

The Modern Collection of Short Stories in English Literature: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the early 20th century short story's altering terrain, particularly in modernist English literature. The short story originated in 19th-century magazines. Modernist short stories' subjects and excellence have increased book and short story readership. The introduction promises that the research will introduce readers to the literary styles of 20th-century authors Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Katherine Mansfield. Modernist short story scholarship. It covers early 20th-century short story studies, theories, and criticism. Modernists popularized short stories by experimenting with storytelling forms, topics, and structures. It should also describe previous research and indicate any gaps the new study fills. Modernist short stories by Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Katherine Mansfield are examined. It examines their literary aspects, themes, and styles. Their paintings may represent modern culture. The section should also explore how modernist short stories influenced novel and short story readers during study. Texts may support arguments using examples and quotes. The conclusion summarizes the study's findings and effects. It emphasizes how modernism affected short stories and their audience. The conclusion should compare 20th-century writers Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Katherine Mansfield.

Keywords: *Modernist Short Stories; Readership; 20th Century Authors*

1. Background

The brief tale is a comparatively recent genre in the realm of literature. Kolbas (2018) posits that the length of fictional works often ranges from 500 to 5,000 words. According to Edgar Allan Poe, the story in question had the characteristic of being able to be comprehended within a single uninterrupted session of reading. This oral tradition has been transmitted for several centuries and often ranges in length from five to fifty pages. The text is organized in a manner that includes an introductory section, a main body, and a concluding section. The structure exhibits distinct personalities and is structured around a sequence of discrete scenarios. The narrative encompasses a plot and various fundamental components that propel the progression of the story. The influence of

Cekove in the 19th century contributed significantly to its subsequent prominence, establishing it as a highly significant art form in contemporary society (Ervey, 2023).

Rather than undergoing a gradual evolution, short stories abruptly emerged as a distinct literary subgenre. This genre has been characterized by various terms such as folklore, narratives, anecdotes, subplots, satires, pamphlets, sagas, and short stories. Fragments of short stories have been unearthed in the literary works of renowned authors such as Boccaccio and Chaucer. Flaubert, Maupassant, Chekov, Poe, Melville, and other notable authors are widely recognized as prominent players within the short story genre. Munro, Virginia Woolf, Somerset Maugham, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and R.M. James are renowned authors of modernist short stories.

2. Literature Review

American culture is credited with pioneering the short tale. It is generally agreed that works like Grimm's "Fairy Tales," Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819), Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales" (1837), and Allan Poe's "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" (1845) marked the birth of the short story (1840). One of the most influential short story writers, Allan Poe, has followed in Nathaniel's footsteps.

In Britain, the rise of periodicals that solicited and compensated authors for short stories is credited with popularizing the form. Short stories gained popularity and critical acclaim in Britain thanks to the works of authors like Stevenson, Wells, Bennett, James, and Kipling. They weren't the first in the series, though; in 1827, Walter Scott's "The Two Drovers" was widely regarded as the pioneering work in the genre.

Between the years 1832 and 1849, Edgar Allan Poe spent time in Britain, where he began penning stories with ominous undertones. The "Murders in the Rue Morgue", "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Cask of Amontillado", "The Pit and the Pendulum", and "The Fall of the House of Usher" are all examples of his work that combines mystery aspects with other genres.

The short story flourished in Britain between 1850 and 1900 as a result of an increasing demand for short stories with word counts ranging from 3,000 to 15,000 words. Several well-known novelists also dabbled with this new medium. "The Three Strangers" (1883) and "Barbara of the House of Grebe" (1890) were two of Thomas Hardy's novels. In his works, Rudyard Kipling compiled what he called "Plain Tales from the Hills" (1888). Science fiction works by H.G. Wells, such as 1904's "The Country of the Blind."

