

Elements of Literature and Creative Communication
Prof. H S Komalesha
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Lecture - 42
Origin and Development of Short Fiction

Hi, welcome again to our ongoing discussion on Short Fiction. In the last class, we came to know about short fiction, how to approach short fiction from multiple perspectives, we discussed different perspectives of short story writers on short story. So, we understood the nature of the short fiction and we understood the scope of the short fiction, we understood the limitations of short fiction. We understood short fiction from multiple perspectives.

After that, we went on to discuss various elements of short fiction and how an active understanding of these elements of short fiction definitely enhances our understanding of short fiction itself.

So, now let us continue that discussion and in this class, we are going to focus more on the origins and development of short fiction. How did short fiction begin as a distinct form of literature or as a sub form of fiction and how did it evolve over time is something that we can take up for discussion in this class.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:31)

Essential Qualities
of a Short Story

- **Unity of Expression:** Must have "one single vivid effect" (Poe), and grab close attention, and never intends to relax it
- **Moment of Crisis:** The focus should be on a simple incident or a sudden moment of insight or "epiphany" (Joyce)
- **Symmetry of Design:** The arrangement of plot-introduction, complication, and resolution:

The slide includes three diagrams: 1. A group of stylized human figures of varying heights. 2. A central blue human figure surrounded by five circular icons with different facial expressions (happy, sad, angry, etc.). 3. A geometric diagram consisting of interconnected hexagons, some colored in blue, green, and red.

A small inset video of Prof. H S Komalesha is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Before we do that, maybe as a way of reinforcing what we did in the previous class we can get to know the essential qualities that define short fiction or short story. Well, unity of expression is what lends the short story its nature of novel revelation. So, in other words when you read a short story, what happens is you are stung by an element of revelation that lies hidden somewhere in the pages of short fiction. Because that is the impact, after having read the short fiction you will have evolved in some way or the other.


It happens to all sensible readers. So, that is the reason why we also discuss that with the particular context to Edgar Allan Poe's statement, how it needs to have a single vivid effect and right from the word go, it has to capture attention and it should not relax it until it reaches its resolution. So, that is called unity of expression.

So, that must be there throughout the text. Now, when it comes to structural component of short fiction, it should have a symmetry of design. When we say symmetry of design it should have a neat beginning, middle, and the end, more than that we are talking about the plot, the arrangement of events, sequences in the plot, neat introduction, and then proper complication and resolution. That is something that we discussed in the previous class.

And more than that when we say a moment of crisis which is also an important quality of short story, it should have a central conflict around which characters, plot everything should hinge, that crisis should be precipitated by that conflict and when it gets precipitated either it is resolved if it is possible or it's not resolved.

If it is not resolved then it becomes tragedy because the character and everything they are unable to find a solution. If it is resolved properly then, of course, it leads to the growth of the character, growth of the story in some way or the other. These are some things that we can keep in mind.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:07)

TYPES OF SHORT FICTION 	
ANECDOTES	A brief account of something interesting and often humorous whose purpose is to support a point.
FABLES	Has anthropomorphic creatures (birds, animals); a moral point at the end
PARABLES	a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson
FLASH FICTION	Stories shorter than 1,000 words
DRABBLE	A short story of about 100 words; tests the author's skill
SKETCH	Illuminates a particular character, setting, or location; no plot as such
VIGNETTE	Excerpt; Captures a single moment or detail about an element in the story, such as a character, idea, or object
NOVELLA	A short novel of about 20,000 words

From essential qualities let us take a quick look at different types of short fiction. In fact, very briefly in the last class, I had touched upon fiction as, a form of literature or if you consider fiction as a genre as a form then short fiction becomes a genre of that. When we say short fiction we basically mean many things there and the short story is one of the predominant types of short fiction.

That is why I said, many come to equate short stories with short fiction whereas, a short story is one of the varieties of short fiction. What are the other varieties of short fiction? Let us begin with an anecdote: anecdotes are something that you and I do when somebody asks us ‘what happened? You had been to the Maldives last Sunday I heard, what happened there? How did you go?’

