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TEACHING THE SHORT STORY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

DISSERTATION

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By

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The Ohio State University
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The English teacher in the secondary school is committed to the idea that a study of literature in the classroom is worth while. Too often, he makes his commitment and then proceeds to acquaint his students with what he considers to be the great literature of the world without stopping to consider carefully what he is doing or why he is doing it. Literature, unlike the history textbook, is not written to be studied in the classroom. The English teacher, therefore, must justify his domain. Two broad purposes of the teacher of literature are to entice students to read and to instruct students in the necessary skills for achieving the most for their effort. Most of the purposes of teaching literature that are generally listed would fall somewhere under these two. A teacher may consider that literature is a body of knowledge that should be approached as such; students should be exposed to the great ideas of literature. In a sense he would be right, but it is knowledge of a unique ordering. The nature of the ordering is the domain of the English teacher. He approaches ideas with a unique focus, a literary focus. Within this framework literature is knowledge, a unique knowledge about man. Philip Young points out this characteristic when he says of fiction:

Because at its best it engages life, which is inexhaustibly rich, at its deepest levels, it
has reserves of suggestion and mystery which are themselves inexhaustible. This is the kind of fiction which is most worth teaching, and worth critical attention; and bring all the disciplines to bear on it we will, the essential mysteries remain because of the essential mysteriousness of life. And so the study really becomes the study of life, but—and this is a reason why one prefers it to history or philosophy or other disciplines—it is a study that is enhanced by the rewards that come from the fact that literature is also an art.¹

The first purpose mentioned above is easier to achieve than the second. Once students become literate, the natural instinct for a story will keep them reading if they are in contact with materials that are appropriate for their ability and interests and if the teacher does not put psuedo-academic blocks between the reader and the literature. The reason that many students do not continue reading after school is that these qualifications are not met. Of course, the public school teacher must concern himself with a number of motivating devices to combat the lethargy of some adolescents, since, "A book, however 'great,' offers only the possibility of stimulation, excitement, insight, illumination ... . Aesthetic experience of any kind ... is a two-way process; the reader must never surrender, but always co-operate."²

The second purpose of teaching literature demands that a teacher consider rather carefully several principles regarding the


nature of literature. Few people would disagree with the idea that it is necessary for all citizens to know how to read. But literacy implies more than the ability to receive communication from the printed page. David Daiches says, "True literacy is not a degree of intelligence or even a degree of skill, but a state of mind and imagination, which is possible at almost any level." Students read for various reasons; to get information, although important, is only one. Since the literature teacher is concerned primarily with imaginative literature, he must see the purpose of reading as something broader.

Some pieces of imaginative literature might have as secondary purposes to inform or to persuade within an artistic framework, but the primary purpose of pleasure gives imaginative literature its unique character. A work of literary art can serve multiple purposes as long as all contribute to and are subordinate to the aesthetic function. When this balance is distorted in a work, its worth as literature is changed. Since recreation, pleasure, and even escape are the reasons why people read imaginative literature out of school, the English teacher must accept them as worthy ends and base his classroom procedures on them if he expects to help students acquire a lifetime interest in and habit of reading. The word escape, in connection with literature, usually has certain negative connotations. The teacher may help students, however, to "escape from trivial reality

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3Ibid., p. 6.
into significant reality." This kind of escape is encouraged by much imaginative literature.

Pleasure in reading may result from entertainment values or from aesthetic values. Full pleasure is derived from appreciation, which, in literature, must be based on aesthetic values rather than on mere entertainment values. Aesthetics is a concept that defies precise definition, but it indicates the merging of the rational with the emotional in response to sensuous qualities and forms and to the technical, psychological, and cultural values of works of art. The qualities of an object and the response to it are fused. Aesthetic quality is present to the degree that truth and beauty are in a necessary relation in the work of art. Mark Schorer makes a more specific reference to aesthetics in literature when he says, "Modern criticism, through its exacting scrutiny of literary texts, has demonstrated with finality that in art beauty and truth are indivisible and one. The Keatsian overtones of these terms are mitigated and an old dilemma solved if for beauty we substitute form, and for truth, content." Welleck and Warren also suggest a literary aesthetic by saying that "when a work of literature functions successfully, the two 'notes' of pleasure and utility should not merely coexist but coalesce."

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There is some merit in the approach that permits a reader to enjoy literature without asking questions about it, but the pleasure will be at a minimum. The aesthetic qualities of literature raise it to the level of art and are those qualities which give readers the most pleasure. If people were asked why they enjoy reading literature, probably few would give the answer, "Because it is art." Even fewer school children could be persuaded to read literature if given this reason bluntly. Yet, a teacher of literature must emphasize the artistic qualities of literature to develop the skills of reading imaginative literature. In order to do this, he must first establish in his own thinking a critical theory of literature. Daiches says, "It is not always true that one must have a conscious theory of literary value before one can fully appreciate works of literature . . . . Nevertheless, self-consciousness is a good quality in a civilization, and introspection into the nature of our intellectual pleasure often increases them."\(^7\)

Two kinds of literature are used in the classroom: that which can be classified as art and that which cannot. Literature that is not art unquestionably has a place in the public secondary schools, especially the junior high school. Much literature that fails to achieve the status of art has merit as it attempts to achieve it. Some literature that has little merit as art has value for developing

\(^7\)Daiches, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 230-31.
an interest in reading for some boys and girls. Ideal works of art in which form and content perfectly coalesce are not often written.

As Daiches says:

There are many imaginative uses of art media which, through looseness of structure, lack of concentration, progressive shifting of purpose, fluctuations of insight, or simply by deliberate limitation of function, do not achieve that echoing totality of meaning which the reflective reader, listener, or observer comes to consider the characteristic of true art or at least the end toward which artistic expression moves. The great and complete work of art is the exception, particularly in the realm of fiction.

The incomplete work of art represents man's struggle toward the ideal and is worth while, although some pieces of literature may illustrate more fully than others an artistic or aesthetic principle. Works that pretend to be art, but are false to artistic principles should be considered carefully before they are used in the classroom. Just as all arts have their by-products, so does literature. Literature as pure play, such as the limerick and the nonsense verses of Edward Lear, satire, the detective story, and some pieces of fantasy, may be called minor forms of art, since they often display skill or virtuosity of some form, but are limited in what they attempt to do. There is no reason why such things should not be produced and enjoyed. The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew have their place, also, in some students' reading programs, but the teacher, at least, should be able to

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. } 109.\]
discriminate between that which is art and that which is not. Students should, too, whenever it is possible; and it is possible more often than many teachers will acknowledge. The teacher's critical theory of literature will help him to be able to make the distinction and to develop approaches that will enable students to make the distinction. Even if the piece of literature being approached is of the non-art variety, the aesthetic principles of his theory of literature will serve as guides for procedure.

A critical theory of literature is based on positing and answering several questions: What is art? What is art in literature? What is reality? What is the relation of literature or art to reality? What is the relation of the artist to the art? What is the relation of the art to the reader? By answering these questions a teacher will be better able to help his students to see what they are reading, to understand the satisfactions they receive from different kinds of reading, and to discriminate among those different kinds.

M. R. Abrams identifies four basic critical theories that have been used and are still being used to approach answers to these questions: mimetic theories, pragmatic theories, expressive theories, and objective theories. All deal with "four elements in the total situation of a work of art": the artistic product itself, the artist, the universe ("the work is taken to have a subject which directly or deviously, is derived from existing things--to be about, or signify, or reflect something which either is, or bears some relation to, an objective state of affairs"), and the audience. Each theory, although
recognizing all four elements, is oriented toward only one, and "a critic tends to derive from one of these terms his principal categories for defining, classifying, and analyzing a work of art, as well as the major criteria by which he judges its value."9 Essentially, these theories serve as different orientations for judging a work of art.

The mimetic theory approaches art as imitation of nature or of various aspects of the universe. This theory was first set forth in the Dialogues of Plato, but since Plato made little distinction between works of art and all existing things, his theory of art was of little consequence. Abrams says of his theory, "From the initial position that art imitates the world of appearance and not of Essence, it follows that works of art have a lowly status in the order of existing things."10 Aristotle, in his Poetics, also views art as imitation, but uses imitation as a term specific to the arts. Abrams says of his theory, "Even the unity essential to any work of art is mimetically grounded, since 'one imitation is always of one thing,' and in poetry 'the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole . . .' and the 'form' of a work, the presiding principle determining the choice and order and internal adjustments of all the parts, is derived from the form of the object.

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10Ibid., p. 8.
that is imitated." The first followers of this theory viewed objects in the universe that art should imitate as either actual or ideal. This raised a question concerning the nature of truth and reality. Abrams points out some of the assumptions that various critics and philosophers have made to answer this question:

[Numerous theorists have assumed] ... that there are two valid uses of the term "truth," one applicable to science and the other to poetry, each making reference to different elements or aspects of reality. Rigid empirical monists like Bentham, on the other hand, recognized only one kind of reality and one valid meaning of truth, and hence maintained that the single alternative to scientific truth is falsity. In a few writers, who wished to save both the premises of positivism and the validity of poetry, we can detect the emergence of an alternate theory. Poetry, they suggest, is neither true nor false, because, as the expression of feeling, it proffers no assertions about reality, and is therefore outside the jurisdiction of the criterion of truth.  

There is a difference between poetic truth and historical truth and scientific truth, but since reality and truth are relative concepts, it is possible for the artist to approach them with as much validity as the scientist or the historian. The meaning of art should be determined by the significance of its relation to the natural world, but once an event is taken out of its setting, either from the world of actuality or the world of the imagination, and placed in some

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11 Ibid., p. 10.
12 Ibid., p. 320.
Artistic medium, such as language, its nature is changed. The artist takes a piece of life and, by defining its meaning more precisely than the meaning of events in real life can usually be known, makes it more deeply real than much of actuality is. Daiches says:

Imaginative literature, the formal presentation in language of what may not be literally true or true in the simplest scientific sense, has most often been defended because it embodies a kind of knowledge which cannot be expressed in any other way; it does this while giving a kind of pleasure, which is similarly unique, and this knowledge and this pleasure are of such a nature as to enrich the personality of him who receives it.\(^1\)

Art represents an inner reality, which takes on significance in its relation to the outer world. Meaning emerges only when the artist expresses things an audience can recognize. Raymond Tschumi says of the literary artist's responsibility to reality, "... his chief purpose is to move, to provoke a reaction to the fictitious data, and this reaction is the meaning of the work, it is a reaction to a supposed, artificially created reality, which is none the less a true substitute for reality."\(^2\)

The artist has his own methods for approaching reality and truth. He uses metaphors and symbols to expand the significance of his meaning. It is through symbol that the artist, unlike the scientist, deals with the differences between appearance and reality. The literary

\(^1\)Daiches, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.

\(^2\)Raymond Tschumi, \textit{A Philosophy of Literature}, p. 18.
artist, for example, is sometimes interested in "the process of a secret real life often underlying the appearances of the narrative."\(^\text{15}\) The scientist must be objective; the artist must combine objectivity with subjectivity to produce a work of art, because he does not, "as the scientist does, leave reality outside, but has to assume it and work it out with the real tools of his mind."\(^\text{16}\) Even literature of fantasy often has its roots in reality. A make-believe world is created in distortion in order to comment better on the real one. Fantasy is a "kind of writing in which the author tries to break down the reader's normal expectations about how events follow one another, perhaps in order to make him reconsider his expectations more carefully, perhaps in sheer disgust at the way things are arranged in this world . . . ."\(^\text{17}\) The literary artist is also interested in non-human factors as they act on man. The focus is still directed, however, toward man and his reactions in observable or mental behavior. Daiches says of the unique value of fiction in getting at truth, "Fiction enables us to explore the recesses of man's head and heart with a torch; history allows us only the natural light of day, which does not as a rule shine into such places. Literature is man's exploration of man by artificial light, which is better than natural light because we can direct it where we want it."\(^\text{18}\)


\(^\text{16}\) Tschumi, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

\(^\text{17}\) Daiches, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-20.

\(^\text{18}\) Ibid., p. 24.
Pragmatic theories of art are directed toward the audience. Art might imitate, but only as a means to an end, that of evoking a response in the reader. The aim of the artist and the nature of the work are subordinate to "the nature, the needs, and the springs of pleasure in the audience." The purpose of a piece of art may be one of giving pleasure or of teaching a lesson, or a combination of the two; its value as a work of art is judged primarily according to its success in achieving these ends. Horace indicates in Ars Poetica that the poet's aim is to profit or to please. The pragmatic critic does not ignore the artistic qualities of a work, however, since they play a large part in pleasing the audience. Abrams says, "Emphasis on the rules and maxims of an art is native to all criticism that grounds itself in the demands of an audience, and it survives today in the magazines and manuals devoted to teaching fledgling authors 'how to write stories that sell.'" Daiches identifies the functional quality of literature when he says, "Works of literature are something, and it is possible to see them for what they are. And because they are something, they do something, they serve a certain purpose, have a certain use, in the light of which their value can be assessed." If a work of art takes on meaning for a specific audience because it

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19 Abrams, op. cit., p. 20.
20 Ibid., p. 20.
serves a purpose, even pleasure, then its value can be assessed only after it successfully communicates something. All communication is not art, however. The thing communicated must have the shape of art and be of significance. Daiches says that since literature "is a unique way of communicating unique insights into the nature of human experience, then it is of value only if we believe that that experience is itself important and worth illuminating. Only a humanist philosophy can, in the last analysis, provide a valid aesthetic."²²

In expressive theories, the focus is upon the artist, who "becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged."²³ Wordsworth illustrates this theory when, in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, he defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Abrams states the central tendency of the expressive theory as follows:

> A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. The primary source and subject matter of a poem, therefore, are the attributes and actions of the poet's own mind; or if aspects of the external world, then those only as they are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind . . . . The paramount cause of poetry is not, as in Aristotle, a formal cause, determined primarily by the human actions and qualities imitated; nor, as in neo-classic criticism, a final cause, the effect intended upon the audience;

²²Ibid., p. 229.

²³Abrams, op. cit., p. 22.
but instead an efficient cause—the impulse within
the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression,
or the compulsion of the "creative" imagination
which, like God the creator, has its internal source
of motion.\textsuperscript{24}

A different criterion is needed to judge the quality of a work
of art according to this critical orientation. No longer does the
critic use "'Is it true to nature?' or 'Is it appropriate to the re­
quirements either of the best judges or the generality of mankind?'
but a criterion looking in a different direction; namely, 'Is it
sincere? Is it genuine? Does it match the intention, the feeling,
and the actual state of mind of the poet while composing?'\textsuperscript{25}

In all art it is the artist who remains in control of his
materials. The unique quality of a particular piece of art resides
in the uniqueness of the artist's perception and in the uniqueness
of his expression, but self-expression is not enough. Daiches says,
"So far as the term [self-expression] can be used of the artist, ex­
pression must imply communication, making the internal external, the
private public, the personal impersonal; and it can never be merely
exclamatory or self-indulgent."\textsuperscript{26}

Objective theories disregard all the elements in the situation
of a work of art except the work of art itself. This critical orienta­
tion "on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{26}Daiches, op. cit., p. 72.
external points of reference [the spectator, the artist, or the world without], analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being."27 This theory emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with Kant and Poe, led to the school of "art for art's sake," and is central to the thinking of John Crowe Ransom, Austin Warren and René Welleck of the "New Critics" today.

Pattern and form are imperative to all media of art, but, especially in literature, they do not constitute art. Perhaps in painting, and occasionally in poetry, pattern or form is the only intent of the artist. Even so, such works will remain only minor pieces of art, if they can be classified as such at all. Pattern and form in art serve as ways to communicate meaning. Daiches says, "Pattern by itself does not make literature; it must be the kind of pattern which communicates insight."28 The idea of "art for art's sake" lacks any meaning in itself, since no real definition of art is implied.

All of these critical theories are valid ones, depending upon the way the critic wishes to orient himself; each one has been used by thoughtful critics to explain the nature of art. A reasonable theory for the teacher of literature, however, and the theory underlying


28Daiches, op. cit., p. 80.
this dissertation, is an eclectic one. Each theory may serve as a valuable approach to get at some aspect of a certain piece of literature. One aesthetic theory for handling certain aspects of poetry may not be the best for dealing with a particular piece of fiction. Different theories might be used if the approach were focused on the creation of art, or on the art object, or on the appreciation of art. The four are separable only in theory; all contribute to the total significance of a work of art.

In order to be art, literature must communicate. In order to communicate, it must have meaning. Meaning emerges through the organized pattern that expresses the individual artist's personal view of human experience. The internal elements of a work of art constitute a major part of its value as art, but art lacks vitality unless it is viewed and criticized in relation to subject matter, to audience response, and to the vision of the artist. All four theories, therefore, must be used before a final judgment can be made regarding a literary work. Art is essentially too complex to reduce it to a single notion. As Daiches says:

... there is no single "right" theory of literature any more than there is a single "right" analysis of Hamlet. This does not mean that we must take refuge in airy relativism. The reason why there are no final answers to the fundamental questions is not that values do not exist, but that they are both more subtle and more comprehensive than any individual approach can master.29

29Ibid., p. 227.
A rhetorical and an aesthetic intention are not necessarily contradictory. It may be possible to defend certain essays, biographies, and letters as works of art, since "effective communication of meaning is both a literary and an intellectual virtue . . . . and, as one definition of literary art might be communication with maximum implication, it might be maintained that all good verbal expression is, potentially or in some degree, art."30 The teacher's theory of literature is directly applicable to all forms of imaginative literature—poetry, drama, the novel, and the short story. Emphasis in the classroom is usually placed on the last two, which fall under the broader classification of prose fiction. There are certain general characteristics common to all art, such as form, organic unity, balance, scope, and focus, but each medium has its unique qualities. Even the various forms of imaginative literature, although each attempts a symbolic expression of different aspects of the human situation, employ different devices. The short story is a distinct art form with a life and character of its own; it is not a truncated novel or a scene from one. In matters of form it is as distinct from the novel as it is from poetry. In fact, the modern short story probably has more in common with poetry than it does with the novel. At the same time, a great number of the characteristics of all prose fiction can be examined through the study of the short story: plot, character, theme, and style.

30 Ibid., pp. 103, 107.
Such a study also serves as a critical basis for examining drama, and to a large extent, poetry, since many of the artistic principles are common to all.

The short story as a form is appropriate for the high school classroom. Many more short stories, different in content and style, can be read and discussed with students than can entire novels, thus, students can be introduced to a greater variety and more interests can be appealed to. A short story can be read as an over-night assignment and can usually be discussed thoroughly in a single class period. It frequently illustrates clearly one or two of the characteristics of literature. Thus, a comparison of different treatments of the same technique can be made. In the matter of style, for example, several writers can be examined, a procedure which would be more difficult with novels because of the time required. The short stories of many writers allow a teacher to approach their ideas when time would not permit a reading of their longer works. Also, reading their short stories, where the focus is limited, sometimes prepares students for the longer, more difficult works of selected authors. The modern short story more often than not focuses realistically on the problems that students face or are concerned with. Its brevity, its limited focus, its compression, and its implicit statement are closely related to the increased awareness today of the fragmentary nature of experience. The temporal quality of the short story is more nearly akin to adolescents' perceptions of their own experiences.
The fact that the short story is more readily available than the novel in the literature anthology is not in itself a reason for recommending the teaching of it. Other sources can be made available. Yet, since many teachers rely only on the literature that is before them in abundance, they should be encouraged to approach it as meaningfully as possible.

The novel, as well as the other forms of imaginative literature, should have a substantial place in the literature curriculum of the secondary school. The position here merely suggests that the short story serves as a useful and expedient tool for teaching the skills of reading imaginative literature and for establishing the reading habit in students.

Numerous critical anthologies of short stories have been published for use in college literature classes, which, although they are helpful to the high school teacher of literature, are limited in their scope. Notable examples of such anthologies are Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Fiction*, West and Stallman's *The Art of Modern Fiction*, Gordon and Tate's *The House of Fiction*, and Jaffe and Scott's *Studies in the Short Story*. In the comprehensive English methods books for the secondary teacher the short story is usually dealt with under the general topic of fiction. Only one such text, Don M. Wolfe's *Creative Ways to Teach English*, devotes an entire chapter to the subject, but Wolfe's treatment, which is not only brief but partially inaccurate, is of limited value. He defines the short story as a
conflict in which two parts of the same hero are at war with one another and recommends that the approach to short stories with all high school students should concentrate upon an examination of the illumination of life in the stories. He says, "As in teaching the drama and the novel, so in teaching the short story: the important thing is the illumination of the life of the students, not the mastery of form or technique or the comprehension of complicated plots." Articles appear occasionally in The English Journal which recount some particular method or approach to teaching the short story or make a critical analysis of a single story. No entire study, however, has been published which brings together for the high school English teacher all the relevant factors in the teaching of the short story.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive treatment of the short story which will serve as a background for teaching that form in the secondary school. Chapters II, III, and IV attempt to define the content of the short story. Chapter II traces the historical antecedents of the genre. Chapter III attempts a definition of the genre that identifies its unique character yet permits considerable flexibility in classification according to method, style, and content. Chapter IV traces the major influences on the form from writers in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia. Chapter V treats the formal literary approaches that can be used for teaching the short story: plot, character, theme, and style.

31 Don M. Wolfe, Creative Ways to Teach English, p. 271.
Illustrative stories are examined. Chapter VI deals with matters related to curriculum organization and methodology: selecting materials and approaches, handling class discussions, tying in related activities, and building units. One illustrative unit is included. Chapter VII summarizes the study.
A story has a strong appeal for human beings. Throughout history children and adults alike have responded to the appeal of narrative accounts of experience in both written and oral form. Man has always found fiction a means of diversion and entertainment. It also has served him as a palatable means for instruction. Some of the earliest fiction grew out of man's search for knowledge as he made surmises about the origin of the universe around him and his own relation to the supernatural.

The oldest record of prose stories is an Egyptian collection of tales contained in the ancient papyri, The Tales of the Magicians, dating from 4000 B.C. to 2700 B.C. In these stories the sons of King Cheops are trying to entertain their father with some interesting accounts of adventure. Similar collections have come from the Hindus, the Greeks, the Arabs, and the Hebrews. The Old Testament is filled with short stories. The story of the conflict of wills between God and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, although a part of a larger narrative, has a central unity in itself. The stories about Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, and Moses' search for the promised land also follow the short story pattern. The stories of Ruth and of Esther are likewise striking examples of the narrative art. The purpose of these
stories, unlike The Tales of the Magicians, is primarily to instruct, but they are written in a manner that appeals to the story instinct in man. The sermons of the Middle Ages were regularly filled with "narratives to instruct the people as well as to keep up their attention when it was likely to flag . . . ." ¹ V. S. Pritchett identifies the universal appeal of fiction when he says, "The story . . . wakes the reader up. Not only that; it answers the primitive craving for art, the wit, paradox and beauty of shape, the longing to see a dramatic pattern and significance in our experience, the desire for the electric shock." ²

Early stories were transmitted orally before becoming fixed in written form. Most of the early folk epics, myths and legends, fairy tales, beast fables, and ballads that are available to the reader today have such an origin. Often they were reports of huntsmen and returned travelers. Heroic figures and supernatural elements often figure in them. As Mary Jane Wing says, "Since myth and legend sought first to explain wonders beyond man's understanding they have always told of figures somewhat larger than life, such as Paul Bunyan, and have usually contained a large element of the supernatural . . . ." ³

¹W. A. Clouston, Popular Tales and Fictions: Their Migrations and Transformations, p. 12.
³Mary Jane Wing, Studies in the American Short Story, p. 9.
W. A. Clouston traces the oral beginnings of a great number of popular tales and fictions in Western literature to Asia. He suggests that many of "our fairy tales were, for the most part, brought to Europe when our remote ancestors, during the 'childhood of the world,' migrated from their Asian homes." Stories and jests from the Far East "from oral tradition . . . were absorbed into literature, whence again they returned to the people; and after being, to all appearances, lost in the revolutions and political turmoils that followed the invention of printing, suddenly 'turned up' again in the jest-books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." The Iliad and The Odyssey represent possibly the greatest achievement in the oral tradition. Narratives were easier to remember and retell when they were presented in some metrical pattern. As a result, much of the folk literature, when written, followed the verse form. The same style is found in many of the tales of the conscious artist. Chaucer's short stories in The Canterbury Tales are the earliest short stories in written verse form in English literature. Spenser used a skillfully developed verse form for his tales in the Fairie Queene. Tennyson used the tales from Malory's Morte d' Arthur as a basis for his verse tales, Idylls of the King. Milton's Paradise Lost and Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner are controlled to a great extent by the narrative

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1 Clouston, op. cit., p. 5.
2 Ibid., p. 11.
element. Occasionally, single, shorter poems depend upon a story for much of their effect, such as Burns' "The Cotter's Saturday Night" and Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man." In fact, narrative is an ingredient of most poetry. A reader must visualize the actions of a lonely man taking a walk and discovering a field of daffodils in Wordsworth's well-known lyric poem.

