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'The Gentle Craft': Short Story, Structural Analysis and Novel

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Abstract

The short story is a kind of prose fiction which has grown up besides the genre of novel and has its own important and recognized place in the world of literature. It may be defined as a prose narrative "requiring from half an hour to one hour for its perusal." In other words, brevity is the key-note of a short story. It is a story which is possible to be read at one sitting. But it must not be supposed that the short story is a novel on a reduced scale. It has a definite technique of its own, and has its own specific requirements of matter and treatment. Hence it becomes clear that the novel and short story are two entirely different forms of literary art, each having its own rules of composition, its own usefulness and importance.

This article, which is based on a research on short story and novel, will discuss the structures of the short story and the novel.

Keywords: Short Story, Novel, Structural Analysis, Brevity, a Definite Technique

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The Gentle Craft¹: Short Story, Structural Analysis and Novel

Part One: Definition of short story and novel

Stories come to us from the ancient past. They drew their first breath from oral tradition and have existed as a portion of much of human literary expression in all ages. In the early centuries of story-telling, people had only one purpose in mind and that was narrating for the joy of the telling and hearing. It can be said that these stories had no origin more specific than the inherent creative spirit of human beings satisfying their desire to tell and to hear stories, and the story-tellers sacrificed unity and totality of effect, as well as originality for an entertaining method of reciting their incidents. A clever and witty remark by Professor Reid clears our task of defining short story when says: "Observing where something has come from is not the same as defining what it has become" (15).

A short story is a kind of prose fiction which has grown up besides the genre of novel and has its own important and recognized place in the world of literature. It may be defined as a prose narrative "requiring from half an hour to one hour for its perusal." (Poe 5). In other words, brevity is the key-note of a short story. It is a story which is physically possible to be read at one sitting. But it must not be supposed that the short story is a novel on a reduced scale. It has a definite technique of its own, and has its own specific requirements of matter and treatment. As Hamilton says: "The aim of a short-story is to produce a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means that is consistent with the utmost emphasis." (62)

The concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms defines short story as:

¹ - This term is borrowed from the title of a short story collection written by Thomas Delony, the most successful short story writer of The Elizabethan Age.

A fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own, as novellas sometimes and novels usually are. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background...the short story as we know it flourished in the magazines of the 19th and early 20th centuries (320).

Britannica Concise Encyclopedia also defines short story as a:

Brief fictional prose narrative. It usually presents a single significant episode or scene involving a limited number of characters. The form encourages economy of setting and concise narration; character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but seldom fully developed. A short story may concentrate on the creation of mood rather than the telling of a story. Despite numerous precedents, it emerged only in the 19th century as a distinct literary genre in the works of writers such as E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov (531).

In *Columbia Encyclopedia* we find short story defined as a:

Brief prose fiction. The term covers a wide variety of narratives—from stories in which the main focus is on the course of events to studies of character, from the “short short” story to extended and complex narratives such as Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. Most often the short story is restricted in character and situation and is concerned with creating a single, dynamic effect. Its length usually falls between 2,000 and 10,000 words. Short stories date back to earliest times; they can be found in the Bible, *Gesta Romanorum* of the Middle Ages, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Colombia Encyclopedia is the only one that mentions something about length of short story, its different kinds and its history.

Ian Reid in his book called “*The Short Story*” believes that: “Short story is generally applied to almost any kind of fictitious prose narrative briefer than a novel” (P.9).

Fred Pattee, in his historical survey *The Development of American Short Story*, points out that:

The term ‘short story’ itself, used generically to designate an independent literary form rather than just a story that lacks length, is as recent as the 1880s. Washington Irving, author of

‘*Rip Van Winkle*’ and ‘*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*’, called his writings ‘sketches’ or ‘tales’, and the latter term was preferred by Poe, Hawthorne and Melville (p.69).

Brander Mathews in his *Philosophy of Short Story* says: "A true short-story is something other and something more than a mere story which is short." (p.5) Mathews actually distinguishes between short story and a story which is short.

M. H. Abrams in his *Glossary of Literary Terms* defines short story as: "a brief work of prose fiction" (295), and defines novel as: "an extended narrative" (p.197). Cuddon in his *Literary Terms* considers short story as: "one of the most elusive forms" (430), and defines novel as an: "extended piece of prose fiction."(p.623).

Critics believe that the roots of the novel come from different sources. It comes from a)Elizabethan prose fiction b)French heroic romances in the mid-17th century c)Spanish picaresque tales-strings of episodic adventures held together by the personality of the central figure; such as *Don Quixote*. The word "novel" (which wasn't even used until the end of the 18th century) is an English transliteration of the Italian word "novella"-used to describe a short, compact, broadly realistic tale, popular during the medieval period.