You do not know it so happened that my in-laws had come and that is when you start narrating, that is the beginning of the anecdote that all of us do, all of us do. So, then comes fables: fables are something that we are already familiar with, whether it is an Aesop Fable or fables in *Panchatantra* we are already familiar with it.

This is also a short narrative that makes use of anthropomorphic characters, such as birds and animals which speak like human beings. And again, towards the end of it, there is a particular moral attached to it, there is a particular philosophical vision attached to a parable, a fable therefore, fable is another variety of short fiction.

Then you have parables: parables are very simple stories used by philosophers or various schools of philosophy to impart a moral lesson or a spiritual lesson. In fact, when you read Ramakrishna Vachanaveda you come across various parables. In fact, parables are the important philosophical narratives through which you get to understand, the philosopher, his or her teachings or when you read the story of Jesus, you come across various parables the stories that Jesus narrates to his followers or his disciples in order to impart a particular lesson. So, that is a parable.

Then flash fiction: flash fiction is basically a modern avatar of short fiction. Flash fiction is a short story basically; flash fiction is a short story constructed in less than 1000 words. Short story: when we say short story, generally it ranges anywhere between 2000 words and seven to 8000 words, again these are not rigid rules these are just conventions, the conventional understanding of types of fiction.

So, please do not think the moment something is more than 8001 words it's not that it does not work that way, generally speaking. Then you have drabble, again it is a modern avatar. So, there are a lot of competitions in drabble where a short story is written in about 100 words. It is written just in about 100 words. So, what do you do in 100 words? there is no scope for adding an extraordinary introduction, a very elaborate rising action, a detailed climax, and all those. There is no scope for all that.

Basically, in a drabble, the impact of the short story is measured. For instance the first story that is generally attributed to Ernest Hemingway, is an example of a drabble. What is the impact? What is the impact? There is no character there, there is no setting there, and there is an implicit theme, and there is a style attached to that.

But when you read it leaves you with an extraordinary impression. So, basically, drabble assesses a writer's skill in imparting the necessary effect on the reader; so something like that. Then you have sketches: sketch is also a type or a variety of short fiction, it basically illuminates a particular character or a setting or a location.

Again, even here there is no scope for a detailed or an elaborate characterization, plot development, and all that. The purpose of a sketch as the term itself suggests is to give you an insight, it is to give you an insight into a character or a setting or a location, that is the purpose. Then you have vignette: it is called a vignette the g there is silent, it's vignette.

So, a vignette is it could be an excerpt from a long story, it could be an excerpt a part of it can belong to a part of a larger one, and a piece from there is taken and presented to you, it could be that. Or it could even capture, independently it could capture a single moment in its detail maybe about a character or maybe about an idea or an object. Of course, there are a lot of overlaps between all of them.

So, you do not need to get confused, it is not that when you start writing short fiction you go with an intention of writing a vignette or a sketch when you end up writing, critics decides whether it is a sketch or a vignette. But these are some general ideas that you can keep in mind.

Then you have novella: the novella is a short novel, you can call it a short novel. So, a novel is anything between let us say 20000 words to 50000 words or it can be even more than that because when you pick up works like *a Suitable Boy* or *War and Peace*, each of them run into at least 1500 pages, 2000 pages and all that.

So, a novel is compared and a novella is a short form. You have *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka or *Siddhartha* by Herman Melville, they are all called and even *Animal Farm*, of course, you have read that and we had a detailed discussion on *Animal Farm*, that is a novella. A novella or something in less than 20 words 20000 words or 25000 words; these are some different types of short fiction.

But most of our discussion is on short stories as such, not so much on novella or flash fiction because flash fiction is of very recent origin, even drabble is of very recent origin.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:24)

Parable

- "the narrative may be fictional, its aim is to instruct the reader according to a higher religious or moral purpose"
- Example: Good Samaritan

Fable

- "Fable is similar, but its chief differences are the endowment of animals and other natural elements with human qualities, a generalised sense of setting or place, and the use of irony"
- Example: Aesop's Fables

So, let us continue our discussion on different types of short fiction. Of course parable, we have already studied that, fable we have come to know, in fable the distinguishing feature of a fable. How do you distinguish it from a parable? Both of them have some morality attached to them, but what is in the parable, it is what is there in the fable that is not there in the parable?

