

## CHAPTER II

# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHORT STORY AND THE AMERICAN TRADITION**

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The literary form *short story* is usually defined as a brief fictional prose narrative, often involving one connected episode. The short story is a kind of prose fiction, usually more compact and intense than the novel. It is composed of certain mutually interdependent elements. There are four elements: *theme*, *plot*, *characters* and *setting*. The first that is the theme, it is also called the idea on which the story is focused. The second element is plot, which helps to plan the events or actions in a proper sequence. The third is character or characters that perform the action and the last element is the setting which gives background to the story as well it sets the tone and place of the story. A short story, in other words, unfolds the kind of idea through the action and inter-action of characters at some definite time and place. It is probably the most widely read of all modern genres. It has been found congenial not only by light-weight entertainers but also many distinguished fiction-writers.

Normally, the novel and the short story are separate entities which share the same prose medium but not the same artistic methods which are crucial to an understanding of short fiction. When if someone tries to think about what a short story is; then the temporal movement and logical linkage are just enough to make a story. In any story, a three-phase action is generally accepted as basics. There may be well connection here with Aristotle's *Poetics*, that a plot must have beginning, middle and end in order to be a whole. It seems reasonable to say that a firm definition of the short story is impossible. No single

theory can encompass the multifarious nature of a genre. It is a very difficult task to define what actually a short story is. There were some writers who tried to define the 'Short Story' but they could not satisfy the readers to get the exact meaning of it.

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines it as:

"Short story is a piece of fiction that is shorter than a novel, especially one that deals with a single event or theme" <sup>1</sup>

*New Webster's Dictionary* defines it as:

"A short prose narrative usually less than 10,000 words." <sup>2</sup>

Harry Shaw defines short story as "A relatively short narrative under (10,000 words) which is designed to produce a single dominant effect and which contains the elements of drama. An effective short story consist of a character (or group of characters) presented against a background or setting through mental or physical action" <sup>3</sup>

Walter Allen defines short story as "The short story, before the modern short story came into being, was a manifestation of the romance. Its aim was to entertain. Its province was the extraordinary. The short story deals with, dramatizes a single incident and in doing so utterly transform it." <sup>4</sup>

K.R.S. Iyengar says: "The short story is an even more recent literary form than the novel, story telling as such has no doubt an ancient ancestry and we may cite the Katha Sarita Sagara and the Arabian Nights as proof of this; but the modern short story is the child of 19th century impressionism and it was in America that it first struck a path of its own in the works of masters like Irving, Hawthorne and Poe" <sup>5</sup>

The conception of the short story as a refined product of art is, however, opposed by Anton Chekhov who believes that the short story should have neither beginning nor end. It should be a 'slice of life' presented suggestively. Chekhov does not round off his stories; he leaves their ends hanging in the air for the readers to draw out their own conclusions. He suggests a situation, and by the time we turn to him to know the conclusions he is going to arrive at, we find the narrator has disappeared.

A short story is kind of prose fiction, distinguished from the novel (*roman*) and the novelette (*nouvelle or novella*) by its compression and intensity of effect. More than this definition of the short story can not be given in proper words otherwise it will be like that we are placing too many restrictions upon the developing art form.

We are here concerned with the short story, therefore, not as a rival to, or as a substitute for, the novel, but as another kind of prose fiction, which has grown up beside the novel and has now recognized an important place in literature. Some inquiry in its structure, objects and methods is for this reason desirable.

A short story is a kind of prose fiction which has grown up besides the novel and which has its own important and recognized place in literature. It may be defines as a prose narrative, *requiring from half an hour to one hour for its personal*. In other words brevity is the key-note of a short story. It is a story which it is physically possible to read at one sitting. But it must not be supposed that the short story is a novel on a reduced scale. It has a definite technique of its own, and has its own specific requirement of matter and treatment.

The short story writer, as compared to the novel writer, introduces a very limited number of persons. He cannot afford the

space for the in detail analysis and sustained development of character. The central incident always selected to manifest as much as possible of the protagonist's life and character.

Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the short story was not generally regarded as a distinct form. But although in this sense, it may seem to be a uniquely modern genre, the fact is that short prose fiction is nearly as old as language. Throughout history man has had enjoyed various types of brief narratives: jests, anecdotes, studied digression, short allegorical romances, moralizing fairy tales, short myths, and abbreviated historical legends. These above constituents did not define the term as a short story but they do make a large part of the milieu from which the modern short story has emerged.

### Origins

The short story, like any other literary form, varies according to the period in which it is written, but it has a unique ability to preserve and at any time recalls its mixed origins in fable, anecdote, fairy-story and numerous other forms. The Short Story is a comparatively recent development in English literature. Before the ages of Chaucer, there were the short stories were written in verse. It was Chaucer who first tried to write short stories in prose form. For example, Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* and *Tale of Melibee*, and the Italian writer, Boccaccio's *Decameron* were the early attempts in prose form. It was only during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, early prose romances continued to be translated and written in English. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Richard Steele, Joseph Addison and Walter Scott tried to give English story a proper format. For example, Walter Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale* (1842), the first effort to the modern Short form. But it was only in America, in the

third decade of 19th century, the short story writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe who paved the way to the theory and form of the modern short story.

In a review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, Edgar Allen Poe, who is sometimes called the originator of the short story as an established genre, defined his principles as follow:

'A skillful 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 such incidents, --- he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tends not to the out bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word 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'<sup>6</sup>

According to H.G.Wells, in his essay *The Contemporary Essay* (1911):

"A short story should go to its point as a man flies from a pursuing tiger: he pauses not for the daisies in his path, or to note the pretty moss on the tree he climbs for safety. But the novel by comparison is like a breakfast in the open air on a summer morning; nothing is irrelevant if the writer's mood is happy, and the tapping of the thrush upon the garden path, or the petal of apple-blossom that floats down into my coffee, is as relevant as the egg I open or the bread and butter I bite."<sup>7</sup>

In each case he considered that the writer must have an 'impression' or 'idea' to communicate, which should engage his attention from first to the last. The language of the short story should be a model of economy.

