

INTRODUCTION

Literature always provides a medium of expression and depicts staunch realities and possibilities which otherwise in the life remain unexposed. Be it any genre in any literature it cannot be separated from its background or context. The meaning is lost if the context is not studied along with the text. The poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer is a reminder of how people lived in the fourteenth century English society. Drama as an enactment is to be staged and it does represent the contemporary problems and issues of its time. It is not a new thing in literature. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Galsworthy, Henrik Ibsen, and G. B. Shaw had portrayed the society in which they lived. They are known to write variety of problem plays. Charles Dickens through his novels had showed all the possible social issues that the 19th century was going through. Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand, through their short stories outlined the issues prevailed in their respective societies. It is through this mediums writers record contexts and give new interpretations to it. Since literature is not taken very seriously in terms of interpreting context, this study takes a serious note on the magnanimous literature which provides the unrecorded context and helps to shape it from the subalterns' point of view.

This study intends to contextualize Premchand and Chekhov on the basis of textual analysis of selected short stories. The background against which this study attempts to situate the stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov is the targeted issue, that is, the context. It is concerned with establishing and integrating the contexts out of which these writers' short stories developed. It aims to assess the different ways in which these contexts supply the narratives

with their substance and rationale, and it will suggest that their short stories must be read from multiple perspectives.

To contextualize something means giving important perspective by citing similar examples or relevant background. Generally, to contextualize an idea, statement or event is to place it within its larger setting in which it acquires its true and complete meaning. Contextualizing aids variety and comprehension. Contextualizing is, thus, a process which incorporates the message of local issues (the “text”) with its local culture (the “context”). So it is obligatory on the part of the writer to blend text and context into that one genre, the proposed short story.

The culture is “a dynamic system of socially acquired and socially shared ideas, according to which an intersecting group of human beings is to adapt itself to its physical, social and ideational environment”(Louis 69). There are three levels of culture:

I. Forms - the “shape” of the particular cultural pattern - the *who, what, when, where, what kind* and *how*. Note that the *why* is absent here because it occurs in the following two levels.

II. Functions - society's answer to the immediate *why*. What are the reasons, presuppositions, prerequisites, needs, associations, repercussions, logical connections, of the particular form? The term *cultural grammar* has been applied to this whole network of meanings, usages, values, presuppositions, associations and purposes, i.e. the reader must be aware of the *cultural semantics* as well as the cultural grammar and the appropriate usages of the language as well.

III. Underlying Psychology - the society's psychology or mentality. It includes the underlying premises, emotionally charged attitudes, basic goals and drives, starting points in reasoning, reacting, and motivating. (*The Church and Cultures*, 69)

Culture then embraces the totality of a way of life. It is dynamic, ever changing, and the short story, properly integral to a culture, is essential in determining the evolving life of the society. The short story must be incarnated into all these levels of form, function and underlying psychology. It is to become an integral part of a life system. The short story is a living part of the living and whole way of life of the society. It is a message about society to the reader in the person of short story writer. In the beginning society created the scenario and then the ideology. Characters in any literature are created in the image of society to enjoy relationship with their creator the author and with one another. They are given stewardship over the created order: the short story, a cultural mandate.

Since this study deals with the short stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov, it becomes necessary to discuss the background of the short story in a nutshell. A Narrative work must have two characteristics, i.e. the story and the story teller while drama is a story without a story teller. In drama the characters act out directly on the stage before the audience while the acts and actions of the characters are described by the story teller in his own words on the basis of his observations and understanding. Every form or genre of literature has a tradition so as the narrative. Every artist learns the basics of his craft from his predecessors to a great extent. They add something to the tradition with their experiments and innovations, open new possibilities for their

successors but they start always with a tradition. Tradition of Narrative is as old as the man himself or perhaps older than the man, as no one knows how long man has had speech. Language was probably invented by some creature that had been the forefather of the man. Trying to find the order of evolution of narrative forms will result into a chaotic and endless debate. The debate is not restricted only to the development order as different cultural and geographical groups also try to establish their superiority and precedence over their counterparts. Robert Scholes, James Phelan and Robert Kellogg have put aside all this debate in their book *The Nature of Narrative* and compared the evolution of form of narrative to the biological evolution:

The evolution of forms within the narrative tradition is a process analogous in some way to biological evolution. Human beings, considering themselves the end of an evolutionary process, naturally see evolution as a struggle towards perfection. The dinosaur, could he speak, might have another opinion. Similarly, a contemporary novelist can see himself as the culmination of an ameliorative evolution; but Homer, could he speak, might disagree. Yet the epic poem is as dead as dinosaur. We can put together a synthetic epic with a superficial resemblance to the original, just as we can fabricate a museum dinosaur; but the conditions which produced the originals have passed. Nature will never recover that lost innocence which she displayed in the creation of those beautiful monsters, nor will narrative artist ever again be able to combine so innocently drawn from myth and history, from experience and imagination.

(10-11)

Of course, the biological process and literary evolution are two completely different fields and the analogy cannot go on for long. It is very difficult to order and present the complex process of evolution of narrative.

The purpose of this study is to reveal and clarify the principal relationships which do exist and have existed historically among the major forms of narrative literature. The written narrative throughout the world emerges from an oral tradition. It often takes the form of heroic poetic narrative which can be called as epic. The epic is a result of a long and gradual process of intermixing of variety of narrative forms such as sacred myth, quasi historical legend and fictional folk tales, which have coalesced into a traditional narrative which is an amalgam of myth, history and fiction. The most important aspect of early narrative is the tradition itself as the epic story teller tells a traditional story. The primary impulse which moves him is not a historical one; nor a creative one; it is re-creative and its primary allegiance is not to fact, not to entertainment but to *mythos*. The word *mythos* precisely meant in ancient Greece: a traditional story.

Literature is not possible without the written form if follow the strict etymological sense of the word. By definition it is an art of letters. Ancestors were well aware of the distinction between “written verbal art” and “oral verbal art” which is implied by the world literature. It should be kept in mind that oral narrative and written narrative are distinct, formally and profoundly, but not culturally. Milman Parry, an authority on orally composed heroic poetry writes: “Literature falls into two great parts not so much because there are two kinds of cultures, but because there are two kinds of form: one part of literature is oral, the other written.” (Scholes et al. 18)

Today, when the percentage of literacy is high and the illiterates are culturally and economically deprived, it would be a mistake to generalize solely from the modern experience that all unlettered persons in every age have been culturally deprived. Also, it has been not so that the scribe's inked shapes were idealized in the all ages ignoring the oral recitation and composition. Socrates in his work *Phaedrus* tells a story in which Egyptian God Thoth having invented writing goes to god Thamus, the ruler over all Egypt, with intension of sharing with people and claiming that it would increase both memory and wisdom of the Egyptians. Thamus replies:

O most ingenious Thoth, one man has ability to develop a new skill, but another to judge whether it will be a curse or blessing to its users. Now you, the father of letters, through your affection see in them the opposite of their true power. For this invention will cause those who use it to cause lose learning in their mind by neglecting their memories; since, through this reliance on the letters which are external and alien to mind, they will lose their ability to recall things within themselves. You have invented not a medicine to strengthen memory but an inferior substitute of it. You are providing your students with a way of seeming wise without true wisdom; for they will appear to have learned without instruction; they will seem to know a good deal while they are really ignorant of many things; and they will become public nuisances, these men who look wise but lack wisdom. (Scholes et al. 24)

The sanctity of the printed words in the people's eyes sometimes allows the worst of Socrates' fear to be realized that the words in their printed form become more real than either the sounds on the lips of the living men or the

concept they represent. Any lie or outrage after getting the dignity of the print becomes many times menacing.