Well, the fable makes use of a humanized animal, an animal or a bird, or anything that starts speaking like human beings. So, that is one of the distinguishing features of a fable.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:05)

Novella

- "In its modern usage, the term 'novella' refers to a short novel, which in the nineteenth century was called a 'novelette'"
- Till fourteenth-century, a novella was called "a story that could be true or fictional, new or simply unusual, written or recited".
- "The tale collections of the Middle Ages, such as Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1349–50) and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1387), harness these contrasting definitions"
- Panchatantra, written in Sanskrit and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* offer an even earlier model for the novella through its use of interpolated tales

Then novella as I said we discussed that. Like Novel, novella too has its origins in the modern times, but there are some critics who argue that Boccaccio's *Decameron*, written sometime in the mid of 14th century, or even Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* makes use of the structure of a novella.

And many have also considered *Panchatantra* which is written in Sanskrit or Ovid's *Metamorphoses* also as examples of the novella, but of course, they are debatable because *Panchatantra* many argue is a short story cycle, and even *metamorphoses* is also a short story cycle.

So, more than as novella, you can consider them as examples for short stories.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:59)



FAIRY TALES

- A fairy tale is an instance of European folklore genre that takes the form of a short story
- "In most cultures, there is no clear line separating myth from folk or fairy tale; all these together form the literature of preliterate societies"
- "Fairy tales may be distinguished from other folk narratives such as legends (which generally involve belief in the veracity of the events described) and explicit moral tales, including beast fables"

a fairy tale again has its genesis in the folklore. So, like a fable, fairy tale also makes use of imaginary creatures, imaginary beings, fairies, and fantasy. Generally, fairy tales are components of fantasy fiction, beasts that you have not heard of unicorns, and all of them.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:28)

Short Story: Beginnings

"From the beginning of history men have gathered round the campfire or in a group in the market place, to listen to the telling of story" - Somerset Maugham

- The origin of the short story can be traced back to the oral story-telling tradition
- It existed in the form of ancient legends, mythology, folklore, fables, parables, fairy tales, etc. found in communities all over the world
- The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest narratives in verse
The narrative parts of the Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha

Now, let us take you through the historical origins of short fiction as such. Though many critics argue that, the short story as a distinct literary form is of recent origin. When we say recent origin, it is something mid 19th century beginning with the 19th century, until the 20th century and 21st century. Therefore, it just has a history of about 200 or 250 years, that is why it is of recent origin.

Whereas there are many critics who go on to argue that you find traces of short fiction even in works, very earlier works. Generally speaking, the short story has their origins in the oral storytelling traditions. In fact, we discussed this while discussing poetry; the origins of poetry, short stories were narrated using poetry, using poetic forms.

So, many consider that also as an origin of the short story. There it was said in verse in the modern times that short stories are narrated using prose, except that even then people narrated stories, even now people narrate stories. The only difference is it is the transition is from verse to prose, that is the reason why you can say that it has its origins in the oral storytelling tradition.

So, generally speaking, short stories are probably as old as Neanderthal human beings, because now imagine a caveman, during their very early times after having returned from hunting maybe when they had just begun, when they had just learned the use of fire, maybe as a kind of campfire in the evening. They sit around, it is a cold evening and somebody

begins, "... you do not know, today when I was about to hunt a deer, you do not know what happened who do I see..."

Now everybody's attention turns towards this particular guy and this guy starts narrating. So, the anecdotal beginning, probably short stories must have begun in that kind of anecdotal way right from the Neanderthal times or ever since human beings began speaking in some way or the other.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:19)



The slide is titled "Beginnings" in a stylized font. It features a list of bullet points on the left and a circular illustration of a castle on the right. The background is light green with yellow and orange floral patterns. A small "Cont..." label is visible in the bottom left corner.

- Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio from the 14th century are the earliest European encounters with the genre
- Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries have produced tales and shorter fictions much before the European countries
- India too produced and paved the path for short fictions before the West did
- It was not until the 19th century that modern short stories were written and published.

Cont...

So, from there when we move on, when we move on this is just we have Western origins as well as other origins a little later. So, we discussed Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, 14th-century works we considered short stories. It's a short story cycle, short story cycles; we get to know what a short story cycle is in a short while now.

But they make use of different short stories and they are connected, they are connected in some way or the other may be in a setting, maybe in a frame, and they are all bound together. A string of various short stories is bound within a frame. So, they are called short story cycles; for the time being, we can keep that tentative definition in mind.

So, I mean considering that you have the first examples in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Bocaccios *Decameron*. And of course, India produced short fiction much before the west produced short fiction. What are some of them? Of course, in the context of the west, the origins of the modern short story begin somewhere in the mid 19th century we identified that.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:46)



Tales from Egypt

- The earliest tales from Egypt were recorded on papyrus
- Their tales were written in prose, while verses were reserved for religious songs, hymns, and other songs
- "The Shipwrecked Sailor" (c. 2000 BCE), "King Cheops [Khufu] and the Magicians", "The Tale of Two Brothers" (or "Anpu and Bata") are some of the well-known tales from the land of Egypt

When it comes to Egypt of course, we have discussed "The Shipwrecked Sailor" and King Cheops the tale of two brothers, who are about 4000 years old. So, they are again short stories too, they are again short story sequences.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:04)



One Thousand and One Nights

The magical lamp that enlightened the world literature

- "THE COLLECTION OF TALES OF ALF LAYLA WA LAYLA, LITERALLY translated as 'A Thousand Nights and a Night', or 'The Thousand and One Nights', also known as 'The Arabian Nights', is one of the great and most celebrated world literature" (8 CE - 14 CE)
- It has had a great impact on Western culture and literature
- It was an inspiration to Goethe in his conceptualization of world literature.
- The stories from this work have influenced medieval European literature, long before its first translation into French in 1704 by Galland, Antoine.
- It is an early example of the frame story, or framing device: the character Scheherazade narrates a set of tales (most often fairy tales) to the Sultan Shahriyar over many nights

So, you can as well find the origins of the story there. More than anything else when somebody says short story has its origins, especially in the middle east and all that, people invariably think of *One Thousand and One Nights*, written somewhere between 800 CE and

1400 CE, it spans about 500-600 years and there are a lot of interpolations into that even in the recent times.

So, you all of us will have heard of at least some tales from *Arabian Nights*, some tales from *One Thousand and One Nights*, this is one of the most translated short story cycles. So, more than looking at it as a novel, it is more meaningful to look at it as a short story because this work will have as it says it has literally more than 1000 short stories; in fact, more than that, because every night, it talks of invariably more than one short story. So, this is a short story cycle that has more than 1000 tales in it. Therefore, it makes sense to look at it as a short story cycle or a sequence.

So, *Arabian Nights* as it is popularly called now has had an extraordinary impact on western culture and civilization, and even behind Goethe's conceptualization of world literature, of course, we find traces of this particular work. It makes use of frame narrative, we have already discussed while discussing narrative techniques, and we have discussed what a frame narrative is.

So, it begins with a character called Scheherazade, who narrates a set of tales to her husband, maybe using her sister as a kind of a decoy. She narrates it and her husband is Shahriyar.

In fact, in the origin of *Arabian Nights*, this guy, this Sultan who has been deceived by his wife, he has been cuckolded therefore, he decides in order to take revenge on all women he decides to marry a girl every day and at night or the next morning he wants to kill her something like that. So, that he would not be deceived, that is his plan.

So, everybody is getting killed, and here is Scheherazade who decides she would put an end to it. And therefore, she requests her father who is also a vizier in Shahriyar's court to arrange for marriage, and during that first night, she starts narrating the story to her younger sister, and her husband who has been hiding, listens to it.

