

Chapter I

Short Story: An Introduction

A Short Story is generally defined as a piece of prose fiction complete in itself with a moderate magnitude. It is densely concentrated and non-extended fragment of fiction written in prose which is neither too short nor too long but of amid length. It is easy to recognise a short fiction by its briefness, economy of words and by short length but very difficult to define it. M.H. Abrams comments: “A short story is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analyzing the component elements the types and the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well.” (Abrams 202)

There is no absolute definition and fixed length of a short story. It can be defined in many way on the basis of word count, magnitude etc. Some regard it as a piece of fiction which has word count of not less than 7500 words. However, it is very difficult to standardize the length of a short story because different writers have different opinions in this connection. Some writers fix the word count of short stories in-between 1000 to 9000 words. But in present context, the word count of a short story is no longer than 20000 words and no shorter than 1000 words. The norm usually followed regarding the length of short story is fixed between 3000 to 6000 words. And those stories with word count less than 1000 words are called Short Short stories or Flash Fiction. But M.H. Abrams defines a flash fiction as “a slightly elaborated anecdote of perhaps five hundred words.” (Abrams 283) However, the most usual and accepted length of the genre ranges from 3000 to 5000 words. Charles Raymond Barrett observes:

The question of length is but relative; in general a short story should not exceed 10000 words, and it could hardly contain less than 1000;

while from 3000 to 5000 is the most usual length. Yet Hawthorne's "The Gentle Boy" contains 12000 words; Poe's "The Gold Bug", 13000; and perhaps the majority of James' exceed the maximum, while "The Lesson of the Master" requires 25000 and "The Aspern Papers" 32000. (Barrett 17)

There is no norm of description in short fiction. However, the norm is flouted as soon as the writer feels need of description necessary. Usually compression is observed. The modern short story writers normally use such familiar locales as Hotel, Bazaar and Temple etc. instead of scenic descriptions. The stories longer than short story and shorter than novel are called Novellas. But being shorter in length is not the only criterion to bring any piece of writing under the umbrella of short stories. Rather, it requires a particular kind of literary composition. According to SFWA (The science fiction and fantasy writers of America) short stories have word count of less than 7500 words, Novelette has 7500 to 17500 words, Novellas have 17500 to 400000 words and Novels have more than 40000 words. M.H. Abrams suggests: "The status of middle length between the tautness of the short story and the expansiveness of the novel is sometimes indicated by the name novelette or novella." (Abrams 283)

Edgar Allen Poe says that Short Story should be finished in single sitting in order to preserve its unity of impression. In other words it requires from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal. It is neither a Novel nor a quicken on reduced scale. However, in his review of Hawthorne's Tales 1 he had laid down a theory in which he stresses on what he calls unity or totality of interest i.e. unity of impression, effect and economy of words. Edgar Allan Poe in his review of Hawthorne's Tales remarks:

A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having

conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence end not to the out bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no words written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished because undisturbed: and this is an end unattainable by the novel. (Poe)

J.A.K. Thomson has opined the notion that to consider short story something quite new is self-deception for those whose reading does not go beyond the present century. Gerald Prince observes that no story exists until three or more events are joined, with at least two of them occurring at different times and being causally linked. Claude Bremond states: "... temporal movement and logical linkage are just enough to make it a story, though no doubt insufficient to make it an interesting one." (Mehta 13)

Short Stories looking like capsules of entertainment are basically philosophical products of writer's vision which he wants to propagate and share with people. These writer-products condition the reader's mind in a particular way and makes them think in the way writer does. Or in other words you can call it mental colonization i.e. stories are used as a key to open up reader's mind in order to delete his traditional thinking and stack it with something of writer's tradition. Short stories or any other fiction are instrumental in activating and sensitizing our consciousness to

react stimuli selectively. But good stories often arouse reader's consciousness and develop his sight into insight. Kamal Mehta quotes Eudora Welty as:

Stories embody a personal vision, when all the elements are set in motion by the writer's perception of the imagery and magic of everyday life. Good stories therefore touch us intellectually and emotionally and ignite our imagination. A story becomes more meaningful when we read it actively i.e. relating the personal vision of the author embodied in the content and the form of the narrative with our own experiences of life and to the questions we ask of it. (Mehta 13)

Short Stories may or may not have exposition which means introduction of setting, situation and main characters. They mostly start in the middle of action and do not give explanation of each and everything due to the lack of space. But they do have climax, crisis etc. Some of the short stories have abrupt and open endings. They focus on a single incident, single plot, theme and setting and engage very few characters with no touch of detailed development. The conventional short stories have a beginning, middle and an end but modern stories are more open-ended with no clear beginning, middle and end. M.H. Abrams remarks:

The short story writer introduces a limited number of persons, cannot afford the space for a leisurely analysis and sustained development of character and cannot develop as dense and detailed social milieu as does the novelist. The author begins the story close to or even on the verge of the climax, minimizes both prior exposition and details of the setting, keeps the complications down and clears up denouement quickly sometimes in a few sentences. (Abrams 283)

Short Story is short by length but in meaning and scope it runs parallel to Novel. The art of short story writing demands more knowledge and creativity as it packs and loads words with multiple meanings in minimal breathing space. Whatever Novel expresses and exposes on many pages, Short Story does so in few sentences by making use of mega-words connecting many things at the same time and places it on par with other dominant genres. It is as fast child of fiction as Novel is. There is no question of superiority or inferiority in being a story writer or a novelist. A Short Story writer squeezes books into pages, pages into sentences and finally sentences into words in the same way as lemon squeezer does with a lemon. According to Sherrie Flick mentions in “The Huffington Post” that it is describing a big world through a small window.