This style reached its pinnacle in early twentieth-century Britain. World War II and subsequent experimentation with new literary forms encouraged writers to pursue this field. The Strand Magazine and Story-Teller, among other publications, provided numerous opportunities for publishing short fiction. Short stories based in Edwardian England were supplied by Hector Hugh Munro, well known by his writing name "Saki." Over a hundred short stories covering a variety of topics were written by Somerset Maugham. The year 1917 marked Wodehouse's first foray into the world of humorous fiction. Attempts at writing detective fiction were made by Dorothy L. Sayers, Agatha Christie, and G.K. Chesterton. In 1919, Virginia Woolf wrote about the political upheaval in England. Both of her short stories, "Solid Objects" and "Kew Gardens," illustrate this point. Between

the years 1929 and 1954, Graham Greene wrote around twenty-one short stories. V.S. Pritchett, who was already referred to as "the specialist," released his first book of short stories in 1932 (Ali, Ali & Khalid, 2020).

Several authors from around the globe, including those at the turn of the twentieth century, were attracted to the American journals "The Atlantic Monthly," "Harper's Magazine," "The New Yorker," "Scribner's, The Saturday Evening Post," "Esquire, and "The Bookman." Those writers were compensated by the magazines. For financial support, F. Scott Fitzgerald contributed short pieces to a few of these periodicals. His debut collection, "Flappers and Philosophers," was serialised in periodicals. "A Clean, Well-Lit Lace" is a short story by Ernest Hemingway (1926). In 1929, Dorothy Parker published "Big Blonde." Author Katherine Mansfield published her first novel in 1912.

Most short stories written at the turn of the 20th century addressed topics like industrialization. Migration to urban centres led to overcrowding and the emergence of new socioeconomic issues. The labour movement and the difficulties faced by the working class were the focus of several short stories. The effects of the two world wars had a significant impact on many of the short stories (Tickner & True, 2018).

James Joyce, a novelist, and short story writer made significant contributions to both genres. The short story "Dubliners" (1914) by James Joyce is widely regarded as the pioneering work in the canon of modern short fiction. The psychological principles Joyce used in his novels are present in this short story. On the recommendation of his writer friend, Russell, Joyce is also rumored to have written short stories for financial gain. His short narrative "Sisters," in which he highlights high-modernist aspects, has become famous. It has a wide range of stylistic potential. None of the plot was considered. The plot is nonexistent, and the writing is in the form of open-ended stories. There is no tidy resolution to the story that we can see. The story's central characters struggle with moral dilemmas. Joyce's major interest is still the fall of man and how man is responsible for his own demise, rather than the uncovering of everyday mysteries and mysteries that man creates for himself.

One of the most famous British short story authors is M.R. James (1862–1936). When it came to mediaeval studies, he was the man to ask. Most of his short stories feature ghosts and are realistic in style. There are several compilations of his short fiction, containing "Ghost Stories of an Antiquary" (1904), "More Ghost Stories" (1911), "A Warning to the Curious and Other Ghost Stories" (1925), and "The Collected Ghost Stories of M.R. James" (1931). Number Thirteen, A Warning to the Curious, and The Rose Garden are some of his other works.

Of all novelists, H.G. Wells (1866–1956) was by far the best known. His science fiction works brought him the most attention. He also made an impact on the world of short fiction. Typically, his short stories are science fiction. The Short Stories of H.G. Wells was published in 1927, while The Country of the Blind and Other Stories was published in 1911. The Country of the Blind and The Man Who Could Work Miracles are two of his other works.

One of the masters of the short story is Saki H.H. Munro (1870–1916). His stories skewer society with biting satire. In his short fiction, he challenges accepted norms. His short stories all have unexpected denouements. The Short Stories of Saki (1939) and Beats and Super-Beats (1914) are two of his collections of short fiction. Open Window, the Storyteller, and The Mouse are some of his other short works.

The British author W. Somerset Maugham (1874–1955) is widely regarded as one of the country's finest storytellers. The effects of colonialism are explored in his short works. He reveals aspects of British colonies in the Far East. *The Complete Short Stories of Somerset Maugham* (1951), *The Causarina Tree* (1926), and *The Trembling of a Leaf* (1923) are all collections of his short fiction. *Rain*, *Footsteps in the Jungle*, and *The Outstation* are a few other stories.

Among the famous novelists is D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930). Most of his work's centre on romantic relationships. The novel *Sons and Lovers* is his best-known work. Even in his shorter works, he explores similar topics to those in his novels. Through the lens of interpersonal interactions, he examines English society during World War I in his short stories. *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories* (1928), *England, My England, and Other Stories* (1922), *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* (1914), and are his collections of short fiction. *The Rocking-Horse Winner* and *The Horse Dealer's Daughter* are two other tales.