And she stops the story exactly at a point so as to pique the interest of the listener and she says let us discuss the next thing tomorrow night if I still survive. And that is how this lady goes on surviving 1001 and by that time, of course, the king is grown fond of her. So, this particular original tale about Arabian Tales talks about the alluring component of the short story as such. So, that is the birth of *Arabian Nights*.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:39)

Tales from Greece and Rome...






- From Greece belongs one of the earliest moralizing animal fable *Aesop's Fables* written during the 400 BCE
- Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (800 CE) the earliest surviving tale from Rome.



And from Arabian nights, of course, we have tales from Greece and Rome as well. In fact, even here Aesop's fables that we have been discussing are said to have been composed sometime in 400 BCE, Before Christ and you have from Latin, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* composed sometime in the 9th century. So, these are the earliest surviving tales from Greece and Rome.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:09)

*Tales from India



- India has a rich heritage of ancient legends, ballads, and folk tales records some of the earliest short fictions
- *Panchatantra* (200 BCE - 300 CE); *Jataka Tales* (Pali - 300 BCE and 400 CE); *Hitopadesha* (Narayana 800 and 950 CE); *Kathasaritsagara* (Somadeva 1100 CE). - some of the well-known collections of short stories
- * Indian fictions are rich in aesthetic and literary values
- The Frame story or frame narrative or story within a story is a narrative technique that probably originated in ancient Indian works such as *Panchatantra*.

From here let us come to tales from India. These are we are discussing the pre-modern manifestations of short story, remember these are the pre-modern versions of short stories. In

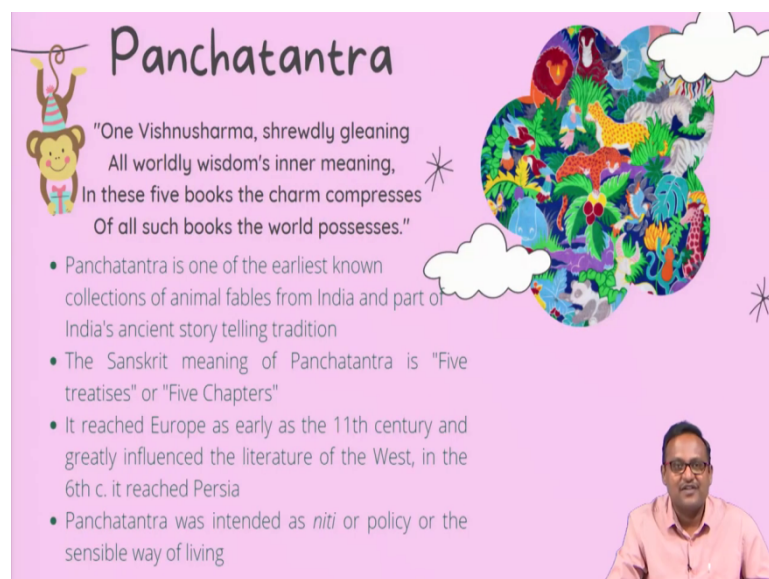
fact, when it comes to short story more than in the west, India has rich illustrations, a rich legacy of short story.

In fact, beginning with *Panchatantra* which was composed in Sanskrit sometime between 200 BCE to 300 CE, is based on the oral tales that are narrated much earlier than that. You have *Jataka Tales* which were written in Pali, sometime in 300 BCE between 300 BCE and 400 CE.

They talk about Buddha's life before he became the Buddha; his life, his reincarnations, earlier reincarnations as an animal, as a bird, as a human being, and all that. And then you have *Hitopadesha* which was written sometime in the 9th century by Narayana, and you have *Kathasaritsagara* very very important thing. In fact, *Kathasaritsagara* is a major stream of stories that has had an extraordinary influence on western storytelling traditions.

