

CHAPTER – I

Short Story: Definition and Theory

A Short Story can be defined as a work of fiction that is usually written in prose, often in narrative format and shorter than novel. It can also be defined as a piece of fictional writing usually less than 5000 words that contains the basic elements— character, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonists and antagonists. M.H. Abrams defines short story as, “a brief work of 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” (Abrams, 295). Edgar Allan Poe gives a classical definition of short story in *The Editor*. He defines short story as, “... short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal....During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer’s control. There are no external or extrinsic influences resulting from weariness or interruption” (Reeve, 110). Though the exact definition of the length of the short story cannot be defined, it is considered a recognisable literary form that is different from its sister genre novel in many ways. To discuss the features of the short story, firstly it should have a story which is considered the most basic element of the short story and the novel. It should have a plot which involves the intricacies and development of the situation, through the series of events to a crisis, and then at end of the story should be followed by a resolution and it should be one theme and message. In a short story, the final situation should be different from the initial situation and a change should be reflected at the end.

The length of a story that covers less than five hundred words is considered as the flash fiction and is also called as short short story which according to M.H. Abrams, is “a slightly elaborated anecdote of perhaps five hundred word” (Abrams, 296). The fiction that surpasses the parameters of maximum word length of the short story comes in the category of ‘novelettes’, ‘novellas’ or ‘novel’. To trace the history, the short stories can be found in the *Bible*, *Gesta Romanorum*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. The modern short story is the most recent genre that began in the 19th century Western Literature with the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Guy de Maupassant. Elizabeth Bowen in her Preface to *The Faber Book of Modern Stories* writes about the history of the short story, “the short story is a young art, a child of the century” (Beachcroft, 1). The short story writer, Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) also connects

the flowering of the short story with the spread of magazines and says in *Points of View*, “it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the short story acquired a currency that made it an important feature of literary production” (Beachcroft,1). R. West considered that the short story remained popular throughout the ages only in one country that is America and says in his book *The Short Story in America 1900-1950*, “the short story is the only form of literature in which the Americans have been able to participate since its beginning, referring especially to the works of Washington and Edgar Allan Poe” (Beachcroft, 1-2). In the modern age, the short story started to begin simply as the economy of words because the magazine editors started to set a particular word limit to the literary genre that helped to develop the modern short story genre. The modern short story has a characteristic that is the fierce economy and a rigid adherence to the principle of selection. In such selection, the words are not to be wasted as when the writer works in a specified place, the selection of words should be satisfying for the readers. It seems that the purpose of the modern short story writer is to present a vivid and significant experience in a small space. To present such a vivid description, the writer of a short story should have a ruthless power of selection. In a short story, he should not include even a single word that does not make purposeful contribution to the overall effect. The short story writer works under a strict discipline which shows his/her good craftsmanship and literary genius.

Some of the most notable exponents of the short story genre include O’ Henry (1862-1910), Henry James (1843-1916), Franz Kafka (1883-1924), D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941), Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), Flannery O’Connor (1925-1964) and J.D. Salinger (1919). The most significant writer of America O’ Henry whose real name is William Sydney Porter is famous for his writing of flash fiction, his ironic plot twist and surprise endings in his stories. The short story “Gift of Magi” written by him is known as one of his best short stories which is a story about young poor couple each of whom sells their precious gifts in order to buy a Christmas gift for their life partner but at the end they find that the gifts bought by them are useless for each other. To commemorate his contribution, most famous O’ Henry Award is given for the outstanding short stories. Another famous novelist and short story writer Salinger is known for his stories dealing with the intellectual and emotional struggle of adolescents who are alienated from the empty, materialistic world of their parents. His works show the frustrated and alienated life of the American people after the world war second. The writers like Chekhov (1846-1904), Kipling, Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) and Salinger

composed the stories that give us brief, vivid picture of the daily life and the feelings and problems of their times. The two exponents Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Hardy are the leading short story writers of the later nineteenth century. Stevenson is called as a specialist in the modern short story. He is known for his short story form and cannot be assessed without reference to his short stories. His first book of short stories *Arabian Nights* was published in 1882. Thomas Hardy a famous writer of short story is also known for his great contribution in the development of the short story. His first collection of the short stories *Wessex Tales* was published in 1888 and he was the predecessor of Stevenson but continued to write short stories even after the death of Stevenson. His short stories are seen as a remarkable contrast to those of Stevenson but both gave an outstanding contribution to the English short story. Some critics say that in Hardy's short stories, there is a sharper, clearer experience than is to be found in the novels. John Updike is also famous as the most gifted short story writer who won thirty different awards for his outstanding short stories in his entire career including the Pulitzer and O' Henry award.