Short Story is based on brevity and minimalism avoiding deliberately extensive and expansive description of characters and incidents. It usually centers on single episode for it cannot afford room for panorama of characters. Here the events are not of paramount importance rather they are meant to highlight characters and situations. It uses short route to reach to the destination. It never delineates characters and situations in detail but gives them only a touch of explanation and proceeds forward. The genre of Short story is very near to poetry than a Novel as far as its structure is concerned. Poetry, too, uses loaded and mega-words for expression as is done by Short Story writer. Both use limited space for the accommodation of their ideas and characters. It resembles Novel in terms of narrative aspect.

Short Story Vis-à-vis Tale, Fable, Parable, Legend, Myth, Anecdote

A Short Story being usually written in prose excludes all stories written in verse. Therefore, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales written towards the end of fourteenth century can be considered as collection of stories but cannot be taken as examples of Short

Story because of their verse nature. Short Story is also different from tale, fable, parable, legend, myth, anecdote etc. because it is not only a story of something appealing but a well-developed and complex literary form with its origin in the early nineteenth century. Even the term 'Short Story' itself was first recognized as a distinct class of literature in 1842, during Edgar Allan Poe's review of Hawthorne's Tales. American writers such as Irving, Poe, Hawthorne and Bret Harte used to call their brief narratives as 'Tales' or 'Sketches' but not short stories.

A tale is basically an oral form of tradition which still exists in the villages of India where people sitting around the fire lend their ears to stories of fairies. It can be a True Story which contains several observable facts. The author can embellish it with his vivid and picturesque style. It may also be an Imaginative Tale, which includes author's imagination who paints events with his touch of imagination. Charles Raymond Barrett observes:

The Tale is the relation, in an interesting and literary form, of some simple incident or stirring fact. It has no plot in the sense that there is any problem to unravel, or any change in the relation of the characters; it usually contains action, but chiefly accidents or odd happenings, which depend on their intrinsic interest, without regard to their influence on the lives of the actors. (Barrett 17)

A fable is a short tale which often conveys a moral. It has generally animals as the characters behaving like human beings. For example "*Panchatantra*" is the famous collection of fables. Its moral is dressed and sugar-coated with a little narrative. It has a fact based minor plot, which demonstrates cost of alcoholism, murder, sin etc. It may be pragmatic or exaggeration as Maria Edge Worth's "Murad the Unlucky" and "The Grateful Negro". Barrett remarks:

The Fable makes no attempt to disguise its didactic purpose, but publishes it by a final labelled "Moral," which epitomizes the lesson it conveys. In Fables the characters are often animals, endowed with all the attributes of men. Fables in Slang and Aesop are of course the immortal example of this sort of story. (Barrett 28)

Short Stories differs from parables for they most often ignite the imagination of writer and create suspense while as parable is a story which presents moral. A short story has meaning and has a point to make but the meaning itself is not important in it. The meaning has paramount importance in parable. Parable is responsible for a mess of bald realism written by professionals who think they are painting life as they see it. It demands artistic skill to make such plots interesting and appealing. Barrett remarks:

The parable is a short story which aims to present a vivid picture of our own times, either to criticise some existing evil, or to entertain by telling us something of how " the other half " of the world lives. It is in a sense a further development of The Tale though it has a more definite plot. (Barrett 34)

A Short Story is also different from anecdote. An anecdote relates an interesting happening or a series of happening or events and a short story may also present these events but the point of difference lies in the fact that in short story the happenings and events are not important in themselves but are a manifestation of the true nature and significance of a character or situation. M.H. Abrams pronounces:

The short story differs from anecdote—the unelaborated narration of a single incident—in that, like the novel, it organizes the action, thought

and the dialogue of its characters into the artful pattern of plot, directed towards particular effects on an audience. (Abrams 282)

Novel and Short Story

Short Story and Novel both belong to the genre of fiction. There are many similarities and multiple differences between them. Both are written in the form of prose with a fictional touch and both make use of varieties of prose such as narrative and descriptive. But they differ as far as their scope is concerned. A Novel is wide ranging and long while as the Short Story is brief dealing with a limited subject. A Short Story is not a Novel in condensed form. Therefore, a summarized Novel cannot be called Short Story. E.M. Forster comments:

Novel is a literary form so wide in its range that generalizations about it are almost impossible. It is much more difficult to pin down the novel to its job say the play or the lyric poem or even the short story. The short story that has the same medium as the novel but it is short and so it must calculate beforehand what effect it wants to produce and produce it or fail. (Forster 170)

The interest in Novel is spread over a vast area and in Short Story you will find narrower focus and greater concentration of interest. For instance, there are many characters in Novel whereas in Short Story you will have a glimpse of only few characters even sometimes only one. M.H. Abrams states: “The Short Story writer introduces a limited number of persons, cannot afford the space for a leisurely analysis and sustained development of character and cannot develop as dense and detailed a social milieu as does the Novelist.” (Abrams 282)

There is time and space for Novelist to present his characters denotatively and then develop them in a gradual connotative manner while as a Short Story writer has to create and expose the characters in a few connotative sentences. In Novel you will come across main plot and sub-plots but in Short Story there is single plot with single theme. Each word helps in extending the motive of a story. A Novel may extend over several years but Short Story limits itself to a short span of time. M.H. Abrams spells out:

The Short Story differs from the novel in the dimension that Aristotle called 'magnitude' and this limitation of length imposes differences both in the effects that the story can achieve and in the choice and elaboration of the elements to those effects. (Abrams 282)

In Novel the narrator may engage in meditative remarks, digressions and detailed descriptions but Short Story writer makes his point by brevity and can even dispense with the narrator and achieve its effect by presenting happenings as they happen. He takes help of suggestions and connotations instead of explanation. The art of short story writing requires a great mastery of technique in order to achieve effect of brevity, unity, concentration and intensity. In Novel and Short Story there is a difference between events and episodes. There is a strong element of episode in the Novels of Thackeray and Dickens. This means that each part of the Novel has to be complete in itself and also prepare the ground for what is to follow. On the other hand in Short Story there is nothing to follow, nothing to look forward to. The end of the Short Story is really an end which is marked by the sense of finality, definiteness, compactness and tautness from start to end. It is self-sufficient, self-contained and its compression arouses a feeling of life expansion into our consciousness resulting in the

enhancement of our consciousness. In this way, a Short Story helps in imparting the feeling and sense of discovery.

