

Guy de maupassant and his two friends

Business



Guy de Maupassant was a great writer.

His family was aristocratic but, sadly, his parents were divorced when he was only eleven. Maupassant was an intelligent student, and was admitted to the University of Paris to study law. However, the Franco-Prussian war began when he was twenty years old, so he was drawn to join the army (“Remembering Maupassant”). His experiences at war eventually inspired Maupassant as a writer later. Specifically, the short story titled “Two Friends” is one of his war stories about two friends who were captured by Prussian soldiers and died for their country together in honor.

Guy de Maupassant used his own experiences and unique writing style to create these two characters, who symbolized loyal French citizens who became protesters to the war; at the same time, he showed the readers how cruel Prussian soldiers were. First, it is important to understand Guy de Maupassant’s early life because it was rough. Again, he grew up as part of the aristocracy which means that the older generations of his family were nobles. But, when he was a child, his family became poor and their aristocratic status was no longer powerful. His father did not hold a job and the only one who worked was his mother.

His parents eventually divorced when he was eleven years old. Despite his familial woes, he was a wonderful student, he was well behaved and got good grades. He was really friendly and he ended up at the University of Paris to study law. However, again, he ended up in the war at twenty. (“Remembering Maupassant”) Maupassant’s writing style was then cultivated after the war.

Following his war experiences, Maupassant began his writing career as a poet, just like other French writers at that time (Johnston). His mentor told him to observe everything, pay attention to everything, and then write. Also, he learned that there should be no thoughts of making money from literary works. He wrote six novels and 359 short stories, and his works had a huge impact on the literary style of the aftermath(Johnston). During and after Maupassant's time, the movement of realism and naturalism reached a climax(Scheidenhelm). Unfortunately, he suffered from rheumatism during his career, once he wrote a letter to his mother; " For three weeks I have been trying to work every night and haven't been able to write a single page...nothing.

The result is that I am gradually falling into a black depression and will have a hard time climbing out again." (" Remembering Maupassant") This quote was an evidence of Maupassant's miserable life in his twilight years; Maupassant suffered from rheumatism, so he couldn't concentrate on his writings. This is also one of the main reason why he tried to commit suicide. Maupassant tried to shoot himself, but failed and, after that, he rammed a paper knife into his throat and died a couple months after, on Sept. 6th, 1893(" Remembering Maupassant"). Guy de Maupassant was inspired by his mentor and developed a unique writing style, which combined both Realism and Naturalism (Johnston).

Realism is a form of literature based on the actuality; it is recreating life in literary work. Naturalism, a logical extension of realism, was an art movement from 1890 to 1915. The naturalists used an objective writing style, they observed the facts and then wrote about their observations. The <https://assignbuster.com/guy-de-maupassant-and-his-two-friends/>

story “ Two Friends” is a great example of this unique writing style because the characters are normal people, as he created them based on reality, and, specifically, it resonates with French citizen readers (Scheidenhelm). This story is based on his experiences during the war, so it is also a naturalist’s work.

Actually, he joined in a naturalists group after the Franco-Prussian War (Johnston). Finally, his writing style affected future generations of writers as the realist movement began in 1861 and ended in 1914, and naturalist movement went from 1890 to 1915 (Scheidenhelm). Both movements reached a climax, during and after Guy de Maupassant. Interestingly, he actually explored two topics for most of his stories: the Franco-Prussian war such as in “ Two Friends”, the criticism of Mammonism, and people’s vanity such as in “ The Necklace” and “ Une Vie.” The first topic, The Franco-Prussian war, is again the background story of “ Two Friends” and was an influential part of Maupassant’s real life. In 1866, the Prussians conquered Austria in seven weeks, which allowed Prussia to become the leading German power.

Otto von Bismarck, the prime minister, wanted the country to be more powerful and so created a more authoritative German empire. Prince Leopold, a relative of the Prussian King Wilhelm I, obtained the Spanish crown, but the French Emperor Napoleon III refused the proposal. The Prussians sent a telegram to Bismarck to explain what happened, but the French became angry and declared war on Prussia on July 19, 1870 (Ingrao). The French Emperor made a speech at Auxerre, where he addressed that he would use the great opportunity, the Austro-Prussian War, to enlarge his

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land. During the speech, Eugène Rouher, the French minister of state said, “Smash Prussia and take the Rhine” By “the Rhine”, Rouher meant Prussia’s western cities: Cologne, Düsseldorf, and the Westphalian Ruhrgebiet around Essen, Dortmund, and Bochum.

These were the industrial mainsprings of Prussia (Wawro). Both countries entered the war with enthusiasm. The Prussian soldiers had just fought in a war with the Austrians, and they were all young, strong and confident. On the other hand, French soldiers were old and weak and untrained, and they were soon outnumbered. “Whereas the Prussians relied on universal conscription – raking every able-bodied twenty-year-old into the army for three years, then releasing him into the reserves for four additional years and the Landwehr or national guard for five more – the French preferred long-service, professional soldiering, employing no reserves and recruiting fewer men but keeping them longer with a seven year hitch and bonuses for reenlistment.