A cave dweller of ancient times sat by the fire telling his shaggy family and friends about his adventures while hunting a wild pig in which he added a few exciting touches to make his listeners hang upon his words. In reply it was applauded by the listeners. That was the beginning of the short fiction. The evolution of the short story first began before man could write. To aid himself in constructing and memorizing tales, the early storyteller often relied on stock phrases, fixed rhythms, and rhyme. The origins of the words used to denote a short prose fiction: "story," with its roots in the Latin *historia*, which suggests the relational of fictional accounts to the presentation of historical events; the English tale and the French *conte* suggest something told or recounted, and by implication the felt presence of the teller or narrator. Short stories in the sense of short tales told by an oral teller, of course antedate the records of human history. The most primitive man undoubtedly could arrange a series of remembered events in a time sequence and thus have the rudiments of a story. Among the earliest writings of man are *Tales of the Magicians*, (4000 B.C.,) a collection of stories from ancient Egypt. Consequently, many of the oldest narratives in the world, such as the famous Babylonian tale *the Epic of Gilgamesh* (c. 2000 BC), are in verse. Indeed, most major stories from the ancient Middle East were in verse: *The War of the Gods*, *The Story of Adapa* (both Babylonian), *The Heavenly Bow*, and *The King Who Forgot* (both Canaanite). These tales were inscribed in cuneiform (writing in characters resembling wedges or arrowheads) on clay during the 2nd millennium BC.

The earliest tales existing from Egypt were composed on papyrus (a manuscript written on this material) at a comparable date. The ancient Egyptians seem to have written their narratives largely in prose, apparently reserving verse for their religious hymns and working songs. One of the earliest `surviving Egyptian tales, *The Shipwrecked Sailor* (c. 2000 BC), is clearly intended to be a consoling and inspiring story to reassure its aristocratic audience that apparent misfortune can in the end become good fortune. Of all the early Egyptian tales, the provocative and profusely detailed story *The Tale of Two Brothers (or Anpu and Bata)* was written down during the New Kingdom, probably around 1250 BC., a baldly didactic. This story was perhaps the richest in folk motifs and the most intricate in plot.

The earliest tales from India like the tales told in the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, are not as old as those from Egypt and the Middle East. The Brahmanas (c.700 BC) function mostly as theological appendixes to the Four Vedas, but a few are composed as short, instructional Parables. Perhaps more interesting stories are the later tales in the Pali language, *The Jataka*. Although these tales have a religious frame that attempts to recast them as Buddhist ethical teachings, their actual concern is generally with secular behaviour and practical wisdom. Another, nearly contemporaneous collection of Indian tales, *The Panca-tantra* (c. AD 500), has been one of the world's most popular books. This anthology of amusing and moralistic animal tales, akin to those of *Aesop* in Greece, was translated into Middle Persian in the 6th century; into Arabic in the 8th century; and into Hebrew, Greek, and Latin soon thereafter. Sir Thomas North's English translation appeared in 1570. Another noteworthy collection is *Katha-saritsaqara* ("Ocean of Rivers of Stories), a series of tales assembled



and recounted in narrative verse in the 11th century by the Sanskrit writer Samadeva. Most of these tales come from much older material, and they vary from the fantastic story of a transformed swan to a more probable tale of a loyal but misunderstood servant.

The most essential characteristic of a short story is to entertain. Hence a short story must be interesting above everything else. It may convey some moral lesson, it may ridicule human follies, but it must do all this in an interesting manner. It must absorb the reader and make him forget the worries of his life for the time being. If it does not do so, it cannot be regarded as a good short story in spite of all the other excellent qualities that it may have.

During the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries BC, the Hebrews first wrote down some of their rather sophisticated narratives, which are now a part of the *Old Testament and the Apocrypha*. The Old Testament books of Ruth, Esther, and Jonah hardly need mentioning: they may well be the most famous stories in the world. Nearly all of the ancient tales, whether from Israel, India, Egypt, or the Middle East, were fundamentally didactic. Some of these ancient stories preached by presenting an ideal for readers to imitate. Others tagged with a “moral” were more direct. Most stories, however, preached by illustrating the success and joy that was available to the “good” man and by conveying a sense of the terror and misery that was in store for the wayward.

### **The Greeks**

The early Greeks contributed greatly to the scope and art of short fiction. As in India, the moralizing animal fable was a common form; many of these tales were collected as “Aesop's fables” in the 6th century BC. Moreover, the Greeks are usually credited with originating

the romance, a long form of prose fiction with stylized plots of love, catastrophe, and reunion. The early Greek romances frequently took shape as a series of short tales. The Love Romances of Parthenius of Nicaea, who wrote during the reign of Augustus Caesar, is a collection of 36 prose stories of unhappy lovers.

By comparison the contribution of the Romans to short narrative was small. Ovid's long poem, *Metamorphoses*, is basically are shaping of over 100 short, popular tales into a thematic pattern. The other major fictional narratives to come out of Rome are novel-length works by Petronius (*Satyricon*, 1st century AD) and Apuleius (*The Golden Ass*, 2nd century AD).

### **Middle Ages, Renaissance, and after**

#### **Proliferation of Forms**

The Middle Ages was a time of the proliferation, though not necessarily the refinement, of short narratives. The short tale became an important means of diversion and amusement. From the Dark Ages to the Renaissance, various cultures adopted short fiction for their own purposes. The myths and sagas extant in Scandinavia and Iceland indicate the kinds of bleak and violent tales the invaders took with them into southern Europe. Many, but not all, of the romances are too long to be considered short stories. Also widely respected was *the exemplum*, a short didactic tale usually intended to dramatize or otherwise inspire model behaviour. Of all the exempla, the best known in the 11th and 12th centuries were the lives of the Saints, some 200 of which are extant.

Among the common people of the late Middle Ages, there appeared a literary movement counter to that of the romance and exemplum. Displaying a preference for common sense, secular

humour, and sensuality, this movement accounted in a large way for the practical-minded animals in beast fables; *the coarse and merry Jest books*, and *the ribald fabliaux*.

