The
SHORT STORY
Story
DEFINITION

- Short, brief
- Fictional
- Prose
- Narrative, story
CHARACTERISTICS

- Few characters
- Single effect
  - often moral
  - theme
  - didactic
  - instructive
CHARACTERISTICS

Dictates of the FORM:

- **Setting** =
  - sparse, economical

- **Plot** =
  - concise
  - simplistic (lack of complex plot)

- **Character** =
  - disclosed in action & encounter
  - rarely fully developed
19th CENTURY

- Short Story’s short history
- Relatively modern genre (19th C.)
- **SKETCHES vs. TALES**
  - extremes
  - from which modern SS grew
- **Poe, Hawthorne, Gogol, Hoffman, Kleist, Merimee:**
  - Tale + Sketch = Short Story
  - combined elements from both: less fantasy & conventionality of Tale, less strict factuality of Sketch
HISTORY

- Short prose fiction = as old as language
  - Jests
  - Anecdotes
  - Purposeful digressions
  - Allegorical romances
  - Fairy tales
  - Short myths
  - Short legends
HISTORY

- **Short prose fiction = from Oral Tradition**
  - Early storytellers used memory aids =
    - Stock phrases, fixed rhythms, rhyme
  - As a result
    - Most early stories = IN VERSE
    - Poetic Tales
HISTORY

- **EARLY SHORT TALES**
  - Poetic
  - Didactic, moralizing, good vs. bad behavior
ANCIENT WORLD

The Short Story Story
MIDDLE EAST

- **Ancient BABYLONIA** -
  - poetic tales, in verse
  - *Epic of Gilgamesh*
  - “The War of the Gods”
  - “The Story of Adapa”

- **CANAAN** -
  - “The Heavenly Bow”
  - “The King Who Forgot”

- c.2000BC
EGYPT

- mostly in prose
- on papyrus
  - (verse = reserved for religious hymns & other songs)
- didactic, moralistic
- “The Shipwrecked Sailor”
- “King Kofu & the Magicians”
- “Anpu & Bata (the 2 brothers)”

≈ c.2000-1000BC
INDIA

- instructional parables
- Buddhist ethical teachings
- secular behavior & practical wisdom
- The Brahmanas
- The Jatakas
- The Panchatantra
  - akin to Aesop’s animal fables
  - quite popular – translated into several languages

c. 900-100 BC
HEBREW

- BIBLE & APOCRYPHA
  - didactic
  - Tobit, Judith, Susanna
  - Ruth, Esther, Jonah

- c.500-100BC
GREEKS

- **GREEK Fables**
  - = most common form (like India)
    - Moralizing
    - Didactic
  - Myths = popular too
    - stories of GODS (love, war)
    - basis of later Hesiod, Homer, tragedians

- **c.300-100 BC**
GREEKS

- **Digressions**
  - on-point
  - within larger works
  - narrative interpolations – episodes w/in the whole
    - Herodotus: *History* with “logoi” (tales, pointed digressions)

- **Romances**
  - “invented” by Greeks
  - love, catastrophe, reunion
  - erotic, bawdy – less didactic
  - Parthenius of Nicaea, Aristides of Miletus

- c.300-100BC
ROMANS

- longer works
  - Rhetoric → fuller, more comprehensive development
  - Tales = digressions

- Digressions
  - like the Greeks
  - on-point episodes within larger works
  - Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*
  - Lucius Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*
  - Gaius Petronius Arbiter’s *Satyricon*

- *c.100BC*
MIDDLE AGES

The Short Story Story
MIDDLE AGES

- Short Tale –
  - proliferation of the form
  - a diversion, amusement
  - imitation over development
SCANDINAVIA

- **SCANDINAVIA & ICELAND**
  - invading Germanic barbarians
  - myths & sagas
    - aggressive, violent
    - grim, bleak
CELTS