Evolution of Short Story: A History

It has been felt, seen and said that the interest in stories is as old as human history. Even before the art of writing was known, primitive man must have shown interest in tales of the day's hunting which were probably transferred and transmitted from one to next generation and finally to us. According to Somerset Maugham, the art of story began when the hunter narrated to his fellows some fascinating incident he had done or seen during the day. The Short Story passed through many forms and phases during its process of development which include myth (The Labors of Hercules), legend (St George and the Dragon), fairy tale (Cinderella), fable (The Fox and the Grapes), allegory (Addison's The Vision of Mirza), parable (The Prodigal Son) and so on. Gradually a body of rules and a techniques grew enabling the men to devise ways of story composition as is seen in Aristotle's statement that a story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Then definitions were formulated and the elements were specified. This made the course of short fiction easy and consummated its wish of becoming an art.

Then stories about basic human nature such as love, hate, fear, and the like grew roots in different literatures where writer's invested them with a fire of imagination using crude stories as raw material to compose matchless tales. Hawthorne's "Rappaccin Vs Daughter" and Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" led us to the present day short-stories. The next prominent writer in the order of development is Edgar Allan Poe, who came up with "Berenice" in 1835 and gave it a definite form, structure and technique i.e. unity, compression, originality, and ingenuity. He is known for stories of 'impressionistic terror' such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and

stories of 'ratiocination' as "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1843). He is also regarded as pioneer of detective story.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's writings exhibit the next stage of development of stories by putting a character in certain circumstances and working out the results as in "The Birth-mark" (1843). His stories are sometimes 'imaginative' like Howe's "Masquerade" (1838), and sometimes 'moral-philosophic' such as "The Ambitious Guest" (1837). Bret Harte's "Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868) advanced the development of the Short Story another step by introducing an ingredient of local colour such as rituals, scenery etc. The next development took place in the tone and subject matter and then the analysis of the working of the human mind, psychologic analysis, invited attention of more writers such as Mark Twain, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Frank R. Stockton and Henry Cuyler Bunner. Robert Louis Stevenson in England touched it with consummating skill and left it a more finished and polished product. A credit of later stage of development of Short Story goes to Rudyard Kipling who made it terse, interesting and painted it with Indian local colour. His stories depicted soldier, machinery, animals, Indian life and so on. The American writer, O' Henry, in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth century arrested the attention of public. He dealt with common masses of America with a touch of humour, pathos and striking technique. So a body of rules, techniques and composition developed with the passage of time and paved a way for the art of story-telling.

The oldest known tales are believed to be of the Shipwrecked Sailor written about Egyptian Papyri around 400 B.C or *The Book of Jonah* in the Old Testament written around 350-750 B.C. But it is also said that the oldest written stories are *The Thousand and One Nights* or the *Arabian Nights*. These were written in Arabic text

but were made known to Europe in the early 18th century by Antoine Galland's French translation them from Arabic to French and Edward William Lane's English translation. Al Masu-di (944), an Arab traveler and historian, in a book called *Hazar Dastane or Hazar Afsane* attributed it to Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C). These tales were gathered in Egypt near about 14-16th centuries. Some critics have said that America is involved in the invention of Short Story. According to Peter S. Prescott, "the thing itself is ours, invented by us a century and half ago and dominated by Americans ever since". The credit of Modern Short Story obviously goes to America where it was infused with new life. Charles Raymond Barrett comments:

The modern short story is essentially an American product; and our masters of its art have established precedents for literary workers of the old world. In England, Stevenson, Kipling and Haggard are considered the originators of the modern short story; and Zola, de Maupassant, Daudet and Paul Marguerite in, France, Tolstoy in Russia, and other famous foreign authors have their claims for consideration; but all of them, admittedly or not, are but disciples of the earlier American trinity. (Barrett 12)

History and Development of Indian Short Story

The origin of Indian Short Story lies in religious scriptures such as *Upanishads*, *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesh* and *Jatak Kathas*. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*, the two great Indian epics contain good number of tales inspiring other writers for writing. Kamal Mehta quotes Rama Rao as:

We have had in India stories which lie embedded in hymns of the Rigveda or scattered in the Upanishads and the epics, the stories which

constitute the Panchatantra, the Hitopadesha, the Suka Saptati, the Dasakumaracharita and the vetalapanchvimsati in Sanskrit, the Buddhist Jatak Katha in Pali and a host of similar stories in modern Indian languages. (Mehta 12)

The Indian Short Stories are comparatively younger than European counterpart leaving aside the fables of *Hitopadesh* and tales of *Panchatantra*. “Dulai Vali” (1907) is said to be the first Hindi Short Story but critics believe “Rani Ketaki Kahani” (1800-1810) as the first Hindi Short Story. The strides made by Hindi Short Story in almost all the Indian languages is remarkable which led its growth as a major literary form. The increasing complexity of social changes and fast track life seems to have made the Short Story a suitable vehicle for exploring the hidden zones of human spirit. It has found special favour with readers too in recent times, due to the inability to cope up with massive voluminous works. The fast and frenetic pace of modern life has exhausted man, mentally, physically and emotionally resulting in the growth of multiple number of readers and writers of Short Story collections in recent years. Moreover, Short Stories multiplied and popularized due to the rise of reading public. In the 19th century more and more people began to read fiction. This process of reading Short Stories accelerated due to the increase in the number of periodicals which could publish fiction and widely read literary Magazines accessible to everyone. Further the pace and hurry of modern life also contributed to the rise of Short Story. These factors except pace and hurry are also held responsible for the rise of Novel.

The Indian Short Story in English began under the influence of colonizers of Britain. Therefore, the Indian Short Story in English is an inheritor of the British legacy bequeathed to her by O. Henry, Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham who in turn

were influenced by Maupassant. The Indian Short Stories possess qualities like preservation of curiosity, uninterrupted narration and the representation of life.

