

Maupassant's short story comparison essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



" Boule de Suif" is a short story by Guy Maupassant. Translated, " Boule de Suif" means ' Ball of Fat' and it is used in reference to the title characters' physical characteristics. This short story is often considered to be one of Maupassant's best works.

The short story was published as part of Maupassant's " Les Soirées de Medan" short story collection. " Boule de Suif" was published in 1880, the period after the French were defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. " Boule de Suif" is a story about the different classes of the French people at the time and Society's hypocrisy.

The story is about Elizabeth Rousette, a prostitute who has the nick name of Boule De Suif. According to the narrator, Rousette is " Short and round, fat as a pig, with puffy fingers constricted at the joints, looking like rows of short sausages... much sought after, owing to her fresh and pleasing appearance" (Maupassant 10).

The story is about ten city residents who are fleeing from Le Havre. The group is made up of people from different classes including shop owners, factory owners, and nuns. The respected citizens of the city are not comfortable with the idea of travelling together with Boule de Suif the ' lowly prostitute'.

However, when the other travelers learn that Boule has packed food, they all warm up to her. The coach is then stopped in a German-occupied village where the top soldier refuses to let it go unless he receives sexual favors from Boule.

Boule strongly refuses this arrangement but she finally agrees just to set her fellow travelers free. However, the rest of the travelers repay her by isolating her and refusing to share their food with her. Consequently, Boule de Suif is outraged by the hypocrisy of the citizens and she is overcome by emotions.

Maupassant's story features insightful character descriptions and a well laid out dialogue. In addition, the author exhibits great skill when describing scenes in his story. The most dominant themes in this story are hypocrisy, class conflict, appearances, and reality.

The story's title character finds herself at the receiving end of hypocrisy and class-based judgment. The other passengers feel that Boule's status does not warrant her the privilege of traveling with their kind. However, when they are in need of food and Boule is the only one who has some, their feelings towards her change.

The narrator of this story remarks that Boule de Suif "felt at once indignant with her neighbors, and humiliated at having yielded to the Prussian into whose arms they had so hypocritically cast her" (Maupassant 40). This happened after Boule had returned to the coach after giving in to the German Commander's demands.

This line marks the point at which the story turns around. Both Boule and the readers were expecting a different reaction from the rest of the travelers given that Boule had just granted them their wish. However, the author chooses to use this scene to highlight the collective hypocrisy of the society.

All the other travelers represent different classes in the society and none of them expresses a different opinion. According to Maupassant, the society advocates for patriotism but ends up sacrificing the patriots. Boule had just given up her dignity for the sake of her countrymen but they repay her by isolating her.

“ Boule de Suif” bears similarities with other Maupassant's literary works. Most of Maupassant's works addressed the social and political issues in nineteenth century France. “ The Necklace” is a short story by Guy Maupassant that tells the story of an ambitious woman who borrows a necklace from an affluent woman only to lose it.

There are some striking similarities between “ The Necklace” and “ Boule de Suif”. Both “ The Necklace” and “ Boule de Suif” were published in the same period. Therefore, both stories were meant for the same audience and addressed social issues that happened within the same period.

When one is reading both “ Boule de Suif” and “ The Necklace”, several recurring aspects of Maupassant's literary style are noticeable. The most notable ‘ Maupassant factor’ in both stories is the similarity of the stories' themes. The theme of class conflict is highlighted in both stories.

Madam Loise belongs to the lower bourgeoisie. In the traditional French society, the lower bourgeoisie was better off than the laborers and tradesmen but it was below the ruling class.

The author uses the same approach in “ Boule de Suif” where Boule belongs to the lowest class, the merchants belong to the lower bourgeoisie, and the factory owners belong to the upper bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, Carré-Lamadon the Comte and Comtesse of Bréville belong to the aristocratic or ruling class. When the travelers are in the coach, the issues of class keep coming up.

The other similarity in style between the two stories is the heavy use of irony as a stylistic device. In both stories, the use of irony plays a major part in highlighting the main themes in the stories.

Another similarity touches on the use of non-partisan third-person narrator. Both stories are told through the use of an omniscient narrator. The narrators in “ The Necklace” and “ Boule de Suif” are able to see into the characters' inner thoughts.

Maupassant, Guy. *Boule de Suif, and other Stories*, New York, NY: Harper, 1909. Print.