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A comparative analysis of selected short stories of Guy De Maupassant and of O. Henry (William Sydney Porter)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF
GUY DE MAUPASSANT AND OF O. HENRY
(WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER)

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Guy de Maupassant and O. Henry are two of the best loved writers of the short story. Both were masters of achieving the designs intended. Their works are concise, inventive and intriguing. But there are noticeable differences in the humor and philosophy of their works. Before a detailed comparison of the works of the two artists is attempted, a definition and some background information of the short story as a literary genre must be given.

Brevity, the most obvious characteristic of the short story, is not the only distinctive characteristic of this genre for there are other forms of which brevity is also characteristic. The novelette or condensed novel lacks the preciseness and singleness of effect which are characteristic of the short story; the episode, the sketch and the tale usually contain no plot. The one characteristic of all these literary forms is brevity. The short story differs from the other forms in that it is:

A brief, imaginative narrative, unfolding a single predominating incident and usually a single chief character; contains a plot, the details of which are so compressed and the whole treatment so organized as to produce a single impression.¹

Egyptian civilization. But it was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the prose tale had its beginning as a literary genre.

Gautier, Mérimée, Hawthorne and Irving are among the nineteenth century writers who helped to popularize the prose tale. The works of Washington Irving are considered the links between the tale and the short story.

It was Edgar Allan Poe who, in a review of Hawthorne's *Tales* in *Graham's Magazine* (1842), first laid down the principles which governed the construction of his own stories and which have been accepted by masters of the short story. The "Philosophy of Composition" by Poe which was printed in *Harper's Magazine* sums up the principles stated in his review of Hawthorne's *Tales*:

Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its dénouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of all the intention.¹

The prose tale must have as its purpose the unfolding of a plot rather than expression of beauty.

The author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at a great disadvantage. For beauty can be better treated in the poem.²

From the principles of Poe, the short story must have as its


² Ibid., p. 49.
purpose the relating of a plot concerning one or more main characters
in a manner as careful as possible so that the story is neither unduly
long nor unduly short, but is clear, direct and intriguing.

No better rules have been devised since these were set forth by
Poe. They remain the standards for the modern short story. Based on
his theory, the short story is generally accepted as having five parts:
the situation, the generating circumstance, the rising action, the
climax, and the dénouement.¹ Stories may be classified according to
purpose (didactic or entertaining) and according to subjects treated
(action, mystery, humor, moral nature, etc.). The seven characteristic-
tics of the short story are: a single predominating incident, a single
preeminent character (usually), imagination, plot, compression, organ-
ization and unity of impression.²

A good, concise explanation of the differences among the novel,
the tale and the short story is given in the introduction to "Mateo
Falcone" and "Colomba" by Pierre Richard.

Si le romancier crée des types dont il se livre en
inventant des séries de scènes et d'épisodes appropriés,
le conteur, au rebours, trouve une situation, curieuse
ou belle, et donne ensuite aux héros l'âme, le visage,
les moeurs adaptés à l'action. ... Il y a entre le conte
et le roman une différence de nature, non de degré. Bien
plus, ils supposent deux attitudes inverses devant la vie,
celles du réalisme et de l'idéalisme: pour le romancier
l'essentiel est la réalité humaine, à la fois directe et
complexe, qui s'impose à son besoin de comprendre et
d'expliquer, sinon de sermonner; pour le conteur, cet

¹ Hubbard Thrall, A Handbook to Literature (Garden City: Double-

² J. Berg Esenwein, Writing the Short-Story (New York: Noble and
essential devient l'accessoire: sa seule ambition est de divertir autrui et lui-même par une fantaisie également illimitée dans le domaine de l'imagination (Hoffmann), de la morale (Boccace) et des idées (Voltaire). Selon la nature de l'auteur et de son public, le conte sera léger (La Fontaine), édifiant (Marmontel), fantastique (Poe), enfantin (Perrault), satirique (fabliaux), spiritueux et attendre (Daudet) ou cruel (Villier de l'Isle-Adam). Il ira du conte oriental goute des romantiques et de leurs ancêtres médiévaux, au récit brut et dramatique dont Maupassant a parfaitement appliqué la formule. Mais, même ici, la différence reste capitale: à considérer un conte et un roman du même auteur, il y a loin du fait-divers photographie d' "Une vendetta" à la patiente auscultation d' Une Vie.


L'on conçoit, par suite, les difficultés du genre. ... Le mérite supérieur de la nouvelle par rapport au conte et au roman réside dans la perfection du métier. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement de faire vrai, il faut faire beau. Les grands romanciers (Balzac, Zola) sont parfois des artistes et des écrivains médiocres. Les dons du romancier sont divins, non esthétiques. Le nouvelleiste, lui, n'est qu'un artisan humain, mais qui s'anoblit par le "chef-d'oeuvre."1

From the preceding quotation it may be concluded that the short story is a brief literary genre which lies between the tale and the novel in much the same way that the act exists in comparison to the

---

scene and the play.

Though there are critics who may not agree that the value of the short story is equal to that of the novel, much genius is required for the creation of well-constructed short stories. This genius is not required for the commercialized short prose which is usually a shortened novel or novelette. Although journalism is largely responsible for the popularity of the short story, careful scrutiny of most short prose reveals lack of unity, organization and compression. The master of the short story art has the ability to create stories of intrigue upon a single, fleeting sensation or an entire lifetime. Either of these ideas as well as the countless units of time between the two can be masterfully constructed into perfect literary short prose form.

It is with all these criteria in mind that the works of Maupassant and O. Henry will be studied. Since many of the works of both authors reflect the events of their lives, biographical sketches of both artists will also be presented before their works are analyzed.

MAUPASSANT: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Literature written in France during the second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by a spirit of scientific inquiry, observation and objectivity. The trend toward objectivity was begun during the period of the Restoration and the July Monarchy by such writers as Stendhal, Mérimée and Balzac while the Romantic literary school was still at its apogée. The trend, however, was not begun as a true art form, but in reaction to certain political events.

After the industrial revolution of 1848, writers, under the
influence of the ideas of the socialist Saint-Simon and his disciple, Auguste-Comte, planned a government which was headed by Lamartine. Their theories of government, which were geared to benefit the masses of the people, were given practical application. But the new government was unfavorable and was overthrown by a coup d'etat, and Louis-Napoléon, nephew of the emperor of the First Empire, became president of the Second Empire.

So great had been the reactions against the intellectuals by the people that the writers withdrew entirely from political affairs and dedicated themselves to the productions of pure works of art. The new trend, Realism, was created by a group of writers rebelling against the literary censorship of Louis-Napoléon and in general reaction to the Second Empire. The censorship placed on them by the new president was placed similarly on scientists, and these restrictions created a bond which encouraged unity, a oneness of purpose among them. Thus, scientific methods were associated with and characteristic of literature. The works of Balzac mark the transition between the Romantic and Realistic schools.

The poets separated from the prose writers and formed their own literary trend, the Parnasse. They, under the leadership of Leconte de Lisle, felt that art should be created as pure works—art for the sake of art, "l'art pour l'art." But other artists felt closer to the prose writers.

Many painters joined the writers of prose in the creation of the new objective trend. Courbet, a leader of the painters, gave the name "réalisme" to the new trend. Their ideas grew until in 1857, with the
publication of *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert, Realism was established as a literary school.

During this same period, scientists such as Darwin, Pasteur and Bernard were developing new theories and making new discoveries. Claude Bernard was a physician who wrote a book *Introduction à la médecine expérimentale*, in which he advocated a method of employing experimentation as a major step in the advancement of medicine. This method of experimentation was purportedly applied to a roman-fleuve, *Les Rougon-Maquet*, by Emile Zola. With this additional step, Zola formed a new literary school, "naturalisme," among whose members were Paul Alexis, Henri Céard, Leon Hennique and J.-K. Huysmans. Another man who frequently attended the literary discussions of the naturalists was Guy de Maupassant.

Henri-René-Albert-Guy de Maupassant was born August 5, 1850 in Normandy at the Château de Miromesnil to a family of the lower nobility. His family possessed a great deal of pride but very little wealth. His father, Gustave de Maupassant, had inherited a small fortune from his grandfather but he spent it too freely. His mother, Laure le Poittevin, married Gustave de Maupassant a few months after her brother, Albert, married Louise de Maupassant, Gustave's sister.