It is considered that the short stories have their origin in the oral story-telling tradition. The art of storytelling being doubtlessly known as older than the record of civilization, it could be said that the origin of the story is equally ancient. To locate the history, 'Anecdote' is considered the oldest form of short story. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "An anecdote can be defined as a short, interesting, amusing story about a real person or event" (OALD). It is considered that this ancient form of the short story was popular under the Roman Empire. The other earlier forms of short stories also include – the myths, folktales, legends, fairy tales, fables, allegories and the parables. Myth signifies a story which may be true or may be imaginary. About the origin of the myth, it is considered that it was originated from historical events. Its origin is considered ancient and it includes as its theme a description of a particular cultural group, gods, supernatural heroes and men. In any society, mythical stories about the gods are considered as true stories which are related to the earlier past. Myths about the gods tell the natives of a country as to how the world was in its earlier form and how it was transformed in its present form. There is a myth-ritual theory, according to which it is considered that the origin of myth is related to rituals, e.g. *The Labours of Hercules*. The fairy tale is also a type of narrative which portrays the characters such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, dwarves, giants or gnomes and also magic and enchantments. These tales are found both in oral tradition as well as in literary form. According to the evidence of the literary works, it seems that the fairy tales have existed since last thousands of years. The

name 'fairy tale' was first given to these tales by Madame d'Alnoy in the late nineteenth century. The literary form 'fairy tale' as a literary form is also popular among children in the present age. In the earlier time, these tales were intended for both the children as well as for adults. The short story writer Charles Perrault is considered the first writer who first recorded the fairy tales such as "Sleeping Beauty" and "Cinderella" in his book *Mother Goose* fairy tales, but it was developed as a famous genre in the works of Brothers Grimm, who recorded many tales from different cultures. Similarly, the folktale can be defined as a short narrative in prose or a general term for different varieties of traditional narrative. It is considered that the author of these stories is not known and in the earlier times, these were prevalent in oral form but eventually folktales started to develop in written form also. Folktales are found in every society and these intend to target audience. The Brothers Grimm published *Household Tales*, which gave an enormous stimulus to the collection of folktales of many centuries and people were very impressed by the two aspects of these stories: first was the magical and extraordinary world in which they took place, a world, says Andrew Lang, "in which queens are accused of giving birth to puppies and the accusation is believed. 'The tales', he writes, in his introduction to the full translation of 1884, 'are of a monstrous irrational and unnatural character....'" (Hunt, xii). Secondly, the stories collected by Grimms were not confined to a particular state or country. The Italians were famous for collecting homely stories while in France, Perrault's *Histoires et Cntes du Temps Passe*, 1697 which included "Bluebeard," "Cinderella," "The Sleeping Beauty," and other famous stories also drew attention towards the traditional folktales.

Legend connotes a type of narrative which may be generally about human actions perceived both by the teller and listeners and which had occurred in the human history and that have certain qualities which provide the tale a degree of verisimilitude such as the legend of St. *George and the Dragon*. The 'myth' and 'legend' both are considered traditional narratives but the difference between the two is that in myth we find the protagonist as a supernatural being and in legend, the protagonist is a human being. An allegory is a type of narrative which can be written both in prose and verse and often in a figurative mode of representation that conveys the meaning different from the literal. The thematic message of these allegories is conveyed by means of symbolic figures, actions or symbolic representation. In an allegory, the significant devices such as character or symbol are considered allegorical when it is symbolic of a concept. M.H. Abrams, in his book, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* defines two main types of allegory; the first is historical

and political allegory, in which the characters or actions are symbolic of historical events, for example John Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). The second type of allegory is the allegory of ideas in which the abstract ideas such as virtues, vices, states of mind, mode of life, love, hate etc. are personified, for example, John Keats' "To Autumn". The allegories became very popular at the time when the morality drama was at its peak of popularity e.g. *Fairie Queene*. Even in the earlier times, the aim of the stories was to amuse and to instruct. In the earlier times, the anecdote functioned as a sort of parable which according to M.H. Abrams is, "a very short narrative about human beings, presented so as to stress the tacit analogy, or parallel, with a general thesis or lesson that the narrator is trying to bring home to audience" (Abrams, 8). The parables were considered as the most favourite device of Jesus Christ as a teacher.