Like Arabian Nights, *Kathasaritsagara* too is well known for its diverse narrative techniques and rich imagination, and a plethora of well-narrated stories written sometime in 1100 CE, these are some of our well-known short story collections. That is why we say that when it comes to short story, no wonder India is considered a laboratory of short stories, especially the rich Indian legacy.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:11)



Panchatantra

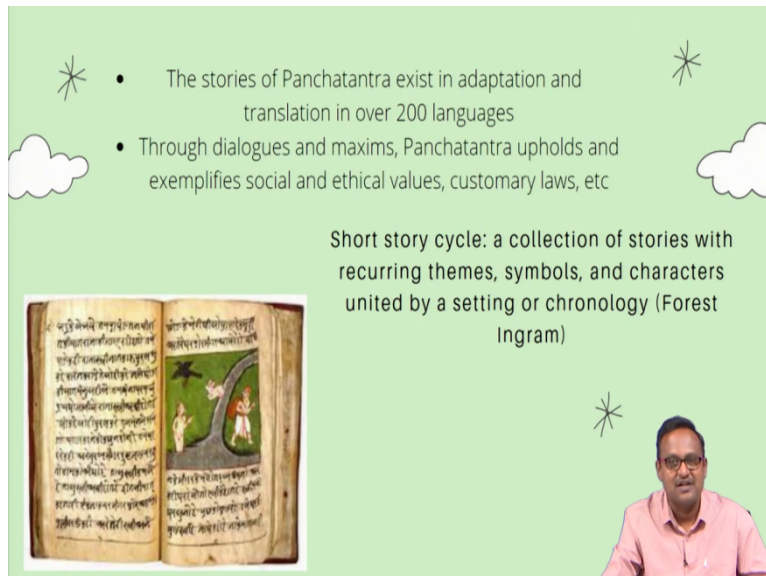
"One Vishnusharma, shrewdly gleaning
All worldly wisdom's inner meaning,
In these five books the charm compresses
Of all such books the world possesses."

- Panchatantra is one of the earliest known collections of animal fables from India and part of India's ancient story telling tradition
- The Sanskrit meaning of Panchatantra is "Five treatises" or "Five Chapters"
- It reached Europe as early as the 11th century and greatly influenced the literature of the West, in the 6th c. it reached Persia
- Panchatantra was intended as *niti* or policy or the sensible way of living

Yeah, as I said *Panchatantra* is a very important thing, we have also discussed *Panchatantra* earlier. *Panchatantra* generally means, 5 books; Pancha 5, tantra is lessons or plans or 5

world views or something like that. It belongs to a sub-genre called fables, it makes use of fables and narrates a story, again it is part of short story cycle.


(Refer Slide Time: 24:36)



• The stories of Panchatantra exist in adaptation and translation in over 200 languages

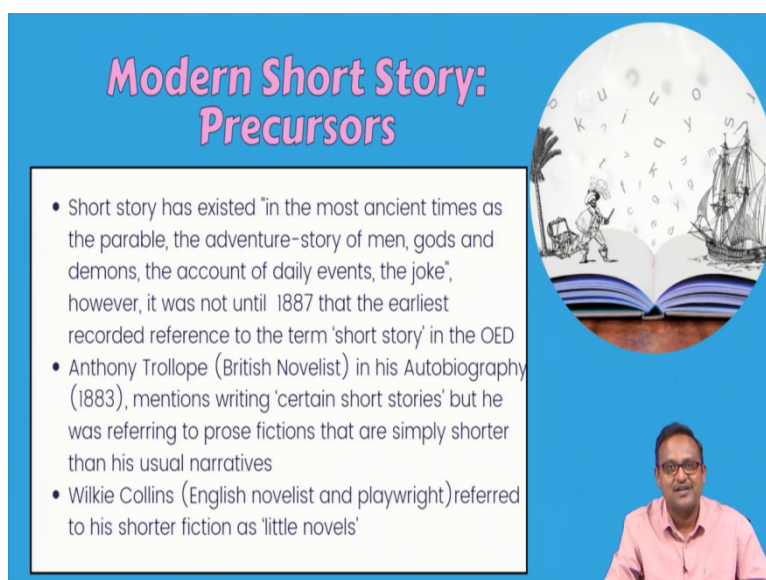
• Through dialogues and maxims, Panchatantra upholds and exemplifies social and ethical values, customary laws, etc