Often, the medieval storyteller—regardless of the kind of tale he preferred—relied on a framing circumstance that made possible the juxtaposition of several stories, each of them relatively autonomous. Such a format is found in *The Seven Sages of Rome*, a collection of stories so popular that nearly every European country had its own translation. This technique is clearly similar to the Middle Ages' *The Arabian Nights*, and the majority of the stories in *The Arabian Nights* are framed by the story of Scheherazade in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Records indicate that the basis of this framing story was a medieval Persian collection, *Hezar Efsan* (*Thousand Romances*, no longer extant).

### **Refinement**

Short narrative received its most refined treatment in the Middle Ages from Chaucer and Boccaccio. Chaucer reveals a character through actions and assertions. In *The Miller's Tale* he artistically combines two fabliaux; in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* he draws upon material common to beast fables; in *The Pardoner's Tale* he creates a brilliantly revealing sermon, complete with a narrative exemplum. He frames his well-wrought tales in a metaphoric context. Chaucer endowed *The Canterbury Tales* with a unique, dramatic vitality.

Like Chaucer, Boccaccio frames his well-wrought tales in a metaphoric context. The trip to the shrine at *Canterbury* provides a meaningful backdrop against which Chaucer juxtaposes his earthy and pious characters. The frame of the *Decameron* (from the Greek *deka*, 10, and *hemera*, day) has relevance as well: during the height of the

Black Plague in Florence, Italy, 10 people meet and agree to amuse and divert each other by telling 10 stories each. Behind every story, in effect, is the inescapable presence of the Black Death. The Decameron is fashioned out of a variety of sources, including fabliaux, exempla, and short romances.

### **Recognition as a Genre**

As a genre, the short story has received relatively little critical attention, the Irish short story writer Frank O'Connor, who suggests that stories are a means for *submerged population groups* to address a dominating community. The majority of criticism on the short story focuses on techniques of writing. The prevalence in the 19th century of two words, "sketch" and "tale," affords one way of looking at the genre. In the United States alone there were virtually hundreds of books claiming to be collections of sketches (Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, William Dean Howells' *Suburban Sketches*) or collections of tales (Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, Herman Melville's *Piazza Tales*). These two terms establish the polarities of the milieu out of which the modern short story grew.

On the one hand, the tale is much older than the sketch. Basically, it provides a culture's narrative framework for such things as its vision of its ancestors and its gods. It is normally a medium through which a culture speaks to itself and thus perpetuates its own values and stabilizes its own identity. The old speak to the young through tales. On the other hand, the sketch, by contrast, is intercultural, factual and journalistic. It is generally more analytic or descriptive and less narrative or dramatic than the tale. Moreover, the sketch by nature is suggestive, incomplete; the tale is often hyperbolic, overstated. The primary mode of the sketch is written; that of the tale, spoken. The

tale-teller is an agent of time, bringing together a culture's past and its present. The sketch writer is more an agent of space, bringing an aspect of one culture to the attention of a second until the 16th century.

The 17th and 18th centuries mark the temporary decline of short fiction. The causes of this phenomenon are: the emergence of the novel and a renascent fascination with drama and poetry, the superior forms of classical antiquity. Another cause for the disappearance of major works of short fiction is suggested by the growing preference for journalistic sketches. Although these journalistic elements later were incorporated in the fictional short story, for the time being fact held sway over the imagination. Travel books, criminal biographies, social description, sermons, and essays occupied the market. Only occasionally did a serious story find its way into print, and then it was usually a production of an established writer like Voltaire or Addison.

In the 19th century certain writers—those one might call the *fathers* of the modern story: Nikolay Gogol, Hawthorne, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Heinrich von Kleist, Prosper Merimee, and Poe—combined elements of the tale with elements of the sketch. The modern short story, then, ranges between the highly imaginative tale and the photographic sketch and in some ways draws on both. For example, the short stories of Ernest Hemingway may often gain their force from an exploitation of traditional mythic symbols (water, fish, groin wounds), but they are more closely related to the sketch than to the tale. Indeed, Hemingway was able at times to submit his apparently factual stories as newspaper copy. In contrast, the stories of William Faulkner more closely resemble the tale. Whether or not one sees the modern short story as a fusion of sketch and tale, it is hardly disputable that today the short story is a distinct and autonomous, though still developing, genre.

## Emergence of the modern short story

### The 19th century

It was only in The Middle Ages short fiction had become primarily an amusing and diverting medium. The Renaissance and Enlightenment, however, made different demands of the form. The awakening concern with secular issues called for a new attention to actual conditions. At first only the journalists and pamphleteers responded to the new demand. When it did shake off its escapist trappings in the 19th century, it reappeared as the *modern short story*. This was a new stage in the evolution of short fiction, one in which the short form undertook a new seriousness and gained a new vitality and respect.

It was not until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, that the short story as a distinct literary form began to attract the attention of serious writers in large numbers. The modern short story emerged almost simultaneously in Germany, the United States, France, and Russia. But in 1795 the German writer, Goethe contributed a set of stories to Schiller's journal, *Die Horen*, that were obviously created with the Decameron in mind. Significantly, Goethe did not call them "short stories" (Novellen) although the term was available to him. Rather, he thought of them as "entertainments" for German travelers.

But a new type of short fiction was near at hand—a type that accepted some of the realistic properties of popular journalism. In 1827, Goethe commented on the difference between the newly emergent story and the older kind. *What is a short story*, he asked, but an event which, though unheard of, has occurred? Many a work which passes in Germany under the title *short story* is not a short story at all, but merely a tale or what else you would like to call it.

According to the above sensitive issue, Heinrich von Kleist and E.T.A. Hoffmann called their short works on fabulous themes “tales”. It was somehow like Poe, Kleist who created an expression of human problems, partly metaphysical and partly psychological, by dramatizing man's confrontations with a fantastic, chaotic world. Hoffmann's intriguing tales of exotic places and of supernatural phenomena were very likely his most influential. Another important writer, Ludwig Tieck, explicitly rejected realism as the definitive element in a short story, as he envisioned the short story as primarily a matter of intensity and ironic inversion. By allowing the writer to pursue an inner, and perhaps bizarre, reality and order, Tieck and the others kept the modern story open to non journalistic techniques.