The development of the short story, according to M.H. Abrams, can also be traced in 'fable' which imply a fictional story that can be written both in prose and verse and portray the animals, mythical creatures, plants, inanimate objects and forces of nature as the characters in the story and these characters illustrate a moral lesson at the end of the story such as *The Fox and the Grapes*. The word "fable" was originated from the Latin "Fabula" which signifies "little" and is applied to little story. It can be differentiated from a parable because it doesn't portray the animals, plants, inanimate objects and forces of nature as characters but human and other powers of humankind. According to Greek historian Herodotus, fables have been invented in 6th century BC by a Greek slave named Aesop and also known as *Aesop's fable*.

As one of the ancient form of short story, the mime was originated in the ancient Greece. It is considered as a different prototype of the short story with its origin in the oral apologues and personal narration. Like the short story, mimes present certain aspects of human nature that cannot be expressed in a longer form.

They were brief spectacles, obscene, sometimes purely knockabout. The best known mime-writers appear to have been sophron, but only fragments of his work have survived...These do not stand very high as literature, and one or two of them are rather unpleasant, but they are remarkably interesting as small pieces of realistic fiction told in dramatic form. (Beachcroft, 17)

Many surviving Roman anecdotes were collected in the 13th or 14th century as the *Gesta Romanorum*. The anecdotes remained popular in Europe up to the 18th century, when the fictional anecdotal letters of Sir Roger de Coverley were published. This character became very popular in

the tradition of periodical essays written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele also. Both Addison and Steele helped in developing a graceful prose that was suited to the accounts of everyday life because these essayists began to invent individual people as characters and gave them modern names and presented the vivid picture of human life.

In Europe, the oral story telling tradition began to develop into written stories in the early 14th century, most notably with Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387) and Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353). Both of these books were set within a larger narrative story that is also called as a frame story. The critics claim Chaucer as a 'gateway ancestor' and *The Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer is considered as one of the most famous books of short stories ever written. It is true that it does not resemble the modern notion of the short story art but is famous because they give us a compendium of every kind of story that was prevalent or related to the contemporary society of the fourteenth century. It is considered that the *Prologue to Canterbury Tales*, (in which Chaucer introduces and describes the pilgrims) is the jewel of all medieval story-telling. In his stories, after introducing the characters, Chaucer does not waste his time in a large narration and gives brief description. He let his characters speak by themselves. In *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer represents the art of English short story in the Middle Ages. He tries to present his stories with a difference by bringing a new wealth of character drawing, and a new vision in portraying the living presence of his own story-tellers. The origin of the medieval stories is considered as ancient and according to the history, these are developed from the *Jatakas*, which originated in the East and can be described very briefly as a collection of stories in which the teachings of Lord Buddha are collected. *The Hindu Panchatantra* by Vishnu Sharma was another collection that gave the contribution in the development of the short story genre. Here, moralising the people was the main theme and it worked as a vehicle of religious and moral instruction.

In the present time also, the short stories are famous because they illustrate some generalised social and religious teaching element. In the 1690s, traditional fairy tales began to be published and one of the most famous collections was by Charles Perrault. A collection of middle Eastern and South Asian stories and folktales *Arabian Nights* influenced the generation of short story writers which is considered as the most famous example of Arabic fiction. It was a collection of short stories which were weaved in the form of frame story. In this collection the stories of Persia, Arabia, India and Egypt are collected. This collection of short story also includes many

other types of the short story which contributed in the origin of the modern short story form such as animal fables, proverbs, humorous tales, moral tales etc. In *Arabian Nights*, the reader finds the stories of Ali Baba, Aladin and Sindbad the Sailor and many others. All the stories in this collection are told by the princess Scheherazade to her husband Sultan Shahriyar. The record of this collection says that it was found in 800s, and at that time it was divided into fragments. The English version of *Arabian Nights* was translated by Edward William Lane in 1840s and *The Thousand Nights and One Night* was translated by Richard Francis Burton in 1880. The essays “Spectator” and “Tatler” by Addison and Steele also contributed in the development of the short story because these essays include many good short stories to highlight the shallowness, folly, foibles and manners of the contemporary society.