Short story cycle: a collection of stories with recurring themes, symbols, and characters united by a setting or chronology (Forest Ingram)




I will not go much into detail because we have been discussing Panchatantra Tales, Aesop's Fables many times now.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:44)



Modern Short Story: Precursors

- Short story has existed "in the most ancient times as the parable, the adventure-story of men, gods and demons, the account of daily events, the joke", however, it was not until 1887 that the earliest recorded reference to the term 'short story' in the OED
- Anthony Trollope (British Novelist) in his Autobiography (1883), mentions writing 'certain short stories' but he was referring to prose fictions that are simply shorter than his usual narratives
- Wilkie Collins (English novelist and playwright) referred to his shorter fiction as 'little novels'





Now, let us take a look at the modern short story. When we say modern short stories, it is said that the 1820s; 1820s to 1880s are the modern precursors to the modern short story.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:06)

Short Story Precursors

- In the US, despite their apparent advance upon the British, the term only gained currency during the 1880s
- The term 'short story' signifies a redefinition of literature towards the end of the nineteenth century; how it is produced, received and consumed
- The short story as a carefully designed literary form is definitely of modern origin



So, the short story though went through a lot of experiments, many called it a short narrative, a novella, and all that, but generally speaking what is the first modern short story and when was it written. When was the first modern short story written?

(Refer Slide Time: 25:27)

Modern Short Stories

In the US and Germany, short stories evolved simultaneously and writers wrote mostly in realist tales or regionalist tales

- Modern short story emerged in Germany, the United States, France, and Russia during the 19th century
- In 1795 Goethe, inspired by Decameron wrote a set of short stories, however, he referred to them as "entertainments"
- It has been argued that the 1st modern short story is Walter Scott's "The Two Drovers" (1827)
- Washington Irving wrote several realistic sketches and Edgar Allan Poe wrote the impressionist stories, another form that dominated the 19th c. Several American writers, from Poe to Henry James, were interested in the "impressionist" story



In order to answer that, we need to come here. In fact, it is said that Walter Scott's "The Two Drovers" written in 1827 to be precise is the first-ever modern short story. The credit for modern short story goes to Walter Scott's "The Two Drovers" of course, arguably, and then even slightly before that we have already discussed Goethe's experimentations and all that.

But generally speaking, modern short stories emerged as a distinct literary genre in Germany, the United States, France, and Russia, especially during the 19th century, mid 19th century onwards.

Especially in the US, you have Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe who are considered the masters of short story fiction and they have had some distinct influence on modernist short story writers, like Henry James and others. So, the kind of stories they wrote is called impressionist stories.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:34)



From here generally, in the 20th-century, short story takes an extraordinary turn, in the sense, it becomes one of the most preferred genres of literature. Especially by Chekhov and in Russia you have from Sicily Pirandello, Kafka, from Prague, Borges from Argentina and Singer from Poland, of course, is an American migrant writer, immigrant writer Singer Polish. These are some extraordinary writers who popularized the genre of the short story.

So, today we have D.H Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Ernest Hemingway, and James Joyce who took up this particular craft from these earlier masters and exemplified the short fiction. And as I said like novels, short stories too is concomitant with the rise of the middle class, the rise of the print culture, the rise of the magazines.

In fact, magazines have played an important role in popularizing the genre because, when a magazine was published along with essays, short stories, and poems were very much preferred. That is one of the reasons why short stories later acquired a canonical status.

With the rise of print culture, especially magazines, journals, and tabloids, short story has come to acquire an extraordinary status in the collective imagination of the 20th century and 21st century times.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:23)

Just Remember...

“There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves fiercely as if they had never happened before.”

- Willa Sibert Cather

"The first necessity for the short story...is necessariness. The story, that is to say, must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough, acute enough to have made the writer write."

--Elizabeth Bowen

Now, before we call it today, just one thing that we can keep in mind: the short story is born out of a necessity. What is that necessity? An urge of the writer to convey something very remarkable, something like that this is Elizabeth Bowen.