Although fictional narrative in prose goes back many years, at the beginning it was often mere scraps of narrative or disjointed anecdotes greatly lacking in formal, artistic elements. Such pieces gained their impetus from the oral tradition of narrative stories for the entertainment of a group. The invention of printing not only permitted the story teller to reach a wider audience, but required him to polish his stories to greater extent. One problem that faced these writers was to find a device that would give some unity to a series of unrelated tales. Ray B. West suggests that the reason writers of prose tales before the eighteenth century felt the need to combine their tales into a large pattern was closely related to their philosophy of man's place in the universe. He says:

. . . God was seen not as finally isolated from man, but related to him in every detail of the natural and spiritual universe. In such a world there was room for the smaller forms only when they could be seen in relation to the great whole . . . . When tales were told in prose . . . they did not stand alone as individual stories, but became part of a larger unity . . . almost as though their authors could not conceive of the brief episode of the story as more than detail or symbol in the larger canvas which his [sic] imagination projected.®

The collection of short stories from the early Orient, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, employs a skillful unifying device: Scheherazade tells stories to her husband, the Sultan, in order to hold his interest and this saves her life. Boccaccio's tales from the *Decameron* are told by a group of citizens to entertain themselves while they are in the country waiting for a plague to abate in the city. Chaucer, in *Canterbury Tales*, uses a trip to the Canterbury Shrine as an opportunity for the people who are making the journey to relieve their boredom by telling each other stories. All of these representative collections can be classified primarily as entertainments. As a result, the major emphasis is on action. Character, atmosphere, and verisimilitude are often sacrificed for the sake of an exciting or shocking adventure. Chaucer is an exception. He had a fresh eye for the contemporary scene and his stories, in their presentation of the truth and richness of life, are close to the experience of the people.

Stories in the sixteenth century followed the fashion of collections. William Painter's collection of translations, *The Palace of Pleasure*, represents the English attempt to copy Boccaccio's work. It was popular in his day, but the individual stories lack originality in form or content. Their emphasis is on plot rather than on character and only a few of them have the savor of real life. Canby and Dashiell describe the work as "a voluminous collection adorned by selections from the chief novella writers of Italy, reinforced by narratives from the French, most of which had more remotely been Italian, and enriched by tales from Herodotus and other classic authors, which resembled in
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substance and in form the Italian stories." Painter's translations are closer to his predecessors' in style than they are to his contemporaries', since they "are simply written, with few digressions, few flourishes, and little or no originality on the part of the translator."

Other noteworthy writers of short prose fiction in the Elizabethan era developed a rather strange style, which gets its name from the piece in which the trend reached its culmination, John Lyly's Euphuies. As do such items as Geoffrey Fenton's "The Countess of Celant" and George Pettie's collection, The Pettie Palace, it employs every rhetorical device that prose allows and some that Elizabethan prose did not permit. These writers seemed to be less interested in telling a story than in preening their literary style in public.

A number of writers in the seventeenth century turned their pens to the writing of short narratives; and readers must have responded, since a great number of editions of fiction titles were published. A variety of entertaining tales were offered to the public--chivalric, sentimental, and heroic romantic tales, moral tales, and picaresque stories and tales of roguery. The dramatists of the Stuart era borrowed heavily from these pieces of fiction, but they remain virtually unread beyond their time. One reason for this, perhaps, is the

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7Henry Seidel Canby and Alfred Dashiell, A Study of the Short Story, p. 15.
8Ibid., p. 15.
lack of big names among the fiction writers of that period. Also, the stories lack literary merit. Charles C. Mish sums up the literary merits of this fiction as follows: "... the seventeenth century had a good deal of fiction, and that of several kinds. It had writers who could tell a good story, who could write dialogue, and who were interested in the analysis of feelings. Yet it never took the step of combining all the elements to make the sort of fiction which we have today..." Without this fusion the short story as a distinct genre had to wait until a later time to be born.

Writers of short fiction in the eighteenth century used intrigues, character sketches, situations, and anecdotes to expose the vices and weaknesses of society. They attempted to teach a lesson or to criticize manners. This didactic purpose is pointed out by Canby when he says, "The short stories ... in their humble way are part and parcel of that movement to picture, to study, and to reform English manners, taste, and morals, where Queen Anne was patroness, Addison, Steele, Swift, and Pope the champions in literature." The essays of Addison and Steele in The Spectator and The Tatler were occasionally presented in the form of a brief fictional tale. The style, however, was only slightly different from the essay. Narrative was substituted

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9Charles C. Mish, ed., Introduction to The Anchor Anthology of Short Fiction of the Seventeenth Century, p. xiv.

10Henry Seidel Canby, The Short Story in English, pp. 177-78.
for general exposition to illustrate a point more concretely. The aesthetic pleasure of fiction was only a secondary aim. Daniel Defoe wrote several short narratives, such as "A Journal of the Plague Year," good in their verisimilitude, but filled with insignificant and non-essential details and lacking formal structure. The event is the story.

The narrative element has been the basic force behind several forms of literature which have a less direct bearing on the development of the short story than those already mentioned. They do illustrate, however, certain characteristics of fictional technique. In More's Utopia, the work which gave the whole genre of Utopian literature its name, the narrative element is subordinate to the didactic purpose. This is more or less true of all such types—Joseph Hall's Discovery of a New World, Bacon's New Atlantis, Francis Godwin's Man in the Moon, and William Dean Howells' Traveler from Altruria. A similar thing can be said of John Bunyan's allegory, Pilgrim's Progress. Long works of fictional social criticism and satire, such as Voltaire's Candide and Swift's Gulliver's Travels, lead more directly to the rise of the novel than they do to the development of the short story. In Swift, however, the narrative element is of such dominance that Gulliver's Travels can be read with pleasure after the events he was satirizing have become unimportant. The narrative element in drama is a separate history.

Even though stories have been told as long as there have been people on the earth, the short story was the latest form of prose fiction to receive exact definition. The novel was at least a hundred
years earlier in developing. The reasons for this paradoxical fact are not certain, although a number of reasonable hypotheses can be suggested. H. E. Bates offers as an explanation the idea that other literary forms dominated public fancy. He says:

The Elizabethan short story had failed to survive the overwhelming counter-popularity of the drama and its greatest exponent, partly because it had no writers of comparable genius, partly because the story seen on the stage was far more exciting than the story read at home (even if you could read it), and partly because writers such as Greene and Nash seem to have had little conscious idea of how to relate a prose tale. As it was then eclipsed by the drama, the short story was later eclipsed, in the eighteenth century, by the rise of the novel, the heroic couplet, and the tittle-tattle essay. Its every chance of revival was frustrated by the advent of some other new or revitalized form for which the age was more ready or the public showed a preference.\textsuperscript{11}

The novel was certainly a popular literary form when the short story emerged, but, according to Bates' theory, "the two arts were never rivals; and towards the end of that \textsuperscript{19th} century, often to the detriment of the story, they were to develop side by side."\textsuperscript{12} The fact that the novel was less important in the United States than it was in England in the nineteenth century is one possible reason why the short story developed here first.


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 31.
Canby and Dashiell state that the Romantic movement in Europe was the most important influence on the development of the short story in Western literature. They say, "It was in pursuit of romanticism in the short story that America first produced fiction of excellent merit. It was in the romantic short story, which America was instrumental in perfecting, that the most interesting technical victories of nineteenth-century fiction were won."^{13} Although romanticism does not directly dictate the short story form, it provides the aesthetic climate and stimulation for a new form to develop. It encourages the establishment of aesthetic principles for a form that was already emerging. Poe was influenced by his reading of German romantic literature. His aesthetic theories, in which beauty and truth coalesce through a proper rendering of the emotions, link him with the romantics. His subject matter, as well as Hawthorne's, shows a prevailing Gothic mood inherited from the German romantics.

Although writers in many countries attempted short stories through the centuries, most literary historians and critics agree that the short story as a separate literary form did not emerge until the nineteenth century and that it established its most solid footing first in the United States. It is a logical assumption that writers in a new country just finding time for fiction in its literature saw a new form as appropriate for developing a distinctive quality in their writing. Also, the rigors imposed upon people by living in a new

^{13}Canby and Dashiell, op. cit., pp. 26-27.
country affected the nature of their literature. Edward J. O'Brien says:

To the pioneer, leisure, perhaps of necessity, seems sinful. To devote one's life to literature is to confess oneself a weakling and to be despised. But the short story from a pioneer's point of view has the merit of being brief and of condensing emotion into a moment as it flies. It satisfies his gregariousness without affronting his conscience. It requires no leisure to grasp its point.  

Bret Harte suggests in his essay, "The Rise of the 'Short Story,'" that "perhaps the proverbial haste of American life [in the first half of the nineteenth century] was some inducement to its brevity." Bates suggests that freedom from tradition and class-barriers as well as the increased tempo of life in the young United States prompted the emergence of the short story here: "... America, unhampered by tradition and class-barriers, was in a happier position to foster the story, which above all demanded speed and simplicity. Already its people were talking faster, moving faster, and apparently thinking faster: so it appeared likely that they might wish their writers to be writing faster."

The rise of the magazine, disseminating its mass culture, provided one of the strongest stimuli for the continued development and thus the

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establishment of a new form of fiction, although the short story itself was greatly responsible for the growth of the magazines. At the beginning of the nineteenth century young writers in America who were experimenting with shorter fiction had the literary column of the weekly newspaper and a few struggling magazines as available sources for publication. The alternative was for them to issue their collected material at their own expense. The response of both writers and readers to the new form brought on the publication of annuals and gift books. The Token and The Atlantic Souvenir were the most durable of the dozens of annuals published. They provided the outlet for the work of some of the best writers of the first part of the century, but too often they showed a penchant for the didactic tale, especially after the women writers started monopolizing the pages. When publishers began to place more emphasis on decorative bindings and pictures than on the literary content, the annuals and gift books exerted less and less influence on the reading public. By the middle of the century they had become ostentatious show pieces, and the more frequently published magazines had taken over the more serious job of presenting short stories that would be read. The annuals and gift books served an important function, however, for the short story. Fred Lewis Pattee makes the following estimation of their contribution:

At best they were a makeshift, a temporary relief during a transition period that was full of discouragement for the new literary generation, but they played an important part during the brief time they were in power. They gave for the first time an adequate outlet for the writing of the new group, they paid prices that were remarkable,
they insisted upon native themes and native authors, and thus helped to create a distinctly American literature, and they suggested and made possible the popular literary magazine that was to be such a power during the latter half of the century.\textsuperscript{17}

The installment novel decreased as a magazine staple as the short story matured and as more writers turned to this shorter form. The magazine has been responsible for many of the curious trends the short story has taken. Currently, short stories constitute the bulk of prose fiction in magazine literature. And magazines provide almost exclusively the means for a short story to reach anything near a wide audience, although there tends to be a difference in the quality of short stories in the literary magazines and those in the mass-circulation class. Volumes of short stories are seldom on the best seller list.

The short story clearly has many antecedents. Poe is most often cited, however, as the first person to define its artistic principles. And Poe and Hawthorne are often mentioned as the first practitioners of the new art. This position is reflected in such statements as "... short story writing as a special art made no progress until Poe and Hawthorne,"\textsuperscript{18} and "Admitting that there were many delightful tales before the time of Poe and Hawthorne, even some true short stories, we must reassert that it was these men who became

\textsuperscript{17}Fred Lewis Pattee, \textit{The Development of the American Short Story}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{18}Sherwin Cody, ed., \textit{A Selection from the World's Greatest Short Stories}, p. 18.
conscious of the art of story writing and made use of their knowledge time after time in writing their stories."¹⁹ Acceptance of this position presents the problem of classifying all the stories before their time.

Prose narrative that is short is not necessarily a short story as it is known today. Pieces of short prose narrative before Poe which closely approximate the short story are commonly labeled as tales, although, as Ray B. West says, "There is little evidence that anyone has been particularly concerned with defining the limits of a tale, or in distinguishing between a tale and a sketch, or a tale and an essay, before the middle of the nineteenth century. . . ."²⁰ Many of these tales are greatly refined and polished in style, yet they lack some of the essential qualities of fiction. The emphasis is on linear action; the writer is presenting a narrative of events in chronological order. There is little ordering of events beyond what happens next and quite frequently irrelevant matters are included. The writer often makes no attempt to reorganize experiences in order to give a sharper picture of reality. The reader remembers a series of events rather than a suggested impression. These tales usually lack organic unity in terms of content, form, and style. The tale interests


²⁰Ray B. West, Jr., The Short Story in America: 1900-1950, p. 5.
the reader for what it says rather than by the way it says it. The tale in general requires or implies an audience. Canby indicates the lack of literary distinction in tales when he says:

Generally speaking... there would seem to be no generic distinction in narrative before the nineteenth century other than narrative short and long, tales of many episodes and tales of one, with a partial exception for fables and such didactic tales, and with this qualification, that in the best of the shorter variety there is usually a certain husbandry of words and choice of incident which indicates a consciousness of the necessity of doing a great deal in a little space.21

Washington Irving brought the tale to its highest development, and in such tales as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" approached very near to the short story form. The tales in The Sketch Book, evolved from Irving's essays, seem effortless and playful in their polished use of legend; they are rich in description and digression; there is little action or conversation. The word sketch is used to imply pictorial representations of places and events. They are tales in that their purpose is simple narrative, although the complicated plots, the emphasis placed upon the dénouement, and the vivid description indicate the hand of a conscious artist. Ray B. West points out that sketch may be considered as a different classification from the tale:

There may be some justification for considering the sketch a separate form, as some writers do, differentiating it from the tale by pointing to its

emphasis upon atmosphere and scene, its subordina-
tion of action and adventure. If so, it is a
form which as yet lacks anything like full develop-
ment, or—as is more likely—it is a romantic means
of catching the atmosphere of remote places. It
would seem more reasonable to say that both the
sketch and the tale (if there ever was a real
distinction) have been absorbed into our modern
concept of the short story.22

By his own statement of his theory of style Irving reveals his lineage
from the eighteenth century English essayists and identifies the
essential quality of the tale in his stories. In a letter to Henry
Brevoort, December 11, 1924, he says:

For my part, I consider a story merely as a frame
on which to stretch my materials. It is the play
of thought, and sentiment, and language; the
weaving in of characters, lightly, yet expressively
delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of
scenes in common life; and the half-concealed vein
of humor that is often playing through the whole,
—these are what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate
myself in proportion as I think I succeed.23

O'Brien does little justice to Irving and his contribution to
the development of the short story when he says:

The history of the American short story before
Hawthorne and Poe is for the most part of mere
academic interest . . . . In its primitive form-
lessness, it is at first only faintly distinguished
from the essay and descriptive narrative. Its
history is to be read in a succession of dusty
annuals of intolerable dullness . . . . if we ex-
cept the fact that a part of Hawthorne's work

22West, The Short Story in America, pp. 4-5.

23Washington Irving, Letter to Henry Brevoort, December 11, 1824,
from The Life and Letters of Washington Irving, ed. by Pierre M.
Irving, II, p. 64.
appeared in these surroundings of melancholy grandeur, it will be safe to dismiss these annuals entirely, as well as the few struggling and short-lived American periodicals published during the first third of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{24}

Much of this is probably true of most of the young writers in America in the first quarter of the nineteenth century who were attempting to copy the success of Irving by producing sketches and tales in prose for the annuals and magazines; however, a few short stories, such as "Recollections," by Franklin Dexter, "The Adventures of a Watchman," by Tobias Watkins, and "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man," by William Austin, have some merit. Each of these pieces has the distinctive quality of the short story. "Recollections," although placing little emphasis upon the culminating sequence of its happenings, exhibits a unity of atmosphere and has emotional intensity. "The Adventures of a Watchman" is a translation from the German, but makes an original showing in American literature of a lively style and rapid movement by means of conversation and dialogue. "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man," although weak in form, has strength as a short story in its creation of atmosphere and in its emphasis on the supernatural, suggestive of Hawthorne, who is known to have read it. Even though these early American writers and their contemporaries, with the exception of Irving, are not widely read today and receive little critical attention, their works played

\textsuperscript{24} O'Brien, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.
an important part in the establishment of the short story in America and had considerable influence abroad. Pattee says:

Thus it was the American short story, crude affair though it was in its earlier forms, that won its way to England as literature distinctively and uniquely American. Cooper was "the American Scott," Irving was "the American Addison," and Bryant was "the American Wordsworth," but the native writers of short fiction for the annuals and the periodicals were producing something that had no prototype in the older lands, a literary form that was to grow in excellence with every decade until it could serve at last as the model for the storytellers of the rest of the world.²⁵

A distinction between a tale and a short story, both of which achieve artistic proportions, might be that the first is a product of unconscious art and the latter is a product of conscious art. This distinction can be seen rather clearly between an Irving tale and a Poe short story, although to call Irving an unconscious artist is partially inaccurate. E. A. Cross says:

As any form of art is growing toward perfection, those who practice it are usually unconscious of the technical processes which they employ. The genius, once in a long while, manages his materials in such a way as to produce the artistic result; but even the genius in the formative period of the art follows no law but the law of necessity, which he instinctively feels will produce the effect he desires. When such an artistic effect has been produced a few dozens of times, then men of analytic minds study the processes employed by

²⁵Pattee, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
the great artists and deduce the technical principles involved in the production of the artistic effect. Such a body of technical knowledge once having been established is the common property ever after of both the true artist and the mere craftsman.²⁶

According to this definition Poe is the first conscious artist of the short story; but whether he or any other writer in the genre has achieved the status of genius is a matter of divergent critical opinion.

²⁶Cross, op. cit., p. 12.
CHAPTER III

DEFINITION OF THE SHORT STORY

To define an art form is to some extent to limit it, since definition implies a static quality. Art, to remain vital and alive, must be seeking constantly new methods of expression. As Warren Beck says:

A writer can profitably study the history of literary forms to note that, whenever they became rigid in practice and dogmatic in definition, they declined from vitality and freshness, and to see, on the other hand, that almost every renaissance or notably rich period has come by revolt against pseudo-classic bigotry as to just what a drama, a narrative, or a poem must or must not be.¹

An art form for which a definite formula can be written is a dead art. At the same time, art emerges only out of a certain ordering of its materials on the basis of conscious aesthetic principles. These principles, rather than a precise, encompassing definition, are Poe's contribution to the art of the short story.

The short story achieves its artistic literary status when it shifts from the mere narration of events to the selection of events which reinforce a writer's vision of experience, since an art form demands selection and arrangement of materials. A writer of short stories

works directly with experience. He does not merely record, but orders and arranges the experience according to his insight and vision. The writer must dramatize his narrative rather than explain or relate the action. The short story has a more compressed structure than the tale. In his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, Poe points out a significant difference between the tale and the short story. "Wakefield" is based on an incident that actually occurred in London. Hawthorne, though, is not merely narrating a tale about a man who decides to leave his wife and remain incognito for twenty years in her neighborhood. Poe points out that "the force of Mr. Hawthorne's tale lies in the analysis of the motives which must or might have impelled the husband to such folly, in the first instance, with the possible causes of his perseverance."² Hawthorne renders an interpretation of experience according to his vision. As Daiches says, "It is only the adequate literary treatment of a sequence of events which can give it that continuously expanding and reverberating symbolic significance which distinguishes great fiction from mere fable."³

Poe's theory of art is contained in his "The Philosophy of Composition" and in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, and reflects Aristotle's scheme of Complication, Resolution, Peripety, and


³David Daiches, A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics, p. 50.
Discovery as set forth in The Poetics. His most encompassing principle is unity of effect. All the parts of the story must contribute to the whole. He says in his review of Twice-Told Tales:

... in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance ... A skillful literary 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 tend not to the outbringing 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. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.¹

He says also in "The Philosophy of Composition":

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality always in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present

¹Poe, op. cit., p. 108.
occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect. . . .

In accordance with this principle of unity of effect, Poe determines the length of the short story as requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours to read. The novel, according to him, is inferior to the short story, since "as it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from totality."

Plot is an essential ingredient of the short story as well as of all fiction. According to Poe, all incidents in the short story must be subordinated to the climax. He says, "It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention."

Another vital characteristic of the short story identified by Poe, and one which many of his imitators apparently ignored, is that of originality. He says, "Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is

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invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest."\(^5\)

Essentially, these principles remain valid critical tools for classifying and judging the quality of short stories since Poe's day if form is kept distinct from method and content. Poe's method was to begin with an idea or an "effect" and then find materials which would contribute to it. Unlike Aristotle, for whom effects have the function of revealing universal truth or, as he put it, "thought," Poe considers thought as simply means to effect. Writers who followed Poe's method led fiction along sterile paths and either separated it entirely from experience or distorted experience, even though their intent was to reflect experience. Mark Schorer indicates that method in fiction can be a means for organizing material that exists or it can be a means for "exploring and defining the values in an era of experience which, for the first time then, are being given."\(^9\) In this latter approach effect will still be the final product of a work of art, but the writer ends with it rather than begins with it. More effective than Poe's is a method in which the vision does not determine the experience and thus the content, but the experience determines the vision. Poe's method may be pleasing aesthetically, but might lead to a false vision. Daiches says, "A writer is a craftsman rather than

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\(^9\) Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery," from Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. by William Van O'Conner, p. 10.
an artist if he first thinks of a subject—whether a plot, an argument, or a description—and then puts it into words clearly and cogently . . . ." 10 Occasionally a craftsman creates a work of art, but only accidentally.

Unity of effect is a principle of all fiction as well as of all art. Daiches says, "The writer of fiction must give us a world sufficiently simplified to enable us to see everything in it as part of a single pattern and sufficiently complicated to allow us to see in each part, as well as in the whole, reverberating meanings which linger in the mind to produce ever deeper insights." 11 Such unity is necessary in short fiction since the focus is limited. In Poe's theory there is one kind of organic unity, however, since character is subsidiary to action and each element of the story is subsidiary to the action of the whole. Balance is an important part of artistic unity; as Danforth Ross says, "There will . . . not be overpainted parts of the canvas, and other parts that are bare of detail." 12 Poe maintains balance, but in emphasizing effect, he is emphasizing mood as the ingredient of the story that receives most emphasis. And this is the way he most often put his theory into practice. Quality stories since Poe's time maintain the unity of emotional effect, although the emphasis may be on a different ingredient, such as character, theme, or plot.

10 Daiches, op. cit., p. 88.
11 Ibid., p. 29.
Although a number of great stories have been written which fall outside of Poe's length requirement, more often called novellas or novelletes, the bulk of the short stories written since Poe meet his length requirement. In fact, the masters of the form have usually emphasized brevity; and this quality is a characteristic of most short stories written today.