The elements of the short story as plot, theme, setting, and characterisation are also associated with the novel. But the thing that distinguishes these two genres is the length and the complexity of the narrative. The dimension of the novel remains longer than the short story and takes several sittings to read it entirely. The short story has the limited region but the novel may range over large number of places, cities and even countries. A short story has one or two events and so the writer does not waste his/her time in giving full description and he/she restricts himself to the surface description of the characters. The short story begins with the conflict in which the protagonist has to overcome the challenge and the reader discovers the resolution very soon. However, the novel requires an entirely different pace because in it, the writer has more time to develop the character. Though the writer of the novel also starts with conflict, the difference is that in a novel the conflict can't be resolved before hundred pages.

E.M. Forster suggests that the story is the fundamental aspect of the novel. He defines the story as “... a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence—dinner coming after breakfast, Tuesday after Monday, decay after death, and so on” (Forster, 30). For him, a story is a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. He defines plot also as a narrative of events but the difference between the two is that in the plot, the stress is given on causality to define the story. He gives example “The king died, and then the queen died” is a story. While for him, “The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot. The time-sequence is presented both in the story and the plot but in the plot, the reason of the death of the queen is given by the writer. In the story, the reader finds that the queen died but no one knows why? In the plot, the reason of the death of

the queen is discovered. E.M. Forster considered it as a fundamental element between the two aspects of the novel. The story arises the curiosity of the reader to know what will happen next, but the plot requires curiosity as well as intelligence and memory. He defines the two type of the readers curious and inquisitive. He says that the intelligent novel reader will read the novel with a curious mind but the inquisitive reader will just run his eye over a new fact and mentally picks it up without understanding. Forster considers mystery as an essential element of a plot as it cannot be appreciated without intelligence. According to him, the reader of the novel ought to have memory and intelligence as interconnected. He says that in a reader, there should have a sharp memory because if the reader does not remember the important facts, he fails to understand. If the reader forgets the death of the king, the question of the death of the queen will never arise.

The novelist expects from the reader to remember and the reader expects from the writer to leave no loose ends. In a plot of a novel, every action and word should have a purposeful meaning; it should be economical and should not have any unnecessary matter. A plot of the novel may be easy or difficult in construction, it must have mysteries but it should not mislead the reader. The plot should not be linear because if it does not have clues or chains to connect the events and to provide the reference to the reader, it won't attract the readers. Abrams defines the difference between the short story and the novel in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

The short story writer introduces a limited number of persons, cannot afford the space for leisurely analysis and sustained development of character and cannot develop as dense and detailed a 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 the details of the setting, keep the complications down, and clears up the denouement quickly – sometimes in a few sentences. The central incident is often selected to manifest as much as possible of the protagonist's life and character, and the details are devised to carry maximum import for the development of the plot. The sparseness in the narrative often gives the artistry in a good short story higher visibility than the artistry in the more capacious and loosely structured novel. (Abrams, 296)

Though the Italian term 'novella' is defined as "a short tale in prose," it is different from a short story because it includes the word length more than a short story. These short tales in prose or 'novella' were popular during the fourteenth century and Boccaccio's *Decameron* is considered as one of the best examples of such tales. To differentiate the short story from other genre of literature, it is very important to define 'novelette' which is "a prose fiction of middle length, such

as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*." The difference between the novella and the short story is that the novella remains more complicated than the short story and its conflict takes more time to develop than that of the short story but less than that in the novel. Like the short story, a novella cannot be divided in many chapters as the writer does in the novel and like the short story; a novella is also intended to read in one sitting. The writer Warren Cariou defines the difference among the short story, novella and novel very well when he says:

The novella is generally not as formally experimental as the long story and novel can be, and it usually lack the subplots, the multiple points of view, and the generic adaptability that are common in the novel. It is most often concerned with personal and emotional development rather than with the larger social sphere. The novella generally retains something of the unity of impression that is a hallmark of the short story, but it also contains more highly developed characterisation and more luxuriant description. (New, 835)

At the end of the 16th century, some of the most popular short stories were also called "novella". The development of a refined short novel in the form of "novella" was seen by such authors as Madame de Lafayette in the mid-seventeenth century.