- CELTS-
  - Ireland, Wales, Brittany/Breton
  - magic, myth, & splendor
  - *Longes mac n-Uislenn*
    - influenced the later chivalric romances
  - 3 major “matters”:
    - Matter of Britain (King Arthur & his knights)
    - Matter of France (Charlemagne cycle)
    - Matter of Rome (antiquity, Paris & Helen, Pyramus & Thisbe)
  - c.800
CELTS

- too LONG to be considered short stories
- shorter = c.1100s
  - Chretien de Troyes (French, Arthurian legend)
  - Marie de France
    - Breton lays: short (600-800 lines) narrative poems @ love, chivalry, supernatural, fairies
HIGH & LOW

- MIDDLE AGES-
  - **Exemplum:** short, didactic tale
    - lives of saints = role models
    - *Deeds of the Romans/Gesta Romanorum*
    - C.1000-1100
  - **Popular Fiction:**
    - common people
    - beast fables, jests, ribald fabliaux
      - common sense, secular humor, sensuality
      - Boccaccio’s & Chaucer’s fabliaux
    - running **counter** to the exemplar
**FRAMING**

- **MIDDLE AGES**
  - **FRAMING:**
    - frame collection of stories by a single circumstance
    - unifying situation
    - all stories = autonomous (added, removed)
    - BUT also
    - part of the whole
    - *The Seven Sages of Rome* ([link](#)) 7 advocates tell stories to postpone prince’s execution, until his innocence is proven
      - Eastern & Western countries, BC to MA
    - *The Thousand and One Nights* (700-1700) Scheherazade tells stories to postpone her execution
MA: RFINEMENT

The Short Story Story
MA: REFINEMENT

- REFINEMENT:
  - still Framing
  - still same types of stories (beast fables, sermons exemplar; fabliaux, romances, exempla)
  - BUT
  - experimentation with FORM
    - mix forms
    - tale = reflection of the teller
    - relationships between tellers
    - = dramatic quality
MA: REFINEMENT

REFINEMENT -

BOCCACCIO:
- *Decameron* (10 days) c.1349/53
- height of Black Death plague in Florence
- 10 people, 10 stories per
- character = subordinate to story

CHAUCER:
- *Canterbury Tales* c.1387/1400
- pilgrimage to Canterbury shrine
- character through actions, assertions
ITALY

- growing popularity
- imitation (of Boccaccio)
- c.1300-1600
- short story = “novelle”
- Franco Sacchetti, Giovanni Fiorentino, Giovanni Sercambi, Masuccio Salernitano
- Matteo Bandello, Agnolo Firenzuolo
  - romances, surprise, deception, ribaldry, irony - realism
- Giamattista Basile (1600s) folktales w/realism
  - + amusing diversion + framing *The Five Days* (= Boccaccio)
FRANCE

- **c.1400-1600**
- **Boccaccio:**
  - framed
  - amusing
  - diversions
SPAIN

- c.1300-1600
- Europe's most influential/powerful country
- short stories = part of novels
- Miguel de Cervantes' *Exemplary Novels*
  - 1613
  - experimental
  - not didactic
  - not diversionary
  - but @ man's secular existence
MA: DECLINE

The Short Story Story
DECLINE

- c.1600-1700
- birth of novel
- imitations of Boccaccio & Chaucer
- same forms
- escapism, amusing diversions
- rebirth of drama & poetry
  - Neo-Classicism
- birth of journalistic sketches
DECLINE

- c.1600-1700
- birth of journalistic sketches
  - seriousness
  - realism
  - fascination w/foreign countries
  - interest in social conditions
    - travel books, sermons, biographies, essays
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIDDLE AGES</th>
<th>RENAISSANCE &amp; ENLIGHTENMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amusing</td>
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<td>diversionary</td>
<td>fact</td>
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<td>escapist</td>
<td>realism</td>
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<td>framing</td>
<td>social issues</td>
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<td>imitations</td>
<td>foreign lands</td>
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<td>fantasy</td>
<td>rebirth of old forms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>birth of new forms</td>
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MODERN SHORT STORY: 19th C.