Parry opines during his analysis of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, oral composition consists of two parts confirming the hypothesis that orally composed literature is distinguishable from the written literature on the basis of its form rather than its content. His investigation in Yugoslavia and from the reports of orally composed epics from the different other parts of the world, he conclude that the individual singers in a tradition of oral poetic narrative are as important as the individual poets in the tradition of written narrative, but the role of singer is widely different from that of the poet. Every part and partial including plot that he learns, the various episodes with which he elaborate them, and even the phrases out of which he makes his lines are traditional and having a formula in the broader sense. The conception that the poetic narrative could have been "corrupted" during the process of the oral transmission rests on a common misconception of the working of oral tradition. If, an orally composed poem is obscure, the difficulty may lie with either to an inferior performance or to corruption in the process of manuscript transmission. On the other hand an oral performance may be indifferent but it will not be obscure or 'textually corrupt'. A singer through continual practice can achieve perfection in his art and may surpass any performance he has ever heard. It can be said in this case that a poem has been 'perfected' in the process of oral transmission. The treasure of different cultures and civilizations has been preserved for ages and centuries without any adulteration by this very oral tradition, *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Simirties* etc. are the fine example of it. Lord Parry's experiments and experiences in Yugoslavia suggest that there may be number of way and

alternatives for the transcription of oral narrative into writing but all of them resulted in inferior representation of live oral performances.

Later oral performances were transcribed and in the process it lost the quality and originality during the process of transcription. Whether a singer dictates to a scribe or he himself try to write, his performance will slow down than the normal performance. Under such circumstances he may lose the beat and the chain of his thought. An attempt to write down an oral performance by its two 'authors', the performer and the scribe, led to a quasi-literary tradition affecting the genuine oral tradition. Hence a genuine oral tradition faces challenge from a spurious, pseudo 'oral tradition' emerging out of a newly established textual tradition. Today the term 'oral tradition' is misapplied by literary scholars for the oral recitation of a fixed literary text which has been composed in modern way with pen and paper. It is a method of composition not the mode of presentation which distinguishes the original oral tradition from the written. There is no difficulty in recognizing genuine oral composition from mere oral recitation of a written text because one is formulaic where other is not.

Here the main concern is to know and understand the tradition and journey of the short story from folk tales of the oral tradition to the modern art tale. Earliest recorded reference to the term short story as per *The Oxford English Dictionary* dates to 1877. Anthony Trollope first time used the phrase 'certain short stories' in his *Autobiography* (1883), but he makes it clear at another place that "It was a short story, about one volume in length" (qtd. in Scholes et al. 11). Here he was referring to prose fiction that are shorter than the usual narrative. William Collins called his short fiction as little novels, whereas

writers like Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling and Robert Louis Stevenson preferred to use the older designation i.e. 'tale'. Joseph Conrad made no distinction between longer and shorter fiction and called them 'stories'. Henry James rejected the distinction between novel and short story and liked to use equivalent term novelette. Even pioneering critic Brander Matthews was not certain about the name of the term. There was much debate and confusion about nature of the short story during the last years of the nineteenth century.

Many writers of the period used the terms 'tale' and 'story' interchangeably without any clear distinction. The editors of the periodicals of the late nineteenth century encouraged and paved the way for differentiation, demarcation and definition of the two terms. 'Short story' being a plotted narrative, written instead of recited, even though writer regarded it as equivalent of the 'folk tale'. H. G. Wells praised 'short story' as a form for its elasticity against its rigid forms and austere unities (Hunter 2-3). So it is important first to understand the artistic appeal of the short story before tracing the prehistory of the form and tradition in which short story writers felt during their working in the field.

The beginning of 'tale' it can be imagined back with invention of the speech and language in some early human civilization. This debate and discussion here which was that civilization will be fruitless, useless and mere wastage of time. Here is a consideration of the five sub-genre of the tale: parable and fable, the creation of the myth, novella, fairy tale and art tale for understanding the background and process of the progress of the short story.

Parable is a kind of fictional or real narrative, with an aim to instruct the reader or the listener for religious or moral purpose using analogy. Fable also

has some purpose but its major differences are the endowment of human quality and speech to animals and other natural things, with a generalized sense of setting or place and use of irony. In fables stock characters such as ass, lion, fox and dog in a non specific location. These characters are not merely types but signify some quality and specific characteristics such as lion stands for power and authority, fox for cleverness and dog for faithfulness etc. *Panchtantra* is a collection of ancient fables believed to have been composed in third century B. C. by Pandit Vishnu Sharama. The stories of *Panchantatra* are instructing Indian masses from generations, particularly the children about the moral and social values and shaping their mind into an ethical future. *Hitopadesha* is a collection of Sanskrit tales in prose and verse written with a purpose of exposing young princes to the statecraft in a simple, easy and digesting way. The earliest manuscript dates 1373. Aesop's fables are very popular in the western world serving the same purpose of entertaining and instructing the children generations after generations.

Myths not only describe the moral order of the world but also how the world came into being. Hindu mythology contains a large body of traditional narratives in Sanskrit including epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabhartta*, *Puranas* and *Vedas* etc. The myth of Manu is a fine example of it. According to the myth Manu was the first Indian King and a king of kings. One day Manu was washing his hand in a bowl, he saw a tiny fish in it. The fish requested Manu to save his life. The fish was shifted to larger vessels one after another as its size went on increasing. Finally the fish was sent to sea. Then the fish advised Manu to build a great ship to save himself and other creations of God on the earth. The fish instructed Manu to carry with him a couple of each animal as well as seeds

of every kind of plants. When flood came Manu tied his ship to the large horn growing out of the fish. The fish brought the ship to Himalaya pulling it through the rough waters and Manu tied the ship to one of the mountains. After receding of the water Manu arranged a *yagha* and got a wife named Shirdha with whom he began to repopulate the earth. In this way myth deals with humanity's perennial concern with its origin; search of identity; and working as the cornerstone of human cosmology. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *King James' Bible* are also fine examples of creation of the myth.

Creation of the myths has taken place throughout the world, i.e. the myths of Ancient India, The Norse Saga, Native America, Ancient Egypt, Judo-Christianity and Greco- Roman culture. Myths are like parables but have religious sanctity and the events are considered fundamentally true.

Novella, in modern usage refers to a short novel but until the end of the fourteenth century it was a story that could be true or fictional, new or simply unusual, written or recited. The tale collections of *Panchantatra*, *Vikram-Betal*; Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1387) harness the contrasting definitions. In 'The Golden Ass' Boccaccio made a new experiment by mixing serious and comic modes, for example, such as court romance and fabliau. He also parodied pre-existing forms like legend and exemplum. Boccaccio brought a new kind of sensitivity in his certain kind of writings by using everyday speech, and was followed by Chaucer in his *The Canterbury Tales*.