E.M. Forster in his *Aspects of the Novel* cites the definition of the novel by a Frenchman named Abel Chevalley. He writes novel is: "a fiction in prose of a certain extent" and adds that "he defines 'extent' as over 50,000 words." (40). In *The Art of Fiction* John Gardner defines novel. He writes:

A novel is like a symphony in that its closing movement echoes and resounds with all that has gone before. . . . Toward the close of a novel. . . . unexpected connections begin to surface; hidden causes become plain; life becomes, however briefly and unstably, organized; the universe reveals itself, if only for the moment, as inexorably moral; the outcome of the various characters' actions is at last manifest; and we see the responsibility of free will. (184)

Novel is not actually an 18th century invention; it was an alternative for romances and as it was earlier mentioned it comes from the Elizabethan prose fiction in 1613 and is basically any story told for its spectacular or revealing incidents.

Part two: A brief historical survey of short story:

Story-telling has a long history and no one can say when, where and by whom story-telling was begun. No doubt, our ancestors have told stories of war, love, mysteries, and the miraculous performances of animals and objects. But the truth is that the short-story, beginning in the early stages of man's development, has gradually unfolded to greater and more useful possibilities.

Stories have always been existing throughout history. Every country has had its own legends and mythology, and tales² from them or their modifications have always been in wide circulation. Egyptian papyri dating from three thousands to four thousands B.C. reveal how the sons of Cheops regaled their father with stories and narratives. Some three hundred years before the birth of Christ, we had Old Testament stories as those of Joseph, Samson, Jonah and of Ruth. Tales told in *The Arabian Nights*, *Panchatantras*, *the epic of Gilgamesh*, *Shahnameh*, *the Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales*, *Ramayana* and *the Mahabharata* testify to the popularity of the short story all over the world.

But these tales of adventure and moral tales of the past have no resemblance with the modern short story. Short story in the hands of the modern masters is a perfect work of art. As an artistic work, it has undergone a gradual evolution and has developed into a popular form of modern literature. The modern short story writer is an artist, who is a close observer of life, a keen student of character, and a master of style. Every subject, between heaven and earth, is now regarded fit for the short story and it can be told in any manner which may please the artist.

The Greeks did very little writing in prose until the era of their decadence, and showed little instinct to use the concise and unified form of the short-story. But oral narrative and oral story-telling produced *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The conquering Romans followed closely in the paths of their predecessors and did little work in the shorter narratives. Both the Greeks and Romans left us episodes and incidents in their early classics. The myths of Greece and Rome were not bound by facts, and opened a wonderland where writers were free to roam. The epics were slow in movement, and presented a list of loosely organized stories arranged about some character like Ulysses or Aeneas. Fables³ as the Greek historian Herodotus has written “have been invented by a Greek slave named Aesop in the sixth century BC.” And they “are known today as Aesop’s fables.” (Wikipedia)

²- A tale according to Abrams is a “story of incident, the focus of interest is primarily on the course and outcome of the events.” (205) It is also a series of events or facts or a report of private confidential matter.

³- fables are considered as folk tales with an explicitly moral message.

a) The medieval era:

In this period, story-tellers and stories appeared everywhere. Even one may consider the ballads of the Middle Ages as a kind of verse story with “their swift moving narratives” and presenting “the elemental themes—love, courage, enmity, death” and “they reflect the lives of people.” (Pooley 52). These ballads focus on narratives that could be told at one sitting and can be considered as folk tales. The impulse to story-telling in this era manifested itself in fables, epics and in the medieval romances. The uneducated story-tellers of the era produced the fable, and the educated ones produced the simple, crude and disjointed tales. Many of these story-tellers did not have really something to say. Herbert Gold is quite right when in an International Symposium on short story says: “the story-teller must have a story to tell, not merely some sweet prose to take out for a walk” (Kenyon Review xxx.4). About 1250, some two hundred well known tales were collected in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and this is a wonderful collection of the mediaeval stories. It is said that the collected tales in *Gesta Romanorum* are anecdotes⁴ that were popular during the Roman Empire and remained popular until the 18th century.

In the middle of the fourteenth century Giovanni Boccaccio assembled his stories in a book called *Decameron*. In the *Decameron*, Boccaccio deals with traditional and contemporary materials. He is a born story-teller and presents many interesting and well-told narratives. In the same century, Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), wrote his framework collection, *Canterbury Tales*, which is also “considered a source book of information on fourteenth century England” (Pooley 66). Charles Sears Baldwin when talking about the stories of the Middle Age says:

More than half are merely anecdotes, and the remaining stories are bare plots, ingeniously done in a kind of scenario form ... Boccaccio was not conscious of a standard in short-story telling, for he had none in the sense that Poe and Maupassant defined and practiced it. Chaucer in England told his stories in verse and added the charm of humor and well defined characters to the development of story-telling. (103)

In the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Mallory (1394-1471), in his *Death of Arthur*, gathered a series of long narratives recounting the exploits of ancient knighthood. According to Pooley and others, this text “is the most complete single version of the tales of King Arthur and his court that has been written in English.” (85).

