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SHORT STORY PRESENTS SHORT DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Short stories have always been in tradition. Man has always had an impulse to think and express his feelings and emotions and he has always expressed it in the form of stories. Earlier there used to be stories about animals and many folk tales. Oral communication became the medium of expressing such stories. Then there was a tradition of beast fable. It grew in scope and gained accuracy. Short story telling flourished in Greece, Italy, France, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and India. This paper is an attempt to discuss and analyse the genre of short story since it began and in the context of Indian Partition Literature.

Keywords: Short story, conciseness, authors, genre, partition.

Introduction

"Lakhs of men had died, lakhs of children had been orphaned, lakhs of women had lost their homes and honour. Now all that remained were their stories, stories which were told and heard by people." (rai 115)

Homer's 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey' worked as a mnemonic device for listeners to remember the tale. There are various short narratives in these tales. Short parts of such stories were narrated at one sitting. But when the multiple parts of the story were narrated, the overall structure of the story would emerge. There are types of short stories like legends, anecdotes, parable and fable. Basically every story must have a moral and these short stories like fable or anecdotes also have a moral. These types of stories like all other literary genres, give us a moral message. Many Roman legends were collected in the Gesta Romanorum in the 13th or 14th century. Aesop, a Greek slave introduced parables or fables and that is why we call short tales as Aesop's fables. Literature has always been a mirror of the society and it has always tried

to improve the society through morals, satire, irony or any other sort of message. Types of storytelling depend upon the message of the story.

19th century is known for evolution. There were many great authors who made this century a great age for literary evolution as well and modern short story also found expression in this age. American author Edgar Allen Poe started it with his review of Nathaniel Hawthorn's Twice Told Tales. There used to be two forms of short stories, printed form and spoken form and Poe used the word 'prose tale' for such stories and his purpose of doing it was to make a difference between printed and spoken forms of such folktales. As the two forms of folktales, printed form and spoken form were very confusing for the audience that is why this word 'prose tale' was very essential to be used for such tales. In India short story narration has always been very popular as in the ancient times there were parables and folktales.

Before any other discussion about short story, parable or fable, it is very essential to understand what is short fiction? and how it

evolved. Though short story telling was there since ancient times, present day short story came into existence only in the 19th century. Though there was drama in the 17th century, essay and novel writing in the 18th century, some journals also flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries, short story developed and flourished in the 19th century. And since then short story writing has not lost its popularity. It is read and discussed with the same interest and enthusiasm. People read short stories with immense interest and vitality as it takes few hours to finish the whole story. If we compare short story with drama or novel, short story is shorter and time saving with interesting themes and messages. Dramas and novels take too much time to be finished. It is asked that what is short story, the answer is that it is a short prose narrative with its message to the society for its betterment or improvement. Short story like all other literary genres focuses on social improvement by giving a message to the society through the presentation of some characters or situations in which such characters find themselves perplexed and fail to understand how to deal with it. Short fiction is an excellent way of expression. It can express deep thinking and views in just few pages and if an author has the skill of presenting his views effectively in few words, a whole era or age can be presented in just few pages. The emotional effect that is produced by the short story writer by creating a mood and presenting a single event in a very interesting way, can not be done by a novel writer. That is why short story writing is considered to be a superior form of expression than the novel or drama as it can be condensed into few pages but still creates deeper emotional effect and elucidates characters and situations in a very interesting way.

What should be the exact length of the short story? This question is very complicated and it is not an easy task to answer this question. One fact that is certain is that it should be really brief and concise. Though the word length can not be fixed, there can be some short stories which are longer than others. It depends on the skill of the author that how perfect he or she is in making the short story brief or concise. The word length can not be fixed. So there can be some stories which are longer than others. It depends on the skill of the author that how perfect

he or she is in making the short story brief or concise. If an author can present his characters and story in just few pages effectively, only then he can be considered a good and skilled short story author. An author can include some description as well but only when it is essential, otherwise brevity is the feature that makes a story really interesting. The more condensed the better. This is the key point that makes a story really interesting and effective to read and it expresses an author's ability and skill as well that how effective he or she is, in making short story concise and short with elucidation of characters and situations.

There are just few scenes in a short story and there is lack of description as well. Not many characters are there but just three to four characters and the author tries to present these characters and situations in a very condensed way to create a deep effect on the conscience of the readers. To make short fiction really interesting and effective, the author uses many tools as sarcasm, epiphany, first person narration, third person narration, inversion and many more other ways. By using such figures of speech or tools, an author tries to make short story really interesting and effective, so that it might create a deeper effect and impact the readers in a deeper way. Usually whenever any author uses a lot of description or elucidation of some characters or situations in a story, it makes the story dull and readers feel disinterested in the story. But if there is brevity and conciseness in the narration, it makes the reader really interested in the story because it affects his mind and heart deeply.

Short fiction writing is considered to be the genre of literature that evolved and developed in the 19th century and became very popular in the 20th century. The early 20th century when short story writing became very popular, was really a disturbing time period. Indians were suffering under the rule of the British people and the British People were treating Indians as slaves. They played with the emotions and feelings of the Indians by making them slave in their own country. The poor Indians felt alienated in their own country and suffered a lot. They suffered all kinds of brutalities at the hands of the cruel British people. All the suffering and misery promoted the Indians to revolt against all the

injustice and brutalities. Mahatma Gandhi showed the path of freedom and liberty to the common masses and ignited the fire of revolution. And all this brought the common masses within the arena of literature and a new aesthetic started in the short fiction which presented the nation and its sensibility very effectively.