Some writers contributed to the development of both types of story. Washington Irving wrote several realistic sketches (*The Sketch-Book*, 1819–20; *The Alhambra*, 1832) in which he carefully recorded appearances and actions. He also wrote stories in which the details were taken not from ostensible reality but from within a character's mind. Much of the substance of *The Stout Gentleman* (1821), for example, is reshaped and recharged by the narrator's fertile imagination; *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) draws upon the symbolic surreality of Rip's dreams.

The short prose of Nathaniel Hawthorne, American novelist and short-story writer who was a master of the allegorical and symbolic tale, illustrates that he has exclusive rights to the use of symbol. On a few occasions, as in *My Kinsman, Major Molineux* (1832), Hawthorne's stories are about symbolic events as they are viewed subjectively by the central character. Hawthorne's greater gift, however, was for creating scenes, persons, and events that strike the

reader as being actual historical facts and also as being rich in symbolic import. *Endicott and the Red Cross* (1837) may seem little more than a photographic sketch of a tableau out of history; the details are symbols of an underground of conflicting values and ideologies.

### The “Impressionist” story

American writers, from Poe to James, were interested in the “impressionist” story that focuses on the impressions registered by events on the characters' minds, rather than the objective reality of the events themselves. In Herman Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* (1856) the narrator is a man who unintentionally reveals his own moral weaknesses through his telling of the story of Bartleby. Mark Twain's tales of animals (*The Celebrated Jumping Frog*, 1865; *The Story of Old Ram*, 1872; *Baker's Blue Jay Yarn*, 1879), all impressionist stories, distort ostensible reality in a way that reflects on the men who are speaking. Ambrose Bierce's famous *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1891) is another example of this type of story in which the reader sees a mind at work—distorting, fabricating, and fantasizing—rather than an objective picture of actuality. In contrast, William Dean Howells usually sought an objectifying aesthetic distance. Though Howells was as interested in human psychology and behaviour as any of the impressionist writers, he did not want his details filtered through a biased, and thus distorting, narrator. Impressionism, he felt, gave license for falsifications; in the hands of many writers of his day, it did in fact result in sentimental romanticizing.



### **Respect for the story**

In at least one way, 19th-century America resembled 16th-century Italy: there was an abundance of second- and third-rate short stories. And, yet, respect for the form grew substantially, and most of the great artists of the century were actively participating in its development. The seriousness with which many writers and readers regarded the short story is perhaps most clearly evident in the amount and kind of critical attention it received. James, Howells, Harte, Twain, Melville, and Hawthorne all discussed it as an art form, usually offering valuable insights, though sometimes shedding more light on their own work than on the art as a whole.

But the foremost American critic of the short story was Edgar Allan Poe. He was a creator of influential impressionist techniques; he believed that the definitive characteristic of the short story was its unity of effect. "A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale," Poe wrote in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in 1842. Poe's polemic primarily concerns craftsmanship and artistic integrity; it hardly prescribes limits on subject matter or dictates technique. As such, Poe's thesis leaves the story form open to experimentation and to growth while it demands that the form show evidence of artistic diligence and seriousness.

### **French writers**

The new respect for the short story was also evident in France, as Henry James observed that Merimee's stories are masterpieces of detached and dry observation, though the subject matter itself is often emotionally charged. As illustrated by *Columbia* (1841) or *Carmen* (1845), which gained additional fame as an opera. Nineteenth-century France produced short stories as various as 19th-century America. The

two major French impressionist writers were Charles Nodier, who experimented with symbolic fantasies, and Gérard de Nerval, whose collection *Les Filles du feu* (*Daughters of Fire* 1854) grew out of recollections of his childhood.

One of the most interesting writers of 19th-century France is Alphonse Daudet, whose stories reflect the spectrum of interest and techniques of the entire century. The greatest French storywriter, by far, is Guy de Maupassant, a master of the objective short story. Basically, Maupassant's stories are anecdotes that capture a revealing moment in the lives of middle class citizens. This crucial moment is typically recounted in a well-plotted design, though perhaps in some stories like *Boule de suif* (1880; *Ball of Tallow*) and *The Necklace* (1881) the plot is too contrived, the reversing irony too neat, and the artifice too apparent. In other stories, like *The House of Madame Tellier* (1881), Maupassant's easy and fluid prose captures the innocence and the corruption of human behaviour.

### **Russian writers**

During the first two decades of the 19th century in Russia, fable writing became a fad. By all accounts the most widely read fabulist was Ivan Krylov whose stories borrowed heavily from Aesop, *La Fontaine*, and various Germanic sources. The stories of the revered poet Aleksandr Pushkin gained serious attention for the form. Pushkin cultivated a detached, rather classical style for his stories of emotional conflicts (*The Queen of Spades*, 1834).

But it is Nikolay Gogol and Dostoyevsky who stand at the headwaters of the Russian short story. Gogol published his *Arabesques* (1835) five years before Poe collected some of his tales under a similar title. Like those of Poe, Gogol's tales of hallucination, confusing reality

and dream, are among his best stories (*Nevsky Prospect* and *Diary of a Madman*, both 1835). The single most influential story in the first half of the 19th century in Russia was undoubtedly Gogol's *Overcoat* (1842). Gogol's story seems to anticipate both the impressionism of Dostoyevsky's *Underground Man* and the realism of Tolstoy's *Ivan Ilich*. Apart from the above writers like Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekhov and Maupassant emerged on the horizon and perfected the form 'Short Story' by all those modernist aspects.

### **The Development of the Short Story in England:**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the growth of modern short story in England was very slow if compared to the growth of the Russian, the American and the French. There were two reasons: on the one hand, the impact of Victorian novelists' multi volume tradition which delayed the spirit of the short story. On the other hand, the Victorian novelists made the use of the novel as an effective medium for moral preaching than the short story. Up to the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was only one example of Walter Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale*, (1814), as a modern short story.