Popularization of framed narrative influenced the collectors of the folk tales. *Singhsan Batisha*, *The Thousand and One Night*, *The Arabian Nights* etc. have the structure of framed narrative popularized by Boccaccio and Chaucer in

the Western world. In Straparola's *The Debauched Nights* thirteen ladies and gentleman who flee from political prosecution to an island, tell each other seventy five stories, out of which fourteen are wonder tales. Though most of tales are either European or Oriental origin but he rewrote them in Italian vernacular and framed them to catch the reader attention. The tales may reflect the moral observation but due to the addition of the riddle in the end, function as parables. Basile during his tenure of civil service in Italy and oversea, overheard and recorded folktales from working people of lower strata of the society and put them in the form of *Il Pentamerone* or *The Tale of Tales* (1634-36). Basile's comic, violent and sexually explicit fifty tales including frame stories that open and close the collection are narrated by a group of hags summoned by Prince Zola. Though the tales of both Basile and Straparola were written for the amusement of aristocratic readership but the stories remained linked to their folk roots. Charles Perrault in his *Stories and Tale of Time Pass* rationalized the structure of pre-existing fairy tales for aristocratic readers in order to make the narrative smoother, ordered and logical. He explains the magical elements more logically and makes the protagonist more sensitive to emerging notions of gender and sexual conduct. His heroine unlike Basile's Cinderella is passive, generous even to her step mother and sisters and serve as a role model of grace and beauty for the girls of aristocratic families. In this way the tales became a tool to teach the children how to become civilized and in the process the fairy tales were removed from its folk origin.

Oral narrative invariably employs an omnipresent, authoritative and reliable narrator gifted like great poets as Valmiki, Ved Vayas and Homer with the ability to observe an action from every side to tell the secrets of the human

heart. Readers have become habitual to identify this omniscient narrator with the author, and think that author is everywhere present to interpret and value the characters and events of the narrative for them. Readers consider this reliable, omniscient, omnipresent narrator as “objective” without any doubt.

A traditional narrative cannot be transmitted without transmission of the outlines of the events, i.e. plot. Thus the plot is the articulation of the skeleton of narrative. In this way a myth is a traditional plot which can be transmitted. Aristotle considers plot as soul of any literary work that was an intimation of an action. Sacred myth, a narrative form associated with religious ritual is one kind of mythic narrative; but legend and folktales are also mythic in the sense of tradition, as in the oral epic poem. The greatest movement in the history of development process of narrative has been the gradual movement away from narrative dominated by the mythic impulse to tell a story with a traditional plot. In Indian as well as in Western Literature this movement can be traced twice: once in classical languages and again in vernacular languages. To understand this development properly it must be taken into account both nature of separation between the two great branches of narrative and the interaction and recombination of the two.

The two antithetical types of narratives which emerged from the epic synthesis may be labeled as empirical and fictional. Both can be seen as the ways of avoiding the dominance and monotony of traditional in the story telling. Empirical narrative turns its allegiance from mythos to reality. One can divide the impulse towards the narrative into two main components: the *historical* and the *mimetic*. The historical component owes its allegiance particularly to the factual truth and to the actual past rather than the traditional version of the past.

It needs for its development means of accurate measurement in time and space, and concept of causality referable to human and natural rather than to supernatural agencies. In ancient world empirical narrative manifests itself first through its historical component as writers like Herodotus and Thucydides carefully distinguished their work from Homeric epic. The mimetic component seeks its allegiance to the truth of sensation and environment instead of truth of facts. It depends upon the observation of present instead of investigation of the past. Its development is based on sociological and psychological concepts of behavior and mental process, such as those which inform the characterization of Alexanderian Mime. Mimetic narrative is antithesis of mythic in the sense that it tends towards plotlessness. Its ultimate form is 'a slice of life'. Biography and autobiography are both empirical form of narrative; historical impulse dominated in biography and mimetic in autobiography.

The fictional branch of narrative shifts its stress from the traditional to the ideal. The impulse of fictional narrative can be subdivided into two main components: the *romantic* and the *didactic*. The fictional writer is free from the bond of tradition and bond of empiricism as well. His main target is not the external world but the audience, which he wants to delight or instruct keeping in view the needs of the audience. Empirical narrative aims at one or another kind of truth, fictional narrative aims either beauty or goodness. The world of romance is ideal world, in which poetic justice prevails and all art and adornments of language are used to embellish the narrative. Where mimetic narrative aims at psychological reproduction of mental process, romantic narrative presents thought in the form of rhetoric. In the movement from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* topics of Kalidasa and *Odyssey* to *Argonautica*

one can see epics becoming more literary and fictional and moving towards pure romance as the *Aethiopica* and *Abhigianskuntalam*.

The Didactic version of fiction may be called as *fable*, a form which is ruled by the intellectual and moral impulse as romance is ruled by aesthetic one. *Fables* display the sharpness of human intellectual with brevity and inclined to lean heavily on romance for narrative articulation if the narrative artist has anything like a sustained flight in the mind. The tales of *Panchtantra*, *Hitopadesha* and *Aesop* are typical examples of the form, but its usual combination with romance Xenophone's *Cryopaedia* and narrative allegories of Middle Ages and Renaissance are the major examples.

Till now this study has been dealing the breakdown of epic synthesis into two antithetical components. It is of prime importance to consider the new synthesis in narrative which has been the main development in the post-Renaissance narrative literature. This was gradual process but it is most obviously discernible in Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. The new synthesis can be seen clearly in a writer like Cervantes whose great work is an attempt to reconcile the powerful empirical and fictional impulses. From the synthesis he effected out the emergence of novel as a literary form. The novel is not the opposite of romance as is usually maintained, but a product of reunion of empirical and fictional elements in narrative literature.

Novel is dominating literary scene and narrative for last four centuries experimenting and intermixing empirical and fictional impulses in different proportion. Industrialization, Globalization and endless race for securing means of maximum physical comforts left no time for reading and enjoying a genre

like novel. Keeping in the mind the need of readers and demand of the time, some writers tried their hands on one aspect of life of a character or some specific trait which could be delineated and enjoyed in one sitting. It is called short story not just because it is short but it has its own parameters which make it the short story like any other narrative form. Short story has become the life line of many newspapers and magazines. There are still rich and vast avenues for development and experiment in this form of narrative in today's complex and typical life.