The Maupassant marriage was not a happy one and so, contrary to the trend of the day, the parents were separated when Guy was about eleven years old.

Guy was the older of two sons. Hervé, his younger brother by seven years, was a retarded child. Laure felt that her elder son had great abilities and she gave him the best education that she could
After his early training at home, Guy was sent to a clerical school at Yvetot where he incurred the wrath of the teachers for antireligious pronouncements which he made. He was summarily expelled. He was then sent to a lycée at Rouen, his mother's childhood home. At Rouen, professor Bouilhet, his teacher, was impressed by the young man's literary potentialities and encouraged correspondence with Gustave Flaubert, an old friend of Bouilhet and of Laure de Maupassant.

Upon graduating from school, he served his military duty during the Franco-Prussian war; and eight months after the armistice was signed, he returned to civilian life. While weighing the possibilities of the study of law, Maupassant visited Flaubert in Paris where he met Turgenev, Zola, Daudet, Edmond de Goncourt, Catulle-Mendes and Hérédia. While the other men actively participated in literary discussions, Guy seemed disinterested. He gave no indication of the literary talent which would later captivate the reading public. But it was during the endless literary discussions at the salons that Maupassant decided upon a literary career. He began what was to be seven years of disciplined study under Flaubert.

The family treasury had been emptied and so Guy was not able to study law. At his father's suggestion and through the influence of Flaubert, Maupassant took a position as a clerk in the Ministry of the Marine and he later worked in the Cabinet of Public Instruction. He continued his literary studies along with his jobs and in 1873 his first literary attempt, a drama, was presented at a literary gathering at Etretat but his first noteworthy work was a book of poetry, *Des Vers*, published in 1880.
Also in 1880, Zola requested that the members of the literary group contribute a short prose work to a collection of stories, *Les Soirées de Médan*. Maupassant contributed his first short story, "Boule de Suif."

Flaubert died in 1880 and did not live to see his protege really establish his career. Flaubert had encouraged Maupassant to write poetry. The teacher's death allowed the young writer to pursue the genre for which he seemed best suited. Many short stories were written within the next few years. "Boule de Suif" was followed by "Le Maison Tellier" (1881), "Mademoiselle Fifi" (1883), and a novel, *Une Vie* (1883).

The creative power of Maupassant reached its peak between 1883 and 1884 with such works as "Clair de Lune," "Yvette" and "Miss Harriet." The collections of 1885 show a decline in style with *Contes et nouvelles*, *Monsieur parent*, *Contes du jour et de la nuit* and the novels *Bel-Ami* (1885) and *Toine* (1886). This decline was caused by mental anguish.

Though Maupassant was athletic, showing prowess as an oarsman and swimmer, he was plagued frequently by illness. The decrease in his production of literature was caused by failing eyesight and neurasthenia, a hereditary mental disorder. In attempts to escape his fears and anxieties, he traveled to Africa, Italy, Sicily, Corsica, and more frequently to Southern France. He often sought seclusion at Etretat, the city in which so many literary gatherings were held and where his literary career began. Premonitions of total derangement haunted him. These frenzied emotions are reflected in his works. As hallucinations
tormented him, such works as "Le Horla" were written. Other works written during this period were Mont-Oriol, "Sur l'Eau," Fort comme la Mort, Pierre et Jean, Notre Coeur and la Vie errante. His career was practically at an end.

On November 13, 1889, Maupassant's brother, Hervé, died in an asylum and soon afterwards, Guy also became insane. He tried to take his own life in 1892 because he was so possessed by his fears of being insane, of growing old, and of dying. In spite of the efforts of his faithful valet to comfort him, Maupassant was taken to an asylum in Paris and died a year later, on July 6, 1893, in a state of general paralysis.

Maupassant's works may be divided into six categories by subject reflecting his own life: Normandy, the Franco-Prussian war, bourgeois life in Paris, high society in Paris, travel, and insanity and the supernatural. According to emphasis, his works may be divided into three periods which overlap each other; the early period emphasizes material life, the next period reveals skepticism in his outlook on life and in the last period his skepticism became pessimism.¹

Maupassant was primarily a short story writer but his complete works also included three dramas, six novels, three books about travel and a volume of verse.² His theory of art, given in the preface of the novel Pierre et Jean, to be discussed in the final chapter, is

¹ Albert Schinz, Selections from Guy de Maupassant (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), pp. xi-xii.

² Ibid., p. xii.
partially based on Flaubert's concept of the "mot juste." This is a theory that it is the author's task to find and use words which have the exact connotation and denotation which he has in mind. This theory is evidenced throughout Maupassant's works.

Toward the end of Maupassant's life there appeared in the United States a writer whose works reveal striking similarities to the works of the French master. This writer, William Sydney Porter, used the pseudonym, O. Henry. The life of Porter was also filled with tragedy and illness, but without the same effects as those in the life of Maupassant.

O. HENRY: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The short story became popular in America during the period between the American Civil War and World War I. In France, England, Russia and also in America the prose tale grew in proportion, restraint and artistic form until it became an accepted literary genre in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the period of its greatest production in America between 1850 and 1880, often called the "era of the short story,"¹ some of the best authors were Rose Terry Cooke, Edward Everett Hale, Henry James, Bret Harte, Sarah Orne Jewett, T. B. Aldrich, Frank Stockton, Ambrose Bierce and Richard Malcom Johnston. With the 1890's, and the full perfection of the short story art, came the writers Jack London, Francis Hopkinson Smith, Richard Harding Davis

and O. Henry.

The man who chose to call himself O. Henry was born William Sidney Porter in Greensboro, North Carolina on September 11, 1862. Until the age of fifteen, he attended the school taught by his aunt. He then stopped and began working in an uncle's drug store for five years. It was then that his artistic ability became apparent. He was not only a writer but also a cartoonist and caricaturist. He often did sketches between sales at the store.

But Porter was not in excellent health. Several members of his family had been victims of tuberculosis and he was mildly afflicted with the malady. When a neighbor, Dr. J. K. Hall, made preparations to journey to Texas, he asked Porter to come along. The climate there would be better for the young man's condition. Porter consented. This trip was greatly anticipated because it was to be Porter's first train ride.

Before leaving, Dr. Hall's partner, Dr. Beall from nearby Lenoir, North Carolina, encouraged Porter to send back articles to the literary society of Lenoir so that his literary talents would not cease to develop. To this, Porter also consented.

Porter spent two years on a ranch in La Salle county, Texas. He was introduced to shepherding, ranching and other outdoor activities. But he did not forget to send some articles to the Lenoir literary society. In 1884, he moved to Austin, Texas with his new bride, the former Athol Estes, and worked as a bookkeeper in a General Land office.

The first child of William and Athol Porter died only a few hours after his birth. His wife was very ill for a few months but within
the next year, another child was born. This child was a healthy girl, named Margaret. This was the last child that they were to have because of Athol's poor health. Porter moved his family to Greensboro, North Carolina in 1891 but he returned to Austin and worked as a teller at the First National Bank of Austin.

In 1894 Porter and a friend, Jim Crane, bought the newspaper, the Iconoclast. Porter had been writing articles for newspapers since 1887 and found this new vocation very rewarding. The paper was renamed the Rolling Stone. But though the paper was humorous and well-illustrated, financial difficulties caused a halt in its publication only one year later.

In 1895 Porter joined the staff of the Houston Post. He wrote a daily column. But in 1896 he was arrested for embezzlement of funds of the bank in Austin. During the year in which the Rolling Stone was published, his work at the bank was neglected. Many errors were found in his accounts.

Fearing the consequences of a trial, Porter fled to Central America but had to return shortly afterwards because of the serious illness of his wife, Athol. On July 25, 1897, she died in her sleep.

Disheartened, Porter lived the life of a vagabond in New Orleans for a while before his trial in 1898. Porter was convicted of the misappropriation of $1,150 from the First National Bank of Austin and he was sent to the Ohio State Penitentiary to serve a five-year term.