The short story theory is a method of critical analysis of the elements of the short story. It has a well-defined structure with three basic elements including – plot, characterisation and setting. The other devices that short story contains are – conflict, theme, point of view, suspense, foreshadowing and flashback. According to M.H. Abrams, the basic elements of the short story are plot, character, setting & characterisation.

Plot is the most significant element of the short story. A plot in the story is constituted by a series of events and actions and these help in obtaining a particular artistic and emotional effect in the story. The revelation of the character is possible through the events and actions which tell what is going to happen in the story. Henry James in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* has pointed out that the character and plot are interdependent critical concepts and says, "What is character but the determination of the incident? What is incident but the illustration of the character?" (Abrams, 233). Traditionally, the plot further can be divided into five parts:

Exposition is the beginning of the story in which the background information, introduction of the characters and setting are provided. As one of the most crucial elements of the short story,

rising action develops after the exposition or introduction. Aristotle had called this section as complication. Here, the events create the problems and these problems lead the rising action to the climax. It is generally considered as the largest part of the story. The rising action in the story leads to the climax which is considered as the highest point in the story or the turning point in the fortune of the protagonist. The climax makes the reader to think what might be the resolution of the conflict. It is not the end of the story but it usually develops near the end of the story.

Falling action occurs after the climax and it shows the changes which take place in the character after the turning point. The events of this section lead to the resolution which may be named as denouement or conclusion. All the conflicts which occur quickly after the climax and provides the last piece of information for the readers are resolved. But sometimes, the conflict is not resolved and it is left open-ended. It leads the reader towards the closure of the story.

Character is the second most important element after plot. It refers to a person in the literary genre as a short story, poem, play, novel etc. who possesses the particular moral, emotional, intellectual quality and helps in the development of the plot. The character may be discussed as protagonist, antagonist, and flat character or round character.

Setting includes the atmosphere, time and place in which the events of a story take place. The setting of the story can be divided into two parts— emotional setting which connotes the mood or atmosphere and physical setting which includes the time, place and season.

Characterisation is a process in which the personality of the character is revealed in the story. The writer reveals the personality of the character through the way of expression, describing the looks and the dresses of the character, letting the reader listen to the inner voice of the character, what the other characters think or say about the character in the story, through the actions that the character enact and by telling the reader directly what are the different qualities or vices like cruelty, kindness or sneakiness the character has. There may be direct or indirect characterisation.

Besides plot, character and setting, there are other devices of short story which include theme, conflict, point of view, flashback, foreshadowing and suspense. The message of the story is described through the theme which is generally described in a single statement and usually stated directly. The conflict is a type of struggle between the protagonist and the antagonist that helps the plot to develop. The point of view includes the three different ways that the writers choose to