And we have a very interesting insight from Willa Sibert Cather, she says that basically if you scan all the short stories that are available to us you realize that there is at most there is only one story or two story, maximum three stories not more than that.

But these three prototype stories, keep on appearing in very many ways. As if they have never been told before like that these stories keep repeating them, something that you can keep in mind. And in case you are interested in writing a short story let me give you very quick tips.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:30)



Now, the first thing, of course, is based on our understanding of the short story, this is something that you can keep in mind. Let us begin with picking the mood, this is the first one. So, as we have identified a short story, the defining characteristic feature of the short story, is a binding feeling, and distinct emotion.

So, you weave everything around it; your character, your story, your plot, your setting everything is woven around a feeling. Therefore, if you want to write short stories, identify the feeling. When you say identify the feeling, let us say for instance you are excited you have found a new love.

Now, do you think you can write a short story about it? Of course, you can write a novel about it. Why do not you explore that? Or if you are feeling let down, some factors have contributed to making you feel let down; why did you feel let down? Do you think you can begin with that?

Identify what is the predominant urge you have, what is the predominant feeling you have, and see if you can construct your characters around it, a story around it, plot around it, and then automatically the theme follows. Maybe setting is something that you need to keep in mind. So, first, begin with the mood, what is the binding emotion that you want to impart your readers. Once you identify that 50 percent of the job is done.

Now, after having identified the mood, then you need to have a strong beginning. As I said, in a short story there is no scope for making an elaborate introduction, a detailed exposition, and all that. So, write the first sentence, what is it that you want to say. Let us say for instance love, you have found new love; you can simply say love is there in the air all around you.

Or the moment Shiva opened his curtains, he sensed a whiff of fresh air and he found that air was lovely. So, maybe using pathetic fallacy, we discussed that literary technique, then see how he describes. That is just a character Shiva, you can make use of Parvati, you can make use of anybody there. Have a solid beginning, better begin, then develop it and then end it.

Start building sentences and then paragraphs. Then build it, brick by brick. As I said everything in a short story is vital. In fact, there is a beautiful metaphor, it is called Chekov's gun, it can also be a literary device. What does Chekov say, it is attributed to Chekov.

He says that in a short story or in a play or in a novel, anywhere it is if you think in the first page you give a setting of a house. And on the wall let us say for instance there is a gun hanging, when describing the house you say there is a gun hanging.

Why do you want to hang a gun if that gun does not go out, maybe in the second page or in the third page? If you think, on a table supposing in the beginning if you say that on the table there is a beautiful wall clock, on a table there is a beautiful wall clock and it is been broken and something like that. Then you need to explain why you have kept it there that is called Chekov's gun.

In other words, every element in the short story is very important, you cannot afford to describe it and then forget it. So, make use of everything that you have used, whether it is a character, whether it is an element, whether it is a story, whether it is anything or a prop. So, make use of everything.

So, brick by brick, brick by brick start constructing it. Then finally, how do you end it, how to land your short story. Try to find out an appropriate way to end it, because you have already evoked a mood, you have constructed a series of characters around it, then you have thought about a plot line and you have built it line by line.

And now see when you end it, whether the mood that you have picked in the beginning or whether it has been properly conveyed. So, whether the neat arrangement that you have

visualized, whether it has been translated onto a page, whether it is been translated or not just think of it. Now, the final stage of course, that is very important after having written; forget it.

Take a break maybe for about a couple of days, then come back and check if the plot, character, settings, dialogues everything that you are identified earlier is perfectly, whether they are gelling well with whatever you have done, . Then automatically your theme emerges, editing is an important thing. When you say editing rephrasing, revising, cutting what is not added, pruning sentences, trimming it here and there and then making it print ready or ready for publication.

Now, using them do you think you can write a short story? Think about all of them of course, in the subsequent classes we pick up actual short stories, some remarkable short stories and present to you the rich range of this particular type of literature with actual examples in the next class. Until then, bye, take care.