In the Medieval era, story-telling was also strengthened from the eastern

⁴-Anecdote as Abrams defines it, is “the unelaborated narration of a single incident.” (295) It is also said to be a short interesting or amusing narrative or a short biographical incident.

parts of the world. Professor Reid writes:

“From Medieval times onwards, several large mobile tale-clusters infiltrated from eastern cultures into European literature by various routes... The most indefatigably migratory is the *Panchatantra*. In its original Sanskrit form it dates back at least to the early sixth century A.D.; in a variety of translations it spread through Europe in the Middle Ages; Thomas North rendered it into English in 1570-‘from an Italian version of a Latin version of a Hebrew version of an Arabic version of a (lost) Pahlavi (Middle Iranian) version of some (lost) Sanskrit version of the original *Panchatantra*’ (according to Franklin Edgerton *The Panchatantra*, London, 1965, p.13)”(18).

b) The Renaissance and the Elizabethan age:

Renaissance or rebirth refers particularly to renewed interest in classical learning, which means the writings of ancient Greece and Rome. The printing press transformed the way information was exchanged during the Renaissance and deleted the laborious work of writing books by hand. In this era, many writers used the term ‘novella’ when referring to short stories.

Boccaccio had a great influence on the Renaissance narrative. In France, Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron* (1558) borrowed the structural formula by which Boccaccio linked and framed his tales. In England, no translation of the *Decameron* in its entirety appeared until 1620.

During the Elizabethan Age, short story made on humble beginning. Thomas Nash and Robert Green are two of the earliest writers of short stories. Green wrote many stories, but his great defect was that he undertook to point a moral before he had learnt to tell a plain tale. Thomas Nash wrote long stories which are destitute of the art of construction. Another short story writer of the Elizabethan Age was Thomas Delony who appeared to be more successful than the other two. Delony’s best collection of short stories are, *The Gentle Craft*, *Jack of Newbury*, and *Thomas of Reading*. In all these stories Delony shows greater skill in construction than any of his rivals. His characters are better drawn, his humor is richer and his wit less strained. The reason for his success was that he was content to tell a plain story drawn from his own experience and depicting men and women whom he knew.

c) Seventeenth century:

In the seventeenth century, Cervantes combined Boccaccio’s anecdotal liveliness and interest in psychological motivation with a new dimension

of moral seriousness. He gave the world its first great novel, *Don Quixote*. Cervantes did not write short-stories, but tales that are fairly brief. His *The Liberal Lover* is near to the sense of short story, as this period came to producing a real short-story. Spain added to the story a high sense of chivalry and a richness of character that the Greek romance and the Italian novella did not possess. France followed this loose composition and lack of beauty in form. Scarron and Le Sage, the two French fiction writers of this period, contributed little or nothing to the advancement of story-telling.

d) Eighteenth Century:

The story-telling of the seventeenth century was largely shaped by the popularity of the drama. In the eighteenth century the drama gave place to the essay, and it is to the sketch⁵ and essay that we must go to trace the evolution of the story during this period.

This century also saw the development of the informal essay, which frequently derived some of its interest from such episodes and sketches as Joseph Addison uses in the "Sir Roger De Coverley papers." The growth of the periodicals and magazines like those published by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, such as *Tatler*, *Spectator*, *Adventure*, *Rambler*, etc. facilitated the publication of short stories. But it is believed that Addison and Steele toyed with the tale as a kind of decorations to their essays in the *Spectator*.

Addison and Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* developed some real characters of the fiction type and told some good stories, but even their best, like *Theodosius and Constantia*, fall far short of developing all the dramatic possibilities, and lack the focusing of interest found in the nineteenth century stories. Some of Charles Lamb's *Essays of Elia*, especially the *Dream Children*, introduce a delicate fancy and an essayist's clearness of thought and statement into the story. In France, Voltaire had a burning message in every essay, and he paid far greater attention to the development of the thought of his message than to the story he was telling.

During the eighteenth century, short story was given a new lease of life. Novel grew and appeared in the eighteenth century. It actually came from the picaresque⁶ novel of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All these

⁵- Sketch according to Cuddon, is: "a- a short piece of prose, often perhaps a thousand or two thousand words and usually of a descriptive kind commonly found in newspapers and magazines. In some cases it becomes very nearly to short story. Dickens' *Sketches by Boz*. is a good example. b- A brief dramatic piece of the kind one might find in a revue or as a curtain raiser or as part of some other kind of theatrical entertainment. A good example is Pinter's *Last Bus*." (p. 632).