Generally short story is defined as a piece of prose fiction complete in itself with a moderate magnitude. It is easy to recognize but difficult to define. It can also be defined as work of fiction whose word count is less than 7500 words. It is often brief in description and dense in concentration. It does not have any fixed length. There is no official demarcation between an Anecdote, Novel, Novella, Novellette and short story in terms of word count. It consists of very few characters which dwell on self-contained incident, with the purpose of creating or evoking a single effect. It consists of five basic elements viz. character, setting, plot, conflict and theme. M.H. Abrams defines short story as "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)

Edgar Allan Poe defines short story as narrative requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal and 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. The question that strikes one's mind while dealing with the short story is how to define a short story. Most of the

people are of the opinion that the best way to recognize a short story is by its briefness, economy of words and short length. But being short in length is not the only criteria of identification of a short story. It requires a particular kind of literary composition. Although Edgar Allen Poe says that it should be finished in single sitting in order to preserve its unity of impression. Poe in his review of *Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales* defines a good short story as:

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 ends 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. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

It is very difficult to fix the length of the short story. Different writers have different opinions in this connection. Some writers fix the word count of short stories inbetween 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. And those stories whose word count is less than 1000 words are short stories or flash fiction. The stories longer than short story must have a plot

which involves sequence of various events linked to each other by casual links. It should lead to crisis through the series of events and happenings followed by a solution or resolution. It must be loaded with message and theme. A novella is able to stand on its own as books. The word count of novella ranges from 30000 to 60000 words. It has fewer conflicts than a novel but more complex than a short story.

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 40000 words. 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)

Short story 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 short stories have abrupt and open endings. The Short story focuses on a single incident with single plot, theme and setting. Short stories engage a very few number of characters.

The short story writer introduces a limited number of characters, cannot afford the space for a leisurely- analysis and sustained development of characters 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 details of the setting, keeps the complications down and clears up denouement quickly- sometimes in a few sentences (Abrams, 273). The term short story was used only in the second half of 19th century. Short story is short by length but in meaning and scope it runs

parallel to novel. It can be seen and recognized easily rather than defined. Generally it is concentrated, non- extended piece of fiction written in prose neither too short not too long but of moderate length. The art of short story writing demands more knowledge and creativity, as it packs and loads words with many meanings. Whatever novel expresses and exposes in many pages, short story does so in few sentences and makes use of mega-words connecting many things, at the same place and places it is at par with other dominant genres. 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.

Short story believes in brevity and minimization, deliberately avoids extensive and expansive description of characters and incidents. It usually centers on single episode because it cannot afford space for panorama of characters. In short story events are not of paramount importance rather they are meant to highlight characters and situations. They use short route to reach to the destination. It never delineates characters and situations in detail but gives them only a touch of explanation or exposition and proceeds forward. 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 being done by short story writers. Both use limited space for accommodation of their ideas and characters. It resembles to novel in terms of narrative aspect. The length of a story that covers less than five hundred words is considered as the flash fiction and in the words of M.H. Abrams “a slightly elaborated anecdote of perhaps five hundred word”(283). A short story being written in prose excludes all stories written in

verse. Therefore, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* written towards the end of fourteenth century can be taken as collection of stories but being written in verse. They cannot be taken as examples of short story. Apart from this, a short story is different from tale or fable because it is not only a story but a well developed and complex literary form origin of which can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. A tale is basically an oral form the tradition of which still exists in the villages of India where people sitting around the fire still listen to stories of fairies.

A fable is a short tale which often conveys a moral. It has generally animals as the characters behaving like human beings the famous collection of fables is *Panchatantra*. Short stories are also very different from parables. Short story always ignites the imagination of writer and a parable is a story that presents moral. Though a short story has a meaning, a point to be made, it is not a parable because the meaning in itself is not important. Moreover 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 manifestation of the true nature and significance of a character or situation. A short story may have infinite number of themes like other genres. It may be about a moral issue, an interesting experience of an aspect of life, a series of connected incidents, a particular scene etc.

In nutshell, 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 is not only the unity of a beginning, middle and an end. The unity lies in the way the writer has given shape to the hugeness of details. The short story writer uses selected details to complete organic whole of a story. The organic whole of a story means that all events are related and connected to each other in such a way that if single event is removed, it will disturb the whole story as the organic body of organism is mutilated if one of its organs is cut. A short story defies an exact definition but it must arouse 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.

Short story and novel both belong to the genre of fiction. There are many similarities and differences between them. Both short story and novel are written in the form of prose and both are fictional and 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 the short story is brief and deals with a limited subject. A short story is not a novel in a condensed form. The summarized novel cannot be called a short story. The interest is spread over a large area in the novel and in the short story one will find narrower focus and greater concentration of interest for instance, there are many characters in novel whereas one will have glimpse of only few characters even only one sometimes.

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 there is sufficient time and space for a novelist to present his characters and develop them in a gradual manner while a short story writer has to create and expose the characters in a few connotative sentences. The editor of American magazine

Life commented that “a short story must contain at least two characters for otherwise there would be no contrast or struggle” (Pattee 372). In the novel one will come across main plot and sub-plots but in the short story there is single plot with single theme. Each word helps in extending the motive of story. A novel may extend over several years but short story limits itself to a short span of time. The short story differs from the novel in the dimension that Aristotle called magnitude and this limitation of length imposes differences of the effects that the story can achieve.

The short story differs from anecdote-the unelaborated narration of a simple incident, like the novel, it organizes the action, thought and the dialogue of its characters into artful pattern of plot directed towards particular effects on an audience (Abrams 282). In novel the narrator may engage in meditative remarks, digressions and detailed descriptions but short story writer makes his point with brevity. A short story may dispense with the narrator and achieve its effects by presenting happenings as they happen. He takes help of suggestions and connotations instead of explanation. Art of short story writing requires a great mastery of technique in order to achieve effect of brevity, unity, concentration and intensity.

E.M. Forster in his book of *Aspects of the Novel* says the 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 in comparison to 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. (170)

It is felt and seen that interest in the 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 days and this interest was probably transferred and transmitted from one to the next generation and finally to the present age. In Europe, according to Somerset Maugham, the art of short story began when the hunter narrated to his fellows near the fire, after they had eaten and drunk. There some fascinating incident he had seen during the day. The oldest known tales are believed to be of the shipwrecked sailor written about Egypt around 400b.c or the book of *Jonah* from the oldest testament around 350-750 B.C.

The oldest written stories are said to be the thousand and one nights or the *Arabian Nights* entertainments. These were written in Arabic but were made known in Europe in the early 18th century by Antoine Gallands who translated then from Arabic to French and Edward William Lane's translated it into English. Al Masudi (944) an Arab traveler and historian in a book called *Hazarabsane* attributed it to the art Axerxes (465-424 B.C). These tales were collected in Egypt near about 14-16th centuries.

The Decameron is a collection of tales written by Boccaccio between 1348 and 1358. In this collection, there are about a hundred tales. The setting of these tales is Florence which caught severe plague in 1348. It is due to the plague seven young men left the city for safer the places telling stories to each other. These tales are mainly oral in nature focusing on a moral point. The difference in these prose tales and the more recent nineteenth century short story appeared on the surface in the 19th century that the short story acquired a currency and character it had not had before.