Throughout her career, Virginia Woolf, best known for her psychological novels, also made significant contributions to the short story canon. She tried several tones and accents in her various roles. Short stories such as "Phyllis and Rosamun" (1906), "The Duchess and the Jeweller" (1938), "The Shooting Party" (1938), and "Lapping and Lapinova" (1938) were published under her pen name in 1939. Her other works include *The Evening Party*, *The Mark on the Wall*, *Solid Objects*, *Kew Gardens*, *Sympathy*, *Monday or Tuesday*, *A Haunted House*, and so on. Technical writing was her forte. She was adept at reworking her writings into concise narratives. Most of her short works featured unorthodox plots with an argumentative bent. Her short stories primarily served to demonstrate the connection between one's mental state, one's life experiences, and the narrative form in which those events are presented.

The Unwritten Novel, *Solid Objects*, *Kew Gardens*, and *The Mark on the Wall* are all short stories by Woolf that reflect her central idea of dogmatic rejection of objective scientific findings. The short tale "The Mark on the Wall" focuses on a single, unanswered question posed by the author at the beginning of the piece and is built around this central idea throughout. This question piques the interest of the reader, who becomes increasingly curious to learn the response he or she has been anticipating since the beginning but does not receive until the very end. She focuses more on developing her characters than the story itself. Therefore, she uses this technique in all of her short stories.

During her formative years, author Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) lived in colonial New Zealand. She was recognized as a top short story author of her era. She was rumored to have been inspired by Chekov. *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1937), *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922), and *Bliss and Other Stories* (1917) are only a few of the volumes she published. *The Doll's House* is her other well-read short story. She changed the nature of the short narrative by making the protagonist's inner conflicts more central. She addresses issues of self-awareness, sexuality, and anxiety. Two of her best works, "At the Bay" and "Prelude," are autobiographical accounts of her New Zealand upbringing. A sense of longing permeates her writing. She also used her short stories to argue against the rise of industry. She was an outstanding modernist, researcher, pioneer, and creator in her own right (March-Russell, 2022). Subtly employing psychoanalysis, she established the contours of her domain (Chen, 2020).

H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), for his work in the science fiction genre, was well recognized. He also wrote some short stories, some of which were fantastic horror. He is usually recognised as the genre's foremost practitioner from the 20th century. Short story collections consist of "The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories" (1899), "The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories" (1901), and "The Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories" (1905) are among his contributions. He also wrote short stories, including "The Colour Out of Space" and "The Shadow Out of Time," among other collections.

Crime novelist Agatha Christie (1890–1976) was well known for her work. She was recognised as the author of the best-selling short stories of all time. *Thirteen Problems* (1932), *The Mysterious Mr. Quin* (1930), and *Poirot Investigates* (1924) were her three bestselling collections of short stories. She also contributed significantly by writing short stories like "The Adventure of the Western Star" and "The Tuesday Night Club," among others.

The best work written by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) is called "The Great Gatsby" (1925). He contributed by penning numerous short stories that were specifically set during the "Jazz Age." *All the Sad Young Men* (1926), *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922), and *Taps at Reveille* are his three most notable collections of short stories (1935). *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Sensible Thing*, *Winter Dreams*, *Last Kiss*, *The Sensible Thing*, and *The Ice Palace*, are some further stories. His short stories show how carefully he thinks about how fragile people are (Plath, 2020).

The novelist William Faulkner (1897–1962) specialized in writing psychological stories. He is a South American author. His short stories and novels are both written using the "stream of consciousness" style. "These 13 Stories" is his collection of short stories (1931). Additionally, he published standalone tales, including "A Rose for Emily," "Read Leaves," and "That Evening Sun." As far as his characters and situations are concerned, the narrative tactics represent psychological fusion. In his short works, he describes his characters and setting elements (Boukemmouche & Al-Khawaldeh, 2022).

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) started out as a short story writer before switching to novels and becoming one of the most well-known novelists of his era. One of the key aspects of his writing style is understatement. "In Our Time" is his best collection of short stories (1924). Other works by him include "Old Man at the Bridge," "Soldier's Home," and others.