Poe's concept of plot is not a restricting one. Simply, it means that the reader is directed toward one single moment, the moment of effect, the moment when he has, as Poe says, "a sense of the fullest satisfaction." Plot is necessary to the short story, although it may be handled in a variety of ways. Many modern readers, and some professional critics, accustomed to an older type of story, find in the newer story nothing equivalent to the underlying and unifying design; they "maintain that the modern short story is plotless, static, fragmentary, amorphous--frequently a mere character sketch or vignette, or a mere reporting of a transient moment, or the capturing of a mood or nuance--everything, in fact, except a story." In many cases they are right, but often they fail to understand that different techniques and methods can present the same plot structure in different arrangements.

Poe's principles of unity, brevity, limited focus, and plot apply as directly to the modern story as they did to stories in his time. The greatest variations in the short story have been in method and content,

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variations which have led both to the advancement and retardation of the form.

Since many of the characteristics of fictional technique are similar in both artistic short stories and artistic novels, the unique character of the short story can be emphasized by a comparison of the two forms. In 1884, Brander Matthews published the first important document, after Poe, regarding the theory of the short story. By that time the short story had become an important literary form in America and Matthews was the first to publish a comprehensive formulation of the principles, although they are based on Poe's more general treatment. According to Matthews, the short story must possess seven or eight characteristics: originality, unity, compression, brilliancy of style, action, form, substance, and if possible, fantasy. The true character of the short story, however, is to be seen in its differences from the novel. He says:

A true Short-story is something other and something more than a mere story which is short. A true Short-story differs from the Novel chiefly in its essential unity of impression. In a far more exact and precise use of the word, a Short-story has unity as a Novel cannot have it . . . . A Short-story deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation . . . . The Short-story is the single effect, complete and self-contained, while the Novel is of necessity broken into a series of episodes. Thus the Short-story has, what the Novel cannot have, the effect of "totality," as Poe called it, the unity of impression.  

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14Brander Matthews, The Philosophy of the Short Story, pp. 15-17.
When compared with the novel, the short story appears to be a rigorously restricted form—restricted as to length, range of time, place, and movement. In style, "it is forced back on the use of suggestion, implied action, indirect narration, and symbolism to convey what might otherwise be conveyed by a catalogue of solid words."\(^{15}\) On the other hand, "the short-story writer is the freest of all artists in words: far freer than the dramatist, infinitely freer than the poet, and in reality far freer than the novelist, since he is offered a wealth of subjects which it is unprofitable, undignified, or otherwise not worth the novelist's while to touch."\(^{16}\) The short story and the novel are two distinct forms, one not inherently superior to the other, but each more appropriate for focusing upon some given experience. The failure of some short stories, as well as the failure of some novels, has resulted from the writer's wrong choice of a vessel for his vision.

The short story has developed through several somewhat distinct stages since its birth with Poe, each affecting its definition as art. When short story writers follow mechanically the principles set forth by Poe, Matthews, and other theorists after them, they exhibit lack of artistic vision and the short story becomes merely an exercise in composition, as was the case by the turn of the twentieth century when the emphasis was on the formula plot. The short story was suffering


\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 216.
from its popularity as the newspapers and magazines were turning out the journalistic pulp of multitudinous unskilled writers to satisfy the public's demand for literary narcotics. Although not all writers were following the formula mechanically, enough were to make understandable Herbert Ellsworth Cory's scathing denouncement of the whole form in 1917. He says:

The depths of our age, beneath a phantom surface of intermittent and delirious gaiety, cry out for a deeper art. There never was an age that was really in more deadly earnest, never an age more full of unorganized religious zeal. The international agony, the national bewilderments, the fearful social injustices, the heart-beat of our epical life—these can neither be described nor interpreted by the trivial and the hasty. The short story is but a more delicate manifestation of that universal fever that has bankrupted mankind, and from which our deepest instincts of self-preservation urge us with tremendous pressure to arouse ourselves... The very technique of the short-story is pathological, and titillates our nerves in our pathological moments. The short-story is the blood kinsman of the quick-lunch, the vaudeville, and the joy-ride. It is the art-form of those who believe in the philosophy of quick results.17

In revolt against the formula plot some writers and critics went to an opposite extreme. Since many of these plots had been unreal and artificial, they advocated the abandonment of plot completely. Sherwood Anderson says in A Story Teller's Story:

There was a notion that ran through all story-telling in America, that stories must be built around a plot... "The Poison Plot" I called

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it in conversation with my friends as the plot
notion did seem to me to poison all story telling.
What was wanted I thought was form, not plot, an
altogether more elusive and difficult thing to
come at . . . . it was certain there were no plot
short stories ever lived in any life I had known
anything about . . . .18

When Anderson's stories are examined, they show that he was not against
the use of plot, but against the use of it in a traditional and
mechanical way. The form that he mentions and demonstrates in his
stories, in essence, meets Poe's plot requirements. It has unity of
effect and all parts of a story are subordinate to the climax or the
moment of illumination.

L. A. G. Strong, in 1932, stated that the intent of the artist
was the most important quality of a short story: "It does not matter
if the story have a plot, or depend wholly for its effect upon the
emotions and reflections it arouses in the reader. The only thing
that matters is that each piece of short prose fiction should have
an aim worthy of an artist, and should succeed in it."19 When a
writer succumbs to orthodoxy in reaction to experience and conformity
to public opinion, or when his work is judged according to these values,


19 L. A. G. Strong, "Concerning Short Stories," Bookman, LXXV
(November 1932), p. 710.
the art of the short story is weakened. And why should it be judged accordingly? Strong says, reflecting both the expressive and objective theories of art:

Today, what uniformity is to be expected or desired in an art influenced by Flaubert, who made a character the thread for a marvellous and intricate tapestry: by Tchekov, who made a mood or an episode the imaginative key to the whole lives of its actors; by de Maupassant, whose skill lay less in plot than in the complete portrayal of a situation: by Conrad, by Kipling, by Lawrence, by Moore, and already by some of its own youngest practitioners? We not only do not know what a short story ought to be, but we do not want to know. The only safe thing is to allow each writer to call his work what he likes and to judge it severely, and without favour, by its own standards.20

An even more liberal statement concerning the definition of the short story was made by William Saroyan in 1935. He says:

What, if anything is a story? Well, frankly, I do not exactly know, and believe no one exactly knows, and if anyone does exactly know, I believe this knowing isn't so terrifically important, and if it is important at all, I do not believe it is important enough to stand in the way of the growth of art, which is inevitably the growth of living, and if I myself am interested in anything at all, I am interested in growth, in keeping in motion, in expanding, in not standing still, however artfully. To be petrified, I suppose, is to be perfect after a fashion, but I would rather be wholly alive, in motion, and imperfect. I would certainly prefer to stop writing altogether than to be turned into a pillar of salt . . . . I don't care what my stuff is called, just so I go on creating it . . . . A thing is what it is, especially a created thing. An un-created thing, an imitated thing, is not even what

20 Ibid., p. 712.
it is supposed to be, and is therefore largely nothing. It is not a question of whether or not a creation is a story, but a question of whether or not it is at all, and if it is, but is seemingly not a story, it is nevertheless and that's all there is to it.\footnote{Bonaro Overstreet, "Little Story, What Now?" Saturday Review of Literature, XXIV (November 22, 1941), p. 3.}

Bonaro Overstreet says that the traditional short story belongs to the nineteenth century:

Most literary types belong to the ages. The short story belongs to the nineteenth century. The short story that bears that trade-mark is, first of all, a story with a plot—a close-knit structure that can be seen steadily and whole. In the well-constructed story of plot, of incident and coincident, things happen—and nothing happens that does not push the story along toward its climax. The skillful writer of the nineteenth century story had his materials as well in hand, as obedient to his organizing will, as had the strong man who spanned a continent with a railroad. He, too, in his own way was a competent executive.\footnote{William Saroyan, "What Is A Story?" Saturday Review of Literature, XI (January 5, 1935), p. 409.}

But life in the twentieth century is based on different values and on different understandings of behavior. As a result, the form of the short story which, although it does not aim at a transcription of experience, aims at a dramatization of it, must change accordingly. He says:

The twentieth century story-teller is becoming, in his own way, a master of rigorous form. But to understand this form, we must recognize that it is dictated by psychological materials and processes, not primarily by events in the objective world. Its logic is not, and cannot be, that of dovetailed incidents that total
up to a precise plot—a plot that any teacher of English can outline on a blackboard. Its logic is the complex logic of mental and emotional experience. Associate linkages, personal memories and fears and faiths, rationalized reasons for behavior, subsurface thinking that goes on in contradiction to surface talk—all these, and a multitude of other factors, must be recognized by the writer, today, as part of the deeper logic of any given situation. In determining its outcome, they may be far more important than are objective events.23

There is much truth in what all these people say. The traditional plot does not seem to be effective in dealing with contemporary life, although the traditional plot was not necessarily artificial in itself. As Bader says, "Conflict, the basis of plot, is the very stuff of life, whether the individual writer tends to see it within the mind or in the external world . . . . And the fact is that modern stories which presumably satisfy their authors on the score of realism do exhibit the traditional structure of conflict, action, and resolution."24 Plot is as necessary to the twentieth century short story as it was to the short story of the nineteenth century.

In all modern short stories which can be labeled as such there is conflict. It is represented in a series of carefully chosen dramatic actions. Sometimes, the reader must supply the connections and the meaning emerges as the reader perceives the relationship. This is the moment of illumination, which often occurs in the reader's mind.

23Ibid., p. 25.
24Bader, op. cit., p. 88.
rather than as explicit statement in the story. Possibly, the conflict is resolved only in the awareness that there is no resolution. Strong describes this method when he says:

The modern short story writer is content if, allowing the reader to glance at his characters as through a window, he shows them making a gesture which is typical: that is to say, a gesture which enables the reader's imagination to fill in all that is left unsaid. Instead of giving us a finished action to admire, or pricking the bubble of some problem, he may give us only the key-piece of a mosaic, around which, if sufficiently perceptive, we can see in shadowy outline the completed pattern.25

The revolution in the true short story was in method and content, not in form. As Beck says, "The experimental movement in the short story must be viewed not as a peevish reaction against plot but as a revolt against wooden formulas."26 The best short stories of all countries exhibit plot structure of one kind or another. The changes in method, however, have added new dimensions to the short story. Although Granville Hicks' statement that follows is somewhat true of all the really great short stories, it is especially applicable to the quality short story written today:

... the good short story is ... a kind of revelation. It is an attempt to make the reader share in a unique moment of insight. It rises ... to a spire of meaning, but the meaning can never be stated as a proposition; it can only be felt ... None of them stops when the story


26 Beck, op. cit., p. 57.
ends, for they have sequels in the imaginations of their readers. A kind of reverberation is created that goes on and on. A moment of insight has been communicated, and the insight continues to operate in the reader . . . .

The position taken by Saroyan has been popular with a number of writers, perhaps in defense of their own careless or immature work. Experimentation has been characteristic of short story writers since the time of Anderson in the United States, James Joyce in Ireland, and Katherine Mansfield in England. Most of these writers, however, have kept their work within the form of the short story. Even some of Saroyan's pieces can be called such. Others have written short pieces of prose narrative which fall outside of this classification. Riley Hughes, reviewing Don M. Wolfe's collection of short stories, American Scene: New Voices, points out the nature of some recent prose fiction that falls into this latter category when he says:

... a coming to terms with one's craft has not been a requirement, apparently, for inclusion in Don M. Wolfe's anthology. Several of the selections here are passages, indeed tentative first chapters, from projected novels. Others are fragmentary episodes, equally tentative, struck from the mother lode of memory. Mr. Wolfe also admits to his pages selections that are nothing more than brief paragraphs--prose poems almost--of mood writing . . . .


Critics and writers themselves have been somewhat hesitant to define the short story with any degree of inclusiveness, as is illustrated by Bates' summary of the statements of several writers' definitions of the form which follows:

... Wells defined the short story as any piece of short fiction that could be read in half an hour.
... Tchekov held that a story should have neither beginning nor end, but reminded authors that if they described a gun hanging on the wall on page one, sooner or later that gun must go off. Mr. John Hadfield describes the short story as "a story that is not long." The late Sir Hugh Walpole, in a moment of truly remarkable perception, asserted that "a story should be a story: a record of things happening, full of incident, swift movement, unexpected development, leading through suspense to a climax and a satisfying denouement." Jack London declared that it should be "concrete, to the point, with snap and go and life, crisp and crackling and interesting." Miss Elizabeth Bowen, rightly wary of the concrete definition, says, "the first necessity of the short story, at the set out, is necessariness. The story, that is to say, must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough, acute enough, to have made the writer write." The late E. J. O'Brien, to whom the short story in Britain and America owes an unpayable debt, holds that "the first test of a short story, in any qualitative analysis, is the measure of how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents." Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, who pronounced on the genius of Hemingway's Fifty Grand when that short story had been rejected by half the editors of America, holds that "a story is like a horse race. It is the start and finish that count most." ... Mr. A. E. Coppard bases the whole theory of his work on the essential differences between a story, as something which is written, and a tale, as something which is told.29

29 Bates, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
None of these definitions will fit all stories. Bates concludes that "the short story, whether short or long, poetical or reported, plotted or sketched, concrete or cobweb, has an insistent and eternal fluidity that slips through the hands."³⁰

To define a short story with complete exactitude is really not very important. A rigid definition of form is certainly undesirable. If a story is to be considered as literary art, however, some classic definition of form is necessary. Its artistic proportions are based on aesthetic principles which are derived ultimately from the order of the artist's focus on experience. Even if the order of the writer's vision is one of chaos, a focus has been made and the vision defined. The order here reflects a view of life that is formless. For purposes of classification, a short story must not only embrace an artistic vision, but must follow generally the conventions of the form. The rather broad statements made by Poe concerning unity, length, limited focus, and plot still serve as valid limitations of the form. In a recent critical anthology of short stories, the editors state that the collection "is based on the assumption that fiction is an art closely allied to painting and that, as in painting, there are certain 'constants' or secrets of technique which not only appear in the works of all masters of the craft but which have been handed down from master to master throughout the ages."³¹

³⁰Ibid., p. 18.

³¹Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate, eds., The House of Fiction, p. ix.
fiction a short story, or to completely remove the label, as Saroyan suggests, is to rob the genre of its status as art. The limitations of the form still provide for great versatility of performance and method, as evidenced by the number of diverse writers who have used it successfully. It has included the simplicities of Hemingway's prose as well as the leisurely complexities of Katherine Anne Porter's style; it has been a vehicle for expressing ardent social or moral beliefs; it has been alive with robust humor; it has reeked with the smell of sickness; it has included carefully plotted stories as well as muted studies more akin to lyric poetry; it has served as a quiet character study, rich in psychological overtones and almost devoid of action; and it has refracted "a slice of life" close to reportage.

It is this breadth and variety that make the short story continue to attract the talents of established and diverse authors. The form also challenges the skill of many able young writers. If writers feel that the artistic form is no longer suitable for their purposes, then it will be abolished and a new form will perhaps take its place.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT STORY

The history of the short story from Poe to the present time, although short, is complex. Once the technique of short story writing was established, it became a popular form in almost every civilized country of the world. The literatures which have contributed most to the development of the form through demonstration or influence, or both are those of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia. The literatures of these four countries are important to the development of the short story if for no other reason than the fact that they have given to the world the stories of Poe, Henry James, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, Kipling, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, A. E. Coppard, Maupassant, and Chekhov. It is not the purpose of this discussion to present a comprehensive history of the short story, but merely to trace some of the important developments of the form in the four countries noted above and to evaluate the contributions of the writers who have been most influential in shaping the content and method within the form. The basic structure of the short story has been rather fixed; it has been refined rather than changed. The greatest variant has been the writer's method, his approach to his material within the limits of the form. Radical changes in the short story have been in content. Changes in
both content and method have been brought about primarily by non-literary influences—changes in social attitudes, philosophies, politics, war, and psychology. Bates says, "The breaking down of illogical moral prejudice against subject . . . is . . . as important as any development in form." The separation of form and content or form and method in art is a false dichotomy, but the distinctions are made here in order to examine more closely changes that have occurred and in order to see the whole more perceptively.

The short story has been a prominent part of the literature of the United States for a longer period of time than in any of the other three countries, with the possible exception of Russia. Smith and Miner say, "Few European critics would question the claim that America has pushed the short story to its greatest development both quantitatively and qualitatively. For them the short story seems practically to belong to America, even though the modern story owes much to Maupassant and Chekhov—a fact the French critics are very much aware of." The development of the short story in the United States will be presented first, therefore, as a background for its development in the other countries.

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2Thelma Smith and Ward L. Miner, Transatlantic Migration, pp. 72-73.
Poe's contribution to the theory of the short story has already been discussed. He applied his principles of fiction in his own short stories, and, in most cases, successfully. He achieved in prose what others before him had already achieved in verse. All the attributes of one of his stories—character, setting, and style—lend their suggestive powers to the major emphasis, for him, effect. Unfortunately, his vision of human experience was limited and his stories lack the ring of truth when compared with those of many modern writers.

Poe attempted to divide short stories into two types—tales of ratiocination and tales of atmosphere or effect. The first, characterized by "The Purloined Letter," achieve their effect by details of complicated action and a final awareness of infallible logic. The second, such as "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," use the multiplication of atmospheric details to achieve their effect. These types are artificial and restricted. They perhaps served Poe's artistic temperament, but they were not grounded in the life around him. Ray B. West says, "His was a dilettante's interest, focused more on the mechanics of form than on form as an expression, an embodiment, of human experience."³ His stories are entertaining, but offer readers little insight into the world of human experience beyond the narrow limits of pathological fantasy. It is not Poe's

stories then that serve as guides for writers, but the principles underlying the form. His concept of content and method, demonstrated in his classification of types, in fact, can be traced as an influence on the development of the rather empty form of the detective story and in the too carefully plotted stories still in the popular magazines. His tales of atmosphere, somewhat forced and sentimental, perhaps influenced later writers like Bret Harte in the false exploitation of atmospheric effects at the expense of psychological and moral truth.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, although he wrote stories before Poe, achieved distinction as a short story writer after Poe's critical attention to his tales. In his Preface to the second edition of Twice-Told Tales Hawthorne indicates his belief in the superiority of his method to Poe's, and at the same time its weakness. He says of his tales, "They have none of the abstruseness of idea, or obscurity of expression, which mark the written communications of a solitary mind with itself . . . . They are not the talk of a secluded man with his own mind and heart . . . but his attempts, and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world . . . ."¹ The weakness of his method is indicated in the following statement he makes about his stories:

They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade--the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, Preface to the 1851 edition of Twice-Told Tales, from The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. by George Parsons Lathrop, I, pp. 16-17.
and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment, and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver.\(^5\)

The tone of the Preface is such that the reader doubts Hawthorne's acceptance of this method as a weakness. The allegorical method, even tempered by romance, does limit Hawthorne's short stories as art, but he was less interested in surface reality than he was in the underlying themes—or "the truths of the human heart." The emphasis he placed on the psychological implications of behavior has had a more profound influence on later writers than any aspect of Poe's method.

Hawthorne's stories can best be classified as stories with a moral purpose. While Poe uses atmosphere and skillful narration to entertain the reader, Hawthorne uses symbols to illustrate moral truths. A situation is the unifying principle in all his stories. He centers the entire interest around a striking or significant single incident. He sometimes lapses into the style of an essayist with a tendency to preach. Since characters must illustrate moral truths, they are often embodiments of ideas rather than living people. Faith, in "Young Goodman Brown," is an idea not a person. Although Hawthorne was not the technician that Poe was, his stories, with all their limitations, have the ring of truth. And truth is explored with power and penetration. His morality is that of a humanist, and his

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 16.
themes, although too artificially dramatized, are a part of all human experience.

Herman Melville, like Hawthorne, was more concerned with theme than he was with technique. Although his greatest achievement was with the longer form of fiction, a few of his short stories achieve technical success, such as "Bartleby, the Scrivener," in which the reader is delighted by the lawyer's discovery of his own hollowness after what has appeared to be Bartleby's story. Melville exerted little influence on the development of the short story, however. West says, "Herman Melville seems to have made no clear distinction between the short story and the novel. He wrote short stories—and very good ones, as we have come recently to see. For the most part, however, their length was dictated by the fact that he was writing for magazine publication." 6

The immediate influence of Poe and Hawthorne on American writers is seen in the work of Edward Everett Hale and Fitz-James O'Brien. Hale's "The Man Without A Country," like Hawthorne's and Poe's stories, makes use of a situation for the unifying principle of the narrative. It is not, however, a flesh and blood abstraction of a moral problem. O'Brien, a free-lance in journalism, poetry, and magazine fiction, was an Irishman who migrated to America about 1852. He was too imitative of Poe to be great, but such stories as "The

6West, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
Diamond Lens," and "What Was It?" with the stamp of the latter end of the romantic movement on their plots about abnormal people who meddle with opium or dally with scientific mysticism, are quite successful.

The most significant trend in the development of the American short story in the second half of the nineteenth century was the story of local color. The Civil War had intensified a sectional awareness throughout the nation, and following the war the local color story became the staple of American fiction. The first major writer in this style was Bret Harte. Writers had used local color in their writing before Harte, but no one had used the peculiarities of a single district as the apparent reason for telling a story. Although Harte was sentimental in his attitude toward his characters, most of whom are stereotyped, unrealistic in depicting the local area of the California mining camps, and often lacked sincerity and compassion, he wrote a number of moving stories with memorable characters. Readers do not quickly forget "Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," and "Tennessee's Partner." His achievement was that he wrote stories of single effect and single situation that were not esoterically romantic or saddled with allegory; he made an attempt to get close to American life; and he introduced what has come to be known as local color into the short story. Bates identifies his limited skill when he says:

He was an honest, if limited and second-rate, artist who to-day would have been a gold-mine in Hollywood,
which recognizes and uses the same machinery of appeal: the ultimate triumph of good over evil, the heart of gold behind the rough exterior, the "hold me up, pal" scene of death, the tough-hombre-sweet-schoolmarm love affair, the laughter behind tears, the fade-out, the restful illusion of tranquility after tribulation. 7

The humorous story was popular in local color writing. Its antecedents were the Yankee yarn, the amusing anecdote, and the tale. As literary art the humorous story was seldom successful. Typically, it was a story of a light, trivial, and surprising situation, the point of which was revealed by a twist of the plot at the end. Thomas Bailey Aldrich's "Marjorie Daw" is probably one of the better examples. The reader and the hero of this story are partners in a practical joke involving a fictitious sweetheart. It is humor of absurdity and incongruity. In Frank Stockton's famous "The Lady or the Tiger," comedy is developed out of a tragic situation. Mark Twain's jokes, such as "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," are seldom stories, and more often his humor is not really humor. His best stories, "A Double-Barrelled Detective Story," "The f1,000,000 Bank-Note," and "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," in which he exaggerates and pokes fun, have a grim undercurrent, and they appear more as improvisations than as logically constructed stories. "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" is the most carefully done; however, the satire controls the cardboard figures in it. About the only interest it has for the reader today is the historical uniqueness of

its theme, a theme which was later explored with greater finesse by Sherwood Anderson. Twain's reputation as a humorist lies in the scope of the techniques of humor that he used, not in the techniques for writing a short story. Gladys Bellamy identifies the scope and the nature of his humor when she says:

He used a satiric humor that laughs at men for being so ridiculously what they are; an ironic humor that laughs at them for not being what they should be; a grisly humor that derides the dignity of life; a macabre humor that mocks at the seriousness of death; a fantastic humor, seemingly too light in touch to be sinister, which yet degrades the lofty or raises the low to unmerited pretensions. As a master of every device of the professional humorist, he employed homespun aphorisms, anticlimax, comic implication, irreverence, solemn protestations of truthfulness, and, very rarely, cacography.  