narrate the story—first person, second person and third person point of view. In the first person point of view, the writer narrates the story through one of the characters and uses the first person pronouns (I, my, me, we, our, us). The reader tries to get what the first person narrator knows or experiences. In the second person point of view, the story is told as an address by the narrator to someone he calls the second person pronoun “you” and the character is represented as experiencing which is narrator. The second person point of view is least used in the short story. In the third person point of view, the narrator uses the third person pronouns (He, she, it, they, them etc.) to tell the story. He tells the reader what any reader thinks and feels. This point of view is used in most of the stories. Flashback shows the events or actions that happened in the past before beginning of the story while foreshadowing is the hint or clue given about the events that are going to happen in the story in future, and the suspense is the anxious or curious state of mind of the reader on observing the actions, characters and setting. However, different authors use different styles and techniques to attract the interest and attention of the reader and to achieve literary purpose in short stories, novels, poems and plays. Some such techniques used in short story are – Irony, symbol and satire.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the collections of the short story that helped in its flowering include *Brothers Grimm’s Fairy Tales* (1824-1826), Nikolai Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm Near Oikanka* (1831-1832), Edgar Allan Poe’s *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1836) and Nathaniel Hawthorn’s *Twice Told Tales* (1842). In the later part of the 19th century, the short stories emerged in magazines and journals between the lengths of three thousand to fifteen thousand words. “Ward No.6” by Anton Chekhov is considered the famous story of this period. In the early 20th century, important magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribner’s* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, started to publish the short stories based on every aspect of life. After the World War II, short story got tremendous popularity in the United States. In 1948, *The New Yorker* published the short story of Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”. Other writers who contributed in short stories of 1940s were John Cheever John Steinbeck, Jean Stafford and Eudora Welty. In the 1950s, J.D. Salinger published his “Nine Stories” (1953) and Flanner O’Conner’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find” appeared in Southern Gothic style. Ernest Hemingway’s most famous long short story “The Old Man and the Sea” was published by the life magazine in 1952 which earned for him the Pulitzer Prize for 1953 and Nobel Prize in the following year. He left a profound influence on the other American short story writers of his time. Flanner O’Conner’s “The Lonely Voice”

was published in 1963 which is considered the classic exploration of the short story. In the 1970s, the rise of the postmodern short stories was noticed by the publication of the works of Donald Barthelme (1931-1989) and John Barth (1930).

In the present age, short story is recognised as one of the most popular genre of literary composition. The reason of its popularity is that, in this modern busy life, the reader has no time to read the “bulky books” like *Tom Jones* and *Great Expectation* which are large in dimension and so many characters. So, most of the people like to read the short stories for entertainment because it can be read in one sitting. Besides, the spread of education has also contributed in the popularity of the short story because it increases the demand of reading. It is generally upheld view among the critics that the short story form is fulfilling the demands of modern life in a better way than the novel because the general reader wants to read something easy to understand and as it gives him/her relief from the tension of this busy life and is amusing in nature. Similarly, the short story writer H.E. Bates has also given the reason of its popularity in *The British Author and Text*. He says, “The evolution of the short story has something to do with the evolution of the general reader” (Khatri, 3). For example, the general readers are increasing due to the spread of education in this present age and they demand for more and more reading. The modern life is full of hustle and bustle and everyone seems in hurry. So, Today, people prefer short stories as they could not give their time to bulky books and the reader wants something that could entertain him/her in a short period of time to relieve himself/herself from the tension of this modern life.

In 1970, the flowering of the short stories emerged in the works of Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Bobbi Ann Mason, John Updike, Joyce Card Oates and Alice Munro. Generally, American short stories of the 1990s were characterised with ‘magical realism’ which implies a style of painting and literature in which fantastic or imaginary elements are presented in a sharply realistic manner. Steven Millhauser and Robert Olen Butter are considered the leading practitioners of this style. The other early practitioners of the short story include Washington Irving, Hawthorn and Poe in America, Sir Walter Scott and Mary Shelley in England, E.T.A. Hoffman in Germany, Balzac in France, and Gogol, Pushkin and Turgenev in Russia. It is considered that the form was originated in America and so Frank O’Conner called short story as “the national art form” (Abrams, 297). Its other American practitioners include Mark Twain, William Faulkner, Katherine Ann Porter and John O’Hara. In the 21st century, the short story genre emerged in the works of

new generation of writers such as Jhumpa Lahiri, Karen Russell, Nathan Englander, Kevin Brockmeier, Jacob Appel, George Saunders and Dan Chaon.

The different types of short stories are popularised by various important short story writers including Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Edgar Allan Poe and Raymond Carver. The Maupassantian short story has its origin in the stories of Henri Rene Albert Guy de Maupassant (1850-93) who was a popular nineteenth century French writer. He was considered as one of the fathers of the modern short story. He has crafted his stories with “ironic” or “tricky endings”. He is known for his best short stories like “Boule de Suif” (Ball of Fat) and “La Parure” (The Necklace).