“(“The Franco-Prussian War”, page 134). This quote from Wawro stated one of the main reasons why the Prussians won this war. As he said the French soldiers needed to serve in the army for a longer time than the Prussian soldiers; the Prussians needed to serve for 3 years. The average age to enter the army is about 20, 21 years old. Therefore, most of the French soldiers were in their late 20s, or early 30s.

On the other hand, all the Prussian soldiers were under 25. Obviously, the Prussian soldiers are stronger. Till the end of the war, the Prussians encircled Paris and cut down all its supplies, and the French Emperor was

finally surrounded on January 28, 1871. The war officially ended with the Treaty of Frankfurt, signed on May 10, 1871. This war created a strong German Empire under the leadership of Prussia and formed a new Europe. Maupassant took what he knew and experienced at war and applied it to his short story “ Two Friends” which was written in 1883.

The plot revolves around two friends Morissot, a watchmaker and Sauvage, a haberdasher. The two are close friends and they fish every Sunday together. Even when the Prussians took siege over Paris, they still would fish their spot even if it was behind enemy lines. They did get a password from a French officers who was a friend of Sauvage, and eventually left the city. They really loved fishing, caught fish after fish, and they were so happy that they ignored the rumbling of cannons from Mount Valerien. Their happiness ended when were captured by the Prussians.

The Prussians wanted the password to the city, and the soldiers tortured the two men. However, the two loyal citizens chose to die instead of betraying their country; they died together in honor. Afterward, the Prussians tossed their dead bodies in the river. There are symbols and motifs in this story. First, Morissot and Sauvage symbolize loyalty and friendship.

Guy de Maupassant used them as models to show the French citizens that they should be loyal to their country. The two friends also symbolized friendship. To illustrate, the author writes, “ A ray of sunshine made the little heap of still squirming fish gleam. And he almost weakened. In spite of his efforts, his eyes filled with tears.

He stammered, ' Farewell, Monsieur Sauvage.' M. Sauvage answered, ' Farewell, Monsieur Morissot.' They shook hands, trembling from head to foot with a shudder which they could not control."(" Two Friends", paragraph 68)
This quote described the scene when Morissot and Sauvage chose to keep the password as a secret and died for their country.

It also showed that real friends can have fun with you but they are also willing to suffer with you. The rumbling of cannons from Mount Valerien is mentioned three times in the story. The first time, when Morissot and Sauvage got to the fishing pond and began fishing, " But suddenly a dull sound which seemed to come from underground made the earth tremble. The cannon were beginning.", this during the rising action, and it reminds the readers that the war is still going on. The second time, when the Prussian soldiers captured them.

This time, the rumbling cannons helped to develop a nervous mood. The third time is at the end of the story, when the two friends were killed by the soldiers already, " Mount Valerien continued to roar, its summit hidden now in a mountainous cloud of smoke." This time, the cannons set up a bloody dark mood, because of the savage action of the Prussian soldiers. This motif is very important because it helps to develop the mood of the story which is serious and dark. The theme in the story is, war changes people's lives often going from harmonious to miserable and it costs lives.

Realistically, there were thousands of people who died in the Franco-Prussian War. Guy de Maupassant then used this story and his own experiences at war to encourage people to protest the war. He created two characters to

represent the loyal French people who died for their country when it was at war. The another theme of the story is again, true friends can have fun and hanging out with you, and they can also suffer with you. Morissot and Sauvage are two real friends, who are loyal to their country.

The two friends choose to die rather than submit is really a touching moment in the story. It is evident that the Franco-Prussian War had a big impact on both Maupassant's life and literary work. It was an important inspiration to him. Furthermore, during his service in the army, he wrote many journals. These journals and experiences helped and inspired him a lot of his works.

Guy de Maupassant had experienced how cruel the Prussian Invaders were; he used what he saw as a soldier in Paris, to write about people's lives and thoughts about the war. In the story, while Morissot and Sauvage are talking, they said what they really felt about the war, which were the opinions of Maupassant himself, and every person in France. His unique writing style contributed to the story as well. He was a naturalist, he observed people in Paris during his service in the army; he knew how they felt and their opinions about war. That is how he could write a short story about protesting wars. He was a realist as well.

He created two characters, Morissot and Sauvage, representing the loyal French people who sacrificed themselves for their country. Using average characters helps the readers to understand and relate to them more.

Resultantly, it is clear that the Franco-Prussian War had a big impact on Guy de Maupassant's life; it was an inspiration for many of his works. His story "Two Friends" used two average Paris citizens, taught the readers many

moral lessons, including true friendship, loyalty, and that people should remember those who died in the war, and to protest any war if they can. This famous French writer with his unique writing style spurred by his war experiences should not be forgotten, and his themes are universal. Works Cited Ingraio, Charles W.

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