The Short Story Story
MODERN SHORT STORY

- c.1800s
- “simultaneously”
- Germany
- United States
- France
- Russia
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **c.1800s**
- **Why then?**
  - rise in middle class
  - rise in literacy
  - rise in literate middle class
    - realism & at the same time fantasy
  - stifled by Neo-Classicism (decorum)
  - back to own past – myths, fables, Old Days
  - [what gave birth to Romanticism]
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **GERMANY-**
- Goethe, Christoph Wieland, Friedrich Schleiermacher
- **Heinrich von Kleist**
  - like Poe: psychological, confrontations w/fantastic
- **ETA Hoffmann**
  - exotic places, supernatural phenomenon
- **Ludwig Tieck**
  - some = realistic, journalistic
  - others = fantastic, intense, ironic, true to character
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **UNITED STATES-**

  - **Realism:**
    - regionalism (Bret Harte, SO Jewett)
    - objectivity, real places & events & people

  - **Impressionism:**
    - narrator’s consciousness & psychological attitudes
    - subjective, narrator’s POV (unreliable, biased, insane)
    - less realistic in the sense of an objective reality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKETCH</th>
<th>TALE</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • intercultural (from culture to culture) | • culturally specific motifs, characters, symbols →
| | • best understood by that culture
| | • tales = intracultural
| | • culture speaking to itself about itself
| | • perpetuating its values & identity
| | • passing along from generation to generation
| | • 16thC.: rise in middle class & their interest in social realism (*journalistic*) + foreign places (*intercultural*)
| | • concerned with the present
| | • suggestive, incomplete, understated, subtle
| | • mode = written
| | • written as if there (*journalistic*)
| | • factual & journalistic, photographic
| | • more analytical & descriptive
| | • less narrative & dramatic
| | • Irving’s *The Sketch Book*
| | • Howell’s *Suburban Sketches*
| | • 16thC.: rise in middle class & their interest in
| | • social realism (*journalistic*) + foreign places (*intercultural*)
| | • concerned with the present
| | • older than the Sketch
| | • a narrative way for a culture to express its vision of itself
| | • past (ancestors & gods) &
| | • present (place in universe)
| | • hyperbolic, overstated
| | • mode = spoken, oral
| | • told as if removed from event (a recreation of the past)
| | • fantastic, mythic
| | • dramatic
| | • Poe’s *Tales of the Grotesque & Arabesque*
| | • Melville’s *The Piazza Tales*
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **UNITED STATES**
  - *Edgar Allan Poe*
    - psychological, confrontations w/fantastic
    - narrator = unreliable, distorts, hallucinates
    - *reader gets only narrator’s impressions of the scene*
    - “Tell-Tale Heart,” Imp of the Perverse,” *Fall of the House of Usher*
  - *Washington Irving*
    - BOTH realistic sketches & impressionistic stories
    - narrator’s imagination, symbolic surreality of dreams
    - “Rip van Winkle,” The Stout Gentleman”
  - *Nathaniel Hawthorne*
    - BOTH realistic & impressionistic
    - historic facts & events w/symbolic importance
      - details = symbols
    - “Endicott & the Red Cross”
MODERN SHORT STORY

- IMPRESSIONISM
  - Poe, Henry James, Melville, Bierce
  - “impressions” registered by events on the characters’ minds
    - not focusing on objective reality

- Story = account of someone’s impression of an event
- subjective: realistic to that person
- Narrator = unreliable
  - distorting, fabricating, fantasizing
MODERN SHORT STORY

- IMPRESSIONISM-
- Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener”
- Twain’s “Celebrated Jumping Frog...”
- Bierce’s “Occurrence at OC Bridge”
- James’ “Turn of the Screw”
MODERN SHORT STORY

- SERIOUSNESS @ ART-
- LITERARY CRITICISM
- *Edgar Allan Poe (unity of effect)
- critical attention paid to the short story
  - discussing it as a serious art form
  - what is good, bad
- craftsmanship
- artistic integrity
- seriousness
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **FRANCE**
  - Prosper Merimee “Carmen”
    - (turned into famous opera)
    - detached observation of emotional event
  - less impressionism
  - Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert
  - Alfred de Vigny, Theophile Gautier
  - Alphonse Daudet: “Letters from My Mill”
    - BOTH fantastic & realistic
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **FRANCE**
- *Guy de Maupassant*
- **objective anecdotes**
  - revealing moments
  - in middle class lives
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **RUSSIA-**