⁶- According to Abrams, "Pizaro is Spanish for rogue and a typical story concerns the escapades of an insouciant rascal who lives by his wits and shows a little if any alteration of character through a long succession of adventures (p.198).

forms are the representation of human love of narration and narratives and factors in the development of a formal kind of story-telling.

But during this century the short story writers were mainly concerned with pointing a moral and did not care to provide pure pleasure and delight to the readers. Thus in the stories of *Hawkesworth and Goldsmith*, we find the presence of the instructive tendency which spoils the artistic effect of their stories.

At the close of this century German romanticism began to seep into English thought and prepare the way for things new in literary thought and treatment.

e) Nineteenth Century:

The first historical evidence in the development of the story shows no conception of a short-story other than that it is not so long as other narratives. This judgment of the short-story obtained until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a new version of its meaning was given, and an enlarged vision of its possibilities was experienced by a number of writers almost simultaneously.

The nineteenth century is a great period of short story writing in English literature. The rapid growth of journalism and magazines facilitated the growth and development of the short story. Moreover writers freed themselves from obsession with some moral and learnt the art of construction and characterization. A moral was sometimes present but it was secondary to the main purpose of the story namely to give pleasure to the readers. There is no obtrusive morality. Their superiority lies in their power and art of constructing the story. The story tellers have become conscious of the vital importance of skilful evolution of the story must be from within.

In the mid nineteenth century, after Poe's review of Hawthorne's "*Twice-Told Tales*" the structure of short story was formulated. Little by little, theories about short story were emerging. One of the first of these theories is Poe's *The Philosophy of Composition* that appeared in 1846 and the other is professor Matthews' *The Philosophy of the Short Story* published in 1901. In this century came Sir Walter Scott, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Merimee and Balzac, Gautier and Musset, Maupassant, Chekhov and Hoffman. With these writers, the short story as a distinct literary genre came into being.

Poe and Maupassant have reduced the form of the short-story to an exact science; Hawthorne and Harte have done successfully in the field of romanticism what the Germans, Tieck and Hoffman, did not do so well; Bjornson and Henry James have analyzed character psychologically in their short-stories; Kipling has used the short story as a vehicle for the

conveyance of specific knowledge; Stevenson has gathered most, if not all, of the literary possibilities adaptable to short-story use, and has incorporated them in his *Markheim*.

The short stories in the nineteenth century are equally remarkable for their variety. They cover nearly the whole range of human interest and appeal to every emotion, from horror and fear to tenderness and pity. They touch heaven and earth and hell. They are dreamy or intensely active, domestic or adventurous. They illustrate crime almost inhuman or virtue almost superhuman. In short, we may say that during the nineteenth century the short story attained a high degree of perfection both in construction and aesthetic pleasure.

In view of this long development, it seems foolish to name one person as the founder of the short story or to credit one nation with its development. It was in this century that a group of writers did consciously formulate the short story as an art form notable among them being Nathaniel Hawthorn and Edgar Allan Poe in America, Merimee and Balzac in France and Hoffman in Germany. This development flowered with such speed and force in America that the modern short story is often called an American art form.

This century opened with a decided preference for fiction. Washington Irving, reverting to the *Spectator*, produced his sketches, and, following the trend of his time, looked forward to a new form and wrote *The Spectre Bridegroom* and *Rip Van Winkle*. It is only by a precise definition of short-story that Irving is robbed of the honor of being the founder of the modern short-story. He loved to meander and to fit his materials to his story scheme in a leisurely manner. He did not quite see what Hawthorne instinctively followed and Poe consciously defined and practiced, and he did not realize that terseness of statement and totality of impression were the chief qualities he needed to make him the father of a new literary form.

Scott's *Wandering Will* is almost faultless in construction. Bert Harte's and Stevenson's stories are models of literary art. These writers know their purpose and rigidly exclude all that comes in the way of their design and thereby attain the unity of impression which is highly essential to the short story.

France with her literary newspapers and artistic tendencies, and the United States with magazines calling incessantly for good short-stories, and with every section of its conglomerate life clamoring to express itself, lead in the production and rank of short-stories. Maupassant and Stevenson and Hawthorne and Poe are the great names in the ranks of short-story writers.

f) Twentieth Century and modern short story:

During the twentieth century the short story has been considerably improved and developed. It has been practiced with perfection by such writers as Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde, H. G. Wells, A. E. Coppard and Catherine Mansfield. Meanwhile in France and Russia, we can see great writers as Maupassant, Flaubert, Anatole France, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov who have made the short story an exquisite medium for catching the most evanescent moods and subtlest ironies. They are perhaps the greatest continental short story writers, standing alone in grace, wit and charm.

