation, he thought Mathilde would like the gift he gave her. She feels she deserves something more than what she has, but the reality of her life does not match her expectations. This reflects the class aspirations that exist in society, where individuals are often dissatisfied with their social status and continue to desire a higher life. Her feelings of dissatisfaction also reflect the reality that many women feel trapped in the social roles set by society. Women were expected to look attractive and charming at social events, and failure to do so was perceived as a shortcoming and also felt this invitation would only highlight her inability to meet higher social standards.

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4.2 The Impact of Marxist Feminism on The Protagonist's Life

Capitalism becomes the causes women's position to be lower than that of men's. In Marxist economic theory, which recognizes the system of workers and employers, Marxist feminism sees men as the owners of capital because men have more access to the realm of production. Men work outside the home and earn wages, while women are relegated to the domestic sphere, spending their time doing housework without earning wages.

Furthermore, dissatisfaction and desire for higher status, makes Mathilde feel dissatisfied with her simple life as the wife of a little clerk and always imagines herself in a more luxurious place and living well. despite having a good life, Mathilda is not satisfied with what she has, dreaming of a life full of luxury, jewelry and admiration, and is dissatisfied with her lifestyle and believes that she deserves more. Her desire for luxury and higher social status reflects the internalization of patriarchal values that judge women by their appearance and social status. Here is an excerpt from the short story: *She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks*.

This quotation shows Mathilde's dissatisfaction with everyday life and her obsession with being more than she is the main trigger of conflict in the story. This reflects how social and economic factors can shape individual obsessions and disappointments. Mathilde insisted that her husband buy her a new dress and a diamond necklace, but he could not afford to buy a diamond necklace so he told her to borrow the necklace from his friend Madame Forestier to attend a party attended by upper-class people to make herself look equal to those upper-class people. Here's an excerpt from the short story: *She had no clothes, no jewels, nothing. And these were the only things she loved; she felt that she was made for them. She had longed so eagerly to charm, to be desired, to be wildly attractive and sought after*.

This quotation shows the social and economic pressures on the main character that made her want to escape her simple life and her obsession with social status and appearance. These pressures made her want to experience luxury, if only for a moment. When her husband said he would give Mathilda four hundred francs so that she could buy a nice dress, it shows that her husband is the main provider of financial resources in their household. Mathilde needs money to buy an appropriate dress for the party, and she has no resources of her own to fulfill this need. Instead, she had to rely on her husband to provide the necessary money. The following is an excerpt from the story: *But he said: 'Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty gown.'*

This quotation shows Mathilde's dependence on her husband in a clear way. Mathilde has no economic independence and has to depend on her husband for her needs and wants, which highlights the inequality in their relationship and how subordinate women's position is in the patriarchal and capitalist structure. This reflects that Mathilde lacks financial independence and is dependent on her husband to fulfill her desires. Her husband providing the money shows the position of financial power in their household, where Mathilde has to ask and depend on her husband's approval for her needs and desires.

The consequences of losing a necklace, after losing the borrowed necklace, Mathilde and her husband were forced to live in poverty for ten years to pay off the debt incurred to replace it. See the quotation below:

> She came to know the heavy work of the house, the hateful duties of the kitchen. She washed the plates, wearing out her pink nails on the coarse pottery and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-cloths, and hung them out to dry on a string; every morning she took the dustbin down into the street and carried up the water, stopping on each landing to get her breath. And, clad like a poor woman, she went to the

> fruitier, to the grocer, to the butcher, a basket on her arm, haggling, insulted, fighting for every wretched halfpenny of her money.

Mathilde's transformation from a woman who dreams of luxury to a woman who must face the harsh reality of a life of poverty. The hard life Mathilde had to face after losing the diamond necklace became a bitter lesson about the importance of reality and responsibility.

At the end of the short story, it is revealed that the missing necklace is fake, showing the irony of Mathilde's struggle and how the class system and materialistic values have led her into unnecessary suffering. Here's an excerpt from the short story: *Oh, my poor Mathilde! But mine was imitation. It was worth at the very most five hundred francs!*

The short story reveals the tragic irony at the heart of the story. The realization that the necklace is only an imitation, and not as valuable as Mathilde thought, highlights the themes of regret, social criticism, and the importance of understanding true value. Mathilde's tragedy serves as a lesson in how appearances and materialism can mislead one from reality and true value in life.

From the perspective of Marxist feminism, Mathilde Loisel is a victim of the economic and social pressures generated by the patriarchal and capitalist systems. Her dissatisfaction with her social status, her desire to be accepted in high society, and ultimately her suffering as a result of trying to live up to social expectations all reflect the destructive effects of class and gender oppression. Thus, the short story not only depicts Mathilde's personal story, but also critiques the social structure that marginalizes women and imposes harmful materialistic values.

5. Conclusion

The Diamond Necklace is a short story that revolves around Mathilde Loisel, a beautiful but discontented woman who dreams of a life of luxury and social status far beyond her modest means. Mathilde's husband, a humble clerk, secures an invitation to a prestigious ball, hoping to make her happy. However, Mathilde is unhappy because she lacks an elegant dress and jewels to wear.

Her husband sacrifices his savings to buy her a beautiful dress, but Mathilde still feels incomplete without jewelry. She borrows a stunning diamond necklace from her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier, to complete her outfit. However, upon returning home, she realizes that she has lost the borrowed necklace. Desperate to avoid shame and embarrassment, Mathilde and her husband decide to replace the necklace without informing Madame Forestier. They find a similar-looking diamond necklace in a jeweler's shop and purchase it for an enormous sum, plunging themselves into severe debt. For the next ten years, the Loisel's live in poverty, working tirelessly to repay the debt. Mathilde's appearance and spirit deteriorate as she toils through hard labor and hardship. Eventually, they manage to repay the entire debt.

One day, Mathilde encounters Madame Forestier and decides to confess the truth about the lost necklace. To her shock and dismay, Madame Forestier reveals that the original necklace was a cheap imitation worth only a fraction of the replacement's cost. This revelation underscores the tragic irony and futility of Mathilde's suffering.

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