- **fables early on**
  - Ivan Krylov = most read fabulist, help make short fiction popular in Russia, borrowed heavily from Aesop & other sources

- **Aleksandr Pushkin:** poet & writer
  - objective/detached account of emotional event
  - “The Queen of Spades”
MODERN SHORT STORY

- RUSSIA-
- *Nikolay Gogol:*
  - impressionistic- hallucinatory, mix of dream & reality
  - realism + fantasy
  - Arabesques, “The Overcoat”
- *Ivan Turgenev:*
  - calm, restraint, simple use of language
  - detached observation
  - antithetical to Gogol
  - A Sportsman’s Sketches
MODERN SHORT STORY

- RUSSIA-

- *Fyodor Dostoyevsky:
  - experimented w/impressionism
  - human motives
  - “White Nights”

- *Leo Tolstoy:
  - human motives
  - non-impressionistic means to capture psychological
  - “Kreutzer Sonata,” Death of Ivan Ilyich
MODERN SHORT STORY

- RUSSIA

- Anton Chekhov:
  - objective story
    - perception yet compassion
  - less on plot, character = #1
  - “The Grasshopper,” “In the Ravine,” “The Darling”
MODERN SHORT STORY: 20th C.

The Short Story Story
MODERN SHORT STORY

20th CENTURY

Developments:

- world-wide
  - Kafka, Pirandello, JL Borges
- explosion due to literary journals
  - Ford Maddox Ford’s Transatlantic Review
  - Scribner’s Magazine
MODERN SHORT STORY

- **20th CENTURY-**

- **CHANGES:**
  - **19th c:**
    - overwhelming or unique event that informed the story
  - **20th c:**
    - subtle actions & unspectacular events
      - less about plot
      - “nothing happens in these stories”
      - (b/c of TV & movies)
    - psychological (not physical) conflict
      - any action reveals the psychological underpinnings of story
MODERN SHORT STORY

- 20th CENTURY-

- CHANGES:
  - 20th c:
    - experimentation w/FORM
      - less plot
        - more psychological
      - play w/archetypal characters & plots
    - Hemingway, KA Porter, DH Lawrence, K. Mansfield
    - William Faulkner, James Joyce
  - though some authors still focused on Plot (O. Henry)
RECAP

The Short Story Story
# SHORT STORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FABLE</th>
<th>TALE</th>
<th>TALL TALE</th>
<th>FAIRY TALE</th>
<th>PARABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• brief, moral, flat characters, simple</td>
<td>• means “speech”</td>
<td>• folk story, recount of superhero or narrator’s</td>
<td>• magical world (witches, goblins)</td>
<td>• didactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• plot &amp; theme over character</td>
<td>• brief, strange events, bare summary, flat</td>
<td>imaginary experience</td>
<td>• by/for uneducated</td>
<td>• to instruct,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• to shape the thoughts &amp; behaviors of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• plot &amp; theme over character</td>
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<td></td>
<td>audience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• SUMMARY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• to set forth a truth @ our world/condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o terse, general narration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• tied to the oral tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o skipping ahead, jumping time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o “and it came to pass” “then one day” “it wasn’t</td>
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<td></td>
<td>long before”</td>
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</table>
# SHORT STORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHORT STORY</th>
<th>TALE, Fable, Parable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• made to seem real</td>
<td>• made to seem imaginative, unreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plot &amp; Theme</td>
<td>• Plot &amp; Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more Characterization, Setting</td>
<td>• less Characterization, Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more than Summary – description (realism)</td>
<td>• Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• longer</td>
<td>• brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tied to a Written Tradition</td>
<td>• tied to the Oral Tradition</td>
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END

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