Apart from Scott the major writers who practiced the form include the famous adventurer Rudyard Kipling, R.L.Stevenson, Arther Conan, Doyle, Joseph Conrad, H. G.Wells, etc. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by writers like Arnold Bennett, Balzac, Zola, John Galsworthy, Forster etc.

### **The 20th century**

In the first half of the 20th century, the appeal of the short story continued to grow. Literally hundreds of writers—including, as it seems, nearly every major dramatist, poet, and novelist—published thousands of excellent stories. William Faulkner suggested that writers

often try their hand at poetry, find it too difficult, go on to the next most demanding form, the short story, fail at that, and only then settle for the novel. In the 20th century Germany, France, Russia, and the U.S. lost what had once appeared to be their exclusive domination of the form. Innovative and commanding writers emerged in countries that had previously exerted little influence on the genre: Sicily, for example, produced Luigi Pirandello; Czechoslovakia, Franz Kafka; Japan, Akutagawa Ryunosuke; Argentina, Jorge Luis Borges. Literary journals with international circulation, such as Ford Madox Ford's *Transatlantic Review*, Scribner's *Magazine*, and Harriet Weaver's *Egoist*, provided a steady and prime exposure for young writers.

As the familiarity with it increased, the short story form itself became more varied and complex. The fundamental means of structuring a story underwent a significant change. The overwhelming or unique event that usually informed the 19th-century story fell out of favour with the storywriter of the early 20th century. He grew more interested in subtle actions and unspectacular events. Sherwood Anderson, one of the most influential U.S. writers of the early 20th century, observed that the common belief in his day was that stories had to be built around a plot, a notion that, in Anderson's opinion, appeared to poison all storytelling. His own aim was to achieve form, not plot, although form was more elusive and difficult. The record of the short story in the 20th century is dominated by this increased sensitivity to—and experimentation with—form. Although the popular writers of the century (like O. Henry in the U.S. and Paul Morand in France) may have continued to structure stories according to plot, the greater artists turned elsewhere for structure, frequently eliciting the response from cursory readers that “nothing happens in these stories.”

Narratives like Ernest Hemingway's *A Clean Well-Lighted Place* may seem to have no structure at all, so little physical action develops; but stories of this kind are actually structured around a psychological, rather than physical, conflict. In several of Hemingway's stories (as in many by D.H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, and others), physical action and event are unimportant except insofar as the actions reveal the psychological underpinnings of the story. Stories came to be structured, also, in accordance with an underlying archetypal model: the specific plot and characters are important insofar as they allude to a traditional plot or figure, or to patterns that have recurred with wide implications in the history of mankind. Katherine Anne Porter's *Flowering Judas*, for example, echoes and ironically inverts the traditional Christian legend. Still other stories are formed by means of motif, usually a thematic repetition of an image or detail that represents the dominant idea of the story. *The Dead*, the final story in James Joyce's *Dubliners*, builds from a casual mention of death and snow early in the story to a culminating paragraph that links them in a profound vision. Seldom, of course, is the specific structure of one story appropriate for a different story. Faulkner, for example, used the traditional pattern of the knightly quest (in an ironic way) for his story *Was*, but for *Barn Burning* he relied on a psychologically organic form to reveal the story of young Sarty Snopes.

No single form provided the 20th-century writer with the answer to structural problems. As the primary structuring agent, spectacular and suspenseful action was rather universally rejected around mid-century since motion pictures and television could present it much more vividly. As the periodicals that had supplied escapist stories to mass audiences declined, the short story became the favoured form of a

smaller but intellectually more demanding readership. The Argentine Borges, for example, attracted an international following with his *Ficciones*, stories that involved the reader in dazzling displays of erudition and imagination, unlike anything previously encountered in the genre. Similarly, the American Donald Barthelme's composition consisted of bits and pieces of, e.g., television commercials, political speeches, literary allusions, eavesdropped conversations, graphic symbols, dialogue from Hollywood movies—all interspersed with his own original prose in a manner that defied easy comprehension and yet compelled the full attention of the reader. The short story also lent itself to the rhetoric of student protest in the 1960s and was found in a bewildering variety of mixed-media forms in the “underground” press that publicized this life style throughout the world. In his deep concern with such a fundamental matter as form, the 20th-century writer unwittingly affirmed the maturation and popularity of the genre; only a secure and valued (not to mention flexible) genre could withstand and, moreover, encourage such experimentation.

### **The Development of the Short Story in America:**

Of 19th century English-language writers it was not British, preoccupied with the expansive novel, who turned to the short story, but the Americans. Fred Lewis Pattee, in his historical survey *The Development of the American Short Story*, points out that the term ‘short story’ itself, used generically to designate an independent literary form. The first great inventor of the American Short Story was Washington Irving who produced stories like *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hallow* published through his periodical called *The Sketch Book* which described the customs and manners of American people. The successors of Washington Irving were Hawthorne and Poe

who started their work in the short story. On the one hand, Hawthorne dealt with the gloomy side of human beings which he presented through his art of characterization. On the other hand, Poe dealt with the supernatural element which he presented by creating the atmosphere of horror, suspense and murder. Hawthorne, Poe, and Bret Harte had given the 'short tale' eminence in America.

Fitz-James O'Brian, a young Irish journalist of *Harper's Monthly*, greatly influenced by the art of Poe as a result he followed Poe. He achieved greater realism by depicting the realistic picture of commonplace conditions of everyday life in his stories. One of his stories, *What Was It* was mysterious account of a dream palace. Bret-Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (1868) describes show of realism. O'Henry, the greatest American writer, published stories like '*The Gift of the Magic* and *The Furnished Room* which illustrate his technique of ironic coincident and surprise ending. His contemporary, Stephen Crane, brought the story nearer to realism.

One of the most successful writers of the period was Bret Harte, while looking back at the development of American fiction; he remarked that the most formative influence on it was humour;

"Crude at first, it received a literary polish in the press, but its dominant quality remained. It was concise and condensed, yet suggestive. It was delightfully extravagant, or miracle of understatement ---- It gave a new interest to slang --- It was the parent of the American short story." <sup>8</sup>

In this context 'humour' includes not only what is seen as amusing but also what is seen as wry, poignant, and disillusioned.