The history of Indian Short Story in English began near the end of 19th century with the publication of *Stories from Indian Christian Life* in 1898 written by Kamala Sathianadan. This collection was followed by K.S. Venkataramani's *Paper Boats* (1921) and *Jatadharan and Other Stories* (1937), K. Nagrajan's *Cold Rice* (1945) and A. Madhaviah's and Kushika's *Short Stories* (1924). Some writers such as S.K. Chetlur and G.K. Chettur wrote short fiction full of awe and sense of supernaturalism. A.S.P. Ayyar also wrote some notable collection of Short Stories such as *Sense in Sex and other Stories* (1929). These stories deal with miseries of sex and marriage faced by Indian women.

However, the first and foremost artistic work in Indian short stories was written by Mulk Raj Anand in the form of the *Lost Child and Other Stories* (1934) in which he dealt with the predicament of the lost ones and sufferers in Indian society. The other contemporaries of M.R. Anand who deserve to be mentioned are R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh and Ruth Praver Jhabvala. Besides these, other eminent Indian Short Story writers were K.A. Abbas, G.D. Khosla, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Bunny Reuben, K.N. Daruwalla, Ruskin Bond, Anita Desai, Shashi Despande etc. These contributed a lot in the development of Indian Short Story.

Mulk Raj Anand, an Indian Short Story writer, wrote Short Stories with a view to depict the predicament of the underdogs of the society and exposed their miserable condition caused by social injustice and the strong prejudices of the privileged communities towards them. He attacks and lashes on the hypocrisy of the people and mocks at the irrational behaviour and inhuman customs of the feudal society. He

criticizes the evils of patriarchy, untouchability, insanitation, child marriage and cruelty of social, political institutions. K. Mehta holds:

It is interesting to see how these short stories shed light on and deals with the mixed fortunes of women in various stages of their lives in our countryside, i.e. 'real' India. For example, "The Tamarind Tree" deals with the wait before motherhood. "Lajwanti" confronts us with a cruel society and "The Silver Bangles" is a narrative that tells us the tale of the humiliations heaped on a sweeper girl. (Mehta 47)

R.K. Narayan presents in his Short Stories the realities happened really and reveals life comically without allowing cynicism or mockery to enter the world of his creation. He exposes the ironies of life magnificently. Raja Rao, a great Indian short story writer, depicts reality with special focus on political and social aspects of it. He is symbolic and philosophical writer who made maximum use of folktales, myths and legends. His deep vision of life is profoundly rooted in Indianess. His stories revolve round both social evils and Hinduism. In story "Javni" he has reflected the sufferings of the rural woman which is the tale of a loyal domestic servant who accepts her humble position in life and serves her employers with devotion and love without any complaint. This undoubtedly arouses much compassion.

K.A. Abbas, a Film-maker, Journalist, Novelist, Short Story writer, has written a good number of Short Stories collections viz *The Black Sun* (1963), *One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stones and Other Stories* (1957), *Cages of Freedom* and other stories (1952), *Rice and Other Stories* (1947), *Blood and Stones and Other Stories* (1947). As a writer of social concern he primarily dealt with hypocrisy, ignorance, unemployment, selfishness, partition, communal riots etc. His stories are often melodramatic and sentimental. He shows great propensity towards the visual effects

and therefore, we meet a series of memorable images of events. Recently a new collection of stories edited by Sureh Kholi named *An Evening in Lucknow* has come in market. It contains at least seventeen short stories and some famous interviews. In stories like “Sparrow” K.A. Abbas beautifully gives voice to the voiceless and makes orthodox people realize how important it is to come out of orthodoxy. In stories like “A Debt to Pay” and “The Revenge” he has shown how partition partitioned the humanity and resulted in the bloody wars killing innocent and poor people mostly.

Characteristics of Short Story

A Short Story covers infinite number of themes like other genres. It may be about a moral issue, about an interesting experience, about any aspect of life, a series of connected incidents or a particular scene etc. Therefore, a Short Story can be written about any topic. The modern Short Story is definitely fictional and may not even have a story. It illuminates some aspects of life or characters. It conveys the impression of completeness. In most of the short stories there is no clear cut ending or resolution of the crisis but the effect is one of organic unity. It has not only the cohesion of a beginning, middle and an end but it also lies in the way the writer has fashioned oceanic details. The Short Story writer uses selected details to complete organic whole of a story which means that all events are related and connected to each other in such a way that if a single event is removed it will disturb the whole story like an organism if being cut. It defies an exact definition but it must arouse feelings and hold the reader’s interest and should necessarily convey a sense of completeness in a style that suits the content which results in the final effect of the story.

While analyzing the genre of Short Story, it is found to have three significant characteristics which include recognition of the familiarity, empathy and readability. Recognition of the familiarity means clear, lucid and vivid details to create the

illusion of reality and actuality which suggests the undercurrents of meaning. The writer has to do away with any kind of banality, formula or cliché. After all a Short Story in real sense is not transcription of life but a dramatization of it. Empathy of a Short Story means to identify ourselves so sympathetically and closely with characters and the situation as if to feel an organic part of this actuality. In this way the well constructed theme gets vivified by being individualized. Readability means pleasure giving tale in which the reader gets absorbed by the magnetic pull of the tale. The reader should not be in a mood to put it aside unless he comes to know what has happened. Besides this, beyond the yarn lies a whole range of meaning to be explored and researched.

In the past the notions that were associated with Short Story such as continuity, change effect, design are probably doubted by today's critics and practitioners of this form who do not deem that readability is an essential ingredient of a short story. They do have a point to make a story possible without a storyline and can prove exciting and evocative without formal parameters. It has been observed that the Modern Short Story has explored new grounds both in content and form due to the new frictions, new fissures, new expectations and new equations at every level personal, state, family, national and international. Therefore, a Short Story is a journey of discovery, self-discovery, self-realization for the reader more than the character.

