

Introduction into the confrontation within louise herself: subject



**ASSIGN
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Introduction

As the plot of the story unwinds in front of the reader, there is only a single thought throbbing in the reader's head, the pity for the leading character.

However, there is more than merely the conflict between the society and the "fat girl" exposed to the reader in the book. A clash of cultural viewpoints, the novel offers plunging into the enticing world of people's prejudice, secret fears and the everlasting confrontation of an individual and a crowd. As the plot of the story unwinds, the conflict gains more shades; starting from the confrontation between Louise and the society, it slowly glows into the confrontation within Louise herself: subject to the evaluations of the others, uncertain and weak-willed, the heroine of the story finally comes into the conflict with her own self, as if one piece of her self told her to listen to the others, while the other would cry for self-respect and the needs of Louise. Thus, it would be more reasonable to consider the conflict within Louise.

Paving the Road with Good Intentions

On the other hand, it is quite natural for the members of Louise's family and for her husband to demand that she took care of her health.

However, if taking a closer look at the situation, it becomes evident that each of the well-wishers except Carrie were guided by their own egoistic ideas – the mother was ashamed to have such clumsy and ugly daughter, the husband stopped loving Louise because of her weight – did he love her, after all, or were these merely the job prospects that enticed him? – and only Louise was deeply concerned with her friend's health and troubles. To drive the parallels between the attitudes towards Louise, pay attention to

Richard's acid remark: " I don't want to touch you. Why should I? Have you looked at yourself?" (Dubus 175) and contrast it to Carol's soft: " I want you to be loved the way I love you. Louise, if I help you, will you go on a diet?" (Dubus 168). Impressing, isn't it? However, it is still obvious that the support of Louise's friend was of little help – it was merely natural for her to keep her " fat" physique. Demanding that she should change was as unreasonable as, say, demanding that a cat stopped being a cat and turned into a dog. The rest of the people did not understand it, though.

Down with the Norm!

Another idea which Dubus suggests to the reader is that the norm created by the society is still required.

Although it was quite reasonable for Louise to demand as much personal space as she wanted to, without restricting herself to the rules established for God-knows-what purposes, there was still the problem of esthetics which Dubus raised. It was not in vain that the author depicted the despicable way Louise looked as she was fat: " Her cheeks had filled out, there was loose flesh under her chin, her arms and legs were plump" (174). Thus, Dubus raises even more important question: how to correlate personal freedom and esthetics? Can a man balance between the two? The sole person in the novel who managed to find the golden mean between body and soul was Carol. Louise lacked grace, her relatives and her husband lacked humanity, and it seems that the latter is much greater a problem.

Conclusion

Unlike most of the moralizing esthetes, Dubus does not hurry to support either of the opponents, leaving the pains of the choice to the reader.

If considering the story closer, all the participants of the uneasy life situation are well worth sympathy – they are all merely people, with their sore spots and prejudices. Living in the modern society presupposes following the norm. Those who do not agree with the opinion of the society become outcasts. However, Louise's viewpoint seems the most convincing – though outcasts have little fun in their lives, they still are well worth respect, while those agreeing with the majority opinion look merely pathetic. It is the matter of choosing one's own lifestyle, not the matter of being right.

Works Cited

Dubus, Andre. "The Fat Girl".

The Tyranny of Normal: An Anthology. Ed. Carol Donley. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996, 164-177. Print.