The other American story writers like Henry James, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway brought story in a

matured form. Henry James made his short stories very complex. Sherwood Anderson depicts a philosophy of life through his stories *Winesburg* and *Ohio*. He made a great influence on Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway's *In Our Time* (1925) express the contemporary social conditions.

### **Setting a context: Hemingway's Short Stories**

Ernest Hemingway was the most significant American writer of fiction in the first half of the twentieth century. His stories can be compared with the finest works of all time; with the stories of Chekhov, Maupassant, Balzac, Flaubert and Joyce in Europe; with the works of Hawthorne, Melville, Poe and James in America. Basically he was mostly influenced by the writers like Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein who showed a great faith on Hemingway's art of writing that made him the greatest writer of the centuries.

Hemingway's best writing often deals with the tragic areas of man's experience, with violent death and lost love, with struggles of men and women to maintain their dignity in the face of personal crisis and battle. His genius laid his ability to transform his experiences of historical moments and private pain into his writing. His main themes were war, alienation, love, violence, sex, and death. He was really serious about the making of literature and about its relationship to life. It is said that if we understand the way he wrote, we could understand the essence of his art. It is also clear by studying his work that he wrote of what he knew and he experienced. He wrote very honestly, directly and unambiguously as he could. A normal reader can also understand the literary work of Ernest Hemingway. He was a man of great experience who involved himself more in shooting, big-game hunting,



fishing and fighting. It was really matter of wondering that how he could find the time to write.

Hemingway believed that he could write well only from direct observation. He used to say that it was very hard to get anything true on anything you had not seen for yourselves. Journalism provided him with vital information and experience. Often he withheld the best stories from his reports and used them in his fiction.

Hemingway's achievement ranks him amongst the most important writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His early work and T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land* set the sterility of modern life against a rich background of historic and religious myth. His most characteristic method of establishing atmosphere of communicating his attitude towards his materials is by the use of style which presents the action of war, of the hunt, the prize fight, and the bull-ring with an almost ritualistic intensity of detail.

When we talk about Hemingway's technique of his writing it is just like the technique of an iceberg. He said:

"I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show."<sup>9</sup>

The above iceberg technique is used in some of the stories in the collections of *In Our Time*, *Men Without Men* and *Winner Take Nothing*. For instance, Hemingway has used an iceberg technique in the short story from the collection *In Our Time*, "Soldier's Home" a story about a man returning from war and trying to re-adapt to American life. The iceberg technique helped the soldier to submerge his disillusionment about his later life.

The style of the narration was terse and faltering with its descriptive eye focused directly on the object and action. He selected the subjects as well themes those he and the succeeding generation had experienced, bred in an age of devastating war and violence and in which for many people the traditional values are disrupted and the meaning of existing obscured. To depict the typical circumstances of the world, he used the powerful style-forming mastery of the art of the modern narration. When we study the works of Hemingway, we come across that his writing sometimes displayed brutal, cynical, and callous sides but it should not be neglected that he had a heroic pathos which was the basic element in his awareness of his life struggled in the world of reality overshadowed by violence and death. Courage was also the central theme of his work.

Hemingway arranges the stories in a subtle and significant structure: from youth to maturity, from innocence to experience, from peace to war to peace again, and from America to Europe and back to America he exposes a central consciousness, whatever names he gives it in the different stories, to the basic realities of the world and the human condition.

There are three major aspects of Hemingway's short fiction which are centering on war, crime, and bullfighting. Hemingway wrote much about war because it constituted the constant, bullying, murderous, and slovenly crime of his time. War, of course, concerns the chaos and violence of conflict between and within nations; crime is the lesser chaos and violence within social groups; and bullfighting symbolizes a way to face a world and a human condition characterized by war and crime. In short, Hemingway outlines the world and the human condition as he sees them and suggest what man must be and do

in such a world. In his stories, he deals with war, love, alienation, and resignation, but the central theme of his work is man in the post-war world.

American fiction was considerably affected by the War. The war affected the lives and works of American novelists like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway's work of art is the product of his personal experience and his great triumph is his ability to transform his early traumatic experiences into a compassionate ethic of responsibility. He believes that life is full of struggle and that Man is not made for defeat. Man can be destroyed but not defeated. Ernest Hemingway was the member of the 'lost' generation of American expatriates in Paris in the 1920s. The World War II seemed to offer the opportunity for the kind of detached involvement that has been possible in the World War I, and as a result of it Hemingway became a combat journalist.

Hemingway in his short stories and novels of the 1920s and 1930s established his reputation by showing how a new subject matter—personal, physical and emotional—could transmit through the rhythms of speech. His short stories define the function of novel. As it is seen that the sexuality has always been a central theme in realist and naturalist fiction because it constituted the unspeakable secret.

Throughout his career as a writer, from his first by-lined stories as a reporter to the time of his death, Hemingway never forgot that the books were written to be read. He never forgot about the readers on the other side of what he wrote. For him the most important thing about a work of art was what it gave to its readers directly, rather than the views of the interpreters.

Hemingway was one of the outstanding writers of his generation, remarkable for his prose economy. He created distinguished body of prose fiction, much of it based on his adventurous life. His sense of modern exposure and his concern with encountering death and nothingness are depicted in his work in a clean and heroic manner.

The new prose of Hemingway and the psychology of Sigmund Freud share some remarkably similar assumptions. The new prose was designed to communicate on two levels simultaneously: the explicit and the implicit; and, as the iceberg metaphor suggests, the deceptively simple surface of the story rested upon a border, more complex "hidden" base.