Some critics have said that America was 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 American ever since. Short story is really an exacting complex literary form cultivated in the United States. But one thing must be kept in mind that short story may be written in both prose and poetry though prose form is popular.” (34)

H. E. Bates commenting on the wide range of the short story said that it can be anything from a prose poem without poem or character to an analysis of most complex human emotions, and that it can deal with any subject, from the death of a horse, loss of a cloak, to a girl's first love affair. The theme or subject matter may be 'anything' but it must be presented in such a manner that it gives the impression of being 'unified' and 'whole' in a limited sense (Bates 53). Famous American short story writer Edgar Allen Poe puts stress on “a certain unique or single effect” and R. L. Stevenson insists for the importance of 'initial impulse.’ The short story writer must visualize the end in the beginning only then he will be able to produce an 'impression' or 'idea' which is his main concern. Even language in a short story is reduced to bare minimum in order to contribute to the intended effect. The major constituents of the fiction proper like plot, character and setting are definitely present in the short story but in the highly condensed and curtailed form for the purpose of a single and memorable 'effect' or 'impression'. H. G. Wells rightly says that a short story has to be read with in twenty minutes.

Certainly it is a very difficult task to define a genre of literature and same is the case of the short story. Different writers and critics have tried to define

short story in their own way. But a definition must pay serious attention to the genre, like a recent definer of literary terms:

A relatively short narrative (under 10000 words) which is designed to produce a single dominant effect and which contain the elements of the drama. A short story concentrates on a single character in a single situation at a single moment. Even if these condition are not met, a short story still exhibits unity as its guiding principle...Dramatic conflict- the collision of opposing forces- is at the heart of the story. (Litz 4)

No doubt it is a comprehensive definition of the short story and fairly acceptable with a slight modification to expand its scope and texture to accommodate the truncation of ideas and presentation of psycho-analysis of a tension ridden age enveloped in discontinuities and disillusionment.

The Indian short story is comparatively shorter in existence leaving aside the fables of *Hitopadesh*, *Budhistic Jataka Tales* and tales of *Panchtantra*. "Dubai Vali" (1907) is said to be the first Hindi short story but other critics thinks "Rani Ketaki Ki Kahani" (1800-1810)to be the first Hindi story. The stride of the form of Hindi short story has made its impact in almost all the Indian languages is remarkable and it has become the major form for litterateurs. 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 with voluminous works. The fast and frenetic pace of modern life exhausted everyone, mentally, physically and emotionally. This has resulted in the growth of multiple number of readers and writers of short story collections in recent years.

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 him 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 resulting clear picture 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 of short stories was followed by K.S Venkataramani’s “Paper Boats” (1921) and “Jatadharan and Other Stories” (1937), K Nagrajan’s “Cold Rice”(1945) and A. Madhavia and Kushika’s “Short Stories”(1924). Some writers such as S.K Chetlur and G.K Chettur wrote 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 predicaments of the lost ones and sufferers in the society. The other contemporaries of M.K.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 were K.A, Abbas, G.D. Khosla, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Bunny, Reuben, K.N Daruwalla, Ruskin Bond, Anita Desai, Usha Johsi, Shashi Despande etc.

The origin of Indian short story can be traced back to the religious scriptures such as *Upnishads*, the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, *Panchtantra*, *Hitopadesh* and *Jatak Kathas*. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* the two great Indian epics

contain a good number of tales inspiring other writer for writing. M. Rama Rao while looking for the origin of short stories says:

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 *Panchtantra*, the *Hitopadesha*, the *Suka Saptati*, the *Dasakumaracharita* and the *Vetalapanchvimsati* in Sanskrit, the *Buddist Jatak Katha* in Pali and a host of similar stories in modern Indian languages. (216)

Moreover, short stories multiplied and popularized due to the rise of reading public. In the 19th century it was accelerated due to the more and more people started reading the fiction. This process of reading short stories was accelerated due to the increase in the number of periodicals which could publish fiction and widespread literature which was accessible to everyone. Further the pace and hurry of modern life also contributed to the rise of the short story. These factors were also responsible for the rise of novel except pace and hurry.

The genre of short story developed in the hands of many writers who were masters of this art. These great writers include Nathaniel Hawthorne(1804-1864), Edgar Allan Poe(1809-1849), Guy de Maupassant(1850-1893), Anton Chekov(1860-1904), R.L.Stevenson (1850-1894), Thomas Hardy(1840-1928), Henry James(1843-1946), Joseph Conrad(1857-1924), Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, K.A Abass, Washington Irving, O’Henry (1862-1910), J.D Salinger etc.

American writers named O’Henry (William Sydney Porter) is known for flash fiction. “The Gift of Magi” is one such story by him. J.D. Salinger, both a novelist and a short story writer is famous for the stories of intellectual and

emotional struggle of adolescents alienated from the materialistic world of their parents. Anton Chekov, Russian short story writer, probes the tragic element of the trivial things in the life. He has adopted the technique of sting in the tail in his stories. One such story is “The Kiss”.

R.L. Stevenson, great English short story writer has depicted evil action and moral corruption in his stories. Thomas Hardy, the writer of Wessex Tales, some critics say portrayed sharper, clearer experience than to be found in his novels. Guy de Maupassant a French short story writer wrote about private joys and sorrows of individuals instead of momentous events. Like a true realist he portrayed the world as he saw it. His stories close with a sting in the tail which means an ironic twist that takes the reader by surprise. “The Necklace” is one such 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 exposes their miserable condition due to 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 behavior and inhuman customs of the feudal society. He criticizes the evils of patriarchy, untouchability, insanitation and cruelty in the education field and others. It is interesting to see how these short stories shed light and deal with the mixed fortunes of women at various stages of their lives in the countryside. For example *The Tamarind Tree* deals with the wait before motherhood especially yearnings of an expectant mother and the tough battles she has to wage with herself to control. *Lajwanti* confronts the reader with a cruel society that heaps indignities on its women and subjugates them without showing any concern for their welfare and happiness.

“The Silver Bangles” is a narrative that tells the reader the tale of the humiliations heaped on a sweeper girl (Mehta 47). R.K. Narayan presents in his short stories the realities and reveals life comically without allowing cynicism or mockery to enter in the world of his creation. He exposes the ironies of life magnificently.

Raja Rao, a great Indian short story writer depicts the reality with special focus on political and social aspects of it. He is symbolic and philosophical writer who makes the maximum use of folktales, myths and legends. He has deep vision of life and profoundly rooted in Indians'. His stories are rooted in the religion of Hinduism. In story “Janvi” reflects the suffering of the rural woman, a loyal domestic servant who accepts her humble situation in life and serves her employers with devotion and love without any complaint. This is undoubtedly the scenario of 1930s feudal culture and its hierarchical society. The poverty of low caste Janvi arouses much compassion.

While analyzing the genre of short story, it is found to have three significant characteristic elements which include recognition of the familiar, empathy and readability. Recognition of the familiar means clear lucid and vivid details to create the illusion of reality and actuality suggesting undercurrents of the meaning. The writer has to do away with any kind of banality, formula or cliché. After all a short story in a real sense is not transcription of life but a dramatization of it. The second characteristic empathy means to identify ourselves so sympathetically and closely with characters and the situation they are, an organic part of this actuality. In this way the well constructed theme gets vivified by being individualized. The third characteristic readability means pleasure of the tale in which the reader gets absorbed by the

magnetic pull of it. The readers are unable to put it aside until they have found out what 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 the 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 the short story. They do have a point to make a story is possible without a storyline and can be proven exciting and evocative without the 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 and new fissures, new expectations and new equations at every level, personal, family, national and international. Therefore, a short story is a journey of self discovery and self realization for the reader more than the character.

