



A Critical appraisal of Franco-Prussian war in the short stories of Guy de Maupassant

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Abstract :- Guy de Maupassant is acknowledged through the world as one of the masters of the short story. His full name is Henry-Rene-Albert Guy de Maupassant. He was born on 5 August, 1850. His father name was Gustave de Maupassant and mother name was Laure Le Poittevin. Guy de Maupassant had a lot of struggle in real life. But his literary life was very prosperous. Maupassant completed his primary school education at the local church. After his mother and father divorced in 1861, Maupassant stayed with his mother. Through her parenting, he was exposed to literature, which would set him on the path to becoming a writer. Guy de Maupassant met Gustave Flaubert, a French writer, in high school in 1867. His mother, seeing his love for literature, encouraged him to connect with Flaubert, which paid off later in his life.

He wrote 300 short stories, six novels, three travel books and one volume of verse. His first published story, “Boule de Suif” (The Dumpling, 1880) is often considered his masterpiece. His short stories is mainly divided into three parts. Some of his short stories mentions about Franco Prussian war. When Maupassant had twenty years old in 1870 he contributed to the Franco prussian war and seeing the actual description of the war, he described in the short story. Therefore, there is some kind of historical taste in their short story.

0.00 Introduction :- A short story is a work of fiction that focuses on one important event in the lines of a small number of central characters and that can usually be read in one sitting. French writer Maupassant’s short stories also has a different issues and it gives this reader a lot of joy and peace of mind. Although he became famous above all for his well – crafted short stories, Guy de Maupassant also write poems , plays and novels. Maupassant also wrote several volumes of fascinating letters to such eminent writers as Flaubert, Ivan Turgenev and Emile Zola. Basically Guy de Maupassant is considered to be the most significant French short – story writer. Unlike other important nineteenth century French prose writers such as Honore de Balzac and Flaubert who are better know for their novels than for their short stories, Maupassant created an extensive corpus of short stories that reveals an aesthetically pleasing combination of wit, irony, social criticism, idealism, and psychological depth. Although his short stories deal with readily identifiable situations and character types in France during the 1870’s and 1880’s, they explore universal themes such as the horrors of war and the fear of death, hypocrisy, the search for happiness, the exploitation of women, and contrasts between appearance and reality. His characters illustrate the extraordinary diversity in modern society, from prostitutes to adulterous husbands and wives and from peasants to aristocrats. Even during his lifetime, his short stories were appreciated both within and beyond the borders of France.

Maupassant short stories are variety modes, including the super–natural legend, the surpriseending tale, and the realistic story. Although he is best known for such surprise – ending tale’s as “La Parue”(The Necklace) and is most

respected for such affecting realistic stories as “Boule de suif”, literally “ball of fat”, Maupassant also contributed to the sophistication of the traditional horror story by pushing it even further than did Edgar Allan Poe into the modern realm of psychological obsession and madness. Maupassant’s short story was free from the romantic ideal and connected to the real world. Each of his short stories has different importance.

0.01 Objective :- French writer Guy de Maupassant is a world famous short story writer. Their influence is seen in the literature and short stories of almost all the languages of the world. Being a world famous writer, it is very beneficial for us to gain knowledge of his literature and composition. Through this research paper, we will analysis the characteristics and basic content of the short stories of Maupassant. Mainly in this research work, we will described the short story containing the Franco – Prussian war.

0.02 Source :- To present this research paper, I have taken the help of many texts. Apart from this have taken great help from research paper and books based on Guy de Maupassant. To accurately represent this research work, I have also taken some important e-notes.

0.03 Methodology :- The sources of data, that are used in this study will be both primary and secondary. The data will be acquired from various books, journals and articles. Analytical method is mainly used in this study.