While in prison, Porter utilized his enforced leisure in writing so that he could contribute to the support of his daughter, now nine years old. In order to keep his identity unknown, he signed his first
three poems John Arbuthnott. These poems were sold to Ainslee's Magazine. His first short story, "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking," sold in 1889 to McClure's Magazine, was signed O. Henry. The new pseudonym was taken from the name of an old friend, Etienne-Ossian Henry. When he sent works to Ainslee's Magazine, the publisher requested that the initial be expanded. The name chosen was Olivier. Checks for his writings were sent to W. S. Porter at the Ohio Penitentiary, but it was not suspected that Porter and Henry were the same person.

In the fall of 1900, Porter was appointed secretary to the steward at the prison and later, on July 24, 1901, he was released for good behavior. Fear of being known as a former convict would have driven him to Central America again but for his love for his daughter and his duty to support her. The matter about the misappropriation has never been cleared up, but many feel that faulty bookkeeping, not theft, was the reason for the errors.

In April of 1902, William Sydney (the spelling was now changed) Porter went to New York to continue his literary career. In 1903 he signed a contract with the New York World to do one story per week for $100 each.

In 1906, Porter's daughter, Margaret, visited him in New York. Their father-daughter relationship was a very warm one. But Porter's second marriage was not very happy. In 1907 he married Sara Coleman, the daughter of a prominent family of Asheville, North Carolina. The marriage was not ended by divorce, but gradually became a formality, rather than a normal husband-wife relationship.
The unhappy marriage, lack of interest in his writings and threats of legal action by his publishers for tardiness in his work are factors involved in Porter's becoming an alcoholic. Alcoholism and the lack of good health habits caused many illnesses including cirrhosis of the liver, inflammation of the kidneys and diabetes. On June 5, 1910, William Sydney Porter died in his sleep.

Twenty books of short stories and articles by O. Henry have been published. The first book was Cabbages and Kings, a collection of short stories, published in 1904. The second collection which is the best known, is The Four Million, published in 1906. His complete works were published in 1917. Other volumes published since 1917 are O. Henryana (1920), Letters to Lithopolis (1922) and Postscripts (1923).

The speciality of both Maupassant and O. Henry was treatment of people and activities familiar to them. The types of people generally treated were those of the middle and lower classes. The characters were generally placed in occupations with which the authors were quite familiar. Each author's background is reflected in their works. Four stories of Maupassant and four stories of O. Henry are analyzed in the next two chapters. From each author's work the writer has chosen to analyze and compare five stories: each of the authors' first short story, a story about rural life (in their own countries), a story about urban life (in their own countries), and a story which is among the writer's favorites.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSES OF SELECTED WORKS OF MAUPASSANT

Four stories of Guy de Maupassant are analyzed in this chapter. They were chosen because they typify the author's literary style. These stories are "Boule de Suif," "La Ficelle," "La Parure," and "l'Aventure de Walter Schnaffs." The first story analyzed is the first story written by the author.

"Boule de Suif" has its setting in Rouen, France, at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. The title is also the nickname of the main character, a prostitute. She is not introduced until late in the story.

None of the characters is introduced initially. The story is introduced with descriptions of the battered and disorganized French forces, retreating before the advance of the victorious Prussian army, and of the worried, uneasy people of Rouen. This situation is lengthy and this extraordinary length is not necessary to the story, but in this extensive description of war-torn Rouen, is much historical accuracy. Maupassant wrote of scenes which he had actually witnessed. Part of the situation is given here.

Pendant plusieurs jours de suite des lambeaux d'armée en déroute avaient traversé la ville. Ce n'était point de la troupe, mais des hordes débandées. Les hommes avaient la barbe longue et sale, des uniformes en guenilles, et ils avançaient d'une allure molle, sans drapeau, sans régiment. Tous semblaient accablés, éreintés, incapables d'une pensée ou d'une résolution, marchant seulement par habitude, et tombant de fatigue sitôt qu'ils arrêtaient. On voyait surtout des mobilisés, gens pacifiques, rentiers tranquilles, pliant sous le poids du fusil; des petits moblots alertes,
faciles à l'épouvante et prompts à l'enthousiasme, prêts à l'attaque comme à la faite; puis, au milieu d'eux, quelques culottes rouges, débris d'une division moulue dans une grande bataille; des artilleurs sombres alignés avec ces fantassins divers; et, parfois, le casque brillant d'un dragon au pied pesant qui suivant avec peine la marche plus légère des ligueurs.

It is in this the situation that the mood of despair is set. Because of this desperate situation, several people are about to leave together in a carriage. The author takes advantage of the early flight to conceal the passengers' identities just as the shadows hid their faces from the other passengers. As the sun rises in the story, the author reveals the identities of the passengers to the reader as the travelers discover among themselves exactly who they are. Six of the people are society couples, two are Catholic nuns, and the ninth person is a disreputable politician. The tenth person is the main character, Boule de Suif. There is little conversing of the passengers, but even that minuscule amount completely excluded the politician, Cornudet, and Boule de Suif. Then it is discovered that Boule de Suif continually watches something under her seat, which is revealed as a basket of food. The others had not prepared for the long journey as she had, and though they did not ask her to share the food, she had pity on them and let them eat with her. All the food, which could have lasted through many meals, was eaten by the greedy companions. It was learned, after the food was gone, and the group then felt obligated to talk to her, that all passengers, besides Boule de Suif, had left Rouen for financial or political reasons. She, alone, left for

patriotic reasons; she hates Prussians. Otherwise, she could have continued her prosperous business as she had done before. Thus, the author shows her as the only true patriot in the group.

The generating circumstance is not given until the passengers have spent the night at an inn, which is to be their only rest stop. They discover that the Prussian soldiers who controlled the admittance and departure of guests at the inn, will not allow them to continue their journey until Boule de Suif responds favorably to the commanding officer's request that she sleep with him.

Rising action is provided by two days of arguing and pleading with Boule de Suif to make her change her mind. Even the nuns were in favor of her sacrifice so that they could leave, though the three society couples were most insistent. One of the ladies, Mme. Loiseau, who had always been the most hostile towards Boule de Suif, was the most critical of the prostitute's decision. Cornudet respected the feelings of Boule de Suif until he is persuaded by the others to try to convince Boule de Suif that she should do what must be done for the sake of the group. Since the group had devoured her basket of food without thanking her, they had shown her no kindnesses and she did not feel responsible for their welfare. But the climax comes when Boule de Suif lowers her defenses and, for the sake of the group alone, allows herself to be ravished by the Prussian officer.

In the dénouement, the reader finds that the attitudes of the nuns and the three couples have not softened. They are delighted that they can finally be allowed to leave, but they do not thank her for her ultimate sacrifice for them:
Personne ne la regardait, ne songeait à elle. Elle se sentait noyée dans le mépris de ces gredins honnêtes qui l'avaient sacrifiée d'abord, rejetée ensuite, comme une chose malproprie et inutile. Alors elle songea à son grand panier tout plein de bonnes choses qu'ils avaient goulument dévorées, à ses deux poulets luissants de gelée, à ses pâtes, à ses pois, à ses quatre bouteilles de Bordeaux; et sa fureur tombant soudain, comme une corde trop tendue qui casse, elle se sentit prête à pleurer. Elle fit des efforts terribles, pleurs montaient, luisaient au bord de ses paupières, et bientôt deux grosses larmes, se détachant des yeux, roulaient lentement sur ses joues. D'autres les suivirent plus rapides, coulant comme les gouttes d'eau qui filtrent d'une roche, et tombant régulièrement sur la corbe rebondie de sa poitrine. Elle restait droite, le regard fixe, la face rigide et pâle, espérant qu'on ne la verrait pas.¹

The story has as its theme the inhumanity of the bourgeoisie and the total indifference of the church towards the lower classes as seen through the eyes of the author. "Boule de Suif" is valued for the accuracy of the descriptions of war-torn Rouen and of human behavior. The negative aspects of behavior over-shadow the positive aspects in this story, for the reader is persuaded, by the actions of the other characters, to pity Boule de Suif.