The humorous story, the story with a quip to it, was later exploited more fully by O. Henry and Ring Lardner and continues in magazine fiction today, revealing Americans' keen pleasure in the inconsequential and the ridiculous.

Many writers after Bret Harte made wide and varied use of local color. The term "local impressionists" is frequently applied to them, since, as Canby and Dashiell say, "Local impression . . . indicates what is very true, that in art it [local color] is very likely to be expressed by impressionism."  

In the best of these writers the

8Gladys Bellamy, Mark Twain As A Literary Artist, p. 127.
distinction between local color and local impressionism is that the first points out sectional differences while the latter speaks beyond those differences for the universal. G. W. Cable's *Old Creole Days* contains both racial and geographical flavor, with just enough plot to keep the stories from being mere scientific or impressionistic descriptions. Miss M. N. Murfree's *In the Tennessee Mountains* is a collection of tales of the Tennessee mountaineers which depend more upon dialect, unusual background, or forced circumstances for success than on logical plot. Thomas Nelson Page describes Virginia locality in "In Ole Virginia." Mary Wilkins Freeman uses the hilltowns of New England as background for "A Humble Romance," and Margaret Deland writes about Western Pennsylvania in "Old Chester Tales."

The best of the dialect stories is Joel Chandler Harris' "Uncle Remus." Harris was a journalist who first wrote these stories to fill newspaper space. Their strength lies in their genuineness. The Negro is presented not as a comic caricature, but as a real figure as Harris had known him on the plantation. Pattee says of Harris' creation:

Uncle Remus is one of the most vital creations in modern literature. The sly, unobtrusive humor of the old man, the little touches almost imperceptible that accumulate until the little boy to whom the stories are told stands alive before the reader, the whole social regime of the plantation that unobtrusively he unfolds and makes grippingly real, the uniform atmosphere enveloping the whole work, each tale and all the tales, until one awakes at last to the world of the real with a bit of a start, the steady progress of the narrative to the
quaint and inevitable climax—never a studied and conscious denouement, but a mere following of nature, a mere recording of the negro's innate dramatic instinct, his love of startling climax craftily led up to—all this is art and art in its subtlest form.¹⁰

These writers are some of the better examples of a general exploitation of dialects, customs, scenery, and out-of-the-way places of civilization that belongs to the tradition of nineteenth century local color. Sarah Orne Jewett and Ambrose Bierce stand out from the rest of the local colorists as genuine artists.

Miss Jewett, in "The Country of the Pointed Firs" and in other stories, attempts to point out the relationship between the rocky country of the Maine she loves and the people who live there. Local color in her stories is subordinate to the characters; details of setting explain her characters and add a touch of reality. Her stories are constructed carefully in a style that is reminiscent of Jane Austen's carved figures in ivory. Pattee describes her artistry as follows:

Her stories are etchings made con amore, centering always about a character or a group of characters and seldom about a situation or a culminating action. Material came first—her neighbors in a little circle that she loved, and then the background of "the country of the pointed firs," which to her was the whole world. With her a short story was not, as with Poe, a deliberate thing of form, of impression, of effect upon the reader: it was a sympathetic study in individuality. She worked always with emotion, with real people in mind, perhaps in view, and as a result her unit of measure

¹⁰Fred Lewis Pattee, The Development of the American Short Story, p. 281.
was short. Her genius was lyric and not epic; it was essentially feminine and not masculine. Charles Egbert Craddock, she once observed, was able to take time and to build elaborately on broad foundations "a good big Harper's story," but "not S. O. J., whose French ancestry comes to the fore and makes her nibble all around her stories like a mouse. They used to be as long as yardsticks, they now are as long as spools, and they will soon be the size of old-fashioned peppermints, and have neither beginning nor end, but shape and flavor may still be left them."^{11}

Ambrose Bierce was a better writer than Bret Harte. His link with Poe is evident; all parts of a story work toward a single effect and he makes use of Gothic horror, although there is less emphasis placed on the supernatural. The brevity of his stories does not permit him to explore his characters fully enough for them to become real and individual. As a result the reader responds to the horror of a situation which lacks somewhat the human element. O'Brien says:

We descend with him into a ghastly hall of longing, in which desires themselves freeze in agonizing forms, and horror rules tyrannically over tombs. He insinuates far more than he dares to tell, and the slow relentless cumulative power of his imaginings as they unfold lead inevitably to tremendous climaxes that browbeat us into surrender. He storms the kingdom of art by violence, and the death-rattle of his harsh dry laughter rings long afterward in our ears."^{12}

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^{11}Ibid., p. 262.

His approach to his material was closer to that of the modern short story writer than it was to that of the nineteenth century writer. He used more obvious psychological techniques in his approach to experience than Hawthorne did, he began to shorten the short story, and he brought it to a sharper, more compressed focus through impressionism. Even though his approach and material are somewhat artificial, he suggests possible situations which compel the reader to search his own soul. His Civil War stories are probably his best known ones, such as "A Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," which rank among the best short stories of world literature. He also used the setting of the frontier, its isolation and loneliness, in his exploration of human behavior.

The majority of the local colorists, most of whom were women, made no worth while contribution to fiction with their mere descriptions of unfamiliar peoples and localities. The best of the local colorists, however, made solid contributions. Of most importance, writers such as Bierce and Miss Jewett demonstrated that quality stories could use setting as more than just a place for the action. Canby and Dashiell sum up the contributions of the local colorists as follows:

... the story of localities declined from the interests of good narrative; indeed, the writers who practice it in the new developments which our times have brought about have not yet escaped from the fallacy that facts or impressions alone can make fiction. Nevertheless, in the hands of the real artists of the school, it has been responsible for some of our best and our most characteristic short stories. Furthermore, the feeling for local color gave to our fiction, as
it has given to others, an invaluable conscientiousness in the use of setting. And this, properly controlled, properly used, is important in the writing of either short story or novel.\(^{13}\)

O. Henry, although his stories were written in the first decade of the twentieth century, belongs to the nineteenth century school of writers. Without question O. Henry is a slick writer; the mechanics of his stories control his material. Critics tend either to ignore him as a short story writer or to find little of worth in his stories. O'Brien says, "Like Mark Twain, the vast body of his ephemeral productions will be forgotten, referred to occasionally by social historians perhaps, but well-nigh unintelligible to the future age with a different idiom."\(^{14}\) Bates says of him:

O. Henry strikes one as being the itinerant photographer who buttonholes every passer-by in the street, wise-cracks him, snaps the camera, raises his hat and hands him the inevitable card .... O. Henry is not, and I think never was, a writer. He is a great showman who can talk the hind leg off a donkey and then proceed to sell the public that same donkey as a pedigreed race-horse.\(^{15}\)

N. Bryllion Fagin says of him:

... an examination of O. Henry's work by any one not blinded by hero-worship and popular esteem, discloses at best an occasional brave peep at life, hasty, superficial, and dazzlingly flippant; an idea, raw, unassimilated, timidly works its way to

\(^{13}\)Canby and Dashiell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 59.

\(^{14}\)O'Brien, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 201.

\(^{15}\)Bates, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 58.
the surface only to be promptly suppressed by a hand skilled in producing sensational effects.\(^{16}\)

Although O. Henry's stories are pat, they do occasionally hit at human truths and they have a certain charm. O. Henry was an excellent observer; he looked at people carefully even though his view of life was somewhat romantic; he was interested in people and could make people interesting; he had a sympathy for the underdog and a sense of humor. O. Henry was always a journalist, but he knew one important thing about the art of the short story--the beginning of a short story must capture the reader's attention. He had and still has an immense popularity with a wide range of readers. Who can forget "The Ransom of Red Chief," "The Gift of the Magi," or "The Cop and the Anthem?" His particular method of the surprise ending has had a persistent influence on writers with less and with more skill.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the philosophy of naturalism, inherited mostly from the French, began to influence American literature. Very broadly, those writers usually considered naturalists attempted to show that environmental and hereditary forces not only influenced man's destiny, but determined it. Such a theory requires a large canvas to pile up the documentary evidence needed to support it, so the significant work of these early

\(^{16}\)N. Bryllion Fagin, *Short Story-Writing: An Art or a Trade?*, p. 41.
naturalists was in the novel rather than the short story. West says:

... literary naturalism made less of an impression upon the history of the short story than it did upon the history of the American novel. In the first place, the short story because of its length demanded a greater preoccupation with literary techniques than the naturalist, who was in an important sense antiliterary, was willing or able to grant. In the second place, the concept itself when carried to its logical extreme exposed itself as being in opposition to ideas embodied in traditional great works which the writer—who was an artist as well as a thinker—was unwilling or unable to discard.17

Hamlin Garland, who wrote two volumes of short stories, *Main-Travelled Roads* and *Crumbling Idols*, dealing with the plight of Midwesterners, is a local colorist of sorts. His stories are weak aesthetically, since they state their theme didactically rather than suggest it, and his naturalistic philosophy is not well grounded and supported. Frank Norris' "A Deal in Wheat" and Theodore Dreiser's "Typhoon" and "The Lost Phoebe" attempt to demonstrate that destiny is determined by the social system, not by character. Dreiser tends to editorialize less than Norris, with the result that his stories are more moving. All of these stories would have been better as novels.

Stephen Crane was influenced by naturalism, yet his best stories rise above the limitations of the philosophical movement. The four men in "The Open Boat" have subjective resources which make them not as much victims of natural forces as victims of their own spiritual lives. In "The Blue Hotel" social forces are set into motion

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17West, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
which result in a killing, but at the end the characters involved imply their own responsibility. Like Bierce, Crane exhibits a method closer to that of the modern writer than to that of the nineteenth century writer. He works extensively with impressionism, symbolism, and irony. Meaning emerges from his stories through the implication of selected isolated incidents in significant arrangement rather than by a traditionally engineered plot; his style was that of an impressionist. In "The Open Boat" the captain, clinging to the keel of the overturned boat, "appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat," the effect being to give the reader an impression of the entire scene. The titles of two stories, "The Blue Hotel" and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," suggest Crane's use of color to achieve an impressionistic effect. Unfortunately, Crane had little influence on his own contemporaries.

The short stories of these naturalist writers, with the exception of Crane's have little merit in the whole of American literature. Literary naturalism, however, has had a strong influence on many writers. It indicates a particular manner of viewing life as it focuses its attention on that part of man's experience in which he is most closely allied to nature. The exclusiveness of naturalism can become a part of a writer's method, just as the romantic view of experience can be a part of a writer's control of his material. More significantly, naturalism helped to destroy the nineteenth century myth of the innocent appearance of the natural world, although
Hawthorne, Melville, and Twain had seen the evil lurking beneath that appearance, and thus prepared the way for a new content in the short story. The theme of social protest is carried on in a later period by such writers as Erskine Caldwell, James T. Farrell and Nelson Algren. The "slice-of-life" technique stems most directly from this movement. Crane's technique of symbolism, impressionism, and irony affected the styles of numerous writers following him, most notably Ernest Hemingway. Part of the naturalist's method, realism, refined by James' technique and a different moral orientation, contributed to a new method for the twentieth century short story writer.

The Genteel Tradition had an effect on the subject matter of several writers in the late nineteenth century. Twain was somewhat hampered by his attempt to shun it. William Dean Howells, who could not entirely reject it, at least came to terms with it in "Editha." Neither Howells nor Twain has any great significance in the development of the short story; their glory lies elsewhere. Henry James, too, is more important as a novelist than as a writer of short stories, although during the ten years before his first significant novel he wrote short stories almost exclusively; his reputation was established by the slender "Daisy Miller," and he wrote at least one masterpiece of the shorter form for each decade of writing.

The method and point of view of Henry James are in contrast to the method and point of view of the naturalists, although both are realists. James, like Poe, viewed fiction as one of the highest
forms of art, and, like the naturalists, believed that art should be firmly based on life. West says, basing his judgments on James' notebooks and Prefaces:

Art was for him an autonomous form of knowledge, as science or philosophy is autonomous. The structure of fiction was organic, the truths which it revealed were implicit rather than explicit, and its appeal was to be made not to the intellect alone—or even primarily—but to the intellect in conjunction with the emotions. As such, its effect was similar to the effect one gets from a real-life situation but refined and concentrated beyond the wasteful and untidy responses one makes in life.13

The most pervasive principle of literary naturalism is social determinism, which, eliminating the will of the individual, permits him to escape any individual human responsibility. The most common technique is an attempt to be scientific and objective. It is technically impossible for an individual writer not to superimpose his ideas of reality on what is observed, since he must create a world through the selection and interpretation of facts. But when the writer, through trying consciously to achieve this, gives the general effect of objectivity, it is in a sense realism. The realist must feel that there is a world to be interpreted objectively; his form and style then reflect what constitutes that world's reality as he sees and attempts to interpret it. At any rate, it is the artist who makes sense out of the world for the reader, whether it is a Stephen Crane

13 West, op. cit., p. 21.
with an impressionism that gives the effect of reality flowing in
upon the consciousness and creating it, or a Henry James with a
realism of heightened consciousness and sensibility; the person whose
mind the artist is in makes sense out of the flux of impressions
that come to him. In neither is there the assumption that there was
meaning in the world before the author discovered it. The artist
begins with an assumption that reality is a flux, or a force, or a
flow, and the individual is either overwhelmed by it or overwhelms it.
The conception of the individual's relation to reality is different
in each case, but both assumptions are those of a realist. It is the
content and the point of view that make Crane, usually, and not James
a naturalist. These two streams of realism in this critical orienta-
tion provide the currents for most quality fiction in the twentieth
century.

Plot is not important to Henry James; he considered Poe's
dénouement as artificial and false to life. Since human experience
is not usually tied up into neat little bundles, doing this in fiction
is being untruthful. This is not to say though that James' art is
not carefully controlled. He does not focus on the dramatic moments
of life, but moves slowly through carefully selected ordinary happen-
ings until a pattern begins to emerge, what James calls "the figure
in the carpet." O'Brien says, "His art is . . . a gradual revelation
of life rather than an historical progression, and his means is to
combine many indirect and subtle points of view as embodied by
different characters so that they converge into a single focus

... "19 The climax occurs when there is a "shock of recognition."

A dénouement is extraneous. In "The Beast in the Jungle" John Marcher seeks experience while avoiding it. When he recognizes that his inability to face experience is his tragedy in life, he has faced the beast in the jungle—his shock of recognition.

James views experience from the inside. A central intelligence is his unifying control. The narrator of his stories is usually an observer who is involved in the action. No outsider analyzes the characters as in the omniscient convention; his characters analyze themselves and each other. The real delight in a James story is when two characters make a psychological discovery of each other. James handles this so skillfully that the reader knows and the characters know, yet the discovery is never brought out into the open. Ross says of James' method:

What James did in a sense was simply to reinterpret Aristotle's conception of recognition in the light of modern psychological studies of subjective experience. His primary concern was to direct what his brother, psychologist William James, called a "stream of thought" toward a moment of recognition. It was always a controlled, rational stream, however. He simply worked with the conscious interior experience of his central character, seeking to highlight moments of illumination.20

Although James made no deep impression on other writers, with the exception of Edith Wharton, during the years immediately preceding or

190 'Brien, op. cit., p. 134.

following his death, he lifted the art of fiction to a new plane. James, like Hawthorne, worked with unifying situations to explore the inner experience. Hawthorne, however, was a moralist who began with a moral to be dramatized. James was an artist who studied what he found in the brain, or the soul, or the heart. Although he was superior to Hawthorne in style and method, he lacked Hawthorne's power and penetration of vision into human experience. Hawthorne rings; James tinkles. James was not as limited as some readers and critics have believed him to be, however. He is frequently criticized for peopling his stories with the upper classes. These happen to be the people James knew best, but the characteristic is less true of his short stories than of his novels. Even so, James is less concerned with class distinctions than he is with the universal motivations of behavior. Leon Edel says of his short stories:

We find also in them school-teachers and grocery clerks; artists' models and penny-a-liners; impoverished bohemians and dowdy dowagers, and families who jump their hotel bills from one resort to another. James was concerned not with classes of people, or their "station in life," so much as with their hopelessness and uncertainty, with individuals who--poor or rich--nourish illusions and suffer the frustrations and indignities of life.  

During the first decade of the twentieth century the short story reached its lowest level of quality in the United States, partially as a result of the popularity of the short story as it was ground out

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21 Leon Edel, ed., The Complete Tales of Henry James, I, p. 15.
to meet demands, partially from the effect of naturalism on literary style, and partially from the fact that there was a lack of great writers devoting their talents to this genre. Journalistic style was at a premium, which led to a lack of quality in style and a cheapness in the materials out of which the stories were made. Two-dimensional characters solved artificial dilemmas, and an emphasis on the mechanical plot became more pronounced. Plot had become a manipulation of life rather than an interpretation of it. Some writers, uncertain of subject matter, sought refuge in pure style. Out of this dearth a group of writers emerged who, with the exception of Willa Cather, had little literary style, but had a vitality that had been lacking. Although these transition writers, who were received by a wide audience, did little to change the traditional shape of the short story, they contributed to the field of American literature by using fresh native material.

Irvin S. Cobb, who inherited many of Mark Twain's qualities, wrote stories with a sense of their being told rather than written. His humor is based alternately on exaggeration and understatement, with a touch of sadness running underneath. Edna Ferber and Fannie Hurst developed and refined the O. Henry method. Ring Lardner's humor also followed in the tradition of Twain, written in the vernacular of ignorant, semiliterate people. His humor is full of satire as he points out man's shortcomings. Booth Tarkington, although not noteworthy as a literary artist, succeeded in portraying faithfully and cleverly some aspects of Middle Western life. Willa Cather, the most
brilliant of this group, wrote from the naturalist movement, but she developed her style and method from James and Sarah Orne Jewett. In her stories there is external detail which contributes to objective reality, but she slowly builds and balances themes and motifs as only an artist can do. Willa Cather represents the cumulative effect of all the best influences of the traditional short story—Poe's unified effect, Hawthorne's great compassion, local color setting, James' method, and Crane's impressionism. For the most part, however, these writers dealt only with surfaces and obvious emotions, sometimes exaggerated for emphasis. Their lack of psychological subtlety is probably the reason for their popular success. Writers are still encouraged by many commercial periodicals to use such a style.

Just as Poe is regarded as the founder of the short story, Sherwood Anderson is looked upon as the founder of the modern American short story. He was the first writer to revolt against a mechanical technique and a mechanical view of life at a time when people were ready to listen. Anderson says in *A Story Teller's Story*, "Let a writer begin to think of human beings, care a little for human beings, and his pasteboard world would melt before his eyes . . . ."22 In the chaotic state of life after the war readers and writers were more mature and discriminating than the preceding generation; they had fewer prejudices and were openly more curious about life. Thus, the writer was able to come into closer contact with his material.

Anderson's stories are filled with people rather than characters. He revolts against New England gentility and false respectability and writes with sympathy and compassion about common people. He has roots in the local color tradition as he writes of the small town in Ohio, but he is really writing of lonely, frustrated, and unloved people everywhere. The titles of two of his finest stories, "I Want to Know Why" and "I'm A Fool," suggest the loneliness and shame his people feel. O'Brien says:

His people are men and women who need to be loved and whom life has somehow passed by, and who are inarticulate. There is a great deal of petty detail in their lives, dull gray monotonous detail, but they cannot find the synthesis of it all. Then one day something breaks, and the man or the woman is free, or more often crushed. The subconscious mind of these people is constantly struggling to reach the surface and to impose its dream upon life. It breaks through the frozen ground at last, and the end is either liberty or devastation.  

Anderson's world is similar to that of the naturalist. His concern is with the psychological implications of that world as they are reflected in the individual psyche, however. And he had an almost uncritical faith in the goodness of human nature. West says, "His characters are tortured by social restrictions from which they can be freed only by a return to nature, a trusting of their instincts and natural sensibilities."  

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23 O'Brien, op. cit., p. 257.
24 West, op. cit., p. 44.
In his reaction against stereotyped formalism, Anderson follows no formula. His stories do not exhibit traditional plot. There is structural unity, however, as he attempts to reveal his characters, not in some significant action, but in some common aspect of humdrum life in the small town or village. Unity is achieved through theme rather than rigid structure. Anderson presents no more knowledge of his characters than he believes they possess, since he knows that these people can be revealed only by looking at them from the inside; they must be permitted to express the hidden depths of their souls.

As a result, no subject is barred from Anderson's stories (frequently it is a sexual frustration that lies buried beneath the social facade), and the language is of the vernacular. As a stylist Anderson is close to the impressionism of Stephen Crane. He saw similarities between the literary artist and the painter. In *A Story Teller's Story* he says:

The true painter revealed all of himself in every stroke of the brush . . . . the words used by the tale-teller were as the colors used by the painter. Form was another matter. It grew out of the materials of the tale and the teller's reaction to them. It was the tale trying to take form that kicked about inside the tale-teller at night when he wanted to sleep. And words were something else. Words were the surfaces, the clothes of the tale . . . . Would the common words of our daily speech in shops and offices do the trick? Surely the Americans among whom one sat talking had felt everything the Greeks had felt, everything the English felt? Deaths came to them, the tricks of fate assailed their lives. I was certain none of them lived felt or talked as the average American novel made them live feel and talk . . . .

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From Anderson on, the American short story has exhibited a freedom and vitality that it had not known before. New writers continued the revolt against tradition that had been begun by Anderson. But they did more than just revolt; they offered positive achievement. There were no limitations on appropriate subject matter for the writer of short stories. The writer approached his material directly and truthfully, using his point of view and style as reinforcements of his vision of experience. Despite Anderson's rejection of Poe, the form of the modern short story is based more clearly on Poe's principles than the stories of the writers who followed him. There is greater unity of effect as all parts, including style, lead directly to a single impression. And there is considerable creative imagination and ingenuity. The difference is in the writer's approach to his material. The modern writer searches for truth in his observation of life; he does not manipulate his material to achieve a preconceived effect.

Experimentation has been characteristic of the short story since Anderson, and not all writers have been successful in their ventures into new territories. The short story has served the best writers as a tool to examine the morality of their times. They have been concerned as well with perfecting their craft. Some have been less successful in their excursions, using the form to write sociological documents. Some have used the slice-of-life and stream-of-consciousness techniques less successfully than others.
The two writers of greatest stature that have emerged since Anderson are Hemingway and Faulkner. Hemingway continued what Anderson started. He also acknowledged Crane as one of his American influences. He uses language as a tool to probe into the human spirit. In his stories he is not concerned, as Hawthorne was, with abstract problems, and he does not share Anderson's confidence that human problems can be solved. He grapples on very simple terms with man's relation to death and to love. He records without placing a personal value on what he sees, although a personal value is implicit in what he selects to record. His prose, therefore, is clean and precise, stripped of conventions. Bates says of his style:

What Hemingway realized, and what it is important all short-story writers should realize, was that it is possible to convey a great many things on paper without stating them at all. To master the art of implication, of making one sentence say two or more different things, by conveying emotion and atmosphere without drawing up a tidy balance sheet of descriptions about them, is more than half the short-story writer's business. Because he mastered that business with a new staccato slickness of style, eliminating so much of what had been considered essential literary paraphernalia, Hemingway was and still is a most important writer.26

Hemingway's plot structure is tight. A character is either initiated into the knowledge of a trapping force of life or he is seen struggling against it. In either case, the human responsibility implied separates Hemingway from the naturalists.

26Bates, op. cit., p. 177.
Faulkner uses style in a manner different from that of Hemingway, although just as consciously. In his early stories he attempted a style like Hemingway's, but he was unable to master it, since his view of experience was different. Faulkner writes of a disintegrating South, where various forces and traditions are at war with each other. Such complexity of experience demands a complexity of style, although in his short stories, where his focus is more precise than in his novels, his language and style are more direct.