The twentieth century short story writers, while taking full care of the art of construction and characterization, have considerably widened the scope of the story. The short story is now used by the English, French and Russian masters as a mirror to social conditions, intellectual movements and historical upheavals. But the best example of the short story, besides being a mirror to life, do not show any decline in imaginative power and creativeness. Such stories as are written by W.H. Hudson, Joseph Conrad and Walter De La Mare, set the mind roaming in mystique realms. They have a spiritual foundation which has no counterpart in the earlier stories. In the hands of Katherine Mansfield, the short story does not remain a mere narration of incidents but is a deeper and deeper probing of the human consciousness. Her later stories have the effect of the plummet dropped into the pool of human consciousness. The stories of A. E. Coppard, at least the earlier ones, have a sweet lyrical quality about them. His stories are based on the theory that the short story should not be a written affair but a tale told. His earlier stories are marked by the natural grace and spontaneity of a lyric. His style became sophisticated as he advanced in his literary career and this change in his style was due to the influence of Henry James.

Another significant writer of short stories is Rudyard Kipling. Rudyard Kipling's stories are as a rule located in remote British colonies and among the territorial armies, where detail may be minutely realistic, but is still rich in romantic association to the untravelled reader. Thus he has supplanted Bert Harte, The famous American short story writer as the acknowledged master of local color in the short story. Local color of this kind that always puts an emphasis on things that are vivid or full of rich tints is very prone to exaggerate. His stories dealing with India and Indian life are most exaggerated and are probably no nearer life than Bert Harte's *Argonauts*. Kipling's best stories are to be found in *Many Inventions* (1883), *The Jungle Book* (1895), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895) and *The Day's Work* (1898).

Short story has also been tried by John Galsworthy, George Moore, and Somerset Maugham. It has also been cultivated by numerous writers like Leslie Howard, Pauline Smith, James Haney, Elizabeth Bowen, C. F. Green, T. O. Beachcroft, Dorothy Edwards and others. A large number of women writers have also contributed to the development of the present day short story. This fact, together with the recent flood of manuals on short story technique have inspired hundreds of unprepared and unqualified people to take to the short story.

g-Modern short story and causes for its immense popularity:

Modern short story as a work of art originated in the second quarter of Nineteenth century in America. Edgar Allan Poe, who leapt into fame with the publication of his *An MS found in a Bottle* in 1883 is considered as a great pioneer. He holds his readers attention with the skill of his narration and the atmosphere that he creates. His influence on the modern short story writers can not be overestimated.

It is now gradually recognized that the modern short story is one of the most popular, if not the most popular form of literary composition. And as Bernard Bergonzi believes: the modern short-story writer is bound to see the world in a certain way” (67) and this can be a reason for its popularity. Its immense popularity is the result of many co-operating causes.

First, the numbers of magazines and journals that publish short stories have increased and the demand for short stories is so great.

Secondly, there is a hurry and bustle of modern life. The modern reader has no time or the inclination to read the “large still books” over which people liked to linger in the past when life passed on in a leisurely fashion (as it was seen in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). He can no longer find times to read novels like *Tom Jones* which require much patience and must be continued day after day. He wants and sometimes needs something which he can read in a short time and in one sitting, whenever he finds time. The short story comes in handy for the purpose. It entertains him after hard days; work, without wasting much of his precious time. In this way the demand for short story is so great and high in the twentieth century, so that “Hemingway’s novella (long short story) sold 5,300,000 copies in only two days.” (Wikipedia)

Thirdly, the spread of education and the enormous development of journalism are other factors which have contributed to its popularity. With the universal extension of education the demand for reading matter has increased. It is obvious that all can not read higher literature which is meant for deep meditative study and not for recreation. The public wants light works and this demand is satisfied by the short story.

In addition to the above mentioned features; it can be said that a large number of magazines and journals which came into being simultaneously with the spread of the education did much to increase the popularity of the short story. Long novels could not be published at one time. If they were published in serial installments, by missing a single issue the continuity broke, and the reader felt them to be unentertaining. Then, they published short stories complete in one issue and providing the reader with the kind of entertainment he wanted. Hence it is true to say, as H.E. Bates has said: “The evolution of short story has something to do with the evolution of the general reader.” (89).

Part three: Essential characteristics of short story:

As it was already mentioned, a short story is a relatively brief fictional narrative in prose. It may range in length from the short short story of five hundred words up to the long short story of twelve thousands to fifteen thousands words. Professor Reid writes:

“Somerset Maugham in the preface to his *Complete Short Stories* notes that the smallest item there comes to about 1600 words in all, the longest to about 20000, and that is approximately the median range – though some authors would include brief and longer work: in Frank Sargeson’s collected stories a few pieces are less than 500 words while one runs to about 32000” (10).

