

CHAPTER – IV

Conclusion

The first chapter in the present research is devoted to the short story theory and its aim is to explore the salient development of the short story art as it developed from the different literary forms. The present research establishes the short story as the oldest form in the literary genre with the focus on modern short story which has its origin in the recent years of the nineteenth century. It emerged from the oral tale-telling tradition in the ancient time. Various forms of literary genre like anecdote, parable, fable, legend, folktales, myths and Greek mime later led to the development of the modern short story in the nineteenth century. Though the definitions of the short story may vary from one critic to the other, one particular element of the short story is that it should be written in minimal words and read in minimal time. Like the other forms of literature, it should provide the instruction and pleasure to the readers. It is observed that though the most of the terms and characteristics of the novel are applicable to the short story genre, it is different from its sister genre. Besides discussing novella and novelette, the present research brings to the fore the difference between short story and novel as suggested by M.H. Abrams and E.M. Forster. The short story turns to be flash fiction when it uses the word limit up to five hundred. The early origin of the short story is found in the *Bible*, in the collection of Roman anecdotes *Gesta Romanorum*, Boccaccio's *Decameron* and in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* which later paved the way for the development of the short story genre. The medieval stories originated from *Jataka*'s which is a collection of Buddha's teachings and from which the moral stories and the other forms like parables and fables emerged. Similarly, *Panchtantra* by Vishnu Sharma equally contributed in the emergence of the short story. *Arabian Nights* in which the stories are told by the princess Scheherazade to her husband Sultan Shahriar, is considered the most famous collection of the stories.

The theory of the short story is discussed in the dissertation to show the difference between the conventional short story and the unconventional minimalist short story of Raymond Carver. While the traditional short story includes the elements like plot and its different parts as exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action and resolution, the minimalist short stories ignore these features. To explore the minimalist short story, the introductory chapter highlights the features like

character, setting, characterisation and the other short story devices including theme, irony, symbol, satire and the different points of view of narrating the story.

Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov and scores of western and Indian short story writers have made this genre popular to the extent that the short story in the present time presents the vivid and significant experiences with the fierce economy of words and strict adherence to the principle of selection. The critics consider that the short story genre is the literary form in which the Americans have participated through its beginning, middle and end. As the present research intends to study the American short story writer, it is quite pertinent to mention the famous American writers like Edgar Allan Poe, O' Henry, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, John Updike, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, William Faulkner and J.D. Salinger who significantly contributed in the development of the short story with their most significant works.

In the present age, the short story genre has started to flower because in this modern life which is busy and full of tension, the reader wants to read something which is not bulky and easy to understand. The increase in the general readership due to the spread of education is also contributing in the popularity of the short story genre.

Slowly and steadily, the different types of the short stories began to develop like the stories of French writer Guy de Maupassant whose stories became popular due to the use of "ironic" and "trick endings." The Russian short story writer Anton Chekhov has largely contributed in the popularity of the psychological short stories so much so that most of the twentieth century writers were influenced by his writing style. The stories of the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne are full of horror and supernatural elements. With the growing popularity of short story, the detective elements in the stories of the famous writer Arthur Conan Doyle and his famous detective character Sherlock Holmes were liked by the readers. The scientific stories of H.G. Wells, the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, the "ideal short stories," the social stories and the adventurous stories further paved the way for emergence of the minimalist short stories of American writer Raymond Carver who emphasised on the economy of words and focused on the surface description more than abstract expressionism. The present research primarily focuses on the short story genre, and different types of short stories. The entire research centres around the minimalist techniques used by the American writer Raymond Carver.

The second chapter explores the basic features of minimalist movement which originated in America, besides discussing the terms “minimalist” and “maximalist” which had their origin in the Russian Revolution. The minimalism was practised in different forms of art and its use was first noticed in the paintings of John Graham at the Dudensing Gallery in New York. In visual arts, it emerged as a reaction against the Abstract Expressionism and preferred the greatest simplicity instead of ostentatious style. They refused to provide any clue and self-expression from the author’s side and used in their works the smallest number of colours which were unmixed, with shapes, lines, geometric forms and cubes in the repetitive patterns. The epitome of the visual minimalism is *The Fulcrum* by Richard Serra because the minimal material is used in its construction and it is discussed in the first major chapter of the present research. Similarly, the minimalist music became popular during the 1960s. These two minimalist arts later paved the way for the emergence of literary minimalism which is characterised by economy of words, idioms, sentences and themes. The minimal material and repetitive pattern were common to all three arts— visual, musical and literary. The spread of magazines and newspapers also paved the way for the development of the literary minimalism. The three writers Raymond Carver, Amy Hempel and Mary Robison used the minimalist techniques in their stories to create unique structural and contextual pattern that readers can understand.