F. Scott Fitzgerald is best known as the chronicler of the Jazz Age. He not only pictures the irresponsibility of those years, but in his best work there is a moral center which identifies the corruption of a society that bases its values only on wealth. Many of his stories suffer from their superficial glitter, but his best stories, such as "A Diamond as Big as the Ritz," "Babylon Revisited," "Winter Dreams," and "The Rich Boy," probe deeply into the human heart and show considerable control of both form and style. West identifies Fitzgerald's link with Henry James when he says, "His short stories at their best recall the work of James . . . for they are studies in manners reflecting a sensitivity to social distinctions--particularly the differences engendered by extreme wealth--which is as penetrating as that of James."27 Mary Jane Wing points out a significant difference between these two writers. She says, "Both James and Mrs. Wharton wrote primarily of Society in the eastern United States

27West, op. cit., p. 64.
and Europe, since that was the world in which they had always lived. Fitzgerald wrote of the same world because it was the one he yearned to belong to. He never did; and that is perhaps one reason why his work, in some significant ways quite like that of James and Mrs. Wharton, is yet very different."28

Three other writers who began writing in the twenties are also important for their experimentation with the form. Katherine Anne Porter, a descendant of both Hawthorne and James, uses a style more experimental and polished to render a psychological situation. Her use of symbols, the stream-of-consciousness, and mythical concepts to develop her themes is her outstanding technical achievement, represented best in "Flowering Judas," "Old Mortality," and "Pale Horse, Pale Rider." Kay Boyle's sharp, precise prose emphasizes the technique of implication. She has demonstrated, also, that fiction can be an effective medium for exploring political attitudes. Dorothy Parker is a brilliant social satirist with psychological depth. Her recent story, "I Live on Your Visits," collected in Stories from the New Yorker: 1950-1960, is a characteristically merciless study of a selfish woman.

The thirties saw a resurgence of naturalism in several writers of fiction. In their attempt to find new standards to replace the old, these writers were in a sense salvaging some of the elements of the past which had been ignored in the twenties. The worst of these

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28 Mary Jane Wing, Studies in the American Short Story, p. 27.
writers, such as James T. Farrell, were again substituting economic for aesthetic canons. As Canby and Dashiell say, "The complete break with tradition has led many writers to forget those deep currents of human life which have gone on for centuries and which are not yet susceptible to explanation either by science or by the theory of historical materialism." The best of these writers are perhaps John Steinbeck and Erskine Caldwell. Steinbeck looks back to the naturalists as he sees man's condition as a product of his environment. He celebrates the natural instincts in man and locates his values in an agrarian society where man is close to nature. "The Red Pony" and "The Chrysanthemums" not only illustrate Steinbeck's themes, but show his artistic control of his material through the use of underlying psychological symbols. Caldwell's philosophic view of his inarticulate and dumb Southerners is similar to Steinbeck's. His stories that reveal the vigor and lustiness of the traditional rustic, such as "Candy-Man Beechum," are better than those which attempt a sociopolitical protest, such as "The People vs. Abe Lathan: Colored" or "Kneel to the Rising Sun." The latter rely on a vague and sentimental symbolic force to resolve the problem, a technique reminiscent of Norris. These two writers, however, demonstrate that naturalism can be handled artfully. West says:

... the superiority of Steinbeck and Caldwell to James T. Farrell, lies not in the social consciousness of each, not in the element of rebellion against traditional social or moral values, but in the technical superiority of each

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29 Canby and Dashiell, op. cit., p. 86.
as a literary craftsman. In short, these writers may be said to share the limitations of naturalism (their subject matter) while differing in the degree in which they accept or reject the technical means of controlling their material.  

The dominant regional group to appear in the contemporary American short story is a group of Southern writers, although numerous other writers use local settings in their stories. Following Faulkner have been Katherine Anne Porter, Caroline Gordon, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Robert Penn Warren, Truman Capote, and Peter Taylor. All of these writers, however, have transcended the bounds of a locale. West says, "Brought up with memories of a social grandeur destroyed by civil war, such authors seem at times almost obsessed with the need to examine the values of that society in terms of the ever-changing present." The Southern social order has been one of the most distinctive in the nation's history; its manners, traditions, and tragic history offer more literary content to writers than the more amalgamated Northern society; and the West, in the twentieth century, has lost the color that it had for the nineteenth century writer. The South, however, becomes only an orientation for these writers to probe into human experience in a significant way. Most of these writers have not limited themselves to sectional stories, but, like almost all American writers of this period, have found color all over the world and have investigated ideas and human situations of wider interest.

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30 West, op. cit., p. 34.
31 Ibid., p. 71.
Danforth Ross lists two characteristics of the modern short story: volume and experimentation.\textsuperscript{32} A list of quality short story writers of the last twenty years would be long indeed. It would be difficult to make a valid generalization about their work other than to say that they have continued to explore with varying degrees of success the possibilities of the form since its liberation by Anderson. To mention John O'Hara, Ruth Suckow, Glenway Wescott, John Cheever, William March, Jesse Stuart, Irwin Shaw, J. F. Powers, Jean Stafford, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, J. D. Salinger, John Updike, Philip Roth, Flannery O'Conner, Saul Bellow and James Baldwin is to ignore the writers of many excellent stories. Current writers are concerned with a number of themes, but the tone of their work is predominantly somber. A note of anxiety, defeat, frustration, or withdrawal, in one form or another, sounds repeatedly. Many stories look back to childhood, not, as a rule, to romanticize it, but rather to isolate the problems with which the authors are preoccupied. Writers see the dilemma of the private self in search of identity in a culture whose major concerns are irrelevant to the needs of a moral life. The short story, with its center in the single physical, psychological, or moral event emphasizes this isolation and as such is an appropriate medium at least for identifying the problem.

\textsuperscript{32}Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 40-41.
A recognizable trend, or possibly fad, is the work of the Beat Generation of writers. Ross says of them:

The Beats carry their rebellion into their manner of writing. They feel that the followers of Aristotle and Poe and James have lost vitality. They have little use for a story that builds toward effect or recognition. They scorn technical triumphs of the artist. Their own stories tend to zigzag madly, reaching for moments of ecstasy, achieving them, and then plunging off in a new direction. They feel that they have gained life even if they have lost form.33

Perhaps the short story is ready for a change, and perhaps the Beats are right in identifying the direction as vitality. Unlike the rebelling writers of the twenties, however, they offer no positive effort in its place. As Ross says, "They have made their point, and now they are repeating it. They reach the West Coast, and then they turn back. Lacking form, their stories, once the newness has worn off, are all duller for the repetition and the failure in technique."34

The short story has reached such a peak of development in the United States that it at least temporarily overshadows the present growth of the novel. That it is an essentially American form and an appropriate form of literary expression for today is illustrated by the number of leading writers who are using it extensively and in many cases almost exclusively. It is practiced with more variety and artistry here than in any other country.

33Ibid., p. 44.
34Ibid., pp. 44-45.
The short story got a much later start in Great Britain than it did in the United States. The dominant Victorian idea that literature should teach something and that its results should not give purely aesthetic, sensuous, and recreative pleasure was a handicap to the development of the short story in England. Also, the novel dominated the world of fiction in England during the nineteenth century. Cody remarks that "until the advent of Mr. Kipling the publication of volumes of short stories was never considered profitable by English publishers."35

Numerous tales of nineteenth century English novelists exist which are neither long stories nor short ones, such as Dickens' Christmas Carol and The Cricket on the Hearth, Mrs. Gaskell's Cousin Phillis, George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life, and Meredith's Chloe. Canby and Dashiell say of this type, "They are to be grouped with what the French call the nouvelle, a story of linked episodes, a larger unity than our short story, and lacking its singleness of effect, though in no sense attempting the complexity, the many-plottedness of the novel."36 Occasionally an English short story appeared in this period which demonstrated the art of suspense and single effect closely resembling Poe's, if not in form, at least in substance. Dickens did it once in "The Signal-Man"; Wilkie Collins


36Canby and Dashiell, op. cit., p. 46.
did it in "A Terribly Strange Bed"; and Bulwer-Lytton did it in "The House and the Brain"—all stories of horror or mystery. These seem to be the product of accident rather than conscious design, since they are not a recurring aspect of the writers' work. These writers were all primarily interested in the more important business of the novel.

Robert Louis Stevenson was the first English writer to devote serious attention to the short story. His link with Poe and Hawthorne is clearly evident in his predilection for the romantic and the mysterious, and in the moral analysis which is the core of his study of the quality of evil in each story, such as in "Markheim," "A Lodging for the Night," and "The Sire de Malétrroit's Door." His style, however, is his own, carefully labored and artificial.

Stevenson set the trend for a number of writers in the romantic vein. At the turn of the century and later, the romantic evasion of familiar reality in fiction is accomplished through the use of subject matter and themes on the extreme margins of common life: a glamorous past, far away and exotic places, and the mysterious and the occult. The exotic setting is typical of many writers from Kipling through Somerset Maugham. W. H. Hudson uses the "far away and long ago" of the Argentine for his four poetic tales in El Ombú. Oscar Wilde's stories, such as The Happy Prince and Other Tales, are filled with fantasy and sentiment; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle followed Poe's tradition of the detective story in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes; and H. G. Wells gave vent to his scientific and speculative mind in such stories as "The Time Machine" and "The Country of the Blind."
Wells, like Poe, satisfied "the nineteenth-century hunger for dream worlds and scientific fantasy." Although many of his ideas are of the wildest improbability, he skillfully manipulated them into credible narratives. Doyle's Sherlock Holmes provides the archetype for almost all fictional detectives since his day. His other stories of historical romance show his ability to create absorbing plot and atmosphere, but not character. Longaker and Bolles say of Doyle, "He must be put among the great yarn spinners, to whom, regrettably, literary appraisals can never do justice in proportion to the pleasure they give us."

Rudyard Kipling was unquestionably the first great master of the short story form in England. Craig says of his stories:

They were true short stories in the sense that they dealt not comprehensively with men's lives in their full development, but selectively with chosen instances, illustrative anecdotes. He was a born story teller; he knew how to give the sense of a man spinning a yarn at the club; to keep the story moving, bring it to its culmination, and give it point. As for his subject matter, it was extremely wide in range, and clearly pertinent to the interests of men concerned with the work of the world and the well-being of the British Empire.

Kipling was a romantic, but his material was from the present rather than the past. He had read Bret Harte carefully, but his local color,

38 Mark Longaker and Edwin C. Bolles, Contemporary English Literature, p. 215.
rather than illustrative of mid-Victorian sentimentality is "full of romantic enthusiasm for primitive vigor, and the life of the emotions and the instincts." "The Man Who Would Be King," "On Greenhow Hill," and "Without Benefit of Clergy" represented something new and vital in local color. The form of his stories follows closely the principles laid down by Poe: a unified and striking incident leaving a single impression. Somerset Maugham indicates that "no one in England has written stories on these [Poe's] lines better than Rudyard Kipling."  

His style is that of a journalist; he splashes sensational people in sensational actions across a sensational setting. Although he used journalistic techniques with considerable success, his imitators often used sensationalism less discriminately. In some of his later stories, "The Brushwood Boy," "They," and "An Habitation Enforced," he applied the journalistic technique to the realm of psychology, making it realizable and concrete. Although his followers vulgarized his technique, Kipling raised one kind of journalism to the level of art and was responsible for much vivid color and finely wrought action in later fiction.

Kipling was unfair in his representation of the native Indian. He was sympathetic toward the native only as long as the native was

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40 Canby and Dashiell, op. cit., p. 67.

faithful to the Empire, and he ignored the whole area of commercial exploitation. Bates says, "One gets... the impression of a writer whose outlook is one of harsh, confused, egotistical mysticism, of a voice vulgar and cruel in its class intolerance." Christopher Isherwood says of his early reactions to Kipling's stories:

I was terrified by Kipling's warnings—if life was as rough as he made it seem, I knew I would never be able to cope with it—but that wasn't the only effect they had on me. I also became aware that the things he approved of—the Empire, the Flag, the Old School Tie and the Stiff Upper Lip—were various aspects of an Enemy whom I, personally, would have to fight, whether I liked it or not, for the rest of my life.

Kipling was identified with imperialism and he expresses the white man's point of view. Now that the native Indian writer has found expression, the view of the native is somewhat different from the way Kipling represented it. Kipling cannot be blamed entirely for his environment and the ideologies of the time in which he lived, although a greater intellect would have been able to transcend them.

Several important late nineteenth century and early twentieth century novelists wrote some short stories as well. Joseph Conrad used the romantic backgrounds of haunted jungle rivers and typhoon-infested seas for his stories. He sought, however, for moral truth in the human heart, and setting was used for symbols of the psychology of

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42 Bates, op. cit., p. 117.

43 Christopher Isherwood, ed., Great English Short Stories, p. 185.
the inner world. Conrad's contribution to the art of fiction is his method of telling his story. The story is told directly by one who participated in the action, or passed on by the author from some informed narrator. He carefully builds a sense of horror and mystery. Craig says of "Heart of Darkness:"

[It] ... illustrates well the function of the narrator in giving naturalness to the tone (where romantic spookiness à la Poe is the substance) and in dramatizing that penchant for psychological interpretation which is at the same time the strength and the weakness of Conrad. It serves to tone down the baroque extravaganza of his "oriental" style. And it enables him without pedantry to give to his sensational story that touch of the "moral" or human which is so lacking in the eerie productions of Poe.

In Conrad's long short stories his methods differ little from the methods of his novels. As Bates says, "He is dealing, as always, with men isolated from their fellows by ironic circumstances and presented in dramatic clashes against elemental forces. Such themes are big, calling for the spacious methods at which Conrad excelled."

Thomas Hardy wrote tales with more realism in them; he is concerned chiefly with familiar life in the English countryside in Wessex Tales, Life's Little Ironies, and A Changed Man, The Waiting Supper and Other Tales. He excelled in the dramatic use of irony, although,

44 Craig, op. cit., p. 606.
at times, it becomes somewhat obvious and monotonous. Hardy's philosophy controlled his stories with the result that character and action are manipulated by the author. Characters may have a life of their own, but they must eventually succumb to Hardy's perverse ordering of things.

Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy also wrote short stories maintaining a sound tradition of realistic craftsmanship. Bennett, like Hardy, explored a limited locality for his materials, and he was unsentimental, brisk, witty, and realistic in his descriptions of middle-class life, but his stories lack the element of real human nature that is more typical of his novels. Galsworthy's stories are generally too sentimental, but sometimes they are moving treatments of obscure tragedy or twisted, sad ironies. Besides his stories and novels, Galsworthy also wrote essays which use fictional narrative to dramatize his ideas rather than expound them. Craig says of Galsworthy's stories:

The tales of John Galsworthy show (mainly) how this form may be made to body forth the "vision" of an honorable English gentleman of fastidious and humane sentiments. The representation of human nature is somewhat pale and conventional compared with that in his novel, The Man of Property. A certain well-bred languor invests the whole, and refinement of taste and feeling are weakened by a penchant for the cliche. 46

46 Craig, op. cit., p. 607.
These novelists illustrate the interest in the short story form in England, and, undoubtedly, they contributed to its development. At a time when American writers were limiting themselves to a rigorous technique, these writers, including Conrad, Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy, were for a time apostles of a freer and broader handling of the short story idea. They did little to refine it, however, and their best work in each case is in the novel rather than the short story.

Somerset Maugham, a blend of Kipling and Conrad, must be considered in part a commercial artist. His stories follow a straightforward and objective narrative line and serve as models for skillful craftsmanship. They have unity and proportion. Characters, although sharply defined within a story, have a tendency to reappear in his stories. Maugham writes about certain types, such as the leading characters in "Mr. Know-All," "The Verger," and "Winter Cruise." Even the famous and well-drawn character Sadie Thompson in "Rain" is essentially a type. Maugham's technical skill lacks subtlety. There is little variety in the structural arrangement of parts of the various stories, and the reader comes to expect a certain Maugham ending that is too inevitable and pat. His stories would be more artistically satisfying, too, if they made more use of compression. Maugham has written a number of memorable stories, however. His technical skill captures and holds the interest of the reader. He has an excellent eye for details of character and setting and his travels in the South Seas have been used to advantage in many of his picturesque stories.
He has a certain genius for the diagnosis of human frailty. Yet, his work has a slickness to it that places him somewhere between O. Henry and Maupassant. Bates identifies sentimentality and lack of compassion for those whom Maugham observes as his major weaknesses as a writer. He says:

He has no heart, and in the place of that heart one has the impression that he uses a piece of clockwork. It is this, I think, that gives Maugham's work the frequent impression of cheapness. This effect is heightened by something else. Maugham, having mastered the art of irony, mistakenly supposed himself to be a cynic. But throughout Maugham's work, and notably in the stories, there exists a pile of evidence to show that Maugham the cynic is in reality a tin-foil wrapping for Maugham the sentimentalist. Maugham's cynicism indeed peels off under too-close examination, thin, extraneous, tinny, revealing underneath a man who is afraid of trusting, and finally of revealing his true emotions.  

Longaker and Bolles, somewhat more objectively, evaluate Maugham's work by saying that he has "a mind that one feels would recognize and estimate correctly the whole content of a situation but would rarely apprehend anything beyond it—which is what the artist must do." Maugham has always been popular with readers, but his influence on the writing of quality stories has never been wide or important. As Bates says, "Neither Conrad nor Maugham, for all their popularity and excellence contributed any lasting momentum to the short story's progress . . . . none threatened the orderly business of that day . . . . Conrad,  

48 Longaker and Bolles, op. cit., p. 307.
Maugham, Bennett, Galsworthy, Hudson and many writers of their generation simply carried into the new world the cooled and now unmalleable tradition of the old.¹⁴⁹

Two other British writers of the early twentieth century are important for their contributions to the story of wit and humor. H. H. Munro (Saki) wrote delightful little inventions that do not pretend to be serious; and Max Beerbohm's parodies of his contemporaries are quite revealing. Both of these writers belong in the Leacock-Thurber-Wodehouse school of humor. In all of his stories Munro showed himself to be the master of the light and subtle touch. He could create a situation in a few deft sentences and then in a swift stroke reach a climax. This style, as well as his impish humor, gives his work a lasting quality. Longaker and Bolles say of Reginold and Clovis, the two characters in most of Munro's light stories, "They are 'nuts,' but highly intelligent 'nuts,' purposeful and consistent in their devastating raids upon stupidity and convention, suave and subtle in their methods."⁵⁰

Revolution in the British short story came first from Ireland rather than from England. At a time when prose style was heavy and labored. George Moore wrote quite short stories about the Irish


⁵⁰ Longaker and Bolles, op. cit., p. 218.
peasantry in a style poetic and transparent and in a form economical and artistically structured. His later stories failed as they grew more elaborate and he attempted to purify the language somewhat artificially.

James Joyce wrote one volume of short stories, Dubliners, filled with simple and poetic pictures of Dublin, his heroine. In these stories there is no clever manipulation of plot, nothing startling or grotesquely mysterious. Joyce was free from the artificial, tricky, and sophisticated that apparently appealed to the masses who read magazines. He was sensitive and deeply thoughtful and he approached life as he saw it. He faithfully portrays the objective world around him, but he seems to be more interested in the special awareness of a character as he comes into contact with a specific situation. His short stories are told rather directly. His more complex expressionistic symbolism of the stream-of-consciousness was to be developed in his later, longer works. Bates says of his original contribution to the short story:

It is an originality arising solely from Joyce's power to transmute ordinary life (a Christmas party, a suicide, a drunken clerk, life in a boarding house, a jealous mother), to render it naturally and yet compassionately, objectively and yet with a rare beauty of emotional tone . . . . Joyce . . . found the crises and dilemmas of life sufficiently terrible without having to invent or manipulate them. Like Moore, he had learned the art not only of presentation, but of filtering life through an extremely fine mesh of sensibility,
and the result was such exquisite stuff as *The Dead, Clay, A Little Cloud, Araby,* and the rest, which were unfortunately never to be repeated in the years of Joyce's preoccupation with a more complex form.51

Liam O'Flaherty also wrote sketches and stories about Irish peasants and fishermen, such as "Spring Sowing," "The Tent," and "The Mountain Tavern," with poetic vividness. Frank O'Connor says of his work, "He flings himself on a theme with the abandonment and innocence of a child, completely unaware of any reflections that might be made on it. 'The Fairy Goose' is an amazing example of his skill in its miraculous avoidance of any of the crudities that reflection would demand—satire, irony, farce . . . ."52 Sean O'Faoláin and Frank O'Connor, two post-war Irish writers, wrote somewhat bitter stories against a background of natural beauty, although there is more poetry in O'Faoláin's stories than in O'Connor's. All of these writers are still contributing to the form.

It is significant to note that the stories of both Moore and Joyce precede not only the work of Katherine Mansfield and A. E. Coppard in England but also the renaissance brought about by Sherwood Anderson in America. Political ferment and the dominance of the Catholic church in the little country of Ireland have unmistakably been influences on the rapid growth of its literature. Bates says of the religious influence, "The constant struggle between the artist and

51 Bates, op. cit., p. 156.

religion, between religion and experience, though more positive and agonized in Joyce than in any other writer, is a heritage that infuses a greater part of the best Irish writing with a quality of poetic mysticism."\(^{53}\)

Frank O'Connor, perhaps in his native enthusiasm, identifies the Irish short story as a distinct art form. He says, "... by shedding the limitations of its popular origin it has become susceptible to development in the same way as German song, and in its attitudes it can be distinguished from Russian and American stories which have developed in the same way. The English novel, for instance, is very obviously an art form while the English short story is not."\(^{54}\) Just as any national literature has unique subject matter and its writers have unique attitudes, so does the Irish and so does the English. The poetic quality of the short story is typically Irish in Western literature at the beginning of the century, although Chekhov cannot be ignored. Ireland can no longer claim this quality as distinctly her own later in the century, however. Irish short stories have a tone all their own as style and method are applied to special content, but they are scarcely a distinct art form. Rather, writers such as Moore and Joyce made contributions to the form as it was later practiced by all countries of the world. Elizabeth Bowen is claimed by both the Irish and the English, just as Henry James is claimed by both the Americans and the English.

\[^{53}\text{Bates, op. cit., p. 150.}\]

\[^{54}\text{O'Connor, op. cit., p. xi.}\]
Katherine Mansfield is to the English short story what Sherwood Anderson is to the American, although she, along with A. E. Coppard, was more a means for transmitting certain influences, especially those of her master, Chekhov, than originating them. Katherine Mansfield did much to liberate the short story in England from the nineteenth-century concept of method and content. In her hands the short story became more compressed and impressionistic. She learned from Chekhov the method of casual and oblique narration. Bates says, "Like Tchekhov, Katherine Mansfield saw the possibilities of telling the story by what was left out as much as by what was left in, or alternately of describing one set of events and consequences while really indicating another." Like Anderson, Joyce, and Chekhov, she is responsible in England for bringing a fresh approach to the common and ordinary aspects of life around her rather than searching for the romantic and the exotic as many of her predecessors did. She too demonstrated that ordinary lives could be interesting without being manipulated into sensational entanglements.

There is immaturity, falseness, and sentimentality in some of her work, as in the story "The Life of Ma Parker." Isherwood suggests that in much of her writing the mature, sophisticated woman in her is at war with the child in her; as a result, many of her stories about childhood contain numerous passages of truly magical insight, but they

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55Bates, op. cit. p129.
are apt to be patchy. But her influence is monumental considering that in the ten years of her writing life her output was small and only a fraction of her work can be regarded as mature. Longaker and Bolles say, "Her method, employing suggestions rather than statements and replacing the well-contrived incident with a subtly created atmosphere, has influenced nearly all writers in the field, and has rendered the traditional type of short story hopelessly old-fashioned."