Domestic short stories were written by John Steinbeck, who lived from 1902 to 1968. His compilation of short stories, *The Long Valley*, was released in 1938. *The Red Pony*, *The Murder*, and other short stories are some of his other works. In his short works, he explores domestic and familial concerns.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of the authors of the 20th century, created a great short story titled "The Winter Dream." This short story was first published in 1922 in the "Metropolitan Magazine." Dexter, the protagonist and the son of a Minnesota grocery business, is central to the story's plot. Between his standing and his yearning, he vacillates. He attends both high school and college. He makes an attempt at a business. He continues to work on the laundry. Fortunately, he succeeds in buying a laundromat. He does not appear to be happy with his current venture. He retails it as a result and moves to New York.

Dexter is deeply in love with New Yorker Judy, believing her presence aids success. Promising to

become a billionaire after meeting her, he continues a relationship despite Judy's rejection and existing partner. Accumulating wealth leaves him uneasy, perhaps due to inherited impediments. His dreams of reuniting with Judy are fueled by wealth, but happiness remains elusive. The obsessive pursuit has led to estrangement. Dexter admires Judy as the epitome of global success, but he must seek contentment beyond her validation and material wealth, focusing on personal growth and finding true fulfillment.

Thus, "The Winter Dreams" in 1922 depicts the most sinister aspect of Dexter's American dream. Dexter is a perfect example of those Americans whose goal was to accumulate wealth and lead fulfilling lives. He is proud and egotistical. He lacks regard for those in lower social classes and is precarious. He takes pride in being a self-made man. In Dexter, Fitzgerald exposes the hollowness and flaws of the American dream.

This short story allegorically depicts the conflict between idealism and reality. Dexter experiences fantasy problems where his wishes never seem to come true. He fantasizes about Judy and thinks she is the picture of success and perfection. Regarding Judy, he has a pessimistic outlook. This short story is the product of Fitzgerald's careful attention to narrative voice and structure. With his job as a critic, Fitzgerald lends his voice to this short narrative. His characters are immature and unambitious. They keep working while looking for happiness and money. This little narrative is divided into six parts. The length of each section is determined by the interaction of the characters Dexter and Judy, as well as their love affairs and betrayals. No logical progression of events is apparent. Dexter is the outcome of inconsistent experiences (Jumatriadi, 2018).

Fitzgerald chooses to speak to his audience directly. The story is told by him and the characters. A direct mention is also made of Judy's standing among her admirers. Fitzgerald's narrative hints at a purpose for writing this story. The author cautions readers against trusting in complete idealism in the middle of the Dexter and Judy narrative.

Fitzgerald's story takes place over a period of fewer than 20 years. The foundation of this novel is Judy's complexity and Dexter's deception. Dexter has a complex temperament, and his background holds significance for him. Fitzgerald expresses the arc of contrasts and hopes that rise and fall in the theatre of human existence. A temporary time shift exists. The narrative begins when Dexter turns 14 years old. His ascent occurs quickly in the narrative. When he turns 32, the narrative comes to an end. His age flashes back in the narrative from 32 to 23, when he is playing a game of golf. His brief story, told in a series of hazy snapshots, has a fluid sense of time.

Fitzgerald's "Winter Dreams" is based on disparaging statements about 20th-century Americans. Scenes from the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties are depicted by the author. Following the First World War, he has emphasized the attitudes and conditions of the American people. The American people were urged to amass fortune by engaging in immoral employment practices.

3. Discussion

Within the domain of modernist short stories, notable characters such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Katherine Mansfield have emerged as noteworthy individuals who have made substantial contributions to this literary genre. Every author presents unique literary elements, ideas, and techniques that embody the fundamental characteristics of

modernism (Jumatriadi, 2018).

Virginia Woolf, renowned for her utilization of the stream-of-consciousness technique, delves into the internal musings and sentiments of her characters in literary compositions such as "To the Lighthouse" and "Mrs. Dalloway." In James Joyce's seminal work "Dubliners," the author explores the lives of individuals from the everyday milieu, effectively emphasizing the recurring motifs of paralysis and epiphany. D.H. Lawrence explores the intricacies of interpersonal connections and cultural conventions in narratives such as "The Rocking-Horse Winner." "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald depicts the disillusionment and decadence prevalent during the Jazz Age (March-Russell, 2022).