The Chekhovian Short Story was popularised by Russian short story writer Anton Chekhov (1846-1904) who is popular as psychological short story writer. So, in his short stories, the setting resides in the minds of the characters. His style is known as “impressionistic style”. He was considered as one of the greatest short story writers in the history of world literature and his short stories are a departure from a conventional beginning-middle-end in story structure in the late eighteenth century. The writers of the twentieth century were very influenced by his writing style. He is seen as a major force in early shifting towards the modern short stories. The short stories of the writers, R.L. Stevenson and Katherine Mansfield are also considered psychological in nature.

American short story writer Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) was famous for his novels and short stories. He was also known as a significant writer for his unusual and terrible subject matter because his stories are full of horror and the supernatural elements. His stories “Twice-Told Tales” and “Mosses from an Old Manse” which were published in 1846, presents an innovative blend of ‘allegorical symbolism’.

Similarly, detective short story is a type of popular literature in which a crime is introduced and investigated and the culprit is exposed in these stories. Some crime or illegal act is done by a person and police pursues the criminals. In these stories it is shown that the culprit can escape the police but not the penetrating eyes of the shrewd investigators such as Sherlock Holmes. The readers create an interest to read the story in order to know the mystery of the story. In these stories, the suspense remains till the last moment. The stories of the famous writer Conan Doyle have a

famous character Sherlock Holmes who is a detective and Ronald Standish and Edgar Wallace are famous for their detective elements.

The Scientific Story deals with the subject and facts of science in an interesting and fictional manner. The subject matter of these stories is taken from the different branches of science. The famous short story writer H.G. Wells is known for portraying the highly scientific characters in his stories and deals with facts which are scientific in nature.

In the present age, the short stories are written on the social subjects. In these stories, the characters are shown as struggling with the problems of daily life and circumstances and it can also be said that these stories depict a struggle between the society and an individual. In these stories, the subjects like social equality, the distribution of wealth and exploitation of human rights of the people. The social stories help eradication of the social evils. The writers like John Galsworthy, Premchand and Mahasweta Devi are famous for their social consciousness which gets popularised in their social short stories.

The love stories are liked by the people as they appeal to their emotions and passions in the story because love is considered as an essential passion of human life. The plot of these stories depicts as to how a man meets a woman and is attracted towards woman's impressive beauty and falls in love. She is also attracted by the impressive personality of man. But the true love stories always remain full of catastrophe because their love is not accepted by the society, their parents and their rivals. At the end of the love stories, either the opponents are forced to give permission of happy marriage or the couples are killed dead. Sometimes the rivals in the story are defeated and punished and the man marries the woman at the end of the story happily. Most of the Bollywood movies are designed in the fashion of short stories on love.

In the adventure short story, the writer depicts the heroic deeds of a person. The writers of adventurous stories take the reader to invincible forests, desert islands, invincible mountains, treasure hunts, beast and thrilling discoveries at the bottom of the ocean, cave and the place which is beyond the search of common man.

The American writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) is the exponent of the two popular short stories: the short story of "ratiocinations" detective story which he invented and the "ideal short story" which defines a predetermined effect. He gave a crucial contribution in the development of

the short story genre and his important writings of psychological horror and detective fiction are collected in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) and other volumes.

Among the most popular types of short stories in the modern age, the minimalist short stories attracted the attention of the readers and critics both for their unique thematic and stylistic aspects. So the present research intends to study short story, theory of traditional short story and the minimalist short stories with special reference to the American short story writer Raymond Carver. Raymond Carver's (1938-1988) short stories are characterised as the minimalist short stories in which the author emphasised on the economy of words and focus on the surface description. His autobiographical background and the adult life was marked with constant struggle and it provided him much material for the writing as he focuses frequently on lost dreams, failed relationships and disillusionment. He was considered as the major force in revitalising the short story genre in 1980s and was rightly recognised as minimalist writer.

The present research explores the typical minimalist features in the select short stories of the chief exponent of minimalist tradition of short story writing Raymond Carver. The research analyses the common characteristics of minimalist short story vis-a-vis traditional short story. It also highlights the sharp contrast between the traditional and minimalist short story. The research is broadly discussed in two major chapters titled as— “The Minimalist Movement” and “Raymond Carver: a Minimalist Short Story Writer”, besides the introductory chapter “Short Story: Definition and Theory.”

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