A. E. Coppard identified his work as tales rather than short stories, emphasizing the oral quality of the ancient practice of story-telling. He says, "... I prefer to call them tales because of a slight distinction in my mind which is nevertheless important to me, that is: a tale is told, a story is written. I have always aimed at creating for the reader an impression that he is being spoken to, rather than being written at." He achieves this style in his stories, but they are constructed by the hand of a conscious artist. His tales are direct and brief. Character is revealed in action rather than through analysis or the creation of atmosphere. Although he writes about the grim and harder aspects of the lives of

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56 Isherwood, op. cit., p.
57 Longaker and Bolles, op. cit., p. 303.
working people, he is not a propagandist who is bitter or class conscious. He has sympathy and pity for these unfortunate and often defeated people, but he is able to see humor as well as tragedy in their lives. Stories like "The Cherry Tree" represent the form at its highest development. He believed that "the short story is to the general body of prose what the lyric is to poetry,"\(^59\) and he brought to the short story some of the fancy, delicacy, and shape of the lyric poem. As a result, the short story gained from him a new vitality and, as Bates says, "a certain quality of transparency."\(^60\) His theory works best for him in helping him to focus on the common and the trivial as the stuff that life is made from. In his later stories, when he relies on his theory too patently, his achievement is less.

D. H. Lawrence was the most important literary figure to rise in post-war England. His stories are more direct, controlled, and objective than are his novels. His greatest gifts, sensibility, vision, an immense vitality, a sense of the physical, and a sense of place, are usually brought into control by the shorter form. Even when he breaks the rules and becomes careless, rambling, or repetitive, he creates powerful effects. Isherwood says of his subjective method, "... he revolutionized the art of description, by bringing to it a

\(^{59}\)Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{60}\)Bates, op. cit., p. 124.
new degree of subjective intimacy. That is, he relates everything in his scene to the subjective 'I,' the observer—so that we get the illusion of being right inside this observer and of seeing through his eyes and feeling through his nerves." Like Sherwood Anderson, Lawrence stormed the walls of convention concerning subject matter in his attempt to interpret his own people in their particular environment. A story like "The Rocking-Horse Winner" shows Lawrence experimenting with the form of the modern short story; psychology, symbolism, and impressionism are all carefully ordered by form.

Other British writers of the modern period have also made contributions to the form as they explore its possibilities, although the short story in Great Britain has never achieved the importance that it has in the United States. Virginia Woolf applied the methods of the imagists to fiction in developing the technique of the stream-of-consciousness. In her stories, as well as in her novels, she explores the modes of consciousness, especially the "moment of being," illustrated well in her effective story, "The New Dress." Elizabeth Bowen shows a deep psychological sympathy for the disappointed and frustrated in her stories about people from a sophisticated middle-class or artistic life. There is power in her delicate and severe irony as she portrays their unhappiness against a tragic atmosphere, often with unexpected humor. Rosamund Lehmann's few stories have the

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Isherwood, op. cit., p. 206.
The short story has never been as distinct a literary genre in France as it has been in the United States and Great Britain, or in Russia. French short stories, with the exception of those of Maupassant, have generally been by-products of other literary movements.
and have been produced by writers interested chiefly in some other form. One explanation might be that the short story has never been entirely respectable in France. Melville and Hargreaves say:

French writers, especially those of the mid-nineteenth century, did not indulge in stint! "Short" to them bore a very different responsibility of interpretation than it does in more modern minds . . . . To many writers of repute, to indulge in the short-story form at all was rather in the nature of a concession . . . . of the short story proper there exists a leaner store than many might imagine. If this applies to the giants of the nineteenth century, in no less degree does it pertain to some of the more eminent writers of later date.\(^{63}\)

Short stories have appeared, however, that either parallel or represent influences of the chief literary movements in France. Even though French writers have not made any considerable achievement in the writing of the short story, if Maupassant can be excepted, their ideas and methods have influenced greatly the style and content of short stories written in other countries.

Since the short story as a genre has never been taken very seriously in France, most French writers of the short story have paid little attention to its form. They have generally avoided any codification of formal principles in the genre, and thus have escaped a period where the short story has conformed to a set of rigid technical standards. This, in a sense, has been an advantage, since the medium has been more supple and capable of different effects. At the same

\(^{63}\)Lewis Melville and Reginold Hargreaves, eds., *Great French Short Stories*, p. v.
time, it is the probable reason why most of the French short pieces have never achieved the status of literary art. When they have, as in the stories of Méremée and Maupassant and incidental stories of other writers, it is because either by accident or by conscious design they have been written according to formal principles.

Literature in the first part of the nineteenth century in France found expression as a part of the romantic movement that was spreading over the entire Western world. Romantic tendencies are evident in the stories of the fantastic, in the exotic and picturesque settings, and in the historical and pseudo-historical episodes. Théophile Gautier is known primarily as one of the Parnassian poets, a group that supported the theory of art for art's sake, but he wrote a number of highly effective romantic short stories. Two major influences on nineteenth-century literary romanticism in France were the English Gothic romance and the writings of E. T. A. Hoffman in Germany. Much of the English Gothic romance strained the reader's belief, but in Hoffmann, "extraordinary phenomena were introduced in realistic settings and in connection with everyday characters, in such a way that the credulity of the reader was completely enlisted."64 Gautier's stories treat situations that are quite incredible, yet they do not fall into the category of the absurd. His prose style is noted for "its abundance of exotic, semi-technical, and other unfamiliar words; and its remarkable pictorial and plastic qualities."65

65 Ibid., p. 13.
In France, Prosper Mérimée had written short stories, such as "The Etruscan Vase," demonstrating the art of single effect and unity before Poe's first tale was published. Walter Pater says of his style, "Mérimée, a literary artist, was not a man who used two words where one would do better, and he shines especially in those brief compositions which, like a minute intaglio, reveal at a glance his wonderful faculty of design and proportion in the treatment of his work, in which there is not a touch but counts." Unlike Poe, Mérimée did not theorize on his art. The American influence on French narrative did not begin until some time later when Baudelaire translated Poe's tales in 1852-1865. Also, unlike Poe, Mérimée represents a trend from romanticism towards realism. C. H. C. Wright says, "The most striking note of Mérimée's style is his irony, not a frisky irreverence, but a calm scepticism and disbelief in enthusiasms and sentiment, a scorn for mankind, which presented French writers with a new 'attitude.'"

After Poe's technique had begun to be felt in France, Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian collaborated on writing short stories, combining Poe's principles with the weird atmosphere of Hoffman. March says of their work, "The combination of the technique of Poe with the atmosphere of Hoffman results in a story that is rapidly moving, exciting, credible, and richly atmospheric."

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In the second part of the nineteenth century, realism and naturalism began to emerge out of romanticism. In literature the ideas were expressed chiefly in the novel, but some of them spilled over into short stories. March indicates their effect on one kind of story when he says, "The fantastic story, deserting such subjects as vampires, devils, and phantom loves, took on a scientific air more in keeping with the spirit of the times. When there arose skeptics who dared to question the religion of Science, short stories appeared that ridiculed excessive scientific pretensions." The methods of the realists and the naturalists affected Maupassant and all serious writers following him. Their effect on writers in other countries has been even more extensive.

Balzac is usually considered as the writer who broke the ground for realism as he attempted to represent the life of the average person without idealizing it. But there is much of the romantic in his mysterious characters, melodramatic incidents, and the expression of personal philosophy and tastes. Willard Huntington Wright explains, "It may be said that he organized the physical world—with its passions, hopes, struggles, aspirations and desires—into abstractions of form." Two stories representative of Balzac are "La Grande Breteche" and "Episode Under the Terror."

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69 Ibid., p. 11.
Émile Zola, considered the chief of the naturalists, compared the novelist to the scientist in his laboratory. Becker and Linscott say, "... Zola was a sincere and simple-minded believer in what might be called Science the Redeemer; and he had a notion that he could paint a picture of French life from which 'scientific laws' or society could be deduced."\(^{71}\) He based his experimental work on Auguste Comte's theories that social and philosophic problems are capable of solution only through the researches of science and on Geoffroy Saint Hilaire's deterministic zoological theories. Zola's ideas are similar to Hippolyte Taine's unsound critical theories of scientific literary determinism, that the work of every author is determined by the forces of race, environment and moment. One can see easily why Zola needed a large canvas to paint his pictures of life in support of his thesis. In shorter pieces, such as "The Attack on the Mill," as well as in his novels, his theories are not truly carried out, "for however much he laid claim to being a scientist, Zola, once confronted with his characters and situations, was carried away by a lyricism of temperament."\(^{72}\)

Gustave Flaubert is a combination of the romantic and the realist. He is a realist in artistic method, but a fondness for violent

\(^{71}\)Belle Becker and Robert N. Linscott, eds., *Bedside Book of Famous French Stories*, p. xi.

\(^{72}\)March, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
sensations and the exotic is a product of his romantic training. In his best work Flaubert the realist controls Flaubert the romantic. His greatest contributions to the art of fiction are his style and method. His discovery of the principle that "in fiction no object exists until it has been acted upon by another object"\textsuperscript{73} was an idea that Henry James carried farther in his method. His work is noted for its precise diction, its perfectly cadenced sentences, and its economy of expression. Even with this extreme attention paid to technical perfection Flaubert "never lost sight of the human heart and he portrayed it with a fidelity to truth as great as that of any artist who ever lived."\textsuperscript{74} This is evident in the short story "A Simple Heart."

Guy De Maupassant developed his precise style and method of patient observation under the tutelage of Flaubert, but he belongs essentially to no particular school of ideas or style. He is unique in French literature in that he devoted himself almost exclusively to the writing of short stories. His literary principles are expressed

\textsuperscript{73}Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate, eds., \textit{The House of Fiction}, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{74}Becker and Linscott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xiv.
in the preface to *Pierre et Jean*, his attempt at the novel form.

March summarizes them as follows:

> The writer of fiction . . . should not attempt to portray life photographically, but should make a selection among his observations; and in his choice he should prefer the common and the highly probable to the merely possible. It is his business to be more real than reality, to create a complete illusion of truth . . . . Complete impersonality he admits to be impossible, for to portray a character an author must put himself into that character's place, and his findings are therefore subjective; but he should cancel his ego.\(^75\)

Maupassant emphasizes the fact that a short story is an interpretation of life according to the writer's vision rather than a portrayal of events. This vision should have its roots in reality, however, rather than in fantasy. Maupassant was never the disciplined writer that Flaubert was. At the same time, as Gordon and Tate say, "Flaubert could never have developed Maupassant's adroitness in constructing plots. He did not handle action easily enough. He could never have contrived for his stories the kind of Resolution of which Maupassant became a past master, in which the climax seems to explode like fireworks out of the action, leaving behind a lingering trail of brilliance."\(^76\) Maupassant mastered the form of the short story, individualizing its economy and unity. In his search for "the

\(^{75}\text{March, op. cit., p. 18.}\)

\(^{76}\text{Gordon and Tate, op. cit., p. 113.}\)
humble truth" he gave it a content of vitality. Maupassant refrained from any moralizing about the characters or situations he found in life rather than placed in life. His method proved somewhat a limitation, for him at least. His characters' responses to life are sometimes limited because Maupassant himself was limited. He was not always able to see all the implications of the narratives he presented.

Maupassant's best known stories are those based on an ironic situation, such as "The Necklace." Critics have sometimes objected to the trick ending in this story. Bates finds the technique superior to that of O. Henry's since in the ending trick and tragedy are one and Maupassant uses the trick only once. He says:

In story-telling, as in parlour games, you can never hope to hoodwink the same person twice. It is only because of Maupassant's skillful delineation of Madame Loisel's tragedy that The Necklace survives as a credible piece of realism. Maupassant, the artist, was well aware that the trick alone is its own limitation; O. Henry, the journalist, never was aware of it.77

In the latter part of his life Maupassant used psychological analysis to explore character, which led him to fictional studies of fear and sometimes the fantastic. These are skillfully written, however. March identifies such stories as "La Peur," "L'Auberge," and "Sur l'eau" as some of Maupassant's most remarkable. He says of them, "His achievements in this class have little of the external paraphernalia

77 Bates, op. cit., p. 62.
of horror, but are imbued with the most deadly sort of mental panic. There is a fearsome seriousness about the fantastic of Maupassant--never a light and relieving touch, such as we find in Gautier and Erchmann-Chatrian."  

A small group of nineteenth century French writers, labeled by F. E. Guyer in *The Main Stream of French Literature* as Impressionists, developed a distinctive method, although they were essentially realists. Like the impressionist painter they attempted to elicit the dominant element in a scene to give the impression of the whole rather than to give impartially all the elements of the scene. Guyer says, "The Impressionist analyzes this dominant element into the finest shades or fleeting tones that combine to give the totality of the impression."  

Their link with the realists was "their careful observation of life and their insistence on describing only what they themselves had seen. They described these things as they saw them externally, from a single point of view; and they were remarkably clever in rendering the impression of small and curious details." The method of these writers became a dominant technique of the modern writer of quality stories the world over.

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80 Ibid., p. 245.
Alphonse Daudet and François Coppée are representative of the Impressionists. Daudet attempted to write in the naturalist's tradition, but his light style is too personal and fanciful and his sentimental sympathy toward the country folk, the workers, and the Parisian man of politics and learning about whom he wrote prevent him from being labeled as such. In "Father Gaucher's Elixir" he applies a light and comic touch to a serious problem, pointing out the contradictions between worldly splendor and spiritual values. Daudet's narrative skill is enhanced here by the use of a narrator within the story to tell the tale.

Coppée began writing as a Parnassian poet, but felt that the artistic principles of that group were too limiting. He believed that beneficial social effect was more important than pure art. March says, "In his numerous short stories he shows unfailing grace and narrative skill, but not unfrequently mars his effort by moralizing; and his fragile pastels, legends, and touching anecdotes of humble life sometimes betray the tinsel glitter of sentimentality."\(^{61}\)

The Parnassians, a group of poets who named themselves in honor of the famous seat of Apollo and the Muses, emphasized purity of form and great care in composition. They were an outgrowth of both realism and romanticism. Like the realists, they insisted on accurate observation, the exclusion of personal bias, and the elimination of personal emotions. In the subject matter of their poetry, however, they are

closer to romanticism. Guyer says, "Voluptuousness, horror of death, and the morbid treatment of death and decay, as well as the cult of perfect workmanship, are important characteristics of their work." It is logical that Baudelaire would feel a personal kinship with Poe. He translated his work since, as Smith and Minor say, he believed that "American naturalism had rejected Poe; it was up to the more aesthetically aware Frenchmen to rescue him and his writings." In the last two decades of the century the Parnassians gave way to the Symbolists, such as Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Laforgue. The work of these poets is significant for the influence that it had on the short story. As March says, "Symbolist prose, pursuing a parallel course and displaying a wealth of harmonies and suggestions, offered a sharp contrast to the brutally matter-of-fact fiction of the Naturalists. The taste for the bizarre and the morbid, the desire to shock, that we associate with decadence, find characteristic expression in short stories." Villiers De L'isle-Adam, a contemporary of Maupassant, wrote short stories in the style of the symbolists which demonstrate his artistry in words, his contempt for bourgeois mentality, and his interest in the extravagant and morbid. March says, "The reader is at

82Guyer, op. cit., p. 262.
83Ward and Miner, op. cit., p. 189.
84March, op. cit., p. 11.
once struck by the abundance of unusual words, the departures from normal order, the italics, the parentheses, the suspensions, the exclamations; but from these startling materials are drawn rare harmonies and rhythms."%85

The symbolists had an even greater influence on writers of fiction abroad. Henry James was influenced by these writers, especially the Parnassians, in his development of the art of fiction. Frances Newman says of their influence on English writers, "The English writers of the celebrated eighteen nineties learned from Laforgue and from the other French symbolists that a story has a right to be a work of art, just as the English painters learned from the French impressionists that a picture has the right not to be an illustration."%86 Oscar Wilde and his followers in the decadent and exotic received their strongest stimulus from this group.

Anatole France belongs to no particular school, although at the end of the nineteenth century there was a general revolt against all schools as writers became, as Guyer says, "internationally minded."%87 Anatole France's stories appear on the surface to be innocent entertainment with a light touch of literary irony. When examined closely

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85Ibid., p. 21.
87Guyer, op. cit., p. 278.
they reveal a subtle and powerful commentary on the nature of man throughout history.

Georges Duhamel is best known for a volume of stories, *La Vie des Martyrs*, about a doctor working just behind the front lines during the first world war, written in an unpretentious style. In content they mark a beginning of the ideas that were to blossom more fully with the existentialist writers. Denis Saurat says that these stories are "most deeply disturbing in their humanity. They convey the feeling that a certain intensity of suffering is unfair to human creatures, and yet that there are human beings, and in great numbers, that are so heroic as to retain possession of their souls in the utmost agony. A higher idea of human nature is driven into the reader by these well-nigh unbearable stories . . . ." 88

André Malraux, Joseph Kessel, Julian Green, Edith Thomas, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus are some of the important twentieth century French writers who have written short stories. In the world upheaval of the last forty years they have attempted to focus on the individual's relation to society. Sartre and Camus are the two leading exponents of existentialism in France. And the stories of both of these writers are illustrative of fiction that serves to clarify a writer's philosophical position. Camus' stories are more successful artistically than are Sartre's.

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The short story is a staple of Russian literature. Like the writers in France, the writers of the short story in Russia have been concerned usually with other forms of literature, but in Russia the short story has always been considered a respectable and worthy form. Avraham Yarmolinsky says, "... nearly all the important Russian authors cultivated the art of the short story, and indeed, for Chekhov and those who came after him it was the chief medium." The British writers C. P. Snow and Pamela Hansford Johnson indicate that "short stories occupy a more conspicuous place in contemporary Soviet literature than they do in ours ... . This is partly because Russians seem to like the short story as a form more than we do. . . . [and] there are far more opportunities of getting stories published, and handsomely paid for, in the Soviet Union than in our country, owing to the existence of the 'thick' monthlies." 

The philosophical ideas underlying Russian literature follow generally the same trends of those of other countries. This is revealed in the romantic tales of Pushkin and Lermontov, the psychological stories of Dostoevsky, the realistic methods of Chekhov, the philosophical problems of Kuprin, and the symbolic stories of Andreyev. Russian writers have influenced the literature of other countries.

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90 C. P. Snow and Pamela Hansford Johnson, eds., Stories from Modern Russia, p. vii.
however, to a greater extent than foreign literature has influenced
the Russians. Russia's oldest literature was written and read by
the aristocracy and the landed gentry. Their higher standard of
living and education permitted them the leisure and knowledge which
they could devote to literary work. Consequently, literature was
isolated and limited. After the Napoleonic Wars the culture of the
Western world exerted more influence on Russian thought. Traces of
the European romantic movement are seen in Pushkin and Lermontov and
later, German philosophical and ethical doctrines played a role in
shaping the Russian mind. Even so, as A. E. Chamot says, "There was
a general endeavour not to follow foreign models, but to produce a
truly national literature. This led to the great age of Russian
naturalistic fiction in the works of Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky,
and caused the Russian novel to become famous all the world over."91
When the methods of the realists and the naturalists are used in any
country, native literature is bound to emerge.

The first significant Russian writers of fiction were essen­
tially romantics. Alexander Pushkin, one of the first conscious
literary artists in Russian literature, wrote several prose stories
that are products of the romantic tradition; "The Queen of Spades,"
a story about gambling, is spiced with the supernatural, and "Undertaker"
has a touch of the macabre in it. But in his emphasis on common people
and the details of daily life in his stories he lays the foundations

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for the realism that dominates Russian fiction. Mikhail Yurevich Lermontov was influenced by Byron, and such stories as "Taman" and "Ashik-Kerib" reflect a similar gloomy outlook on life and an interest in the exotic.

Nicolay Gogol, although showing the romantic influences of Hoffmann's style in his use of the weird and uncanny, established the naturalist tradition in Russian literature. His stories, weak in structural and stylistic unity, are important for the emphasis they place on the more sordid aspects of the commonplace. Dostoevsky said, "We've all come out of 'The Overcoat,'" implying Gogol's achievement in establishing the trend of social protest and his emphasis on the common man in this pathetic and humorous little story. Bates says of Gogol's work:

Gogol marks the switch-over from romanticism to . . . realism; he marks the beginning of the wider application of visual writing, of vivid objectivity, of that particular faith in indigenous material which is to-day the strength of the American short story, and the absence of which brought it to such puerile levels thirty years ago. Gogol is the father of all writers who say, "I believe the lives of ordinary human folk, rich or poor, adventurous or parochial, good or depraved, dull or exciting, constitute the only vein of material a writer need ever seek or work."92

Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev too was a writer whose sympathies went out to the underdog. In his character sketches and psychological

studies there is little action and little formal plot. Yarmolinsky says of his method, "The germ of his story was always a face, an individual man or woman, whose features he studied until he could read the individual's history there . . . . the moral grows out of the situation, the situation out of the characters, and . . . all, closely observed, sensitively apprehended, are set down with a natural felicity." Turgenev's method is based on that principle which distinguishes modern fiction of quality from the inferior. He "... felt himself to be a spectator of the human scene, peculiarly equipped to make his vision present to others, and convinced that the moral meaning of that vision lay in the penetration of his insight and the integrity with which he conveyed it." His first stories are contained in The Sportsman's Sketches, a series of poetic, but terrible pictures of the conditions of Russian serfdom. Bates says of their influence on British writers, "Conrad, Galsworthy, George Moore, and, among living writers, Mr. Sean O'Faoláin are only a few to whom The Sportsman's Sketches constitute a formative influence far more important than Poe; even the materialistic Arnold Bennett confessed that Turgenev had influenced him as much as any other writer."
Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy may be considered as the greatest masters of the psychological novel. Dostoevsky wrote few short stories. "A Nasty Story" is a good example, however, of his subtle and analytic method of developing characters and moods. "An Honest Thief," "An Unpleasant Predicament," and "Notes from the Underground" illustrate his naturalist vein and his interest in the abnormal. The latter, identifying the dual nature of man—man with his weaknesses and evil impulses striving after grace, serves as a clue to Dostoevsky's longer works.

Leo Tolstoy, a strongly religious man, was constantly preoccupied with the problem of living according to the dictates of conscience and reason. His own moral philosophy permeates his entire work. His stories reveal his interest in all aspects of the worldly as well as the spiritual life, usually made exciting and real. He was often sidetracked, however, just as Hawthorne was, by his fervent moral preoccupation. Janko Lavrin indicates that since literature in Russia, even at this time, was the only realm where freedom of mind and spirit was permitted expression, "there was a natural tendency to combine fiction with moral, philosophic, religious, social and political tasks even at the risk of encroaching upon the aesthetic side of literature."96 Dostoevsky was able to make his characters independent of himself, even when he used them to express his own views and tendencies. Tolstoy the man, psychologist, and artist was

96 Janko Lavrin, From Pushkin to Mayakovsky, p. 147.
always in conflict with Tolstoy the preacher. When the first was in control he wrote with frankness and truth, getting at the very root of life with a psychological and artistic integrity. In his later years the moralist in him began to interfere more and more with his vision. This led him to postulate "that a writer of fiction needed 'a clear and firm conception of what is good and what is bad in life,' that a narrative was held together not 'by the unity of characters and situations' but by the cement of the author's 'moral attitude toward his subject.'"^97 Life itself must be sacrificed to what he considered the meaning in life. The characters in his stories lost their psychological probability as they became vehicles for his own views.

Tolstoy's earlier stories show less of his moral preoccupation than do his later moral parables, such as "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" "The Viper," "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch," "The Cossacks," and "Family Happiness" are more characteristic of Tolstoy's best work; they are carefully constructed and forceful in style within the bounds of realism. In these stories Tolstoy's genius succeeded in balancing the two antagonists in his creative life.