Elements of Short Story

The Short Story writer attempts to give a specific form to the haphazard world. Therefore, it is necessary that a story should have a formal plot called structure. The finishing and artistic touch of the author lies in fabricating it to appear natural, spontaneous and life-like instead of artificial and contrived. The artist attempts to invent such incidents, episodes or situations which will appear natural, real but not

planned. A good artist always searches and researches a well thought-out plot which means series of events connected by causal links forming an organic whole without having any superfluous event in between to distress the connectivity. It is because of this a Short Story should have beginning and must convey a constant sense of movement. Hence the ideal plot or structure will make the story exciting and more interesting. Such an ideal story will be true to life and create an atmosphere of suspense and will make the readers curious and inquisitive to know what happens next. They must show curiosity in as to how the situation gets resolved at the end. It must give meaning to the narrative. A good story has to struggle for a unity of effect called single effect which means a story should be compressed and economical in the same way the poem is and should be free from digressions and irrelevancies. It is marked by intensity of poem. It should be complete in itself and must have organic unity and wholeness. It must be meant to be read in just one sitting. Therefore, it is essential for a story that its effect must be sudden, powerful and revealing. Short stories also carry and convey psychological reality which means whatever happens in the character's mind . Therefore, many modern writers in order to reveal the drama of human consciousness have stopped stressing the orderly progression of plots even they have played down external action and have left aside photographic realism in favour of a more complex psychological realism. The short stories demand focused attention. We can skip here and there in case of Novel but in a Short Story no such skipping is possible without losing some of its meaning.

There are various elements which go together into the making of a Short Story viz. Plot, characters, setting, conflict and point of view. These all elements mix together to constitute the structure of a story. Plot is the nucleus of a story and every story has a plot without which there is no way out to think of a story. It is a sequence of events or

incidents which are inter-related in such a way so that each event must grow logically out of the previous one. So the entire plot must have a unity. It deals with what and how of the story and situates characters in manifold contexts and develops them gradually which is known as plot-germ. It should not violate probability and shall have a touch of originality either of subject or of treatment. A well thought-out plot must have a conflict either between individuals, groups, the individuals with forces of nature, society etc. It should also have the exciting elements of surprise and mystery. Aristotle has termed the plot as myth. In a plot, there is no chance of addition, deletion or withdrawal. M.H. Abrams has rightly observed :

A plot is commonly said to have unity of action or to be an artistic whole if it is apprehended by the reader or auditor as a complete and ordered structure of actions directed toward the intended effect in which none of the prominent components or incidents is non-functional; as Aristotle put this concept all the parts are so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole. Aristotle claimed that it does not constitute a unified plot to present a series of episodes which are strong together simply because they happen to a single character. (Abrams 228)

A plot is not a simple account of a narrative. It is constructed and composed. The story writer has in his mind a simple account of narrative but he really does things with it. He often rearranges the incidents in time. He may tell the end first and then relate how events lead up to it. He may withhold some information to arouse and sustain our curiosity and interest. He may be prejudiced and partial in favour of or against some of the characters and overplay or underplay certain facts to reinforce his

stand. A plot is what an author does to the narrative account to make out a story to give it meaning and purpose. But a simple narrative account which is sequential, open and truthful or depiction of external events as they happen in time cannot be a plot. There is vast difference between story and plot. E.M. Forster argues:

We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis following on causality. The king died and then the queen died is a story. The king died and the queen died of grief is a plot. The time sequence is preserved but the sense of causality overshadows it.... That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects of a novel. A plot cannot be told a gaping audience of cave-men or to a tyrannical Sultan or to their modern dnt the movie-public. They can only supply curiosity. But a plot demands intelligence and memory as well.
(Forster 75)

Plot simply means the idea of unity i.e. various individual events stick together. It is a matter of cause and effect due to which we expect to find logic, reasonable connection between the various parts. This logic is not a mechanical thing. The various stages of plot are exposition, complication, climax, denouement. Many human reactions and responses and non-human things sometimes enter the logic of a story and in the end the central logic we are dealing with is the logic of human motivation. This leads us to know how human needs and sentiments work themselves out. Plot is character in action. Henry James says that plot and character are interdependent critical concepts and are manifestation of each other. Character is nothing but the determination of incident and incident is nothing more than the illustration of character. M.H. Abrams remarks:

Notice also that a plot is distinguishable from the story that is a bare synopsis of the temporal order what happens when we summarize the story in a literary work we say that first this happens, then that then that... It is only when we specify how this is related to that by causes and motivations and in what ways all these matters are rendered ordered and organised so as to achieve their particular effects that a synopsis begins to be adequate to the plot. (Abrams 227)

A plot has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning starts the course of action and does not look backward for its cause. It should be rather independent and origin of itself. The middle of plot should directly come out of beginning and must be in position to give birth to end. It is a connecting rod between beginning and end. The end should emerge out of middle and must not lead to some further action. M.H. Abrams has rightly commented:

The order of a unified plot Aristotle pointed out is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more. The middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more, we feel satisfied that the plot is complete. (Abrams 229)

Exposition is the beginning of the story that provides us information about the characters and events necessary for the reader to understand the developing action. It is followed by rising action which has been called as complication by Aristotle. In this Aristotle has divided plot into two parts, complication and denouement. Complication includes all the events and incidents until the change in fortune takes place and denouement includes unravelling which starts from the change in fortune till the end

of play. It finally leads to climax which is the greatest point of interest, tension etc in plot in terms of the conflict. It is the point of the story which is synonymously used with crisis i.e. the point at which the action is most intense and begins to turn towards the end. It also means turning point in the course of action at which the protagonist's fate changes either towards positive change or negative change. It follows rising action and precedes the falling action or denouement. M. Ray has beautifully quoted Gustav Freytag as:

Many critics and writers conceive plot in terms used by German writer Gustav Freytag in *Die Technik des Dramas (The Technique of Drama 1836)* to describe the structure of a typical five act play, especially a tragedy. Freytag's Pyramid, his enumerated sequence of events includes the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and catastrophe. Alternative and additional terms such as crisis, resolution and denouement have come into vogue but Freytag's terms and sequence are still often used to describe and analyse elements of plot.