It is true that his first published work, which was basically short fiction called *In Our Time* has the subjects like woundings, sexual unhappiness, killing and suicide which emerged from the writer's tender and sensitive mind outraged by the apparent cruelty of life. Unrelieved pessimism is no answer to the human predicament: it is a denial of life. Hemingway's preoccupation with the plight of the individual in a world overshadowed with pain and violence marks him out, from the beginning of his career, as a writer who is essentially a moralist. The method of communicating unexpressed emotion by making the reader identify himself with the objectively-described actions and reactions of his characters is one of Hemingway's favorite and the most effective devices. Hemingway remembered those words when he wrote his own stories. In this context, Dorothy Parker, says:

"Hemingway has an unerring sense of selection. He discards details with a magnificent lavishness; he keeps his words to their short path - - - Mr. Hemingway's style, this prose stripped to its firm young

bones, is far more effective, far more moving, in the short story than in the novel. He is, to me, the greatest living writer of short stories.”<sup>10</sup>

Hemingway was an avid fisherman; hunter and bullfight enthusiast and he drew heavily on his experiences in writing. Hemingway has used the themes of helplessness and defeat in his entire work and expressed his concern for social issues. These issues are perennial and will remain as it will be until as far as the society exists. There is no permanent remedy for it. His works strongly condemned economic and political injustice. His works also expressed the society which follows the norms of war as a remedy for liberty and peace, will be in danger of loss of liberty at universal level. Man has become a victim of war and his freedom has lost everywhere.

Hemingway, as a war veteran, depicted the life of two types of people. The first type, were of the men and women who deprived, by World War I, of faith in the moral values in which they had believed, and who lived with cynical disregard for anything but their own emotional needs. The second type, were of men and women of simple character and primitive emotions, such as prizefighters and bullfighters. Hemingway wrote of their courageous and usually futile battles against circumstances.

His style of writing is characterized by crispness, laconic dialogue, and emotional understatement. His writing and personal life exerted a profound influence on the American writers of his time. Many of his writings are regarded as classics of American literature and some of his stories have been made into motion pictures. To him, adventure, often dangerous, was his chosen way of life, and his writing dealt largely with action violence and death. When he found themes to match his skill his work made him one of the most influential authors

of his century. In this connection, the well-known critic, Sean O'Faolain says:

“Hemingway’s style is one of the Most Self-conscious, original, and personal styles ever invented, based on a proper respect for words such as a man might develop from the habit of sending cablegrams from battlefields at a high price per word. It is hard to describe an effect of simplicity originating in the silences and suppressions of a man of such deep feeling”<sup>11</sup>

Hemingway wrote about the bitter experiences World War I in his stories, where he worked as a volunteer in Red Cross for serving to Italian troops. He was badly wounded in the leg by a trench mortar. That incident affected not only his life but also all that he wrote. In many of his short stories, he used his previous memories of the war, the wounding, the hospital, and after effects of those incidents as material about which he seeks to write truly and precisely. For example, The Greek retreat on Smyrna came out not only in a sketch for *In Our Time*, but also, transmuted by the novelist’s art, in the Caporetto sequence of *A Farewell to Arms*. He was learning more about war about places, people, and about they felt and looked and behaved.

Hemingway’s point of view and much of his work have been shaped by many influences such as his boyhood experiences in the Michigan woods, his mother’s domineering temperament, his father’s suicide, the shrapnel wound he received near Fossalta on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1918. All the above factors gave him traumatic shock which made him spiritually and inwardly disgrace and it was reflected in his work.

Hemingway was not only a brilliant writer of his generation but also a disciplined craftsman and artist who gave expression to his

views on life and human destiny in a war-torn world. He pictured the modern man's dilemma and voiced his loss of faith and the frustration of his hopes. He thought war was monstrous and brought death and diseases in its wake. He always dealt with the theme of war, violence, and death because he searched for extreme emotional states in acts of physical tension. He found the character of Nick Adams through whom he depicted all his experiences of life. When we study the experiences of Nick Adams, we should believe with blind eyes that it is the experience of the writer Ernest Hemingway. Nick Adams goes on trout fishing in the woods of upper Michigan, an expedition which serves as an act of healing his neurosis.

Hemingway's main occupation was with violence, brutality, wounding, killing and suicide, because his tender and sensitive mind was outraged by the brutality and violence which he witnessed on the battle-field and the bull-ring. Violence has been a facet of American life. He honestly presumed the presence of violence in the world and accepting this fact of life he went on establishing satisfactorily modes of behaviour to contain man's violent impulses in tales of hunting, bull-fighting and fishing. Hemingway dealt with the theme of violence and death to show that there is much pain and suffering in life.

The world that Hemingway created in his fiction is based on his experiences of what he had seen in the Michigan woods, the war arena, the bullrings, the gulf-stream, and the green hills of Africa. He described the contemporary problems caused by war, the disintegration of traditional moral values, and the despair and the defeatism of the post-war era.

*In Our Time* (1925) includes twelve concentrated sketches take for their subject matter the war, bull-fighting, and events of his

newspaper work. They all in common that they deal with violent incidents in contemporary life it reveal perhaps a more accurate picture of the moral status of twentieth century man. It also explores a modern world of pain and torment. According to Philip Young, the short stories in the book *In Our Time* are the original data for psychological case work on Hemingway the man and writer. The Hemingway hero, by whatever names he appears, carries both physical and psychic scars. He is deeply sensitive, hard-bitten rather than hard-boiled, and suffering profoundly from the fang-marks of experience. Hemingway's basic preoccupation is how to live these scars.

Hemingway's men not only implies moral courage but is usually identified with physical competence. Sex is an important motivating force in most of his heroes, such characters as Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan, and Santiago. Hemingway's early obsession with courage on the battlefield such as bull-fighting or boxing led him to prize this virtue in its entire possible context. Death and destruction strike at random in war. Hemingway's highly developed interest in military matters, which brought him back to Spain in the Civil war and to France at the head of an irregular fighting unit in the Second World War, is mirrored. The development of the hero towards maturity is one of the submerged elements in the structure of the novel, as indeed of all Hemingway's work. Hemingway while giving a background to his work, he has used weather as a kind of symbol, or rather, as atmospheric accompaniment to the emotional tones of the various scenes. He uses natural scenery to match the emotional tone of his dramatic scene.