The short story writer attempts to give a form to the inchoate world. Thus it is necessary that a story should have a formal plot called structure and the talent and artistic touch of the author lies in fabricating that it may 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 planted. A good artist always searches and researches a well thought out plot which means a series of events connected by causal links forming an organic whole without having any unrelated 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 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 the single effect which means a story should be compressed and economical in the same way the poem is and is free from digressions and irrelevancies and 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. The short story also carry and convey psychological reality which means whatever happens in the modern story occurs in character's mind in the interior world. 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 the favour of a more complex psychological realism. The short stories demand focused attention. The reader may skip here and there over in case of novel but in a short story no such skipping is possible without losing some of its meaning.

In the novel and the 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 was to follow. On the other hand in the 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 or definiteness of compactness and tautness from start to end. It is self sufficient, self contained and its compression arouses a feeling of expansion into life and an awareness of life into the readers' consciousness resulting in the increase of our

consciousness. In this way, a short story helps in imparting the feeling and sense of a discovery. There are various elements which go into the making of a short story viz. plot, characters, setting, conflict and point of view. Those all elements mix together to constitute the structure of a story. These all are explained one by one as under: Plot of a story is a significant element. Every story almost has a plot. It has a sequence of events or incidents which are inter-related in such a way that each event must grow logically out of the previous one. So the plots must have a unity. A well thought out plot must have a conflict either between individuals, groups, the individuals and forces such as nature, society etc. It should also have the exciting elements of surprise and mystery. Aristotle has termed the plot as myths. In a plot, there is no chance of addition, deletion or withdrawal. M. H. Abrams has rightly observed in his "A Handbook of Literary Terms":

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 strung together simply because they happen to a single character. (228)

A plot is not a simple account of a narrative. It is constructed and composed. The author 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 led 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, purpose. But a simple narrative account which is sequential open and truthful account or depiction of external events as they have happened cannot be a plot. There is vast difference between story and plot. E.M. Forster has made clear distinction between story and plot in aspects of novel as:

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. Or again: the queen died no one new way until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king. This is a plot with a mystery in it, a form capable of high development. It suspends time sequence, it moves as fast away from the story as its limitations will allow. Consider the death of a queen. If it is in a story we say: And then? If it is in plot we ask: why? 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 dint the movie-public. They can only supply curiosity. But a plot demands intelligence and memory as well. (75)

Plot simply means the idea of unity i.e. various individual events stick together. A matter of cause and effect due to which one can expect to find a logic, reasonable connection between the parts. This logic is not a mechanical thing. The various stages of plot are exposition, complication, climax,

denouement etc. Many human reactions and responses and non-human things sometimes enter into 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. Then plot is character in action. M. H. Abrams has made a clear cut distinction between plot and story as:

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 organized so as to achieve their particular effects that a synopsis begins to be adequate to the plot. (227)

Supriya M.Ray also makes a good distinction between plot and story in, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* as:

Plot is distinguished from story which refers to a narrative of events ordered chronologically, not selectively and with an emphasis on establishing causality. Story is the raw material from which plot is constructed. Crafting a plot requires choosing not only which elements of a story to include and what order to tell them in but also relating the events of a story to one another so that causality may be established convincingly.... Russian formalists made a similar distinction between plot and story, which they referred to as *syuzhet* and *fibula*, respectively. Unlike Forster, however they did not emphasize causality. Rather the devices such as rhythm pattern, syntax and imagery used by an author convert a story into a plot. More recent critics who have sought to explain this transformation from story line into a plot by analyzing the rules that generate plot are called narratologists. (386)

A plot has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning starts the course of action and does not take backward movement for its cause. It should be rather independent and should be like a linking pin. The middle of plot 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 connects the events 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 on beginning, middle and end of plot in his *Handbook of Literary Terms*:

The order of any identified plot, Aristotle pointed out is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end the 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)

M.A.R. Habib has also explained the concept of plot. He has quoted Aristotle in his book, *A History of Literary Criticism*, and has said "A beginning, for Aristotle is that which is not necessary caused by anything else but itself causes something else. A middle part both follows from something else and results in something else. An end is what is necessarily follows from something else but does not produce a further result." (A.R. Habib, 56)

Exposition is the beginning of the story giving information about the characters and events which is necessary for the reader to understand the developing action. Exposition is followed by rising action which has been called as complication by Aristotle. In this Aristotle has divided plot in two parts: Complication and denouement. Complication includes all the events and

incidents until the change in fortune and denouement includes unraveling which starts from the change in fortune till the end of play. It finally leads to climax, the greatest point of interest, tension etc. in the plot. It also means turning point in the course of action as 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 *The Bedford Glossary of critical and Literary Terms* and said 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. (M. 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 a simple plot the action moves smoothly. There plot 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 anagnorisis. Aristotle prefers complex plot because it helps in evoking the emotions of pity and fear called catharsis which is the fortune of tragedy.

Character- generally, a character is a figure in a literary work that need not be human beings. A character can be an animal, human or even non-living

entity when the author attributes them human. It also connotes personality of a person and morality. 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 posted against the protagonist is called as antagonist. For example Hamlet is protagonist and King Claudius 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 versions of character are called character sketches. 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 or view point. For example, Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Such characters called as flat or type or two dimensional character. Sometimes character changes his outlook, temperament or his ideology through a gradual process of development such as Pip in Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Such characters are called as round ones. These round characters are dynamic in nature. They never stick to stability. M.H. Abrams has quoted E.M Forster introduced new terms for an old distinction by discriminating between flat and round characters. 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 the readers. (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 the characters are not treated equally; some are being more focused than others. In this sense characters may categorized 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 the 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.

At this point of discussion the reference of setting is also important. 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. M.H. Abrams is of the following opinion regarding setting of a story, play etc. He says that 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. (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 help of flashbacks and flashforths in the time. Place is equally important in setting of a story. The point that is noteworthy here is how the author attempts to use setting in order to heighten the effect of a story. For example the setting is usually dark or ruined place or castle or a bleak graveyard in case of horror stories. Thus setting contributes to the atmosphere of

mood of the 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. There is a Greek word *opsis* meaning scene or spectacle is hardly used for picturesque setting. M.H.Abrams has rightly observed that when applied to a theatrical production, 'setting' is synonymous with decor which is a French term denoting both the scenery and the properties or moveable 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 to signify a director's overall conception staging and directing of a theatrical performance. (281)

Setting is very important because it creates atmosphere of lifelikeness. 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 every economical in his language and word pictures. Moreover, the setting of a short story, play or novel can be emotional setting or physical setting emotional setting or physical setting. Emotional setting means mood or atmosphere and physical setting includes time, place.

Now comes the point of theme. 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, device etc. That occurs frequently, 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 while making a distinction between the two has clearly said:

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 in an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader. John Milton states as the explicit theme of *Paradise Lost* to assert external providence and justify the ways of god to men. 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 Keats "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." (178-179)

Theme may also be defined as a central topic that a text deals and treats with. It may categorized as thematic concepts which means what the readers

think the work is about and thematic statement which means what the work says about the subject. It refers 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.