Boule de Suif is shown as benevolent, in that she shared her food with her companions; as patriotic, in that she left Rouen only because of her hate for the enemy of France; as unselfish, in that she slept with the Prussian officer, solely for the welfare of the group; as having morals in that, even though she is a prostitute, she did not like to entertain enemy troup; and as sensitive, in that she cried when the group did not appreciate the sacrifice that she made for the welfare of the group.

¹Ibid., pp. 56-57.
The three society couples, M. et Mme. Loiseau, M. et Mme. Carré-Lamadon and le Comte et la Comtesse de Bréville are characterized as haughty members of the bourgeoisie who are leaving Rouen for financial reasons. They treat Cornudet, the politician, and Boule de Suif with scorn and contempt. They are the greediest eaters of Boule de Suif's lunch, the most insistent that she sleep with the officer--so that they can leave the inn, the least willing to converse and they are completely self-centered.

The two nuns are extremely un-talkative. They speak, politely, to the society couples and spend most of their journey in quiet prayer, saying nothing to the prostitute and the politician. They do not forestall the three couples when Boule de Suif is urged to sleep with the Prussian and actually participate in that argument. They do not insist that she uphold the Christian principle of not indulging in extra-marital sex.

Cornudet is Boule de Suif's only close companion. He converses with her quite freely and is not insistent upon her sleeping with the Prussian until he is urged to do so by the society couples. It is then that even his attitude changes. He is regarded as the hero who frees the group from their two day confinement at the inn because of his part in convincing Boule de Suif to do her 'duty' for the group. He is finally accepted as a peer of the others and then he, too, treats Boule de Suif with scorn.

Personne ne la regardait, ne songeait à elle. Elle se sentait noyée dans le mépris de ce gredins honnêtes qui l'avait sacrifiée d'abord, rejetée ensuite, comme une chose malpropre et inutile.¹

¹Maupassant, op. cit., p. 56.
And so, the reader is lead to the conclusion that the author sees the bourgeoisie and the church as enemies of the common people; the bourgeoisie as open enemies, the church as an indirect enemy, guilty of not defending the good people who lack financial assets.

The author uses the personification extensively in his descriptions with a minimum of similes, metaphors, and alliterations, in the "mot juste" concept to create this work. Later stories are not this lengthy, but it is still meritorious because of the author's ability to correlate his theories into such a didactic and entertaining work, though its purpose may seem to be the placing of the reader in a depressive state of mind. The author's works are, in general, very pessimistic and, though they are entertaining, they are not usually very enjoyable.

"La Ficelle" is constructed in much the same manner as "Boule de Suif." Its mood is despair, set in the description of the peasants dressed crisply for the events of market day but who are bent and burdened from the toils of labor. The setting is the Norman village of Goderville. The title is the piece of string which is the generating circumstance of the story.

The situation, containing descriptions of the peasants, sets the stage for the introduction of the main character.

Sur toutes les routes autour de Goderville, les paysans et leurs femmes s'en venaient vers le bourg, car c'était jour de marché. Les mâles allaient, à pas tranquilles, tout le corps en avant à chaque mouvement de leurs longues jambes torse, déformées par les rudes travaux, par la pesée sur la charrue qui fait en même temps monter l'épaule gauche et devier la taille, par le fauchage des blés qui fait écarter les genoux pour prendre un aplomb solide, par toutes les besognes lentes et pénibles de la campagne. Leur blouse
bleue, empesée, brillante, comme vernie, ornée, au col et aux poignets d'un petit dessin de fil blanc, gonflée autour de leur torse osseux, semblait un ballon prêt à s'envoler, d'où sortaient une tête, deux bras et deux pieds.

The main character, Maître Hauchecorne, is also a peasant; an old man, crippled by rheumatism. He is described as a very thrifty but proud man. The generating circumstance is a piece of string which he finds by the side of the road; a piece of string for which any thrifty person can find many uses. But an old enemy of Maître Hauchecorne witnesses the action and, since he is ashamed of his frugality, Maître Hauchecorne hides the string in his pocket.

The rising action begins when the observer, Maître Maladrin, reports that he had seen Maître Hauchecorne conceal some money or a purse containing money and was trying to keep it without reporting its loss. This version is known to the reader as an untrue one, but the people of Goderville believed the story and were even able to supply a missing purse to make the story seem true. No one even bothered to ask Maître Hauchecorne's version of the story. He was met with the news of his alleged evil deed by the time he arrived at the town square.

Suspense is built by the rising suspicions and accusations among the residents, who are convinced of Maître Hauchecorne's guilt. The peasant tries in vain to explain his story to his neighbors and even to monsieur le maire, showing them the string in his possession. The lost purse was returned to its owner but Maître Hauchecorne is believed to have arranged its return in order to clear his name. The author

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allows Maître Hauchecorne to speak in the true Norman dialect, thereby making the story seem more authentic:

C'qui m'faisait deuil, disait-il, c'est point tant la chose, comprenez-vous; mais c'est la menterie. Y a rien qui vous nuit comme d'être en réprobation pour une menterie.¹

Maître Hauchecorne, like Boule de Suif, feels himself "blackened" by this ill-fated incident. His complete feelings are summed up in this monologue, rather than by extensive descriptions. Maître Hauchecorne soon becomes physically and mentally ill because of this incident. The climax and dénouement are the extreme illness and subsequent death of Maître Hauchecorne.

The theme of the work is the danger of ruthless destruction of man's reason for existence. The only thing of which Maître Hauchecorne could boast was his good name and reputation; when these were taken from him, he found no other reason to live. The reader pities Maître Hauchecorne's plight. This story, concise and skilfully written, is nevertheless, very depressing. The negative aspects of human behavior are dominant.

There is very little character development of Maître Hauchecorne because there are no secondary characters whose actions persecute him. He is persecuted by the entire populace of Goderville who give him such salutations of contempt as: " — Vieux malin, va!"² and "Gros malin, va!"³ This attitude of his neighbors makes the old man become

¹Ibid., p. 63.
²Schinz, op. cit., p. 63.
³Ibid., p. 64.
very ill and he dies of a broken heart.

The story, "La Parure," also deals with undue punishment for a mistake. The setting is Paris; the title is the jewelry which is the generating circumstance. The situation introduces the main character, Mathilde Loisel, in a statement of philosophy of women.

...C'était une de ces jolies et charmantes filles, nées, comme par une erreur du destin, dans une famille d'employés. Elle n'avait pas de dot, pas d'espérances, aucun moyen d'être connue, comprise, aimée, épousée par un homme riche et distingué; et elle se laissa marier avec un petit commis du ministère de l'Instruction publique.

Elle fut simple, ne pouvant être parée, mais malheureuse comme une déclassée; car les femmes n'ont point de caste ni de race, leur beauté, leur grâce et leur charme leur servant de naissance et de famille. Leur finesse native, leur instinct d'élégance, leur souplesse d'esprit sont leur seule hiérarchie, et font des filles du peuple les égales des plus grandes dames.¹

Mathilde feels that she is destined for the riches of life, while her husband is very happy with lower bourgeois life. She often wishes for things which she has never had. The bare walls, the twice used tablecloth, the meager stew that they eat describe their low status, while Mathilde wishes for silks, fine fabrics and elegant dinner parties.

In the generating circumstance, Monsieur Loisel brings to his wife an invitation to the Minister's Ball. She is not thrilled, as her husband expects, because she has no nice formal wear. He is, apparently, aware of his wife's desires, but has heretofore been indifferent to them. When she cannot be persuaded to wear any of her dresses, her husband reluctantly gives her the money which he had saved to

buy a new hunting rifle so that she can buy a new dress. The fact that he had saved this money is indicative of his concern for his own desires; the tenacity with which he tries to keep the money shows his insensitivity to Mathilde's desires. When she is still not satisfied with her attire, she borrows a diamond necklace from a rich acquaintance. The ball is a wonderful experience for Mathilde, for she was the most sought after lady there. But when the ball is over, it is discovered that the necklace had been lost.

The rising action consists of the vain search for the missing jewels and the resolution that money must be borrowed in order to replace them. Her husband goes valiantly into enormous debt to pay for the new necklace. Ten years are spent in utter poverty. Before this catastrophic incident, they did have a woman aide to do the shopping and cleaning. Now Mathilde had to do these jobs herself, while her husband took extra jobs to make money after office hours in order to pay this enormous debt.