(Ray 387)

Aristotle has called plot soul of tragedy. It makes story to exist. He has gone to the extent of saying that story or tragedy is possible without character but not without plot. He has divided plots into two types, simple plot and complex plot. In simple plot the action moves smoothly. There is no chance of reversal of fortune and recognition of reality while as in complex plot the action is marked by a movement through reversal of fortune called peripetia and recognition of reality called anagnorsis. Aristotle prefers complex plot because it helps in evoking the emotions of pity and fear (katharsis) which is the function of tragedy.

Character is a figure in a literary work that needs not be human being. It can be an animal, human or even non-living entity when the author attributes them human feelings. It also connotes personality of a person or his morality. The story has a norm of three to six characters. And there is not given much of the description to characters rather the developments are described directly as childhood, old age. Almost all stories have characters which includes both good and bad ones. The main character of a plot who is centered and focused on is called as protagonist or alternatively heroine or hero and the character who is pitted against the protagonist is called an antagonist. For example Hamlet is a protagonist and king Claudius is the antagonist in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. However, the antagonist who is evil or capable of cruel and criminal actions is called villain. The character in a work who contrasts with the main character to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament of the protagonist is called foil. Thus, Fortinbras is a foil to Hamlet in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. However, when the phrase "The Character" is discussed, it refers to a literary genre that developed in 17th and 18th century England and France. It was started by Greek writer Theophrastus who wrote a book entitled *Characters*. The modern version of the character is called Character Sketche. In this genre character type instead truly individual character is described in prose or verse briefly. A character may or may not change in the course of action. Some of the characters remain stable and static. They remain unchanged till the end in terms of temperament and perspective. For example Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Such characters are known as flat or type or two dimensional character. Sometimes character changes his outlook, temperament or his ideology through a gradual process of development such pip in Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Such characters are termed as round ones. These round

characters are dynamic in nature and never stick to stability. M.H. Abrams has quoted E.M. Forster as:

A flat character, Forster says, is built around a single idea or quality and is presented without much individualizing detail and therefore can be described adequately in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity. Such a character, therefore, is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life and like real persons as capable of surprising us. (Abrams 45)

The various ways and means by which an author describes the character in a literary work is known as characterization. It is of two types, direct characterization and indirect characterization. In direct characterization the author directly comments on the characters while as in indirect characterization the author describes the characters through representation of their actions, statements, thoughts and feelings. All characters are not treated equally, some are being more focused than others. In this sense characters may be categorised into minor and major characters. Major characters include those who constantly and continuously show their participation in activities to proceed the story forward. Such characters may include protagonist, antagonist, villain etc. Minor characters work in action for a short duration and they do not continue their course parallel to major characters.

There are mainly two ways for a writer to present his characters to the readers viz telling and showing. When the writer tells readers directly about the character his method of characterization is expository. Here the author interferes with a view to describe and evaluate the desires, motives and qualities of characters. But this method of characterization is not preferred because it is not objective and impersonal in

character portrayal. It is regarded as violation of artistry because writer does not efface himself completely to depict things. But on the other hand when the writer allows his character to reveal himself indirectly through his thoughts, dialogue and action, it is called as indirect characterization or dramatic method. In it the writer depicts or presents characters talking and acting, assigns the reader the task of deducing the motives and dispositions lying behind their saying and doing. The author makes use of stream of consciousness technique. He shows both inner and outer thoughts, responsiveness and actions of a character.

Setting may be defined as the combination of particular place, time and social milieu in which action takes place and forms background for the characters and the plot of a literary work. By and large the settings are depicted in concrete form to enable the reader to visualize it. M.H. Abrams observes:

The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time and social circumstances in which its action occurs. The setting of a single episode or scene within the work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. The overall setting of *Macbeth* for example is medieval Scotland, and the setting for the particular scene in which Macbeth comes upon witches is a blasted heath. (Abrams 281)

Every story starts at a particular place. The author can change chronological sequence of a story. He can tell it in order of happening or can start at the end. He may take the help of flashbacks and flashforths in time. Place is equally important in the setting of a story. The point that is noteworthy is as to how the author attempts to use setting in order to heighten the effect of a story. For example the setting is usually being dark, a ruined place, castle or a bleak graveyard for horror stories. Thus, setting contributes to

the mood of story but it is not important in all stories wherein character or situation is more important. In drama setting refers the scenery and sometimes even the props. In other words setting refers physical backdrop of a play. The Greek word “opsis” meaning scene or spectacle is now hardly used for picturable setting. M.H. Abrams has rightly observed:

When applied to a theatrical production, ‘setting’ is synonymous with decor which is a French term denoting both the scenery and the properties or movable pieces of furniture on the stage. The French *mise en scene* (placing on stage) is sometimes used in English as another synonym for setting; it is more useful, however to apply the term more broadly as the French do is to signify a director’s overall conception staging and directing of a theatrical performance. (Abrams 281)

Setting is very important because it creates atmosphere of life-likeness. It motivates the reader to accept the world created by writer. The psychological and physical effects along with the mood which are essential to the theme of the story are created by setting. The author ensures reality and authenticity by presenting a suitable locale with a local colour. A short story writer has no space to describe in detail locale, time and background. He has to be very economical in his language and word pictures. Moreover, the setting of a short play or novel can be emotional setting or physical setting. Emotional setting means mood or atmosphere and physical settings include time and place.