In the bull-fights Hemingway found the "feeling of life and death and mortality and immortality" which he sought, and which, he



could write about it truly enough, he would communicate to his readers. He was especially interested in reporting “what really happened in action,” this approach postulates Hemingway’s thesis that a writer should write only of what he knows. Hemingway contends that the business of a writer is to create living people, not characters; to project people living within the reference of the action of the novel, and stripped of all unnecessary exterior reference. The simple fact is that Hemingway has chosen to write about people in love and in war and in violent action.

Hemingway’s love of sport involves a love of landscape. This theme recurs frequently in all his works. According to Hemingway, nature and art are the two things that survive in the world; and the authors whose work survives, are those who convey the feeling of reality. Hemingway’s participation in two world wars has enabled him to give literary reality to one of the major experiences of his and of the succeeding generation; the tragic destruction of innocence in *A Farewell to Arms*, and the richer, deeper exploration of Robert Jordan’s mature and sophisticated mind in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may well prove, in the long run, to be amongst the most representative novels of our age.

Hemingway’s life and work are the well-publicized excesses of rebellion: the emotional outbursts, the sexuality, the use of free language, the crude humour, the ill-concealed competitive hostility, and the interest in violence and abnormality. The pervasiveness of such emotionally inspired conflicts in Hemingway’s fiction may make us feel while reading it that we are handling a tightly sealed container that is about to explode. One critical slogan about Hemingway’s work states that it is almost pathologically concerned with violence. This is

not so. There is comparatively little “action” in the normal fictional world. He is concerned with a threat of a violent world or the emotional effect of the threat of violence. The ultimate threat lies in the question, how can you protect yourself from the self? The short stories like *Big Two-Hearted River*, *Now I Lay Me*, *A Clean, well- Lighted Place*, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*- the real question is the reliability of the self.

It is seen that Hemingway has experimented with the form by using short sentences as well complex sentences; most of the time he uses complex sentences when he is in the happy mood and he uses short sentences when he is in an unhappy mood. We have the best example of it in his very famous short (long) story *Big Two-Hearted River-II*:

“He sat on the logs, smoking, drying in the sun, the sun warm on his back, the river shallow ahead, entering the woods, curving into the woods, shallows, light glittering, big water-smooth rocks, cedars along the bank and white birches, the logs warm in the sun, smooth to sit on, without bark, gray to the touch; slowly the feeling of disappointment left him.”<sup>12</sup>

These kinds of complex sentences are used only when he was in a relaxed or happy mood. In all his stories, such kinds of examples are seen. It is also true that he is very famous for using short sentences. Most of the times, Hemingway readers’ find the short sentences in his all work art and that is a specialty of Hemingway. The short sentences are used by Hemingway only when he was in the unhappy mood. We have the best example in his very famous story *Soldier’s Home*:

“He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without

consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing.”<sup>13</sup>

Hemingway's emphasis on the masculine point of view is easily the most characteristic aspect of his writing. This view is reflected in all his novels and some of short stories. He was certainly anti-Marxist: almost everything in his work points to the idea that joining together with other men in mass movements tends to dissipate the energies of the individual count for more.

Hemingway notes that good writing must begin with direct experience rather than reading or watching about them and then writing. The writing process for him was the translation of the personal to the objective, which means that almost Hemingway wrote, treads the narrow line between a personal journal and fiction.

It is seen that Hemingway uses the war as a game symbol where everyone loses and that the goal he has been committed to is really empty as the rhetoric that describes it: everything in war was in vain. According to Hemingway, necessity is born of life itself; it is inherent in the human condition. Life must end in death, and all commitment must end in loss. These two ideas are the essence of Hemingway's tragic vision.

The *Winner Take Nothing* philosophy is basic to Hemingway's conception of the world; the only victories in such a world are victories of the spirit, and if man gets anything tangible, the only sure thing is that he will lose it. Hemingway has brought man much closer to the terror to the complete loss, nothingness, closer than the loss of something outside himself, is the possibility that man may lose his

identity, his completeness, his manner. A classic statement of this fear that lies at the heart of so much that Hemingway has written is found at the beginning of the short story *Now I Lay Me*:

"I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. I tried never to talk about it, but it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep, and I could only stop it by a very great effort." <sup>14</sup>

Whereas the fear here is announced and overt, more often it is held distantly in the background, always present because, unlike this occasion, it is never thought of. The threat of disaster which abides in much of Hemingway's fiction is much less akin to the naturalistic.

"A Writer's job is to tell truth"<sup>15</sup> said Hemingway in 1942. His standard of telling-truth remained, moreover, so high and so rigorous that he was ordinarily unwilling to admit secondary evidence or evidence picked up from other sources than his own experience. He always used to say that he only knew what he had seen. The primary intent of his writing was to seize and project for the reader what he often called "the way it was." In his writing, there are three more important things: the sense of place, the sense of fact, and the sense of scene. He as skillful writer makes them work in harmony, with place and fact like teamed horses under the dominance of the sense of the scene.

Hemingway, in this context, can be called "the best story teller" as he gives a vision of man fighting against the odds in life with his environment or nature. As he presents the story in the most natural

way, there is not a very remarkable use of the figures of speech except some examples of simile, repetition, refrain, allegory, and the personification. The nature imagery used in the novel is one of the most important aspects of his writing.

His greatest achievement lies in the sphere of his prose style which is bare, clean and concentrated one. No wonder, he dominated the literary scene for almost four decades as a master of powerful style.

Thus the foregoing account of Hemingway's development as a short story writer and his contribution to the development of American fiction in general and the short story in particular gives us an idea about Hemingway's art of fiction. His mastery over the form and his ability to handle it by providing themes of universal appeal place him midst the great masters in the tradition of 20<sup>th</sup> century American fiction. Hemingway did not write just to entertain his audience. He was highly aware of the fact that man can not live by his choices alone and that there happens to be a very big scheme deciding upon his actions and directing fate in between the two extremes specified by the binaries such as love and hate, happiness and sorrow, the beautiful and the ugly, celestial and the dialectic.

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