Since this study interrogates contexts of the short stories of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand, a discussion on comparative literature becomes necessary as it would prove helpful in contextualizing the material of these two writers incorporated to this brilliant genre. Before starting the comparison between the short stories of Munshi Premchand and Anton Chekhov it is necessary to know what actually 'comparative literature' is and how it came into being. The simplest answer is that comparative literature involves the study of texts across the cultures and it is inter disciplinary concerned with patterns of connection between the literatures. Some time the readers do not start with comparative literature but end with it in one way or other and at other times reader may be impelled to follow. There seems a general agreement among the scholars that comparative literature acquired its name from a series of French anthologies used for teaching of literature, entitled *Course de Literature Comparee* published in 1816. The title according Rene Wellek, was 'unused and unexplained' and only shows how the term crept into use through 1920s and 1930s. It could be argued that anyone who has interest in books may be lead to the road of comparative literature. When one reads a British writer he will come across or acquainted with many Latin and

Greek writers. For example, one can trace Shakespeare's source material through Latin, French, Spanish and Italian etc.

There is no limit to the list of examples one can devise. When one starts reading, he crosses the frontiers, making association and connections, no longer reading single literature but within a wide open space of whole literature with capital L, what Goethe termed *Weltliterature*. At this point one could assume that comparative literature is nothing more than commonsense, an inevitable stage in reading, made increasingly easier by international marketing of books and by the availability of translations as suggested by Susan Bassnet in her book *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*: "Comparative literature involves the study of texts across cultures, that is interdisciplinary and that is concerned with patterns of connections in literatures across both time and space." (11)

At this stage one can assume that comparative literature is nothing more than common sense, an inevitable stage in reading which is made popular by international marketing of books and availability of translations. But if one shifts the attitude a little, he will find a history of violent debate that goes back to the earliest usage of the term at the beginning of Nineteenth Century. There is a general agreement among the scholars that comparative literature owes its name from a series of French anthologies used for teaching of literature published in 1816 and entitled *Course de Literature Comparee*. German version of term 'Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte' first appeared in book by Moriz Carriere in 1854 while earliest English usage is attributed to Mathew Arnold who referred to 'comparative literatures' in the plurals in a letter of 1848. Regardless who coined or used the term first time and when, the term seems to

be derived from a methodical process applicable to sciences as a mean of confirming a hypothesis.

The idea of cultural heritage and establishment of its superiority was based on the concept of the nation that swept the whole of the Europe in the age of revolutions. Each nation tried to discover or rediscover their cultural heritage, whether it was real or fake, in order to enthuse the people to compete in the race of superiority. Gayatri Spivak in her famous work *Can the Subalterns Speak?* criticize scholars for their dependence on western intellectuals to speak for the subaltern and their condition rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Spivak are use that by speaking out a collective cultural identity, subaltern will invite there subordinate position in the society (Swami 153). But in other parts of the world the comparative literary study stresses the politicization of literature and rejects the formalist approach completely. While analyzing the east-west literary relations, Swapan Majumdar argues that Indian Literature like African and Latin American counterparts form a community of sub- national literatures and no way inferior to the European or Western Literature. (Majumdar, 26)

It is evident that two writer under this study hail from two different cultural backgrounds and it being a comparative study, not only the writers under study and their works come under the scanner but also the environments- social, political and other cultural are taken care of. So it is necessary here to understand the dynamics of the comparative literature.

In history there had been a continuous debate which is still going on i.e. the debate of cultural or social supremacy, the misconception of cultural supremacy has led to the destruction of uncountable number of lives and

resources. If people would have understood the reality, all the destruction could have been avoided, and the civilization would have been in a far-far better position.

Culture is often region specific because it is product of people's activities and concerns. People are part and partial of it, each and every region has its own ethos, fables, stories, poetry, aesthetics and living styles and food habits. Kayyappa Panikar in his Sahitya Academy Saravatsar Lectures- Nineteen try to define the culture:

In a primary anthropological sense, culture implies the style of living of community, which makes it off from other communities. One may say that country's culture is the mirror which reflects its inner intellectual and emotional setup. The reaction of people to any external stimulus may be predicted on the basis of predominant of features of its culture. (Panikar, 9)

In one part of the world one may see many common features which become the base of the identification in the cultural map. But there can be great divergences within a very small part having common regional features. For example the epic of *Ramayana* is interpreted in different manner in different countries like Colombia, Thailand, Indonesia etc. but even within India one can see this difference in the versions of Krithibas, Tulsidas, Kamban and Ezhuthacchan. The claims of regionalism can't be ignored at the cost of internationalization. Local, regional, personal and particular may be different but not necessarily opposed to the universal. Culture therefore has two faces like a coin which may be different but not necessarily opposed to the universal. No culture can claim to be pure and without mixing of the elements of other cultures, and no race has absolutely pure blood. United Nation has already

confirmed that no man has absolutely pure blood, all the races are interconnected. The claim of purity of race, tribe, family etc. is unscientific and without any valid evidence. Hence no culture is superior or inferior to the others and no race can claim purity or superiority of the blood. No culture is superior or inferior but all are equal and partake of each other. In the similar manner all humans and families are equally ancient.

There had been one sided attempt to study history of mankind and civilization by the people of ruling and dominant cultures and races so far. It is not possible when two culture or person or people come into contact, only one of them feels the effect or influence. The studies of colonialism by historian like Arnold Toynbee and other were incomplete and they did not give proper space to the culture of colonized people. Some recent studies proves that some subjected nations have greater civilizations and stronger culture identities' than their so called conquerors. In the similar fashion K.M. Panikar in his "Asia and Western Dominance" do not give due importance to the after effects of colonialism in Europe. In Today's post imperial world impact of colonizer cultures on colonized cultures and vice-versa should be done in an objective manner. This will be a corrective manner.

Unbiased account of cultural interactions during past makes it quite clear that give and take have been taken place even among the unwilling and unequal partners. The impact and traces of conquest of Alexander of Macedonia can be seen even today on the cultures of areas his route. Their military and business expeditions over world have left their imprints on the respective cultures. The spread of knowledge of Indian astronomy and narratology to West and Middle East are significant in this regard. Earlier these contact were few and far

between but scene is quite different today in the age of internet and super speed means of transportation, when each and every person in every part of the world is within reach of every one round the clock, the process of universalization is quick and global. But it does not mean local or regional aspect has lost its relevance. It is still there and contributing into the process universalization. The concept of isolated cultures is almost impossible and people are enjoying and experiencing the benefits of other and feeling more wise and experienced than their forefathers.

The diversity in food habits, living style, language and rituals in different cultures are governed by the geographical and environmental factors. People of the area have acquired the knowledge through the practical experiences from beginning to the present and adopted this knowledge into their behavior because it was necessary for their survival. This knowledge had continuously been transferred from generations to generations. With the passage of time it has become part and partial of the behavior.