The theme of the story is revealed in Mathilde's daydreams when she was at home alone.

Mme. Loisel semblait vieille, maintenant. Elle était devenue la femme forte, et dure, et rude, des ménages pauvres. Mal peignée, avec les jupes de travers et les mains rouges, elle parlait haut, lavait à grande eau les planchers. Mais parfois, lorsque son mari était au bureau, elle s'asseyait auprès de la fenêtre, et elle songeait à cette soirée d'autrefois, à ce bal où elle avait été si belle et si fêtée.

Que serait-il arrivé si elle n'avait point perdu cette parure? Qui sait? qui sait? Comme la vie est singulière, changeante! Comme il faut peu de chose pour vous perdre ou vous sauver!  

\[1\]
\[\textit{Ibid.}, \text{p. 55.}\]
It is in this monologue that the author expresses the possibility that fate had intervened in Mathilde's life, changing the possibilities for social success to utter hardships.

The climax and dénouement are entwined. Mathilde meets her old friend and discovers in their conversation that the necklace which she had lost, and for which they had suffered so long was not of genuine diamonds. She and her husband had worked for ten years for a cheap imitation of a diamond necklace.

In a sense, there is no dénouement. No information is given as to whether the Loisels would lose their minds upon hearing this news or whether the necklace would be returned to them, and all would be happy, later. But the author leaves the resolution to the reader because the story has already been told. It does not matter what the resolution is, for the ten years of torture cannot be undone. This cruel treatment of characters is characteristic of Maupassant's works, and though not enjoyable, the ideas demonstrated are very realistic and logical.

There is much character development of the Loisel couple. Mathilde is described as very dissatisfied with her life. She wishes for fine surroundings while her husband is very content.

Quand elle s'asseyait pour dîner, devant la table ronde couverte d'une nappe de trois jours, en face de son mari qui découvrait la soupière en déclarant d'un air enchanté; « Ah! le bon pot-au-feu! je ne sais rien de meilleur que cela...» elle songeait aux dîners fins, aux argenteries reluisantes, aux tapisseries peuplant les murailles de personnages anciens et d'oiseaux étranges au milieu d'une forêt de fée; elle songeait aux plats exquis servis en des vaisselles merveilleuses, aux galanteries chuchotées et écoutees avec un sourire de sphinx, tout en mangeant la chair rose d'une
truite ou des ailes de gélignite.¹

Monsieur Loisel saves his extra money to buy a rifle for the hunting season, while Mathilde has only the basic necessities of life with none of the luxuries.

Elle n'avait pas de toilettes, pas de bijoux, rien. Et elle n'aimait que cela; elle se sentait faite pour cela. Elle eût tant désiré plaire, être enviée, être séduisante et recherchée.²

This is the passage in which Mathilde asks for money for a new dress.

Il n'était pas au juste, mais il me semble qu'avec quatre cents francs je pourrais arriver.

Il avait un peu pâli; car il reservait juste cette somme pour acheter un fusil et s'offrir des parties de chasse, l'été suivant, dans la plaine de Nanterre, avec quelques amis qui allaient tirer des alouettes, par là, le dimanche.

Il dit cependant:

-Soit. Je te donne quatre cents francs. Mais tâche d'avoir une belle robe.³

At the ball when Mathilde has a wonderful time, Loisel is bored.

When Mathilde is upset about the loss of the necklace, Loisel is calm and logical about the search for the necklace. And there is a big change in his reactions to her needs when he goes into enormous debt without scolding her or regretting the loss of their pleasant environment before the necklace was lost.

Il emprunta, demandant mille francs à l'un, cinq cents à l'autre, cinq louis par-ci, trois louis par-là. Il fit des billets, prit des engagements ruineux, eut affaire aux usuriers, à toutes les races de préteurs. Il compromit

¹ Ibid., p. 49.
² Ibid., p. 49.
³ Ibid., p. 50.
toute la fin de son existence, risqua sa signature sans savoir même s'il pourrait y faire honneur, et, épouvanté par les angoisses de l'avenir, par la noire misère qui allait s'abattre sur lui, par la perspective de toutes les privations physiques et de toutes les tortures morales, il alla chercher la rivière nouvelle, en déposant sur le comptoir du marchand trente-six mille francs.  

When Mathilde returned the new necklace, she was frightened by the attitude of the friend from whom the necklace was borrowed. The friend's attitude makes Mathilde feel that she would be accused of stealing the original necklace. Mathilde felt persecuted by her friend's behavior. 

Quand Mme. Loisel reporta la parure a Mme. Forestier, celle-ci lui dit d'un air froissé:  
-Tu aura du me la rendre plus tôt, car je pouvais en avoir besoin.  

Finally, the Loisels are forced to live very frugally. Many sacrifices were made by both of them. All of the events of the story have completely changed the couple.  

Mme. Loisel connut la vie horrible des nécessiteux. Elle prit son parti, d'ailleurs, tout d'un coup, héroïquement. Il fallait payer cette dette effroyable. Elle payerait. On renvoya la bonne; on changea de logement, on loua sous les toits une mansarde.  

This story has as its didactic purpose, the revelation of the author's theories of women, of fate, and of the destiny of the poor. In this story, through means of metaphors, similes and alliterations as well as narrations, the author creates an intriguing work of literary  

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1 Ibid., p. 54.  
2 Ibid., p. 55.  
3 Ibid., p. 55.
The final story is not set in a mood of despair, nor does it present the cruelties of life. It is not only a story dealing with human behavior under semi-normal conditions, but has war-era setting, as did "Boule de Suif." It is one of the few stories by Maupassant which is light and humorous. The title, "l'Aventure de Walter Schnaffs," is self-explanatory. The story relates the events of a Prussian soldier in France during the Franco-Prussian War.

The situation gives a description of Walter Schnaffs, primarily by means of his reflections. He regrets having to participate in this war since he is a peaceful man who loves his wife and children who are in his homeland. His philosophies of life are also given in the situation.

Depuis son entrée en France avec l'armée d'invasion, Walter Schnaffs se jugeait le plus malheureux des hommes. Il était gros, marchait avec peine, soufflait beaucoup et souffrait affreusement des pieds qu'il avait fort plats et fort gras. Il était en outre pacifique et bienveillant, nullement magistre ou sanguinaire, père de quatre enfants qu'il adorait et marié avec une jeune femme blonde, dont il regrettait désespérément chaque soir les tendresses, les petits soins et les baisers. Il aimait se lever tard et se coucher tôt, manger lentement de bonnes choses et boire de la bière dans les brasseries. Il songeait en outre que tout ce qui est doux dans l'existence disparaît avec la vie; et il gardait au cœur une haine épouvantable, instinctive et raisonnée en même temps, pour les canons, les fusils, les revolvers et les sabres, mais surtout pour les baïonnettes, se sentant incapable de manœuvrer assez vivement cette arme rapide pour défendre son gros ventre.¹

Schnaffs is afraid of being killed and so, to escape the skirmishes of the battlefield, he jumps into a ditch, where he remained until...

¹ Ibid., pp. 38-39.
night fall. The generating circumstance surrounds this maneuver, for he decides to try to become a prisoner of the French, rather than try to rejoin his army. After two nights and days in the ditch with no food or drink, Schnaffs decides to attempt a trip to a distant château at which he may be fed and also be assured of capture, rather than death.

The rising action is the dangerous journey across the plains to the château, where he finds that dinner has been set on the table. There, he jumped through a window and frightened all the occupants out of the château. He ate all the food and drank all the wine which were on the table, then he fell asleep.

The climax comes when Walter Schnaffs is captured, as he wished. The occupants had reported his presence to the national guard forces. In the dénouement, Schnaffs is marched to prison with an escort of two hundred guards.

The author shows, in this story, that war is absurd; that most soldiers are men with other responsibilities and desires than those which concern war. The reader is emotionally involved in the feelings of the Prussian soldier and is delighted with the fact that Walter Schnaffs was able to attain his goal and can be optimistic about his safe return to his homeland.