Theme is one of the important elements of a Short Story. Generally, the theme of a text refers to the main idea or message conveyed by the words of a story. It may be moral or a lesson. The main idea that a text seems to be making about its subject can be termed as theme for example the theme in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* is that

power can corrupt anyone completely. Theme is also related to motif. But the two are altogether different. Motif means conspicuous unifying element in a work such as image, type of event and device which occurs frequently and informs and casts a revealing light on the theme in works of literature. It also refers to the repetition of an important verbal or musical phrase frequently made in a work. For example, the loathly lady that develops into a beautiful princess is a motif in folklore. M.H. Abrams remarks as:

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with motif but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine whether implicit or asserted which an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader. John Milton states as the explicit theme of *Paradise Lost* is to assert external providence and justify the ways of God to man. Some critics have claimed that all non-trivial works of literature including lyric poems, involve an implicit theme which is embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery as in Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*. And archetypal critics trace such recurrent themes as that of the scapegoat or the journey underground through myths and social rituals as well as literature... A motif is a conspicuous element such as type of events, device, reference or formula which occurs frequently in works of literature. The man fatally bewitched by fairy lady is a motif adopted from folklore in Keat's "La Belle Dame Sans Mercy". (Abrams 178-179)

Theme may also be defined as a central topic that a text deals and treats with. It may be categorised as thematic concept which means what the readers think the work is about and thematic statement which means what the work says about the subject. It

refers to the concept or idea that is centered and focused on in a story. It can be summed up in a single word like death, conflict, love etc. It permeates the whole story and repeats throughout the narrative. The whole story revolves round the theme. The writer of Short Story may use symbol, metaphor, simile, irony to emphasize his theme.

Point of view is defined as the angle, way or perspective from which the author tells or writes the story. To simplify it further, it is an observation point from which the story is told. It also refers to the teller of tale. There are at least four ways to tell the story viz first person point of view, third person objective, third person limited, third person omniscient and second person point of view. In first person point of view, the narrator of the story is one of the characters. It may be a protagonist or any other character but not an outsider. In this point of view we use pronouns such as i, my, mine, me, we. But in it the narrator being one among the characters is not trustworthy as he cannot erase himself completely from the story. He may use personal bias and may show partiality while telling the story. We will come to know about the facts which are known to narrator.

In third person objective, the narrator is not the character in the story and the pronouns that are used to tell the story include he, she it, his, her, they etc. Here the narrator works like an observer. He can tell only whatever is said or done. But he cannot penetrate into the minds of people to know their feelings, thoughts, emotions etc.; rather, he knows only that much whatever the character does and says. In third person limited, the narrator is not a character of the story and pronouns such as he, his, she, her, it, they and them are used in telling the story. He tells the story from the perspective of one character and can see into this characters mind only but not any of the other characters mind. He can examine only this character both internally and

externally and this will enable us what this character does, thinks and observes. In third person omniscient, the narrator is not one of the characters of a story. The narrator while telling the story uses pronouns such as he, his, she, hers, it, they and them. Here the narrator is all-knowing and can see and penetrate into the minds of all characters. The narrator can tell the story from the perspective of many characters. He moves from character to character because he knows every character. He knows what all of the characters do, feel, think and observe.

In second person point of view, pronouns such as you, your and yours are used to tell the story but mostly stories are not told in second person. It is mainly reserved for items of personal address such as letters. This point of view emphasizes the reader and is mostly used to give advice or to give instructions to get things done.

Conflict is a type of struggle or confrontation between opposite characters or forces that helps the plot to develop. It may take place between man and man; man and self; man and nature etc. To make story interesting there must be something for the protagonist to overcome such as adversary, a situation which is also called the obstacle. Then there must be in the beginning of story something like antagonist or untoward happening which brings the protagonist into conflict with the obstacle. It is called the complicating force. Finally, towards the end of the story, the protagonist is helped to overcome the obstacle, which is called the resolving force. M.H. Abrams has rightly observed:

Hamlet is the protagonist and King Claudius is antagonist in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* and the relation between them is one of conflict. Many but far from all plots deal with a conflict. In addition to the conflict between individuals, there may be the conflict of a protagonist against fate, or against the circumstances that stand

between him and a goal he has set for himself, and in some works as in Henry James *The Portrait of a lady* the chief conflict is between opposing desires or values in the protagonists' own temperament. (Abrams 228)

Conflict is of two types external conflict and internal conflict. External conflict creates the clash between man versus man, man versus nature and man versus society. The type of conflict wherein man and society struggles against each other is called as social conflict. The two men may include generally protagonist and antagonist. The conflict in which man struggles against nature may include man and some natural catastrophe such as flood, cyclone, earthquake etc. This is called as man versus fate conflict. But conflict need not involve two people or things because sometimes man becomes victim of dilemma. This type of conflict is called as inner or internal conflict or psychological conflict. It involves the inner turmoil of a single character. It results from the characters attempt to choose among multiple number of alternatives for action or between opposing beliefs.

Moreover, some critics suggest one more type of conflict called as metaphysical conflict wherein the clash or struggle takes place between man and fate or some type of deity. In this way literary work contains various types of conflicts. In Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* we find various conflicts together such as captain Ahab's psychological conflict is shown in his metaphysical conflict with God or fate, his external conflict with whale and his social conflict with an endangered crew. It is the conflict that pulls the plot forward. It makes the story interesting and exciting. It works as a confluence where both good and bad elements happen to meet or encounter. It starts just after the exposition and leads the plot towards its climax. It comes in the part of complication of a plot. W. Patterson Atkinson observes:

As these two forces work in different parts of the story, the action is conveniently divided into parts to which names have been attached. First comes the introduction or proposition, wherein the time, place, circumstances, and protagonist are presented; then the entanglement, wherein the protagonist is brought into collision with the obstacle by the complicating force and the interest begins to deepen. Next we have the climax, in which the struggles, and consequently the interest, are at their height; and this in turn is followed by the resolution, where the resolving force works and the knot begins to be untied. Finally there is the denouement or conclusion. (Atkinson 18)

In addition to plot, character, theme, point of view, conflict, setting there are some subsidiary devices which go into the making of Short Story. These devices include suspense, surprise, flashback, foreshadowing, style etc.