The tension, conflict and interaction between different cultures and within the culture prevent the cultures from becoming rigid, aggressive, opinionated, fossilized. Basic nature of the culture is fluid and this fluidity saves it from fixity and obstinacy. In a culture, like the atom, the proton and electron of similar and dissimilar force maintain the balance and keep it active and vibrant. This activeness helps it to maintain its identity in negotiation with other cultures. When one culture comes in contact with another culture, it put into action the principal of mutual symbioses. Dissimilarities are the sources of attraction and absorption in comparison to similarities. A culture can't borrow from another which is already available in the structure and texture of it. People

migrated from one cultural environment absorb and assimilate the traits and habits of the cultural environment in which they are living. After two or three generation they do not feel nostalgic about their parent cultures but still maintaining some bases traits.

Thus, the comparative literary analysis of the writers excelled in the same literary genres focuses on their contextual aspects. The contextualising of Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand through their selected short stories, includes the national mindset in pre-revolutionary Russia and pre-independent India. This background is integral to not only the development of the characters, but also to the text which supports the characters. Much of what is contained in the texts is from scenario, anecdotes, and written material from and about their respective societies. This materials will be used as interpretive tool in the development of the character, and includes clues to physical appearance and personality. The characters analysis contained herein is, in part, a reflection of these historical, social and economical concerns. In addition, external and internal portrayal and the means used to achieve them are thought provoking.

Contextualising is a key issue to understand and implement the relevant and effective literary practice. The literature comes dressed in culture and it must be depict the culture. The writer gives life in its setting. The significance of context regarding the life issues, which the text must address and dwell upon, cannot be underestimated. There are constructive approaches to contextualisation which facilitate an analysis of both literature and culture, and their dynamic ongoing relationship. The short stories available are varied and each brings out particular aspects of a context, and each runs the particular risks of misappropriation. The application of these approaches by Anton Chekhov

and Munshi Premchand is significant here for their relevance in the present context not only in Russia and India but throughout the world.

The *First Chapter* begins with an introduction to the intellectual atmosphere of Chekhov and Premchand's perfect employment of the genre, the short story. It describes in short the background of the genre short story and gives a brief sketch of the genre chronologically. The concept of contextualising is touched upon. It also brings into focus how these two great story writers struggled to contextualise their materials.

Chapter Two entitled "Positioning of Ideals and Values in Chekhov and Premchand's Short Stories" analyses the contextual indications of the ideals and values which Chekhov and Premchand valued like compassion, freedom, humour, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance. Particular stories are seen and positioned in the wide range of these ideals and values to focus on the contexts of their short stories.

Chapter Three, which has the title "Traits of Wisdom Displayed in the Short Stories of Anton Chekhov", is a brief survey of the manner by which Chekhov wisely builds up the contexts of his short stories. His wisdom reflects in different ways of setting, characters and their opinions. There is no one who possesses complete wisdom. This is also argued that individuals who are considered wise have no guarantee generally to display it equally in all aspects and almost all phases of their lives. Central to his wisdom are values of compassion, freedom, humour, beauty, truth, goodness, humility, honesty, justice, and tolerance which time and again one can find while reading his short stories.

Chapter Four, bearing the title “Sharp and Sensitive Observation Displayed in the Short Stories of Premchand”, elucidates that Premchand was a sharp and sensitive observer; he had a wide range of experiences of rural life from his childhood and saw closely the city life during his student life and as a government servant. His description of rural as well of urban life of India is so vivid, live and so vibrant that a reader feels that he is actually roaming in the environment of his description. He not only describes the atmosphere but the inner feeling, emotions and characteristics of the society reflecting their way of thinking, living and dealing with the different situations. In this chapter there is an attempt to analyze Premchand’s treatment of different problems and resource of Indian society about which his sharp and sensitive observation speaks.

Chapter Five, headed “Contextual Relevance of Chekhov and Premchand’s Short Stories” establishes the thesis that Premchand and Chkehov are more relevant today and it appears that they will remain forever because they touched the basic human nature in their short stories and basic human nature never changes.

The *Concluding Chapter Six*, in addition to being a summing up, attempts to focus on the new possibilities in comparative literature and highlights the situations of the subalterns in both the Russian and Indian societies. With the passage of time they are portrayed with the process of emerging from their earlier marginalizing status. What is new is the essential awareness that they have long been exploited and the feeling that it is time for each of them to become human beings. Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand's protagonists in their short stories are identically presented as the victims of the privileged groups. Contextualising Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand through their

selected short stories is thus an attempt to break the myths of marginalization and subordination which means that there is no truth behind the of superiority or inferiority, dominance or submission theories, that all the individuals are free to determine their own lives as equals.

While the protagonist of the first novel breaks the myth of subordination breaking the constraints of marriage, the protagonist of the second novel survives a duplicitous appearance that she has to put up in order to face the world. Atwood broadens the scope of feminine subordination to a political atmosphere in her third novel and the next novel actualizes it. The last novel portrays a successful woman. So, a progressive pattern is seen in all her five novels.

The object of this study is to highlight the main aspects of contextualizing Anton Chekhov and Munshi Premchand in their selected stories and to establish the thesis that they are unique in the way they use the contexts to enrich the genre short story. The study also attempts an interpretation of the strategies of these writers to contextualize the short story. Within the limited canvas available for establishing the targeted issue, this thematic study confines itself to the one volume of short stories of both writer i.e. Anton Chekhov's Short stories selected and edited by Ralph E. Matlaw published by W.W.Norton & company, New York and Premchand: Deliverance and Other Stories translated by David Rubin and published by Penguin Books, New Delhi .

The basic methodology of this study will rely on the process of examining the short stories that achieve the proposed end. These short stories will be located within the larger cultural and historical context of the ideological

construction of the Russian and Indian identity. Chapters excluding Introduction and Summing up would follow the same pattern.

Works Cited:

- Abrams, M.H. *The Glossary of Literary Terms*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc., 2014. Print.
- Bassnet, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993. Print.
- Bates, H.E. *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1941. Print.
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.
- Habib, M.R. *A History of Literary Criticism from Plato to Present*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Hunter, Adrian. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English*. Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Print.
- Litz, A. W. *Major American Short Stories*. Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1975. Print.
- Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. New York: Orbis Books, 1988. Print.
- Mehta, P.P. *The Indian Short Story in English: A Survey*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1976. Print.
- Pattee, F.L. *The Development of the American Short Story: A Historical Survey*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1923. Print.
- Prescott, P.S. *Never in Doubt: Critical Essays on American Books*. Gettysburg: Arbor House Publishing, 1986. Print.

Rao, M. R. "The Short Story in Modern Indian Literature." *Fiction and the Reading Public in India*. Mysore: Mysore University Press, 1967. Print.

Ray M. S. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Bedford: St. Martin's, 2008. Print.

Scholes, Robert et al. *The Nature of Narrative*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968. Print.

Swami, Indu. "The Relevance of Mainstream Indian Feminism to North- East India." *Journal of Rajasthan Association for Studies in English..* Vol. 8. Year 2012. 151- 157. Print.

Internet Sources:

Poe, E.A. <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/nhpoe1.html>. Web. 11 Sept. 2015.