There is no character development of Walter Schnaffs. He is described fully in the situation and the rest of the story concerns his reactions to the events of the war. This lack of character development is, however, unusual in Maupassant's works.

This story's merit, as in the authors' other works, is the
realistic and concise representation of human behavior. This story differs from the others in this chapter, in that an optimistic air radiates from this work, rather than horror or pessimism. Most of the author's humor is morbid, his moods are of despair because of the sad and tragic events of his own life. "l'Aventure de Walter Schnaffs" is rare, among his works, because it leaves the reader happy, as most of his works do not.

In America, a short story writer, O. Henry, also created stories pertaining predominantly to his own experiences. But in spite of O. Henry's prison life, unhappy marriages and, in the end, his alcoholism and severe illnesses, his works are very seldom morbid. His stories are noted for their humorous optimism, surprise endings, and simplicity of style. Four selected stories from the works of O. Henry are analyzed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSES OF SELECTED WORKS OF O. HENRY

The four stories of O. Henry which are analyzed in this chapter are "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking," "Hearts and Hands," "The Gift of the Magi," and "The Cop and the Anthem." The author was a master of brief description, using humorous but appropriate metaphors in the presentation of his characters and their surroundings. Surprise endings are characteristic of his works; often the climax and dénouement are interwoven. The first story analyzed is the author's first short story.

"Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking" is so entitled for the stocking found by the main character, Whistling Dick, which introduces the generating circumstance of the story. The use of the stocking makes Whistling Dick a hero. The setting is New Orleans. Whistling Dick is a red-headed professional tramp who has earned his nickname because of his talent at whistling. Nothing else is given about him except that he usually goes to New Orleans each year to escape the New York winters. There is no intricate development of the character.

In the situation, he is hidden in a box car of a train and is contemplating entrance into the city when he is warned by a friendly policeman that tramps would not be allowed to wander the streets of the city this winter and that he would have to find refuge elsewhere. The policeman reveals the direction in which the other tramps have gone. As the hobo travels north from the city to find his compatriots,
a black silk stocking is dropped from a surrey out of which a little
girl has cheerfully wished Whistling Dick a "Merry Christmas." Al-
though the hobo has no idea whether or not he will have any presents
to place in the stocking, he puts it into his pocket and continues his
journey until he spots the familiar hobos' fire near a large planta-
tion.

The generating circumstance is a plot by the hobos to rob the
plantation owner. When Whistling Dick refuses to join in the con-
spiracy, he is held at gunpoint in order to prevent him from warning
the planter. But he manages to write a warning note, place it in the
silk stocking, and, using a slingslot effect, throw the note through
a window at the planter's home. When Whistling Dick does this, he
prepares for all the actions which lead to the climax of the story.

The climax is reached when the planter was able to upset the con-
spirators' plans and Whistling Dick is regarded as a hero. He is re-
warded with a big meal at the plantation, a bedroom of his own and an
important job on the plantation. He is pleased at the prospects of a
new future but, in a sudden twist of the dénouement, he leaves the
plantation early the next morning, without notice.

The author reveals the true feelings of Whistling Dick and his
high value of freedom through the description of the actions and
thoughts of a bird which heard the whistling of the tramp as he left
the plantation.

A small, ruffled, brown-breasted bird, sitting upon a
dogwood sapling, began a soft, throaty, tender little pip-
ing in praise of the dew which entices foolish worms from
their holes; but suddenly he stopped, and sat with his head
turned sidewise, listening.
From the path along the levee there burst forth a jubilant stirring, buoyant, thrilling whistle, loud and keen and clear as the cleanest notes of the piccolo. The soaring sound rippled and trilled and arpeggioned as the songs of wild birds do not; but it has a wild free grace that, in a way, reminded the small brown bird of something familiar, but exactly what he could not tell. There was in it the bird call, or reveille, that all birds know; but a great waste of lavish, unmeaning things that art had added and arranged, besides, and that were quite puzzling and strange; and the little brown bird sat with his head on one side until the sound died away into the distance.

The little bird did not know that the part of that strange warbling that he understood was just what kept the warbler without his breakfast; but he knew very well that the part he did not understand did not concern him, so he gave a little flutter of his wings and swooped down like a brown bullet upon a big fat worm that was wriggling along the levee path.¹

Through the use of this lengthy dénouement, the author shows, symbolically, that the nature of being free is what led Whistling Dick away from his secure future. His cheerful whistling reveals his happiness with the decision that he has made. The author used this indirect manner to show the spiritual character of Whistling Dick rather than lengthy descriptions of his physical character because it is his mental, emotional and moral state which dictate his actions, regardless to his physical condition.

Despite the uncharacteristic longevity of this story, its portrayal of human behavior is of great merit. The surprise ending is unique; it becomes a trademark of O. Henry's stories. The dénouement of the next story is most unusual.

"Hearts and Hands" derives its title from the seriousness with which the main character accepted the story told to her by an old

friend. The setting is a train bound east from Denver, Colorado. Miss Fairchild, a young lady from Washington, D.C., is going home after a summer vacation in Denver. No other information is given about her. While seated on a train, she sees an old acquaintance and she speaks to him. This story is quite brief. The story is completed through the climax in a few short paragraphs:

"Well, Mr. Easton, if you will make me speak first, I suppose I must. Don't you ever recognize old friends when you meet them in the West?"

The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly, and then clasped her fingers with his left hand.

"It's Miss Fairchild," he said, with a smile. "I'll ask you to excuse the other hand, it's otherwise engaged just at present."

He slightly raised his right hand, bound at the wrist by the shining "bracelet" to the left one of his companion. The glad look in the girl's eyes slowly changed to an bewildered horror. The glow faded from her cheeks. Her lips parted in a vague, relaxing distress. Easton, with a little laugh, as if amused was about to speak again when the other forestalled him. The glum-faced man had been watching the girl's countenance with veiled glances from his keen shrewd eyes.

"You'll excuse me for speaking, Miss, but I see you're acquainted with the marshal here. If you'll ask him to speak a word for me when we get to the pen he'll do it and it'll make things easier for me there. He's taking me to Leavenworth prison. It's seven years for counterfeiting."

"Oh!" said the girl, with a deep breath and returning color. "So that is what you are doing out here? A marshal!"

The generating circumstance is the discovery of the handcuffs by Miss Fairchild, the rising action is her reaction to the handcuffs and the climax is the explanation given by the glum-faced man. At this point in the story, Miss Fairchild and Mr. Easton hold a conversation about their experiences at home until they are interrupted by the

1 Ibid., p. 1666.
young man's companion's request to be taken to the smoking room to enjoy a pipe.

The dénouement takes place in a conversation between two passengers who overheard the reunion of Miss Fairchild and Mr. Easton. One of the passengers remarks that the marshal is a very nice man. The second passenger asks if the "marshal" were not extremely young for such a position. The first passenger is amused by this question. He explains that it is the older man who is the real marshal and that this is known because a marshal always handcuffs his prisoner to his left hand. It was the right hand of Mr. Easton that was shackled.

The author was able to take a single event and create a complete short story out of actions which occurred. There is no character development. Only the immediate actions of the characters are involved in the story.

The third story, "Gift of the Magi," is also created upon the events of a day in the lives of the characters. The title is derived from the manner in which Christmas gifts are exchanged between a young husband and wife. The situation begins after the generating circumstance is given.

One dollar and eighty-seven cents, that was all—and sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implies. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it, which stimulates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the house is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the
home. A furnished flat at $8 a week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring.

Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."\(^1\)

The dollar and eighty-seven cents is the generating circumstance.

In the situation there is also a picturesque description of the two treasures of the family:

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the air shaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window someday to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck his beard from envy.\(^2\)

To supplement the dollar and eighty-seven cents that she had saved, Della decided to sell her hair so that she can have enough money to buy a nice present for her husband. She bought, with her new sum, a platinum chain to replace the worn leather strap on Jim's gold heirloom watch. This is the climax of the story.