Anton Chekhov, who did not reach the depths nor the heights of Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, confined himself, except for his dramas, to the short story. And many people justifiably believe him to be the greatest master of the form in all times, of all countries. Yarmolinsky says,

^97Yarmolinsky, op. cit., p. xii.
"One feels in reading him not the limitations of the medium, but the opportunities." Chekhov was a number of years ahead of the modern short story in the Western world, and he served as master for many modern writers. His method is one of implication and impression. Bates says, "Tchekov, taking it for granted that his audience could fill in the detail and even the colour of a partially stated picture, wrote consistently on a fine line of implication. . . . Events or happenings are implied; they happen 'off'; they are hinted at, not stated; most important of all, they go on happening after the story has ended." His stories are not rigidly plotted. Their emphasis is on character, on the revelation of a significant moment in the life of a character and the effect that moment has on him. Brewster and Burrell say that Chekhov uses an extended moment in the consciousness of people "to probe below the surface of consciousness, with the idea of stirring the devils that lie waiting there." The significance of the moment is not always realized by the character in the story, but the reader is always well aware of the implications. Yarmolinsky says:

His preoccupation is with men and women whose lives are drab, empty, narrow, and helpless. They may dream of, even passionately long for, something that would bring color, depth, and meaning into their existence, but they lack the requisite strength of will, the capacity for sustained effort. The typical situation that he presents is one in which

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98 Ibid., p. xiv.
100 Dorothy Brewster and Angus Burrell, Dead Reckonings In Fiction, p. 60.
a man, a woman, or a child is trapped, imprisoned, facing a blind alley. They are perhaps the victims of circumstances, or, more often, of their own inadequacy, or a combination of the two. In any case, the stories, with few exceptions, move toward no solution of the problem, no emergence from the impasse.101

Yet this is the most realistic of plot structures. Recognition of a conflict is all that many people can hope for or expect in life. That is a great achievement. Chekhov's stories have the quality of the unfinished nature of experience, irregular, complex, paradoxical, and contradictory. Yet there is unity of effect in each story. Chekhov is especially skillful in using the natural scene to enhance and support mood. Frances Newman's delightful statement which follows illustrates the enthusiasm of one critic for this writer:

Chekhov always began at the beginning—and not at a beginning ingeniously near the end. He wrote down the name of the man he was going to describe and his exact social condition and his precise situation at that moment. He did not walk cautiously and a little lumberingly between nightingale's eggs, as Henry James did, and he did not affect an ignorance of the way his creature chose to spell his name, as Joseph Conrad did, or of what was going on inside his creature's head. He walked in and out of his hero's thoughts, in and out of his life, and in and out of the lives of the men and women who affected his life. He wrote stories that have no rhetoric of phrase or of emotion, that are alive with the Comic Spirit but that have no phrases which leap away from the other phrases—stories that have no interest in Reversals and Recognitions and no unity except the unity of their hero's character. He did not judge his fellow mortals as harshly as their creator is commonly supposed to judge them, he did not judge the

President of the Immortals harshly, he did not expect his hero's end to astonish a rational reader and he did not hurry it into one sentence as if the curtain might come down in another minute and leave it untold forever.$^{102}$

Maxim Gorky, a contemporary of Chekhov, wrote tales of the underworld depicting the ugly side of reality in pictures of tramps, hawkers, and Volga boatmen. He was the first major Russian author to come from the proletarian class of society. His stories, written from personal experience, are not merely an attempt to reveal a new world to the reader, but are a protest against the life he saw around him and from which he had come. Later in his career he became one of the principal literary and moral forces behind all the activities connected with the working class movement in Russia. Lavrin says, "... he permeated his writings with his strongest urge—the urge to turn the whole of existence into something of which human beings need no longer feel ashamed."$^{103}$ His stories are written in a bright, lively, and colorful style, but he often lacks the quality of restraint and sometimes has the tendency to preach.

The stories of Leonid Nikolaevich Andreyev rivaled those of Gorky for popularity. His subject matter, the opposite of Gorky's, reflects the decaying bourgeois intelligensia during the last few years before their passing out of history. His stories are in the style of Poe, weird, mysterious, symbolic, and often sensational.

$^{102}$Newman, op. cit., p. 173.

$^{103}$Lavrin, op. cit., pp. 192-93.
Ivan Bunin, who writes in a realistic style, detailed and conservative, is concerned with personal and metaphysical themes rather than social. He is best known for his carefully constructed story, "The Gentleman from San Francisco."

Yarmolinsky says of Russian literature prior to the revolution, "Russian literature passed out of the awkward age with the writings of Pushkin, matured in the work of the major novelists, declining with Chekhov, and, when the hour of the revolution struck, coming to an end which was a new beginning." The period of the nineteen-twenties was as fertile a one for the short story writer in Russia as it was in the United States. The recent experiences of a civil war, the new experiments in social and personal relationships, and the clash between the old and the new were subjects full of dramatic possibilities and more suited to the short story form than the subjects of industrialization, wrecking activities, and collectivization of agriculture, the subjects of the Five-Year-Plan documentary novels of the early thirties. The literature of the twenties was rich and diversified before the Communist lawgivers tightened the controls on writers during the thirties. Writers of the twenties did not ignore their ties with preceding artistic trends and they welcomed their connections with the Western avant-garde. The most prominent Soviet writers today began their writing careers in this period.

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104 Yarmolinsky, op. cit., p. vii.
Michael Zoshchenko, Konstantin Fedin, and Leonid Leonov, in 1922, belonged to a literary group called "Serapion Brothers," whose motto for writers was "that their voice should not ring false." All have written quality short stories reflecting the conflicts of their society, but Zoshchenko's stories, "transforming the innumerable trivialities of everyday life into jewels of literary creation," are the best known in this country. Alexandre Nevierov, Isaac Babel, and Boris Pilni̋k also contributed to the quality of style and method of the short story in this period. Panteleimon Romanov's "The Problems of Sex" is typical of Romanov's quiet, discursive manner and of his preoccupation with the problems of individual morality. His stories reflect his attempt to reconcile the romantic and instinctive impulses of human nature with the new rational moral standards and the stern demands of Communist ideology.

From the opening of the first Five-Year-Plan until 1932, Russian writers were limited in their choice and treatment of subject by the requirement that they should help in the realization of the Plan. After 1932, a "charter of freedom" was given to Soviet writers. Theoretically, this has more or less been in effect to the present time. Writers do not have complete freedom to be critical, however, as evidenced by the case of Pasternak. A judgment of Soviet literature must take into account the fact that literature in Russia today is an

integral part of the whole mechanism of the State. Just as writers once served the Church and the Empire and later the liberal movement, today they serve the new State. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, which stresses the education of the masses as the supreme goal of literature, still has control over Russian writing. Marc Slonim says that one difference between the literatures of the United States or Great Britain and that of the Soviet Union is "that while one can speak of American short stories or the British 'angry young men' without mentioning President Eisenhower or Elizabeth, Queen of England, it is out of the question to appraise Russian fiction without referring to Mr. Krushchev."106

C. P. Snow points out several characteristics of current Soviet short stories. They tend not to be short. Like their predecessors, they shy away from a tightly controlled plot. He says, "Soviet critics and readers seem to admire the skill with which the English--and we are not bad at it--blend plot and suspense into our narrative; but they sometimes feel that, at our worst, we are too willing to distort the truth for the sake of the drama. At their worst, they fall into the opposite trap, and decline into a kind of porridge of naturalism."107 He also warns that it is "important for English readers not to read Soviet stories as though they were documents in

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106 Marc Clonim, et.al., Perspectives: Recent Literature of Russia, China, Italy, and Spain, p. 1.

107 Snow and Johnson, op. cit., pp. x-xi.
the Cold War." Soviet writers in general, he believes, are proud of their country and its achievements and accept the Communist system as desirable, although there is room for criticism, disputation, argument, and varieties of opinion. There is little evidence in their work of anti-Soviet revolt. "They are pillars of their society, and we have got to read them as such, read them, so far as we can, although it is of course very difficult, as Soviet readers do."109

Alexander Tvardovsky, Kinstantin Paustovsky, S. Zalygin, Mikhail Sholokhov, Nikolay Yevdokimov, and Vladimir Tendryakov are representative of current Soviet writers. "The Stovemakers," Tvardovsky's only short story, was first published in 1958. Tvardovsky, a favorite in his own country, writes with a sense of humor that is sly, psychologically attentive, and sharp-edged. Paustovsky's "The Telegram" is written in a manner and technique very close to most Western writing. Zalygin's "Bob" is psychologically interesting and deep. Sholokhov, who has been writing for some thirty years, "has a tongue of formidable sharpness, and a range of very salty aphorisms: it is rumoured that he sometimes lends one or two to Mr. Khrushchev."110 His "One Man's Life" is representative of the Soviet writing that is still devoted to the Hitler war. Yevdokimov's

106 Ibid., p. xi.
109 Ibid., p. xiii.
110 Snow and Johnson, op. cit., p. xvii.
"Light from Other People's Windows" deals with the magical allure that the city has for simple country girls. Tendryakov, a new young writer, speaks for the Soviet intellectuals in "Potholes."

Esquire magazine has recently brought to the attention of American readers the stories of Yuri Kazakov, who, according to Esquire, "is well-known in his own group as one of a small group of exciting young Soviet writers, all with fresh, original, unideological ideas . . . . Instead of the Soviet Superman who postures in statuary, art museums, and official fiction, Kazakov writes about a cast of human characters from drunkards and bums to the outcasts, the lonely, the frightened and the foolish." The stories of all these writers are in the tradition of great literature the world over and represent an attempt to restore to Russian literature the place of importance it has held in world literature in the past.

A history of the development of the short story would not be complete without at least mentioning the contributions of Germany's Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, and Franz Kafka, Italy's Alberto Moravia, and Denmark's Isak Dinesen. All of these twentieth century writers have explored and stretched the short story form, adding to its vitality and strength.

The short story has come far since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It has developed independently and interdependently

in the various literatures of the world. Great writers as well as lesser ones have found the form to be an appropriate vessel for their vision of life. Each has shaped and molded it by his own method and style, building on what had gone before. The short story has developed from a somewhat artificial form that was separate from the real and vital aspects of life to a form that penetrates deeply into experience. Only the writers of the future can determine whether or not the form will continue to serve their ends.
A short story has merit as a work of art only when all its parts contribute to a unified and ordered structure. Only when each part contributes to the meaning of the whole does the short story become significant and impressive. Modern quality short story writers especially have stressed the importance of the total relevance of their material. The plot or the action of the story is only one ingredient. Meaning emerges from other parts as well. The writer's style, his diction, sentence structure, point of view, use of details and symbols and setting, the title of the story, even sometimes what he chooses to omit—all contribute organically to the total meaning of a quality story. The reader does not merely follow the plot to determine what will happen to the hero, but if the writer has included only the relevant or the essential the reader attempts to establish the relevance of each detail of the story to every other detail in order to determine the meaning of the entire pattern. If the reader is unable to do this he lacks the necessary perception or training or else the writer has failed to achieve organic unity in the story.

In order to arrive at a full comprehension of a short story students must become perceptive in sensing the order and essential
relationships of its parts. Fiction is a complex art which is best understood by degrees. To help students read perceptively, beyond the level of plot, a teacher must guide students in breaking the story down into its basic elements. And this seems to be a defensible reason for teaching literature in the public schools. Each part of a short story has its own function, and each adds meaning to the other parts. A class discussion focusing on one element can give students a sharper sense of that element. Forthcoming discussions, however, should help students understand that all the elements in a story are parts of one unified expression. The parts must be studied with painstaking care, but students should never be led to confusing the part for the whole. Parts must always be seen in their relation to the context of the story's meaning. The parts are not always conveniently isolated. Even when the focus is on one element a teacher will find it frequently impossible not to introduce other elements into the discussion.

Some students may rightly object to tearing stories apart in the classroom. Analysis, however, does not necessarily destroy the joy and spontaneity of reading a story. Talking about stories students have all read heightens their enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding, usually affording new insights. Through classroom discussion and analyses students will develop new reading skills and will discover that the perceptive reader gains pleasure unknown to the casual reader. Students will discover that sharp attention to
detail in a few stories will enable them to be aware of much more in their future reading with little or no special effort. They will discover that the resulting pleasure is worth what effort is required. As a student learns to become more sensitive to fictional experience, he will more than likely discover that he has also become more sensitive to all his experience.

It is difficult to specifically classify short stories in terms of quality. They tend generally, however, to go in two directions. In one direction are stories labeled quality or literary. In the other are stories variously called commercial, popular, craft, pulp, or formula. In one direction the quality tends to be high, and in the other it tends to be low. A point of orientation for the English teacher when guiding students in story analyses in class should be the distinctions between these two general kinds of stories. For purposes here they will be called arbitrarily quality and formula. There is not a fixed line between the two. Many gradations in quality exist and ideas and beliefs appear at all levels. A quality story and a formula story might use the same materials or the same basic situation; however, the fictional treatment would be different because of the writers' different views of experience, depths of vision, and technical approaches.

Formula short stories are characterized by stereotypes. Characters lack individuality and themes are often mere myths and illusions. Plots rely heavily on action and the happy ending, usually at the
expense of plausibility and honest motivation. The cliche is the stock-in-trade of style. Warren Beck says:

\[ \ldots \text{the formula short story depends on a whole arsenal} \ldots \text{of platitudes, held to be self-evident—to wit, that love will find a way, that mother knows best, that the police, the U. S. Cavalry, the handsome hero, and all other agencies of rescue and just retribution operate infallibly on a nick-of-time schedule, because it's darkest just before dawn, and of course love conquers all, and in no ambiguous sense.} \]

The formula short story is based on sentimentality and has been popular because great numbers of people prefer illusion to reality. The writing of such stories is generally controlled by widely accepted conventions and by the saleability of the material.

Quality short stories are written according to a different vision and with a different intent. The writer of quality stories assumes that the best fiction explores reality rather than offers an escape into dreams and illusions. Quality stories offer a more penetrating view of human experience than do formula stories and have a more subtle emotional realization. In close analysis they show a more genuine sympathy for mankind. They protest against the deceptive sentimentalizing of reality. Their themes are always original, springing from the affirmations of personal and individual lives. They result from a writer's attempt to convey deeply held beliefs of his own, rather than conventional ones. Their style is that of an individual artist. Sean O'Faoláin says of this type of story, "The interesting story \ldots \text{begins where the formula ends, and the formula ends where the individual interest begins: that is to say, that}

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{Warren Beck, "Art and Formula in the Short Story," College English, V (November 1943), pp. 58-59.} \]
interest which appertains to the character or behavior of one single individual and to no other in the whole world—other than by analogy or comparison."

Readers sometimes object to quality stories on the grounds that such stories often deal with the ugly aspects of life and lack a happy ending. Thus, the element of pleasure is missing for them. Such readers like to believe that existence is simple rather than complex and that answers and solutions to the problems in life are easy. Quality stories are not based on such assumptions, so it is natural that they might disturb a reader who insists on formulas as his equipment for living. Problems exist for everyone. The practical person will find a realistic way of living with them or of solving them. To pretend that they do not exist is not a solution. Only in formula fiction are problems, solved quickly, easily, and forever. Schneider, Walker, and Childs say, "The choice is not usually between easy pleasure and no pleasure at all. More often it is a choice between dreaming and thinking, between a dangerously unreal view of human affairs and a beginning of knowledge."

The formula story, in which the reader can count on a happy ending, actually has less suspense than a more realistic story. If the outcome can be guessed too easily, suspense is weakened and interest may lag. If a reader cannot take

\[\text{2Sean O\'Faolain, (ed.), Short Stories, p. 15.}\]

\[\text{3Elisabeth W. Schneider, Albert L. Walker, and Herbert E. Childs (eds.), The Range of Literature, p. 21.}\]
a happy ending for granted he will enjoy the story all the more for the relief of genuine suspense.

The English teacher in the public school should not assume the responsibility for wiping out the reading of formula fiction and setting up the reading of quality fiction as the model for all to follow. Reading, in its final analysis, is a personal experience and a personal choice. The teacher's responsibility is to help students see distinctions between the two types, so their choices will be more rational. A democracy is based on the idea that the political majority is composed of thinking individuals. If public education serves in helping students assume their place in such a society, then the teacher has the responsibility of helping students rise to the level of inquiry and responsibility to fact that would probably make them less tolerant of the assumptions of formula fiction. This type of citizen is needed today more than ever before. If the tired and harried reader chooses to escape from the real world for a while, he should at least know that it is an escape into illusion rather than reality. The teacher can hope that a student will be able to make the distinctions and will realize the advantages of quality stories over formula stories, but the teacher's role is that of a guide not a dictator.

The basic elements of a short story that will be treated separately in this chapter are plot, character, theme, and style. Style will cover such items as the writer's use of language, setting, point of view, and symbol, irony, and metaphor. To these elements will be applied an eclectic critical theory of art to discriminate
between formula and quality stories. Does the story aim at some aspect of human truth and reality? Does the story have something to say that is meaningful and worthwhile for the reader? Does the artist have a serious intent? Is the story put together in artistic proportions? The stories used for illustration may or may not be usable by teachers working with specific groups of students. The purpose in this chapter is to illustrate how formal literary approaches can be used for analysis. An individual teacher would be encouraged to apply these approaches to stories of his own choosing.

Plot is an ingredient which separates fiction from other types of prose—the essay, the character sketch, biography, a record of events, or merely a scrap of dialogue. Aristotle, in his Poetics, was the first critic to articulate and label the scheme or basic pattern underlying every masterpiece of fiction. His principles, derived through a careful analysis of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, are directed toward drama; however, they serve as well for other types of fiction. The four technical concepts he works with—Discovery, Complication, Resolution, and Peripety—apply either directly or indirectly to the plot structures of all true short stories. Plot is based on conflict or complication which results in a resolution. In quality fiction the resolution is foreshadowed by the complication. Inherent in the resolution is the element of discovery. In some short stories the central character makes a discovery. In others, the discovery is made by the reader as he perceives the implications of what has been presented to him. Peripety, in more common terms, is a kind of irony,
indicating a reversal in the progress of a narrative or plot. In the strictest Aristotelian sense Peripety does not appear in all short stories, in the sense that there is a change from one state of things to the opposite of the kind described. In Oedipus Peripety is represented by the action of the messenger who, coming to gladden Oedipus, reveals the secret of his birth. Gordon and Tate say of this device, "The technical device of the Peripety reflects the mystery inherent in the creation of any fiction. As in life, it is the event which is at once perfectly probable and yet unforseeable which precipitates or gives its final direction to the action." In Ivan Bunin's "The Gentleman from San Francisco" death is this precipitating factor of irony. A wealthy industrialist from San Francisco crosses the Atlantic in gluttonous luxury. He returns "in a tar-coated coffin . . . lowered deep into the black hold of the steamer," while the same frivolous gaiety of the first trip goes on above him. In a more general sense, reversal is a part of all short stories. A reader or a character at the end of a story is different from what he was at the beginning.

Later criticism has translated Aristotle's plot scheme into the pattern of conflict, complication or developing action, climax, and dénouement. Without a conflict a short story cannot exist. The conflict in a short story is not always limited to a mental conflict.

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within a single individual as Don M. Wolfe states, although a great number of short stories can be reduced to this type. Conflict can be physical or mental between man and man or physical between man and nature. Often a short story contains a combination of types. A conflict of some sort is either established or revealed in a short story by dramatic action. It is developed through a series of dramatic incidents until a climax is reached where either the conflict is resolved or the reader is satisfied by some kind of awareness of meaning. In the short story the dénouement is of less importance than in the novel or the drama. Often the climax and the dénouement are simultaneous. The implications of the climax are all that are needed for the reader's satisfaction.

William Carlos Williams' very short story, "The Use of Force," offers a concise illustration of plot conflict. A doctor is called to examine a young girl who has had a fever for three days. He suspects that she has diphtheria, but she refuses to open her mouth for a throat examination. The doctor struggles mentally and physically with her, first coaxing her to open her mouth, then forcing her with his hands, then forcing her with a wooden tongue depressor, and finally forcing her with a heavy silver spoon until he at last reveals the child's secret—"both tonsils covered with membrane." Two opposing forces are set into motion, operating until one is victorious.

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5 Don M. Wolfe, Creative Ways to Teach English, p. 263.
over the other. The story is developed through logical, sequential, and culminating action. The meaning of this story, however, emerges from the implications of the conflict and climax. The doctor realizes the necessity of his action. He could have returned in a few hours and perhaps have made the examination without the use of force, but he had "seen at least two children lying dead in bed of neglect in such cases." At the same time the doctor feels guilt for his action. He feels a certain admiration for the heroic action of the child in battling against overpowering odds. He thinks to himself early in the story, "I had already fallen in love with the savage brat . . . while she surely rose to magnificent heights of insane fury of effort bred of her terror of me." And even more significant is his awareness of his own irrational feelings and pleasures that the conflict has released. He says, just before the final blow, "But the worst of it was that I too had got beyond reason. I could have torn the child apart in my own fury and enjoyed it. It was a pleasure to attack her. My face burned with it."

Traditional plot structure has been essentially of one kind. A conflict is established clearly at the beginning of the story, it is developed through a series of sequential and progressive scenes of action, and it is finally resolved by a culminating action which gives meaning to the story. A story of this kind is referred to frequently as "the plot story." A. L. Bader suggests the geometrical quality of this type of plot structure when he says, "Just as a proposition is stated, developed by arguments, and finally proved,
so a conflict is stated at the beginning of a story, developed by a series of scenes, and resolved at the end. Stories of this type rely heavily on suspense. The reader is trapped by the conflict, so he reads on to discover how the conflict will be resolved. Traditional plot does not of itself constitute a formula, since stories following this pattern are capable of considerable variation. They become formula when the writer's vision is limited to platitudes and mechanical patterns of behavior. Stories which rely on this traditional structure for their entire meaning are usually insignificant. The pattern can serve a writer though to produce a quality story. The traditional plot of Williams’ story is so simple that it would be dull if its significance were only in the resolution of the action. The plot serves merely as a vehicle for broader implications. In stories which emphasize plot as the major ingredient, pleasure ends when the story ends. Sean O'Faolain says, "In better stories there lies behind and beyond the Yarn a deeper and more lasting pleasure based on what the Yarn has helped--along with other technical factors in the story--to reveal about what we call the nature of things (or people) in general, or the world-at-large, or human nature, or the human comedy, call it what you will." The short stories of such

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7 O'Faolain, op. cit., p. 17.
deliberate plotters as Poe and Somerset Maugham emphasize the way the central conflict is developed in each sequential happening of the plot and how each development is a deliberate move toward a plausible resolution. They also illustrate some of the weaknesses of this plot pattern. A Conan Doyle detective story may stimulate the imagination and offer great pleasure for the reader, but once the story is finished it is over. A reader may remember the cleverness of the solution, but a rereading would offer no reward, since the story has as its major impact the suspense of the conflict, which is relieved forever with the solution.

Plot is something more than the traditional plot may indicate. Essentially, plot is the arrangement of any series of events which is supposed to carry meaning. The individual writer may arrange the separate events in any order he chooses. He is not limited to any fixed system. His unique ordering of experience is a part of his vision and permits him to come to terms with the areas of life he feels to be important and in the way he sees them. The only thing that the reader asks is that his vision be ordered, and that all the parts may be seen in relation to each other—that they make some kind of sense.

Many modern short story writers, who believe that the traditional plot is unreal or artificial, have written stories that upon a first reading have little resemblance to the older type. A closer reading, however, will reveal that the essential ingredients of the
traditional plot structure are also those of the modern story. There is conflict, there is action, and there is resolution, although the method is frequently indirect and the resolution is by implication. Such stories may contain deliberately selected details and incidents which leave gaps and questions in the reader's mind. The meaning is often deliberately clouded and even garbled in an attempt to express the complexity and ambiguity of human experience. The writer may present the reader with a series of carefully selected and arranged scenes or events which serve as clues to meaning. Such a story demands much of the reader who must be sensitive to meanings and be able to perceive the relationships of the parts. He must supply much of the connective tissue that the traditional plot structure supplied for him. If the writer reveals too little or is too abstruse then he fails to communicate and his efforts fail artistically. Although the conflict is not always stated clearly at the beginning, the writer is aware of the importance of suspense and of an effective beginning to trap the reader. He may use a startling or puzzling incident or image at the beginning. The reader may be curious to discover what the conflict is, or he may be in suspense merely to discover the meaning of trivial or seemingly unrelated incidents. So he reads on.