Suspense is the feeling of worry or curious state of mind that the reader has when he feels that something is going to happen affecting characters life in one way or other way. It is essential to keep holding the attention of reader and makes him to complete the story. After every sentence it increases the curiosity of reader as to what happen after this. The next worth mentioning element is surprise. It refers to the happening which happens against the expectations of a reader. It often occurs against and opposite of what was expected and predicted. It also gives a touch of taste to the Short Story.

Flashback refers the events and incidents that happened before the time at which work starts. It takes place through remembrance, dream, reverie etc. The writer using this device interrupts the present action and goes back in the past to support the development of plot. The writer such as Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*

makes frequent use of flashbacks. Foreshadowing is a sign about events that are expected to happen in the future of a story. It is also called as flashforward. The way things are presented i.e. style is also important. Style also refers the way in which a text is written. Whenever the authors' style is analysed, it is attempted to determine whether writer's diction is clear and brief and how far his ideas are vivid and powerful.

There are different types of stories depending on the theme they deal with. Some types of stories are Tale, True Story, Imaginative Tale, Moral Story, Fable, Allegory, Weird Story, Ghost Story, Fantastic Tale, Study in Horror, The character Study, The Dialect Story, The Parable, Instructive Story, Story of Ingenuity, Story of Wonder, The Detective Story, Humorous story, Nonsense Story, Burlesque, Dramatic Story etc.

Short Stories featuring a crime especially murder which is solved by a detective through the use of deductive reasoning from a series of clues are called Detective Short Stories. In such stories crime is done by a criminal in a way to escape the eye of detective initially but is caught at last and punished. The Detective Story requires the most complex plot to hold readers interest. It makes the plot mysterious and arouses in the human mind much the same interest and curiosity. Poe wrote the first, and probably the best one in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and his "The Mystery of Marie Roget" and "The Gold Bug" are other excellent examples. Writers like Conan Doyle is known for Sherlock Holmes, a famous detective, and is a worthy successor of Poe. Poe's stories are classified as ratiocinations and ideal short story.

Guy de Maupassant, a French short story writer wrote about private joys and sorrows of people and often ended his stories with a sting in the tail as in "The Necklace". His stories are termed as Maupassantian Short Story.

Anton Chekov, the Russian writer of short fiction, wrote stories which probe the tragic element of the trivial things in life as in “The Kiss”. Stories of this writer are generally called Checkovian Short Story.

Stories dealing with scientific facts, methods and subjects in a fictional manner are called Scientific Short Stories. The subject matter discussed in such stories is taken from natural sciences. H.G. Wells is famous for such Scientific Stories.

Short Stories which deal with social problems of people such as dowery, exploitation of poor fall under the category of Social Stories. John Galsworthy is well-known in writing these stories.

Short stories wherein a writer penetrates and probes into the psyche of characters and reflects their inner feelings and emotions are called Psychological Short Stories. These stories are attributed to R.L. Stevenson.

Relevance of Short Stories

Short Stories, a genre of fiction, are often ignored and marginalised as compared to Novel though it is a genre in its own right. It is an appealing genre mostly sidelined when a talk is held on fiction. This genre has been underestimated in such a way as if pushed into the den of darkness. Therefore, it is the need of hour to bring it back into the limelight of public. Its relevance lies in the fact that it strikes a perfect balance between literature of the present and literary taste and the expectations of public. People being in hurry want a fast and frenetic literature which is furnished and offered by Short Stories. Modern man in the capitalistic society finds himself busy with work almost round the clock feeling the dearth of time to go through voluminous books of plays and Novels. Consequently time reserved for writing and reading is lessened. Hence it is Short Story instead of other lengthy genres which suits to the

temper of modern man. There was a time when epics, dramas, novels find a good number of readers because of their long leisure time. Now capitalistic man has no time at his disposal to study such time-consuming literature. Most of the great writers often begin with the genre of Short Story because it makes them learn the basics of art composition in limited time scale. It also provides them opportunity to find their own voice. It can be taken as a career of life wherein you can write for literary magazines, radio, major competition such as Stand competition, the Flannery O'Connor award and Raymond Carver Award. There are writers such as Grace Paley, Raymond Carver and Katherine Mansfield who never went for a publication of Novel. They often focussed on Short Story to bring it on par with dominated genres. Even the well-known novelists diverted themselves from Novel to Short Story because they believe it refreshes their talents. Pater Carey says that this genre assists him in taking new risks in life. In one of his radio interviews he said that composing a Short Story is similar to building a shed. Kate Atkinson, a great short story writer observes that her pleasure, playfulness and joy is restored by working on Short Stories after producing three Novels. But she emphasises on this point that the story is a genre in its own right, not the little sister of the Novel. Short Stories fits to the nature of man because his mood varies almost after one sitting within which he can finish reading of only Short Story rather than Novel or Play. Rather, this art must be called genre of gratification for it holds the attention of reader and leaves him emotionally satisfied. This form of art is highly economical both in sense of time and word count. Here the reader has not to burn midnight's oil to discover the outcome of an action.

According to Poe, the intensity of short and concentrated forms of writing read in one sitting increases their emotional impact which Aristotle terms Cathartic effect. Since Short Stories are self-contained, they also display a dramatic unity, developing swiftly

towards resolution. Poe even allies the art of Short Story with poetry, painting referring to a unity of effect and impression, created by the close integration of language, imagery and form. Joyce Carol Oates argues that a Short Story represents a concentration of imagination in few words.

The contemporary reading public due to the shortage of time and their fast and frenetic life are not interested in going into the details of every character and scene. They want things fast and finished. The service of which is being provided by short fiction. They never expand their themes rather distils or condenses it in line with the needs of modern hectic man. The another cause of magnetization of short fiction may be the magazine boom where an author gets published all his stories within a single issue leaving opening gates for millions of readers. There is also one more commonality between life and Short Story that is both are short and fragmentary.

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