In the dénouement, Della rushes home to curl her short wispy hair and to wait for her husband's return. Jim was shocked by the loss of the lovely tresses and for a while was completely dumbfounded. This reaction is explained when it is revealed that he had sold his watch in order to buy for her the tortoise shell combs that she had long

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 8.
wanted to adorn her hair. They had each sacrificed their prize possessions to try to please the other. The author's own words best express the didactic purpose of the story; this is given in the concluding part of the dénouement.

The Magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in the case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts such as they are the wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

The next story has no didactic purpose. "The Cop and the Anthem" was written for entertainment only. The title is taken from the anthem heard by the main character which made him decide to make of himself a responsible citizen and the man who kept him from doing so.

The situation begins with the advent of winter when a tramp, Soapy, begins his plans to obtain shelter. No description is given of Soapy, for only his actions are important to the story.

On his bench in Madison Square Soapy moved uneasily. When wild geese honk high of nights, and when women without sealskin coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you may know that winter is at hand.

A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. That was Jack Frost's card. Jack is kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square, and gives fair warning of his annual call. At the corners of four streets he hands his pasteboard to the North Wind, footman of the mansion of all outdoors, so that the inhabitants thereof may make ready.

Soapy's mind became cognizant of the fact that time had come for him to resolve himself into a singular Committee of

---Ibid., p. 11---
Ways and Means against the coming rigor. And therefore he moved uneasily on his bench.

It is Soapy's plans to provide his room and board for the winter which are generating circumstance in the story. The actions which take place as a result of his plans are the rising action of the story. Soapy tried to get himself arrested so that he could spend the winter months in jail, as he had done for so many years. He tried unsuccessfully to get arrested for eating in a restaurant though he had no money; breaking a plate-glass window; lechery; disorderly conduct; and stealing. But no policeman would arrest him; no one would press charges against him.

The climax is reached when Soapy realizes that all of his schemes are to no avail. As he stood across the street from a church, he heard a beautiful hymn which made him think about his life. He decided to get a job and make himself respectable.

The dénouement reveals a surprising reversal of events when Soapy is arrested by a policeman for vagrancy. The next day Soapy was sentenced to three months in jail.

There is no didactic purpose to the story; there is no moral lesson to be learned. The stories of O. Henry contain no character development. The characters are not described fully. Only the information pertinent to the action of the story is given; and the character's physical appearance and personality are very seldom of importance. Only the actions of the characters which make up the action of the story are pertinent; and only those actions are given. The author's

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1 Ibid., p. 37.
purpose is to show, through the actions of Soapy, one of the aspects of life in America. The story's merit lies in the author's unique literary style, which is discussed in the final chapter along with a discussion of the style of Maupassant.
CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON OF THE STYLES OF MAUPASSANT AND O. HENRY

There are striking similarities in the lives of Guy de Maupassant and O. Henry (William Sydney Porter). The similarities do not exist in their educational backgrounds for Maupassant completed his education through the lycée while O. Henry's education was only completed through the eighth grade. (O. Henry was able to augment his education through extensive reading and, as a result, the vocabulary of his works is remarkable.) But both authors' lives were plagued by misfortunes and the works of Maupassant reflect the misfortunes of his life. The works of O. Henry do not reflect the tragedies of his life.

Maupassant was physically fit but he was afflicted with an hereditary mental disorder, neurasthenia. His mother and his only brother were afflicted long before Maupassant became aware of his affliction, but he felt haunted by insanity and by thoughts of growing old and of dying. Consequently, his works are very pessimistic in nature. His stories treat war, poverty, insanity and the supernatural, the inhumanity of man towards others and the cruelty of fate.

Boule de Suif was persecuted by her companions. She was treated as though she were depicable.

Personne ne la regardait, ne songeait à elle. Elle se sentait noyée dans le mépris de ces gredins honnêtes qui l'avaient sacrifiée d'abord rejetée ensuite, comme une chose malpropre et inutile.1

1 Maupassant, op. cit., p. 56.
Maître Hauchecorne was persecuted by the townspeople of Goderville because they believed that he was dishonest. His feelings of persecution are expressed in his monologue.

C'qui m'faisant deuil, disait-il, c'est point tant la chose, comprenez-vous; mais c'est la menterie. Rien qui vous nuit comme d'être en réprobation pour une menterie.  

Mathilde Loisel felt that fate had been the only factor in her having to work like a common peasant rather than enjoying the life of success which she had only tasted once, at the ball ten years before.

Que serait-il arrivé si elle n'avait point perdu cette parure? Qui sait? Qui sait? Comme la vie est singulière, changeante! Comme il faut peu de chose pour vous perdre ou pour vous sauver?

Walter Schnaffs felt that war was the most horrible event that had ever entered his life.

Depuis son entrée en France avec l'armée d'invasion, Walter Schnaffs se jugeait le plus malheureux des hommes. Il était en outre pacifique et bienveillant, nullement magnume ou sanguinaire, ...

Through his characters, it appears that Maupassant regards life as a miserable experience, and man as an intolerable being.

O. Henry, too, was plagued by tragedies. He had been afflicted with tuberculosis; he had left his country to try to escape imprisonment, but later he still spent three and a half years in prison; he had experienced the death of his first wife and an unhappy second

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1 Hills, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

2 Ibid., p. 55.

3 Ibid., p. 38.
marriage; and he experienced alcoholism and the severe illness, cirrhosis of the liver. Yet, he reflects, through his characters, the bright side of life; optimism in the face of tribulations.

Whistling Dick gave up a glorious future to keep his freedom, but his joyful whistling reveals that he is perfectly happy in spite of his having left the plantation and a good job.

From the path along the levee there burst forth a jubilant, stirring, buoyant, thrilling whistle, loud and keen and clear as the cleanest notes of the piccolo. The soaring sound rippled and trilled and arpeggiodied. ... it had a wild free grace ... 1

The real marshal refused to let Miss Fairchild know that her friend, Mr. Easton was a convict. He, instead, told her that Mr. Easton was the marshal and that he himself was the prisoner.

"You'll excuse me for speaking, Miss, but, I see you're acquainted with the marshal here. If you'll ask him to speak a word for me when we get to the pen he'll do it and it'll make things easier for me there. He's taking me to heavenworth prison. It's even years for counterfeiting." 2

The author, in reviewing the actions of Jim and Della Young, regards the sacrifices of their treasures as the most wonderful kind of giving.

But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi. 3

Instead of describing the coming of winter with scorn and contempt,

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1 Porter, op. cit., p. 528.
2 Ibid., p. 1666.
3 Ibid., p. 11.
the author describes it in a humorous way.

On his bench in Madison Square Soapy moved uneasily. When wild geese honk high of nights, and when women without sealskin coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you may know that winter is at hand.¹

The works of O. Henry depict life in the city and in rural areas with light-hearted humor. He shows the humorous side of the lives of the poor; the good qualities of human nature. His theory of art does not differ much than that of Maupassant, although the effects accomplished are different.

O. Henry wrote, in a letter to his friend, Al Jennings, that the most important aspects of writing the short story are: simplicity, and unembellished style; realism, generous use of factual information, thoughts based on natural instincts and the use of a highly descriptive vocabulary in as direct and concise means as possible.²

The concept of "mot juste," which he learned from Flaubert, was followed closely by Maupassant. He added to this concept, in the preface to the novel Pierre et Jean, that art could be either a transformation or a reproduction of reality; that logic, free from elements of chance, must be followed in order to present life more objectively than it is.³

¹Ibid., p. 37.
³Albert Schinz, Selections from Guy de Maupassant (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), pp. XXV-XXVI.
It is this objectivity which prevails throughout Maupassant's works and which causes the pitiless treatment of his characters. The stories of O. Henry are more subjective. His characters are not persecuted by other characters or depressed by unfortunate events.

Another major difference of the works of the two authors is the lack of character development in the stories of O. Henry and the complete character development in the stories of Maupassant, as shown in the analyses of their stories.

There is also a difference in the methods in which the authors use in the construction of their short stories. All five parts of the short story appear in their works, but do not necessarily appear in the established order. In the typical short story, the situation is given first, followed by the generating circumstances, rising action, climax and dénouement. The stories "L'Aventure de Walter Schnafts," "La Parure," "La Ficelle," and "Boule de Suif," like most of the stories of Maupassant, are constructed in the manner of the typical short story. Only "La Parure" deviates slightly from the pattern when the climax and dénouement are interwoven. (This was the news that the diamond necklace was of imitation stones, with no further explanation of the reaction that this news had on the Loisels.)