The research discusses as to how Hemingway who is considered the father of American minimalism popularised minimalist short stories. He suggested that a writer should omit the superfluous information to maintain the sanctity of the art of the story writing. He was of the opinion that the provided information should be satisfactory for the reader so that he/she can make out his/her own meaning or interpretation of the story. The details which a minimalist writer omits should not weaken the story, rather it should add to the artistic and thematic beauty of the story.

The second chapter largely discusses as to how literary minimalism rose in America and spread in the various forms of arts especially in the literary art. The writers like Hemingway, Mary Robison, Donald Barthelme, and Amy Hempel started using the minimalist techniques in their works under the influence of visual arts and music. They were so much engrossed in the minimalist short story writing that with the passage of time they established it as a distinct form of literature. But the focus in

the present research is to examine the most important minimalist characteristics in the short story collection of Raymond Carver *Where I'm Calling From*.

The third chapter studies Raymond Carver as a minimalist in sharp contrast with traditional short-story writers. Tracing the changes in short style of Carver has become the most persistent topic of Carver's criticism. The critics like Arthur F. Bethea, Jeffery Kenneth, Berkenstein, Russell Banks, Kasia Boddy, and Sam Helpert have provided the comprehensive analysis of Raymond Carver's writings. The entire chapter highlights the basic features of Raymond Carver's minimalist stories by eliciting appropriate examples from his stories where he is captured as a minimalist writer.

Besides, Raymond Carver significantly contributed in the popularity of minimalist stories and paved the way for the coming generation of the minimalist writers. The influence of Hemingway, Gordon Lish, and John Gardner helped in making the minimalism as the hallmark of Carver's writing style. Hemingway has an influence on Carver's writing because a sense of simplicity can be observed in their works. The present research studies Carver not only as a minimalist practising typical features of minimalism, but also as a fanatic obsessed with everything minimal—whether it is stylistic aspect or thematic. Raymond Carver chose for his early works the themes like alcoholics, divorcees, the unemployment and characters struggling to face the ordeals and the challenges of life. To lessen their mental stress and the problems of daily life, they choose the liquor or fishing to pass their time or for recreation. In his literary works, Carver uses the ordinary things, language and unimportant items in order to create a sense of realism. Raymond Carver wants to compose his stories in this way because he intends to provide an opportunity to the reader so that he could communicate with the writer and he calls it “compact between the writer and the reader”. The research analyses Raymond Carver as an exponent of the minimalist movement by referring to the typical minimalist elements in his short stories. Raymond Carver distinguished himself from his contemporaries or other short story writers through the use of an anti-conventional style that helped him to emerge as a minimalist writer.

The short stories of Raymond Carver considered as minimalist for a number of reasons including— the first person point of view; the present tense narration; the use of narrow setting like inside the house, bedroom, kitchen rooms and even cars: the minimal exposition in the stories; the use of repetitive words, phrases, sentences,

minimal paragraphs; no introduction of the background events; and the use of ambiguity.

In recent years, the study with respect to the literary minimalism has become a crucial part of the literary studies and its future seems bright. The present research is a step ahead to celebrate minimalism with special reference to Carver. After the death of Carver, the talented writers like Amy Hempel, Mary Robison, Chuck Palahniuk, Beattie, McCarthy are practising minimalism to add eternal value and charm to the style used by Carver.

The research is a modest attempt to study Raymond Carver as a minimalist short story writer by locating him amidst a large number of writers—traditional and modern. It intends to trace the phases in the development of short story and also the factors contributing in the popularity of minimalism. Here, the traditional and anti-conventional minimalist features are juxtaposed to understand and appreciate as to how Carver succeeds in establishing himself as a writer with difference. The dissertation has its essential limitations also as it discusses only select stories of Raymond Carver and ignores a number of other popular short story collections written by Carver. It doesn't mean that the study fails to deliver the desired results because the collection of short stories studied here is a typical minimalist work of Raymond Carver. At the end, it may be observed that many researches have been performed and equal number of researchers might be in the process to locate Carver as a minimalist in words and spirit, but 'story' being essentially 'minimal' in nature, makes one rethink his/her approach to distinguish 'story' from a 'minimalist short story'.