Short story may be distinguished from the sketch and the tale in that it has a definite formal development, a firmness in construction; however, it finds its unity in many things other than plot – although it often finds it there – in effect, in theme, in character, in tone, in mood, even on occasion, in style.

It was not until well along in the nineteenth century that any one attempted to define the short story. Bret Harte says: “Crude at first, it received a literary polish in the press, but its dominant quality remained. It was concise and condensed, yet suggestive. It was delightfully extravagant, or a miracle of understatement.” (qtd. in Baets, 49)

The primary aim of short story is to entertain. Hence a *short story must be interesting above everything else*. It may convey some moral lesson, it may ridicule human follies, but it must do all this in an interesting manner. It must absorb the reader and make him forget the worries of his life for the time being. If it does not do so, it cannot be regarded as a good short story in spite of all the other excellent qualities that it may have.

The short story must have only one aim or purpose. *It must have singleness (unity) of effect*. All the events, all the incidents, all the

characters of the story must be invented to create that preconceived effect. The story must have one pivot of interest and by focusing the attention on that one point or powerful effect must be created on the reader. The satisfaction of the reader is the real test of its success. According to what professor Reid has written:

Poe said that the chief formal property of 'the short story tale' was 'unity of impression', which he regarded as the product of conscious artistry; the author first 'conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out' and then devised an appropriate narrative vehicle for conveying that (p.54).

Every subject between heaven and earth is fit for the short story, but it must be as such that can be effectively developed within the short space prescribed for it. Whatever may be its subject, the story must leave us with the impression that even if nothing would have been lost at least nothing would have been gained by further elaboration. It must be complete without any suggestion of overcrowding. The attention must be focused throughout upon the single purpose of the story and everything not directly connected with that purpose must be rigorously excluded. Concentration on the aim or the motive of the story is essential for its success. Subject is not so important as the method of telling the story.

Owing to the exigencies of space, a short story writer cannot portray a character in full. He can only exhibit some one phase or at the most a few salient features of a character. The searchlight is focused on some important phase of character and it is thrown into prominent relief. Men and women are placed in such telling situations as are sufficient to develop the prominent traits of their characters. Here the novelist has an advantage over the short story writer. He has ample space at his disposal, and so can place his characters in as many situations as he likes and display different qualities of his characters. He can gradually develop the characters of his men and women and can lay their very souls bare before us. All this is not possible in a short story. Besides a short story writer can not introduce a dozen or even half a dozen characters in a story, as it would result in overcrowding. None of the characters would then be effectively developed. This drawback has given rise to the one-man story. The plot hinges on the actions of one man. All our attention is concentrated upon him and this results in a powerful impression and the story gains much in effect.

As in novel and drama, in the short story also the dialogues occupy a very prominent place. They add to the interest of the story and make it charming and easy to read. In characterization, the dialogue counts for much. Every word of it is made to tell. In a novel, we know much about

the character of an individual by what he says, by what others say about him and/or by what the author says about him. But the dialogue in a short story should be brief and to the point. Unlike novels, long speeches in a short story would be considered a serious defect.

A suitable atmosphere is necessary for a short story. The atmosphere may be one of tragic gloom, or of love and laughter or of suspense. But there should be consistency in the creation of this atmosphere. If, for example, the story is a detective story, it must have the atmosphere of horror and mystery throughout. In a tragic story, the atmosphere must be one of gloom and a humorous or comic atmosphere would be out of place.

A short story writer has limited space, so he must use extreme economy of words. Because of its extreme condensation and extreme economy of words, every word and sentence must take the action of the story a step further. Every superfluous word or sentence is considered a defect. Moreover, the language used should be easy and simple. Long and involved sentences are out of place in a good short story.

The short-story must always have a compact unity and a direct simplicity. In such stories as Bjoernson's *The Father* and Maupassant's *The Piece of String*, this simplicity is equal to that of the anecdote but in no case can an anecdote possess the dramatic possibilities of these simple short-stories; for a short-story must always have that tensity of emotion that comes only in the crucial tests of life.

The short-story does not demand the consistency in treatment of the long story, for there are not so many elements to marshal and direct properly, but the short-story must be original and varied in its themes, cleverly constructed, and lighted through and through with the glow of vivid imaginings. A single incident in daily life is caught as in a snap-shot exposure and held before the reader in such a manner that the impression of the whole is derived largely from suggestion. The single incident may be the turning-point in life history, as in *The Man Who Was*; it may be a mental surrender of habits fixed seemingly in indelible colors in the soul and a sudden, inflexible decision to be a man, as in the case of *Markheim*; or it may be a gradual realization of the value of spiritual gifts, as Bjoernson has concisely presented it in his little story *The Father*.