O. Henry's stories, "The Cop and the Anthem" and "The Gift of the Magi," as well as many of his other works begin with the generating circumstances, followed by the situation, which explains the generating circumstances. "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking" and "Hearts and Hands" begin with the situation. O. Henry's stories often contain the climax and dénouement combined in one paragraph, as in "The Cop
and the Anthem." The other parts of the story follow the established pattern.

The differences in the style of writing lies in the different methods of description. O Henry's early works are longer than his later works because of the use of many descriptive adjectives. But the works of Maupassant seldom contain many descriptive adjectives, as is evident in the following passages.

... Les hommes avaient la barbe longue et sale, des uniformes en guenilles, et ils avaient d'une allure molle, sans drapeau, sans régiment. Tous semblaient accablés, grevés, incapables d'une pensée ou d'une résolution, marchant seulement par habitude, et tombant de fatigue sitôt qu'ils arrêtaient. ...¹

This passage from "La Parure" contains only one descriptive adjective.

Elle fut simple, ne pouvant être parée, mais malheureuse comme une déclassée; car les femmes n'ont point de caste ni de race, leur beauté, leur grâce et leur charme leur servant de naissance et de famille. Leur finesse native, leur instinct d'élegance, leur souplesse d'esprit sont leur seule hiérarchie, et font des filles du peuple les égales des plus grandes dames.²

This passage from "La Ficelle" also contains few descriptive adjectives.

Sur toutes les routes autour de Goderville, les paysans et leurs femmes s'en venaient vers le bourg, car c'était jour de marché. Les mâles allaient, à pas tranquilles, tout le corps en avant à chaque mouvement de leurs longues jambes torse, déformées par les rudes travaux, par la pesée sur la charrure qui fait en même temps monter l'épaule gauche et devier la taille, par le fauchage des blés qui fait écarter les genoux pour prendre un aplomb solide, par toutes les besognes lentes et pénibles de la campagne. Leur blouse bleue, empesée, brillante, comme vernie, ornée, au col et

¹ Maupassant, op. cit., p. 5.

² Hills, op. cit., p. 48.
aux poignets d'un petit dessin de fil blanc, gonflée autour de leur torse osseux, semblait un ballon prêt à s'envoler, d'où sortaient une tête, deux bras et deux pieds.\(^1\)

Most of the descriptions are given by the actions of the characters: "...marchant seulement par habitude, et tombant de fatigue sitôt qu'ils s'arrêtaient. ..."\(^2\) "...Les mâles allaient, à pas tranquilles, tout le corps en avant à chaque mouvement de leurs longues jambes torses, ..."\(^3\) by description of actions which had taken place earlier but which affect the appearance of the character: "...leurs longues jambes torses, déformées par les rudes travaux, par la pesée sur la charrure ..."\(^4\) by similes: "Leur blouse bleue, ...brillante, comme vernie, ..., semblait un ballon ...,"\(^5\) "...mais malheureuse comme une déclassée,"\(^6\) and through philosophical statements: "Leur finesse native, leur instinct d'élégance, leur souplesse d'esprit ... font des filles du peuple les égales des plus grandes dames."\(^7\) The descriptive adjectives are used with adjective clauses to better give


\(^2\) *Maupassant, op. cit.*, p. 5.

\(^3\) *Hills, op. cit.*, p. 58.


a true picture of the character: "Elle fut simple, ne pouvant être
parée, ..."¹ "Tous semblaient accablés, éreintés, incapable d'une
pensée ou d'une résolution, ..."² "Leur blouse bleue, épesée, ..., ornée
au col et aux poignets d'un petit dessin de fil blanc, gonflée
autour de leur torse osseux, ..."³

Maupassant's early work, "Boule de Suif," is much longer than his
later works. But the difference in length lies in the use of fewer
descriptive passages rather than shorter descriptive passages. There
is no essential difference between the passages from "Boule de Suif"
and those from "La Ficelle" and "La Parure," which were previously
given. There is, however, a noticeable difference in the types of de-
scriptions used in O. Henry's early and later works.

O. Henry's first story, "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking,"
contains many descriptive adjectives, combined with adjective clauses.
The following paragraph describes the whistling of Whistling Dick.

From the path along the levee there burst forth a jubil-
\-ant stirring, buoyant, thrilling whistle, loud and keen and
clear as the cleanest notes of the piccolo. The soaring
sound rippled and trilled and arpeggioed as the songs of
wild birds do not; but it had a wild free grace that, in a
way, reminded the small bird of something familiar, but ex-
actly what he could not tell. There was in it the bird
call, or reveille, that all birds know; but a great waste
of lavish, unmeaning things that art had added and arranged,
besides, and that were quite puzzling and strange; and the
little brown bird sat with his head on one side until the

¹Ibid., p. 48.
²Ibid., p. 48.
³Ibid., p. 48.
sound died away into the distance.¹

In this paragraph, the whistling is described by the adjectives, 

**jubilant, stirring, buoyant, thrilling, loud, keen, soaring, lavish, 
unmeaning, puzzling and strange.** The verbs used to describe it are 

rippled, trilled and arpeggiod.² Henry's later works contain very 

few descriptive passages, but those that appear contain few descript-

ive adjectives. When Della realized that she did not have enough 

money to buy Jim a present, this passage describes what took place. 

"There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little 

couch and howl. So Della did it."² The only adjectives used are 

shabby and little. The author uses the verbs flop and howl which are 

so descriptive that no adjectives are needed. In the passage from "The 

Cop and the Anthem," which describes the coming of winter, no adjec-

tives appear. The author uses the actions of geese, women and the 

tramp rather than describing the physical aspects of the weather. 

When wild geese honk high of nights, and when women 

without sealskin coats grow kind to their husbands, and 

when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you 

may know that winter is at hand.³ 

The author does not describe the Youngs' mailbox by simply stat-

ing that it did not function properly. Instead he uses this method. 

In the vestibule below was a letter box into which no 

letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal 


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¹ Porter, op. cit., p. 528.

² Ibid., p. 7.

³ Ibid., p. 37.
finger could coax a ring.\(^1\)

0. Henry's works contain very few similes: "... clear as the cleanest notes of the piccolo."\(^2\) and very few metaphors: "A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. That was Jack Frost's card."\(^3\) but many analogies.

Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.\(^4\)

Another analogy is made in the statement about Della and Jim's sacrifices. "Of all who give and receive such gifts, such as they are the wisest. .... They are the Magi."\(^5\)

The two authors' works differ greatly in grammar. Maupassant's Maître Hauchecorne and other citizens of Goderville speak in the Norman dialect, but the author's use of the French language is generally grammatically correct. 0. Henry makes such mistakes as omitting commas where they should be: "On his bench in Madison Square Soapy moved uneasily."\(^6\) and using incomplete sentences: "Which instigates

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 7.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 528.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 37.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 8.

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 11.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 37.
the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating."

It is therefore concluded, by the writer, that the short stories of Maupassant and O. Henry differ in artistic style, construction of the short story, impression, humor, character development, grammar, and theories or reflections of life and human behavior. Their stories are similar in that they treat the same classes of people (the bourgeoisie and the poor), in the literary school which influenced their works (realism), and in the masterful execution of the story in a manner as concise, precise and intriguing as possible.

Brevity and organized construction of a story are not all that are necessary to the literary short story. Each description and event must fit, irrevocably, into the design of the climax and dénouement. Creativity and universality are absolute essentials to the longevity of the author's popularity. All of these qualities exist in the works of Maupassant and O. Henry, thereby making them, though individually different, unmistakable masters of the short story art. No attempt has been made to say that one author is better than the other for any reason. It is the writer's belief that they are equal; that if one balances the severe, objective and pessimistic works of Maupassant against the lucid, subjective and optimistic works of O. Henry, one can see the full range of life and all its aspects; that one need search no further to find perfect short story art.

1 Ibid., p. 7.
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