Katherine Mansfield's narratives frequently center around instances of meaningful human encounters, as seen in her works "The Garden Party" and "The Fly." The authors' literary approaches cover the exploration of narrative structure, symbolism, and imagery, which are all distinctive characteristics commonly seen in modernist writing.

Moreover, the artworks produced by these modernist authors can be regarded as manifestations of the socio-cultural milieu in which they were created, so enhancing the depth and complexity of their storytelling. Woolf and Mansfield were affiliated with the Bloomsbury Group, a collective of artists who engaged in artistic exploration across diverse mediums. The artistic output of Joyce frequently exhibits a resonance with the fragmentary qualities observed in Cubist paintings. Fitzgerald, as a keen observer of the cultural milieu of the Roaring Twenties, portrayed the richness and superficiality characteristic of the era in a manner reminiscent of the Art Deco aesthetic (Plath, 2020).

The impact of modernist short stories on readers of novels and short stories, both contemporaneously and in subsequent periods, holds significant scholarly importance. The utilization of creative storytelling approaches and the examination of intricate issues posed a challenge to established literary conventions, thereby paving the way for subsequent writers. The readers were introduced to a novel approach in the realm of literature, departing from traditional linear narrative structures and delving into the intricate psychological dimensions of people (Chen, 2020).

The emergence of modernist short stories has played a pivotal role in the advancement of literary development, serving as a catalyst for following generations of writers to engage in innovative explorations of narrative structure and delve into complex and thought-provoking subject matter. These literary works continue to hold significance in contemporary times, captivating both readers and researchers due to their ability to provide distinct perspectives on the complexities of human experience and the dynamic nature of the world. The incorporation of illustrative instances and citations from these literary works can effectively bolster arguments, so highlighting the exceptional qualities of modernist short tales and their enduring influence on the realm of literature (Ali, Ali & Khalid, 2020).

4. Conclusion

The 20th century indeed witnessed significant transformations in the structure and content of short stories, leading to a revolution in literature. Throughout this period, authors experimented with various techniques and explored psychological and scientific theories to enhance their storytelling. As a result, the genre of short stories became more distinct and innovative, incorporating elements

like stream-of-consciousness style and subtle references to psychology. One of the key advancements during this time was the testing of both form and content. Authors began to break away from traditional narrative structures and experimented with new ways to tell stories. This experimentation allowed for a deeper exploration of characters' inner thoughts and emotions, leading to the rise of the stream-of-consciousness style. This narrative technique aimed to represent the flow of thoughts in a character's mind, giving readers a more intimate and immersive experience.

Moreover, the psychological theories of the time had a profound impact on short story writing. Authors like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Katherine Mansfield delved into the inner workings of the human mind, incorporating themes of introspection, unconscious desires, and the complexities of human psychology into their stories. This psychological depth added layers of complexity to their characters and narratives. Several renowned authors contributed to the acceleration of short story writing as an art form during the 20th century. Alice Munro, for instance, gained widespread recognition for her masterful exploration of human relationships and her ability to reveal profound insights into the human condition through the seemingly ordinary lives of her characters. Her works earned her numerous accolades, including the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013.

The likes of Somerset Maugham, D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and R.M. James also played pivotal roles in pushing the boundaries of short story writing. Each of these authors brought their unique styles and themes to the table, further diversifying the genre. In addition to individual stories, many authors published collections of short stories, which emphasized the growing popularity of the art form during the 20th century. These collections allowed readers to explore various themes and styles, making it easier for the genre to reach a broader audience.

Overall, the 20th century was a period of immense creativity and exploration in the world of short stories. Authors challenged conventional norms, incorporated psychological theories, and crafted distinctive narratives that left a lasting impact on the literary landscape. The legacy of these authors and their contributions continues to influence contemporary short story writing, inspiring future generations of writers to innovate and experiment with the art form.

5. Declarations

Conflict of interests: Not applicable.

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