The short-story is stripped of all the incongruities that led Fielding, Scott, and Dickens far afield. All its parts harmonize in the simplest manner to give unity and "totality" of impression through strict unity of form. It is a concentrated piece of life snatched from the ordinary and uneventful round of living and steeped in fancy until it becomes the acme of literary art.

The aim of the short-story is always to present a cross-section of life in such a vivid manner that the importance of the incident becomes

universal. Around the turn of the century, however, the impact of realism and the advent of naturalism joined with the example of Chekhov's *slice of life* stories to force upon the formula for the serious writer, and such masters of the form as Somerset Maugham and Catherine Mansfield in England and Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway in America began producing short stories of great integrity that reflected the complex formlessness of life itself.

It was around the end of the nineteenth century that the tightly constructed *surprise ending* story of O. Henry was added to the formula of short story and the short story came to be thought of as corresponding to a formula, a pattern that was repeated in endless retellings of its limited variations in the popular short story.

A short story is a story that *can be read at a single sitting*. Edgar Allan Poe said that "a 'tale' (which for the moment can be taken as a synonym for short story) is capable of being perused at one sitting" (qtd. In Reid, 9). Hence *brevity is another important characteristic of the short story*. Absolute economy of means is to be used and everything superfluous is to be strictly avoided. There is to be no word written of which the tendency direct or indirect is not to further the action of the story. The art of short story writer is, therefore, a difficult one. It requires a long training and practice to master the art and become a successful short story writer.

Some short-stories are told with the *definite end in view of telling a story for the sake of exploiting a plot*. *The Cask of Amontillado* is all action in comparison with *The Masque of the Red Death*. Hawthorne, above all writers, is most interested in ethical laws and moral development and Henry James and Bjornson turn the x-rays of psychology and sociology on their characters; Stevenson follows with the precision of the tick of a watch the steps in Markheim's mental evolution.

The types of the short-story are as varied as life itself. Addison, Lamb, Irving, Warner, and many others have used the story in their sketches and essays with wonderful effect. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is as impressive as any of Scott's tales. The allegory in *The Great Stone Face* loses little or nothing when compared with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. No better type of detective story has been written than the two short-stories, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Purloined Letter*. Every emotion is subject to the call of the short-story. Humor with its expansive free air is not so well adapted to the short story as is pathos. There is a sadness in the stories of Dickens, Garland, Page, Mrs. Freeman, Miss Jewett, Maupassant, Poe, and many others that runs the whole gamut from pleasing tenderness in *A Child's Dream of a Star* to unutterable horror in *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

Part four: limitation of short story and its differences with the genre of novel:

“The wrong word, a misplaced paragraph, an inadequate phrase or a convenient explanation, starts fatal leaks in this kind of writing which is formally very close to poetry.” (qtd. In Reid, p. 54-55). Perhaps this dictum by Poe makes the difference between short story and other genres of literature quite clear. Frank O’Connor when asked in an interview “Why do you prefer the short story for your medium?” He answers: “Because it’s the nearest thing I know to lyric poetry for a long time, then discovered that God had not intended me to be a lyric poet and the nearest thing to that is short story.” (p.165)

Structurally a novel is an extended fictional narrative, usually written in prose. It naturally deals with human characters in social situations. Professor Matthews Writes: “The short story is the single effect, complete and self contained, while the novel is of necessity broken into a series of episodes. Thus the short story has, what novel can not have, the effect of ‘totality’, as Poe called it, the unity of impression.” (5). The traditional novel has: a) a unified and plausible plot structure b)sharply individualized and believable characters c)a pervasive illusion of reality. A novel aims for a comprehensive unified effect in which all of the elements of fiction intertwine to make a comment on the human condition.

As the short story writer is handicapped by *little space* and *little time*, or *short period of time* he has to concentrate his attention on a *particular event* or idea or a *particular aspect of character*. He can give us merely a slice of life. *He has to aim at a single effect* and has to unite closely together all such events which are best likely to produce that effect. *Everything superfluous and unnecessary has to be skillfully sorted out*. In the whole composition, there should be no word written, of which the tendency is not to further the effect sought to be produced. This singleness of aim, this directness of method and this brevity and concentration, result in a powerful impression. But it requires greater care and greater skill in all the details of composition, than is necessary for a novel. Any defects in the composition of the short story would stand out with greater clearness, than the same defects in the novel. *A short story requires a better artist than the novel, and is a higher literary form*. Leibowitz asserts that: “In general terms,... the novels selectivity differs from the short story’s because the novel’s narrative task is elaboration, whereas the short story’s is limitation.” (125).