1.00 There is a lot of story of Guy de Maupassant in which pure details about Franco – Prussian war. He joined in just twenty years, his experience of contributing to the war, he correctly and truly described in his short story. The Franco – Prussian war or Franco – German war, often referred to in France as the war of 1870, was a conflict between the second French Empire and the German states of the North German confederation led by the kingdom of Prussia. Lasting from 19 July 1870 to 28 January 1871, the conflict was caused by Prussian ambitions to expand German unification and French fears of the Shift in the European balance of power that would result if the Prussian succeeded. The caused of the war are strongly rooted in the events surrounding the unification of Germany. In the aftermath of the Austro – Prussian war of 1866, Prussia had annexed numerous territories and formed the north German confederation. This new power destabilized the European balance of power established by the congress of Vienna in 1815 after the Napoleonic wars.

In this research work we will discuss about Maupassant’s three war content short story. The name of the three short stories are – ‘Baul de suif’, ‘Two Friends’ and ‘A Duel’. Guy de Maupassant’s first famous short story is Baule de suif. It describes the sad pain of the defeated female heart. Baule de suif was very high level literature and keeping an eye on it, his mentor Gustave Flaubert said that – “I have been longing to tell you that I consider Boul de suif a masterpiece. Yes, young man nothing more or less than a masterpiece. The idea is quie original, magnificantly worked out and excellent in style. The setting and the characters are brought before one’s eyes and the psychology is grand. I am delighted with it, in short and two or three times I loughed aloud. That little tale will live, I promise you, what a grand bunch your bourgeois are. Not a single failure. Corundet is immense and life like. The nun pitcid with small pox is perfect and the count with his my dear child and the ending. The poor gire crying with her friend sings the Marreillaise ; that is grand too. I should like to hug you for a quarter of an hour on end. I am pleased with it, I enjoyed it, and I admire it.

Baule de suife has a terrible description of how Prussia army tortured French people. It mentions about the atrocities of the Prussian army. The story begins during the time period of the Franco – Prussian war, and it follows the journey of a group of French residents from Rouen, which was recently occupied by the Prussian army. The team of this army occupied a woman’s house and stayed in her house and the tyrannical army started exporting this woman physically and mentally. At last the tyrannical Prussian army captain beheaded the woman. Baul de suif is very painful story.

Maupassant's another important short story written on the basis of war is 'Two Friends' "Two Friends" is set during the siege of Paris in 1871. Before the war, the main characters, Monsieur Morissot and Monsieur Sauvage, used to meet every week at a particular finishing spot. During the war, they run into one another in Paris and, after a few drinks, decide to go fishing again. A colonel gives them permission and a password so they can get back into the city. The two men successfully make it to the fishing spot and spend the day talking and fishing. Near the end of the day, they're captured by German's army, who believe they are spies. The German officer demands they give him their password, or he will kill them. The two men refuse to speak except to say goodbye to one another, and they are killed. They remain friends and stick together until the end. Their last words are a farewell to one another. In this story we can learn the tyranny of the German army and how the war ruined innocent lives.

"A Duel" written by Guy de Maupassant is a short story set in Post Franco – Prussian war. It is a fictional story set in the 1870's. The story is about military life. "A Duel" is a short story about Mr. Dubuis's return after the German's conquered France. Mr. Dubuis was a former National Guard in Paris and was on his way to join his wife and daughter but he was prudently sent away to Switzerland before the invasion. In this story we read a description about the war of Mr. Dubuis and Prussian army officer. It's a war centric short story. At last Mr. Dubuis shoots the German officer. From these three short stories we get a painful and terrible details or description of the Franco – Prussian war. With the help of Flaubert, Maupassant began making a name for himself by writing short stories. Maupassant's short stories was excellent standards. Nitse and Dargam have written about them in the 'History of French literature' that as its best the structure of his work is marked by two things : an economy which gives only the essential element of character, situation and development and an outward movement which combines logic with the maximum publicity. Hence a dramatic swiftness which is Maupassant's special gift. Maupassant work is thoroughly realistic. The ten years from 1880 to 1890 were remarkable for their productivity. During 1886-87 Maupassant began to show signs of mental illness, probably the results of venereal disease. A sea voyage to improve his health enabled him to make some gains toward recover. He was over taken by paralysis and severe hallucinations due to syphilis. He died Paris on July 6, 1893.

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