Many authors presented the struggle and suffering of the common people in the form of short fiction and nation and its sensibility found expression in the form of short fiction. Such short stories ignited the fire of revolt and revolution and made people aware of their rights and made them eager to fight for their rights and get their freedom and liberty from the British people. Such short fiction made them aware of their situation and motivated them to come out of the tyranny and serfdom of the British people. Literature has always played a very important role in making people aware of their rights and making them enthusiastic for social reforms. The short fiction in the 20th century played the same role.

Indians were deeply affected by the nationalistic views and literature of that time. European history became a modal that ignited the fire of nationalism, liberty and self esteem in Indian people. They became impatient to get their freedom from the British people. European history presented the example of linguistic, cultural and social homogeneity before them and they came to know about revolt, liberty and nationalism.

Mahatma Gandhi and other people played a very important role in making people aware of their rights and his ideology was presented by many authors through literature. Politicians ignited the fire of communalism to fulfill their own selfish motives. Their politics and Hindu-Muslim divide became the topics of many stories. At such a time there was a wide gap between the poor and the rich as well. This dissatisfaction of the poor people with their own situation and their plight as they were suffering because of the rich people, led to the division of the society. The short story writers decided to write on this division of the society on the basis of caste, class and religion and how it all led to the loss of fraternity in the society.

The authors who were writing at that time dealt with their contemporary time period and tried to present the contemporary time period and tried to present the contemporary sensibility in their works. It was a very disturbing time period and everything was affected by changing situations. Short story authors also got affected by such changes in art, craft and life. Short story writing became a very strong and effective medium of social change. Socialism became the main theme of short fiction instead of didacticism. Whenever society changes, common masses get deeply affected by the changes and they suffer from some psychological problems as well. As the authors of partition short stories tried to deal with the realistic contemporary situations, they tried to probe deep into the psyche of the common masses. Before 20th century short fiction used to be event oriented but later the authors made it character oriented so that a deep study or presentation of the individual psyche could be possible.

India got freedom from the clutches of the British rulers after a long struggle of freedom fighters who lost their lives for the freedom of India. At such a time when freedom was the main issue and freedom movement was going on in India, short story writers also focused on this issue in their short stories and besides presenting the contemporary life, short story writing became a medium of propagating ideologies and views of freedom movement. We get to see how the British people treated miserable Indians as slaves and how Indians became awakened mass who could raise their voice against any sort of exploitation and injustice. Literature played a very important role in freedom struggle as it motivated people to take part in it and raise their voice for their rights. There is patriotism in such short stories that played a very important role during that time.

Partition of India is called a holocaust and grim tragedy. It was extremely horrible and the suffering it caused was unbearable. That is why partition short stories are full of horror and trauma. Such short stories are different from other stories which deal with imaginary and romantic characters. Partition short stories generate fear and horror in readers. It was a new type of literature. It was

different from other imaginative literature. Almost all the partition short stories deal with violence, bloodshed and horror which were unleashed at the time of the partition of India. It all happened because there was lack of values in human beings. That is why people forgot virtues like humanity, compassion and kindness. People killed each other with brutality, forgetting all human values. There was pain and crying all around which made people introvert and they thought more than talking. The authors, who have written about the partition of India, faced all the violence and brutality and so they became very grieved and pensive. When people face pain, killing, bloodshed and screaming all around, they began to think more and become introverts. Authors of partition short stories also became introverts and started writing about whatever they experienced. It was through partition short stories that they could give expression to their suppressed emotions and pain of their hearts. Thus partition short stories became a medium of giving some relief to their souls and hearts which were grieved because of the brutal violence and killing of Indian partition and there is autobiographical note in such short stories.

Partition short stories present what happened at the time of the partition of India but that is not just a description or presentation of facts but the authors have tried to make the readers feel the pain and plight of all those who suffered and lost everything at the time of the partition of India. Many authors suffered due to the partition of India and faced the grim tragedy. They have tried to present whatever they witnessed or faced in a very realistic way. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas was a magistrate at the time of the partition of India and he witnessed what happened at that time. He has tried to give a realistic presentation of what he faced at that time. Through his short story 'Ya Khuda', he makes us feel the pain of an orphan girl who is raped and suffers a lot during the partition of India. Through his short story 'Toba Tek Singh', Sadat Hasan Manto has tried to present his own suffering and plight that he went through during and after the partition of India. There is identity crisis in such short stories which was faced by the authors themselves. Literature is a medium of making people feel what is felt by all those who

suffer. History presents facts but literature makes people feel an era or time period in such a way that readers feel as if they are living in that time period. This is the greatest contribution of authors who make readers feel and live the experiences of others through their works. Such short stories as 'Ya Khuda' by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, 'Toba Tek Singh' by Sadat Hasan Manto, 'Adaab' by Samares Basu and many more such short stories are written in such a way that the readers feel as if they are living the life of those characters, represented in short stories and feel as if living in a particular era. Literary world is indebted to all such authors who wrote about the partition of India and made people live the unbearable suffering and existential crisis which was experienced by people at the time of the partition of India.

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