But in another respect, the novel is far superior to the short story. *The short story can not exhibit life in all its variety and complexity like the novel*, for it needs a larger canvas than is provided by the story. Reid says:

The action of a short story...need have no completed pattern at all. It may be virtually without start or finish, representing only a state of affairs rather than a sequence of events. This is generally true of the work of some writers; Galthworthy said Chekhov's stories are 'all middle, like a tortoise', and Chekhov himself once remarked : I think that when one has finished writing a short story one should delete the beginning and the end'." (p.62-63).

Brander Matthews in *The Philosophy of the Short-Story* writes:

A true short-story differs from the novel chiefly in its essential unity of impression. In a far more exact and precise use of the word, a short-story has unity as a novel cannot have it.... A short-story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation (p.3).

Short story may be distinguished from the novel in that it tends to reveal character through a series of actions or ordeals, the purpose of short story being accomplished when the reader comes to know what the true nature of a character is (James Joyce called a short story an epiphany⁷ because of this quality of revelation), the novel tends, on the other hand, to show character development as a result of actions and under the impact of events. This generalization like every generalization about the short story and the novel, grossly overstates its case; yet in a broad sense it does define a basic difference between the genres.

In Wikipedia we find that:

The Short stories are not as complex as novels. Novels contain certain elements as: exposition (introduction, setting, characters) complication (The event that introduces the conflict), rising action, climax and resolution. In this way, short stories may not follow this pattern. Some modern short stories only occasionally have an exposition, and some have an abrupt beginning or the story starts in the middle of the action, and some longer short stories may have a climax, or a turning point, in any case, the ending of many short stories are open.

⁷ - Epiphany as Abrams defines it; is "a manifestation," or "showing forth." It is the "manifestation of God's presence within the created world." (85)

Short story can not exhibit the gradual evolution of character, which is possible only for a novel. The spiritual history of Levil in Anna Karenina, and the study of Tito Meleema's moral downfall in Romola, would be impossible within the framework of the short story. In a short story we meet men and women only for a few minutes and can know only one aspect of their character. The concentration of attention on one particular quality may result in a powerful impression, but the men and women who live long in our memory are the men and women of the novels and not necessarily those of short stories. In short stories some particular qualities of men and women and thus brings them out into bold relief. Searchlight is focused on some particular incident in a man's life, and some particular phase of his character is brilliantly illuminated. Robert Creeley in the preface of his book writes: "Whereas the novel is a continuum, of necessity, chapter to chapter, the story can escape some of that obligation, and function exactly in terms of whatever emotion best can serve it." (p.iii).

In a novel, the character unfolds itself before us, as the action develops. No such gradual evolution of character is possible in the short story. But like the novelist, the short story writer can, if he likes, constitute himself the official interpreter of his characters and tell us himself all that we need to know about them. Like a novelist, he can dissect his characters and lay bare before the readers their innermost souls. Also like the novel, short story can be both subjective and objective. He can introduce his personality into the story and mix freely with his men and women, lay their thoughts and feelings before us and pass judgment upon them.

Part Five: Conclusion:

Though immensely popular in modern times, the short story is not a modern product. It has been popular in every age and in every country. From times immemorial, people, old and young, have always liked to be entertained and the short story has been their most popular entertainment. The earliest forms of short story were the tales of adventure, dealing with the deeds of valor or of chivalry of some popular hero. If we really want to appreciate short story as a form of art, we must not limit ourselves to any one country but must try study the great masters of this art in many countries.

In spite of all the features mentioned for short story and its differences with the genre of novel, it seems really problematic to determine what separates a short story from longer fictional works. A practical definition of short story must be broad enough to include the surprise ending story of O'Henry and Maupassant, the tale of unified effect of Poe, the slice of life story of Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield and Sherwood Anderson and

the symbolic and mythic stories that are popular in the little magazines today. At the same time within breadth that such a statement must have, there should be distinguishing characteristics that set of the short story from other prose fiction forms.

However natural and formless, the short story may sometimes give the impression of being much more than it may appear rather than being simple narrative as in Somerset Maugham's stories, or the unadorned report of an action, as in Hemingway's or John O'Hara's, a distinguishing characteristic of the genre is that it is consciously made, that it reveals itself, on careful analysis, to be the result of conscious craftsmanship and artistic skill. Furthermore, however slight the short story may appear, it consists of more than a mere record of an incident or an anecdote.

It is clear that the short story and the novel are two entirely different forms of literary art, each having its own rules of composition, its own usefulness and importance. Sometimes extravagant claims are put forward for the short story. It is claimed that the short story is the future form of fiction and it would gradually replace the novel. However popular the short story may be, it is no likely to displace the novel for the very good reason that it can not do what the novel does. So long as the people are interested in the variety and many sidedness of life, the novel is going to live as the representative type of modern literary art. Hence the short story must not be regarded as arrival to, or as a substitute for the novel, but as a separate literary form which has grown side by side with the novel, and has come to occupy an important place in the literature of the world.

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