

The Growth and Development of Short Story

The desire to listen to stories is deeply rooted in human civilization world over. Man, being the social animal, is always interested in other man's life. This feature of man's mind might have created the art of story-telling. Short stories date back to oral story-telling traditions which originally produced epics such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. Oral narratives were often told in the form of rhyming or rhythmic verse, often including recurring sections. Such device helped to recall the stories easily. Short sections of verse might focus on individual narratives that could be told at one sitting.

The origin of short story can be traced back to the oral story-telling tradition. Perhaps the oldest form of the short story is the anecdote which was popular in the Roman Empire. At the time, the anecdotes functioned as a kind of parables in the Roman Empire. Anecdote is a brief realistic narrative that embodies a point. The anecdotes remained popular in Europe well into the 18th century, when the fictional anecdotal letters of Sir Roger de Coverley were published. The another form close to the short story is the fable. Fables, concise tales with an explicit moral

were, said by the Greek historian, Herodotus to have been invented in the 6th century BCE by a Greek slave named Aesop, though other times and nationalities have also been given for him. These ancient fables are today known as in essence, the short story is a literary genre which presents a single significant

event or a scene involving a limited number of characters. Short stories have no set length. In terms of word count there is no official boundary between an anecdote, a short story, and a novel. Rather, the form's limits are given by the rhetorical and practical context in which a given story is produced and considered, so that what constitutes a short story may differ between genres, countries, eras, and commentators. The short story has been considered both an apprenticeship from preceding more lengthy works, and a crafted form in its own right, collected together in books of similar length, price, and distribution as novels.

"A short story is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analysing the component elements, the types, and the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well."

The short story is a comparatively recent development in English literature. In Europe, the oral story-telling tradition began to develop into written stories in the early 14th century with Geoffrey Chaucer's

Canterbury Tales and Giovanni Bocaccio's Decameron. Both of these books are composed of individual short stories set within a larger narrative story. At the end of the 16th century, some of the most popular short stories in Europe were the darkly tragic "novella" of Matteo Bandello 7th (especially in their French translation). The mid-17 century in France saw the development of a refined short novel, the "nouvelle" by authors like Madam de Lafayette. In the 1690s, traditional fairy tales began to be published. One of the most famous collections was by Charles Perrault. The appearance of Antoine Galland's first modern translation of the Thousand and One Nights or Arabian Nights would have an enormous influence on the 18th century European short stories of Voltaire, Diderot and others.

The theme means the story's main ideas on the message the writer intends to communicate. Short stories often have single themes and illustrate a single idea such as the result of certain actions on behalf of either the protagonist or antagonist. Theme can be reflected in a variety of ways through the story. Theme can be incorporated in a story through setting, clothing, musing, sounds, certain smells, things, things the characters touch or hold, transportation and the occupation, abilities of the characters etc.

A short story has almost all the characteristics and the elements of

novel but they are used in a short story in a different and limited way to bring their good effect. A short story concentrates on a small group of characters creating a single effect or mood. It is less complex than the novel. Usually a short story focuses on one incident; has a single plot, a single setting; and covers a short span of time. Short stories have no fixed length. The order of exposition, conflict, intensifying action, crisis, climax, resolution etc. may change from writer to writer. In modern times such order may or may not be followed by the writers. The form of the short story can be used by each writer in a different and innovative way.

By, Arshad Khan
Dept. of English
J N College Madhubani