The traditional plot tends to emphasize the dramatic, sensational, or striking aspects of life, although not always. Such stories tend to have a surface reality, although a reality nonetheless. The more modern plot arrangement may be more convenient to a writer for focusing in depth on some seemingly trivial incident which
the traditional plotter would tend to ignore. The modern story may use what appears on the surface to be insignificant in order to show a more significant reality that lies beneath it. Neither pattern is necessarily unreal. Writers determine what they wish to emphasize and then choose patterns and techniques that will best help them accomplish their purpose. When the writer's method is that of discovering meaning in experience instead of finding meaning to support his preconception of experience, the plot structure will more likely be of the non-traditional type.

John Updike's "Walter Briggs" illustrates the non-traditional type of story quite well. The story is in two scenes. A young mother and father, Jack and Clare, and their son and daughter are taking a short automobile trip. The parents play a game, the object of which is to remember names of people from their past. They recall a person who had been at the camp where they had spent their honeymoon. His first name is Walter, but neither can remember his last name. They arrive home, put the children to bed, drink a ginger ale, watch television, and go to bed. Clare falls asleep, but Jack continues to think about Walter's last name. He thinks of the honeymoon summer and remembers reading Don Quixote. Suddenly he says to Clare, "Briggs. Walter Briggs."

A reader who completes this story with the expectations of a traditional plot would surely be disappointed, although a semblance of traditional plot does exist. A man and a wife try to recall a name—conflict. Finally, the husband, for some non-explicit reason,
remembers—resolution. This plot would scarcely be a satisfying story and the reader would be correct in assuming that there is much irrelevant detail. A hurried reading of the story puzzles the reader. When the story is re-read closely, meanings begin to emerge and the story becomes an interesting illumination of the relationship of a married couple. The sharp dialogue and brief descriptive passages give strong insights into the personalities of the two characters.

The first paragraph of the story gives the reader a clue to the relationship of Clare and Jack. Updike creates a picture of the family in the car and shows Jack and his baby son in the front seat and Clare and the young daughter in the back. Immediately, the two adults are separated in the reader's mind because of this descriptive detail. This seating arrangement might be considered as merely the most convenient for the trip, but because Updike chose to point to it as explicitly as he did, the reader can assume that it has suggestive importance. The couple is not elderly or even middle-aged, and they have been married for only five years. Updike, therefore, is not saying that long years of marriage and parenthood have made the relationship stagnant—the answer is elsewhere.

After Clare and the daughter have their little nonsense conversation, which also contains some revealing elements, and the daughter falls asleep, Clare rests her chin on the back of the front seat and the parents begin to converse. It is through their dialogue in Updike's quick, sharp, illuminating sentences that the reader sees these two characters and understands their relationship. They talk
gaily about the people at the party they had attended, trying to
determine who was best, "one of their few devices for whiling away
enforced time together." From this, the reader gathers that they are
bored with each other. They must make up little games to enjoy one
another's company. But this is more true of Jack than it is of
Clare. And the reader begins to see that the story belongs to Jack.
It is through him that any revelation will be made. Jack does not
respond as a lover to Clare's attempt at closeness. Clare had put
her chin "near Jack's shoulder, and breathed on the right side of his
neck." Jack had responded by initiating their game. The game "lacked
the minimal element of competition needed to excite Jack." Thus,
the reader is given a new clue to Jack's personality. He is one of
those persons who lose interest in a thing or person whenever challenge
or excitement is a missing element. This may be the reason for his
boredom with his wife and marriage. The routine state of their
marriage is later suggested by their activities at home--drinking a
ginger ale, watching television, and going to bed.

Their conversation in the car switches abruptly to their honeymoon and the people at the Y.M.C.A. Camp where they had stayed. The
subjects spoken of at this time are other people, not their own
actions and feelings. Obviously, this is not a romantic reminiscence.
Normally, when people recall the days of their honeymoon, shared ex-
periences and moments of romance would come to mind instead of the
amusing people. Jack and Clare come close to remembering something
important out of their "store of explicit memories" which "they had
collected together." They try to recall from "the sanctum where
the man's last name was hidden" the last name of Walter, a "lazy,
complacent Walter Somebody" who had loved them because they were nice
to him. Walter is really unimportant and the reader realizes that it
is something else that these two people are trying to recall from
their past in this moment of attempted intimacy. But the moment
passes and Jack is "happy that they had discovered such a good game
for the car just when he thought there were no more games for them."

The title of the story may at first seem to be rather baffling.
The whole matter of Jack and Clare's insistence upon remembering
Walter's last name and its significance in the story may not be
clear at first. The answer to this puzzling aspect of the story is
in the last, lengthy paragraph. Jack is lying alone, thinking about
the earlier honeymoon conversation in the car. He remembers that
Clare had recalled a young German boy who had made eyes at her. Thus,
the emotions of jealousy and competition are aroused in Jack and he
feels love and tenderness for the girl who was his bride and the
woman who is his wife. He remembers reading Don Quixote that summer
and crying at the end. And this is quite significant—for just as
Sancho pleaded with his master to "find the Lady Dulcinea under some
hedge, stripped of her enchanted rags and as fine as any queen," so
Jack is experiencing a moment of excited love for his wife again—
stripped of the rags of everyday life, of dullness, of common wifely
attributes. Jack remembers Walter's last name. The "sanctum where
the man's name was hidden" was actually the place in Jack's mind
where the once exciting love for his wife was to be found. When Jack,
in the last sentence, "unexpectedly found what he wanted," the reader sees that recalling the name is not what he wanted at all. Briggs and his name stand for something once known and now forgotten—something on the tip of Jack's heart that could not quite be reached—his love for his wife. This moment of illumination is the point of the story. What it will mean in the relationship of these people is not the subject, although the reader has been given enough information about the characters for him to continue thinking. It is doubtful that Jack will change. He makes no aggressive action toward his wife at the moment of recognition, and the stimulation for the recall is of a fanciful nature. Possibly, their marriage will be similar to the life of their car: the murmur of the motor was lopsided, pieces of dirt had been getting into the fuel pump, they had never been able to adjust to the color—"Waterfall Blue," and they realized it was soon going to cost them something, but Clare, at least, refused to hear anything of trading it in.

The emphasis in this story is not upon the sequence of scenes, events, or actions in logical progression, but upon the meaning of them in a perceived relationship. The reader, in a moment of perception, supplies what has been omitted in the story and connects all the clues that have been provided. The omissions here are clear statements of what the real conflict is in Jack's mind and what remembering Walter's last name really means for him. In this story the resolution and moment of perception are simultaneous. Through a perceived relationship the story has unity; each detail contributes to the central meaning, there is a conscious ordering of the details,
and no detail can be omitted without destroying the unity and meaning of the whole. Once the reader has perceived the essential meaning of this story, additional readings will reveal new facets of insight; details will reflect the central meaning.

Short stories are interesting because they are about people. Plot is important because it happens to people. A reader often remembers a character in fiction after the other elements of the story are forgotten. This is so primarily because the reader achieves some kind of emotional involvement with the character. The persons and events in the story exist in a meaningful relationship to the reader. All successful stories have an emotional impact on the reader. Some, however, stress this element more than others. Chekhov, in "The Lament," carefully builds his scenes around the emotional tensions of the central character. In the final moment of illumination the reader realizes that the loneliness of the old man who can find no one but his horse with whom to share his grief is his loneliness as well.

In order for characterization in stories to be successful individual characters must be convincing emotionally, consistent, and true to life. A writer should not tell the reader that a character has a certain trait—that he is domineering; he must place the character in an action which demonstrates this trait for the reader. Although people in real life do unexpected things, characters in short stories, which have such a limited focus, are expected to behave consistently. Once a character is established as domineering the reader expects him
to behave in such a way. The central character in a short story often leaves it different from the person he was when he went in, but the writer must reconcile this change by providing adequate motivation for it. The reader must understand the reason for the change, and he must be convinced that the cause for the change was adequate and logical. A domineering character who suddenly, without explanation, behaves passively is unconvincing.

If a reader is to become emotionally involved in a story he must care about what happens to the characters. Hence, the characters must have some real life. Chekhov was a master at creating real people in his stories. Brewster and Burrell say of Chekhov's characters, "... you will find no labels on Chekhov's characters. His people cannot be easily classified. Each human being has for him a uniqueness, affects him with wonder. Chekhov must have felt this about hundreds of people; this accounts for the curious freshness of his perceptions."°

In formula fiction stock characters from the stage, movies, and television are often reproduced--the motherly mother; the crusty individual with a heart of gold; the detestable brat who is really good; such stereotyped nationality figures as the Englishman, Frenchman, Scotchman, Mexican, Chinaman, Irishman, and the stage Jew, each of whom is given consistently certain characteristics and a certain way of

°Dorothy Brewster and Angus Burrell, Modern Fiction, p. 355.
talking; gangsters, villains, and lovely, vivacious, or sophisticated heroines. Unfortunately, these stock characters are as familiar to many readers as are real people, so that an uncritical reader may believe that they are actually representative of life. Also, stereotypes have enough characteristics drawn from life to further confuse the unsophisticated reader. In order for a character to ring true he must be an individual. The serious writer does not reduce his characters to generalizations or place them in categories. Heroes frequently have faults as well as virtues. Because a character is a mother she is not required to behave in a certain way. Instead of loving and caring tenderly for her child she may resent and neglect him, or her love may be a destructive factor. This behavior may be in contradiction to what is considered the natural mother instinct, but newspapers daily reveal it to be true to life. In several of John Updike's stories the possessive mother is presented as an emasculating agent. When characters are represented realistically as ugly, a writer is not necessarily violating idealism. In the best stories, although the writer is presenting life as it is, there is a subtle and implicit awareness of life as it ought to be.

Short story writers are more restricted than novelists when developing characters. Modern writers, especially, present little physical description. When they do, they generally focus on one or a few characteristics which give an impression of the whole. Usually one sees people by whole impressions rather than by single physical
characteristics, so a completely detailed description is unnecessary. Also, character is revealed more profoundly through other ways than through a person's appearance. Character is revealed through action, what a person says and does, and the way he reacts to events. Character is also revealed in short stories through what other people say about a person, through a description of a character's environment, or through a stream of conscious thought within a character. Direct author analysis is usually a less convincing technique. In the novel the writer may trace a character's life in a long sequence from birth to death, but the writer of the short story usually views his character in some typical or critical moment, a moment that is representative, or is the end result of some long sequence of activities, or is a turning point in the character's life after which he will never be the same. Sean O'Faolain says, "There is no time or space inside a short story for complex characterization. But, if the situation is an eloquent one, we can, somehow or other, induce a whole personality out of the tiniest incidents within the situation, much as we can see a whole panorama, see the highest mountain in the world, through a tiny pinhole in a sheet of paper."\(^9\)

Students must learn to be sensitive to the techniques of character revelation that writers of quality stories use. Although characters are a necessary part of all stories, some stories focus

\(^9\)O'Faolain, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 16.
primarily on character revelation for their theme. In J. F. Powers' "The Valiant Woman" the moment of illumination occurs when the reader perceives the contradictory elements in the personality of the central character. Mrs. Stoner is the parish housekeeper for Father Firman. The action of the story takes place during one evening in the parish house. A guest is invited for Father Firman's birthday dinner. After the guest leaves Father Firman and Mrs. Stoner play cards and then each goes to bed. Character is revealed primarily through conversation, recollections, and actions. There is no character description. The title of the story is important—a Biblical reference to a passage in Proverbs 31:10-28 describing the character and duties of the ideal woman and wife. The story then reveals ironically through conversation and action that the housekeeper assumes all the duties of a wife and practices all the virtues of the valiant woman, but does them in such a way as to be intolerable. She nags, she snoops, she gossips, and completely dominates the priest. She practices the letter but not the spirit of the law. Father Firman (the names of both characters in the story are suggestive of their personalities) would like to get rid of her and finally discovers a possible way, but he lacks the strength of character to do anything about it. He realizes that that people had "always laughed at him for something—for not being an athlete, for wearing glasses, for having kidney trouble . . . and mail coming addressed to Rev. and Mrs. Stoner," but, "it would be a slimy way of handling it after all her years of service." Two passages in this story are especially effective in illustrating how
character is revealed through action. The first is the description of the game of cards played by the housekeeper and the priest. When Mrs. Stoner dealt the cards "she swept up the cards and began to shuffle with the abandoned virtuosity of an old riverboat gambler, standing them on end, fanning them out, whirling them through her fingers, dancing them halfway up her arms, cracking the whip over them. At last they lay before him tamed." Her method of playing is described as follows:

She was getting all the cards, as usual, and would have been invincible if she had possessed his restraint and if her cunning had been of a higher order. He knew a few things about leading and laying back that she would never learn. Her strategy was attack, forever attack, with one baffling departure: she might sacrifice certain tricks as expendable if only she could have the last ones, the heartbreaking ones; if she could slap them down one after another, shatteringly.\textsuperscript{10}

She took the game seriously; "she played for blood, no bones about it, but for her there was no other way; it was her nature, as it was the lion's."

The second illustration concerns the mosquitoes. Father Firman slept in the back room while Mrs. Stoner slept in the guest room, since the screen in the back room let in mosquitoes. Early in the story Father Firman slaps a mosquito and the dinner guest tells him, "Only the female bites." After Father Firman retires and battles with his decision to get rid of Mrs. Stoner and loses, a mosquito enters

\textsuperscript{10}J. F. Powers, "The Valiant Woman."
his room and he struggles hopelessly to kill it. Mrs. Stoner, who plays cards for blood, comes to his room to discover the meaning of the noise. She says to him, "Shame on you, Father. She needs the blood for her eggs." At no place in the story is a physical description of Mrs. Stoner given. Would one be needed?

Flaubert's "A Simple Heart" is less typical of the short story in structure since it focuses on a number of incidents over a long period of years. Yet, in each incident the intent is to reveal the character of the simple serving woman Félicité. Physical description is at a minimum. In the following passage describing Félicité the selected details are suggestive rather than fully descriptive:

At all times of year she wore a print handkerchief fastened with a pin behind, a bonnet that covered her hair, gray stockings, a red skirt, and a bibbed apron—such as hospital nurses wear—over her jacket. Her face was thin and her voice sharp. At twenty-five she looked like forty. From fifty onwards she seemed of no particular age; and with her silence, straight figure, and precise movements she was like a woman made of wood, and going by clockwork.¹¹

These details suggest aspects of character that are revealed in action throughout the story—her treatment of her mistress, of the boy and girl of the house, of her nephew, and finally of her pet parrot. Her actions reveal the inner spirit of a simple but unselfishly good woman. This revelation compels the reader to respond with admiration.

¹¹Flaubert, "A Simple Heart."
and also permits Flaubert to make his theme possible. Félicité's reward for faithful service is her own sanctification, revealed in her deathbed mystical vision of the Holy Ghost. She is rewarded with knowledge of the highest spiritual truth.

Updike's "Friends from Philadelphia" illustrates the change of a central character brought about by the effect of other characters' personalities on him. The story focuses upon a simple incident in the life of a young teenage boy, John. He walks some distance to purchase a bottle of wine for his mother who is to entertain some of her college friends from Philadelphia. He is unable to purchase the wine since he is not of age. He stops at a girlfriend's house and presents his problem. The girl's mother tells him her husband will soon be home and will buy the wine for him. The father, after he arrives home, permits John to drive him and his daughter to the store. There he buys the wine and then takes John home. As a result of this experience a change is brought about in John. When John first arrives at the girlfriend's house he is a shy, blushing, and unassuming person. When he learns that "some of the other kids" were at the house earlier, he tells the girlfriend, Thelma, that he would have come if he had known. Thelma tells him, "Keep in touch, they say, if you want to keep up." Thelma's flippant, sophisticated attitude and affected manners excite John, but he cannot tell her that he doesn't like her plucked eyebrows and the affected way she pronounces his name. John has not yet cut the umbilical cord from his mother. When he is offered a cigarette he refuses, although he wants one. His
mother might smell it on his breath when he gets home, even if he
chews gum. The easy relationships in Thelma's home, although the
people are coarse and somewhat crude, seem to have a vitality that
is lacking in John's own experience. Thelma's father, although
uneducated, has been financially successful. Thelma's father drives
a new Buick while John's father, an educated man, drives an old
Plymouth. Updike uses the technique of focusing on one or two
suggestive details to describe Thelma's mother: "Thelma's mother
was settled in the deep red settee watching television and smoking.
A coffee cup being used as an ashtray lay in her lap, and her dress
was hitched so that her knees showed." Although she is crude, she
is sympathetic and genuine in her relationship with John and per­
missive in her relationship with her daughter.

The directions Thelma's father gives to John for operating
the automatic transmission of his new Buick suggest rather directly
what John needs to do to change his behavior. John had driven only
his father's old Plymouth which had a standard gear shift. Thelma's
father explains the little lever behind the steering wheel:

You pull it toward you like that, that's it, and
fit it into one of these notches. "P" stands for
"parking"—I hardly ever use that one. "N" that's
"neutral," like on the car you have, "P" means
"drive"—just put it there and the car does all
the work for you. You are using that one ninety­
nine percent of the time. "L" is "low," for very
steep hills, going up or down. And "R" stands for--
what?12

12Updike, "Friends From Philadelphia."
John is able to answer—"Reverse." Updike is implying that these same operations are necessary in John's behavior. John recognizes the need for reverse. He must move out of neutral and use drive.

Thelma and John wait in the car while the father goes into the store to purchase the wine. The beginning of a reversal is seen. John tells Thelma he doesn't like her eyebrows plucked and the way she pronounces his name and they smoke a cigarette together. When the father returns, he takes over the wheel, saying that John drove all right but that he knows the road better.

The last incident in the story, a subtle touch, must be interpreted figuratively, in terms of John's personality problem, to reflect the significance of this story. As John gets out of the car he asks if there was any change from the two dollars he had given Thelma's father to purchase the wine. His father gives him a dollar and twenty-six cents. John seems to think this is a large amount and wonders about the quality of the wine—Chateau Mounton-Rothschild 1937. He thinks perhaps he should have let his mother buy it. Thelma's father tells him, "It's your change." There has been change in John, although not as much as Thelma's father encouragingly indicates. He must rely on himself, however, rather than on his mother if it will continue.

James Joyce used the term epiphany to label the special kind of character revelation that he used in his stories. The word comes from the Greek, meaning "a showing forth." It is also a religious term referring to the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. In
Joyce's *Stephen Hero* radiance is identified with epiphany, the religious significance seen as "a sudden spiritual manifestation." Stephen hears a fragment of a conversation while walking and "this trivial incident becomes for him the symbol of a spiritual state, and through his insight the incident finds its epiphany; for epiphany is not only the meaning of a symbol but the artist's apprehension of that meaning."\(^1\) The epiphany is the moment of climax or the moment of perception, the moment when the meaning of the story becomes clear. It is usually represented by some trivial object or event which in some way illuminates all that has gone before. In Joyce's stories suspense is derived through expectations of character revelation, which becomes more important than plot suspense. All of his stories build toward the epiphany; all the suspense is directed toward that moment when the character is fully revealed and understood. In "Araby," for example, a young boy becomes romantically infatuated with the girl next door. He dreams of and longs for Saturday night when he can go to the bazaar to buy her a gift he promised her in a chance conversation. At the bazaar he examines several gifts in one of the stalls. He overhears a young lady talking and laughing with two young men. Hearing this flippant conversation serves as an awakening in the boy and he realizes the foolishness of his illusions about the girl who lived next to him. He leaves the bazaar without

\(^1\)W. Y. Tindall, *James Joyce: His Way of Interpreting the Modern World*, p. 120.
purchasing the gift. The gay conversation in the stall serves as the epiphany and the light that it throws on the boy's understanding is revealed in the last sentence of the story: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

Since Joyce's time many short story writers have taken advantage of the economy and power of the epiphany. In Updike's "Walter Briggs" the recollection of the wife's remark about the German boy combined with the recollection of reading Don Quixote serve as the objective stimuli for the final revelation. Updike's "Toward Evening" is a perfect example of the epiphany as Joyce defined and used it. Rafe, a young married man, gets onto a bus to go home. First, he stands by a beautiful young woman and has romantic fantasies about her. He then looks out the window and counts the marked numbers along the streets. He associates the numbers with events in his past from the corresponding year. Thus, the number 1900 is also the year his father was born. A block was torn down where the number for the present should have stood and the numbering began again with 2000, "a boring progressive edifice" with a poster above it advertising Jomar Instant Coffee. He then observes a young Negress seated beneath him--"... his imaginings concerning himself and the girl were so plainly fantastic, he could indulge them without limit." He arrives home and gives the baby a mobile he had carried carefully on the bus. He argues mildly with his wife and is unable to communicate with her at dinner. After dinner, sitting alone in the living room, Rafe looks at a ridiculous
Spry sign blinking on and off, "which by virtue of brightness and readability dominated their night view." He suspects that the Spry sign was put there for no particularly good reason. It just happened. "Thus the Spry sign (thus the river, thus trees, thus babies and sleep) came to be." The Spry sign and Rafe's reactions to it serve as a final illumination to Rafe's character and his attitude toward existence. In Rafe's estimation life is empty and dull, a block torn down, and the future offers only a vague "progress" which is boring and leaves man unfulfilled. The baby does not even respond to the mobile Rafe had guarded so carefully. In a sense Updike is identifying the emptiness of the technological age, reflected in a number of images throughout the story, culminating in the Spry sign. In contrast to this world is the world of the imagination. At the beginning of the story "Rafe was tired and hence dreamy." His marital status permits only fantasies of desire for the beautiful women he sees on the bus. The image of the stars, hinted at throughout the story, suggests this world of the imagination. Rafe waits for a number five bus and he sees repetitions of a V on the first girl--both suggesting the five-pointed star. At dinner his wife drops a triangular piece of bread, which "falling to her lap through a width of light, twirled and made a star." This illusion of Rafe's is in contrast to the actual situation--annoyance, irritation, and lack of communication between the husband and wife. In the last sentence of the story the relation of Rafe's two worlds is brought into focus--"The Spry sign occupied the night with no company beyond the also
uncreated but illegible stars." The dull and empty world of reality dominates the world of the imagination. The epiphany has served to illuminate the meaning and unity of the isolated and seemingly unrelated events that have gone before.

Theme is essentially the total meaning of a story and thus it is the most important element. Without theme a story lacks point or purpose. And it is theme which gives unity to all the other parts of the story. When a story is reduced to a simple statement of theme, the story loses some of its flavor and richness of experience. But one way to get at the meaning of a story is to attempt to state the subject and meaning of the central conflict or to state a predominant idea in the story.

Theme is based on the writer's personal vision of human experience. If a number of quality writers treat the same subject, they will reveal it in a number of truly individual ways, for they will be speaking as individuals. The writer examines the world about him and in his writing focuses from his point of view on those aspects of the human condition which he believes to be significant. Theme is, in a sense, the way the individual writer looks at a problem or an area of experience. In this sense, theme is a very personal matter. But fundamental to the themes of all the really great stories is their universality. The problem of a story may be a timely one which soon loses its importance in the rush of human affairs, or it may be a problem which has meaning only for a character in the story. If the theme of the story is limited to the external identification and
resolution of the problem, the story lacks universality. The same kinds of problems can be treated so that the theme is developed out of an individual's reaction to the problem and the theme then becomes universal. If the theme identifies a human weakness or a human strength, or any other aspect of the human condition, using the problem merely to expose it, then the theme transcends the temporal limits of the problem. Theme then is the significance of an event or a series of events occurring to an individual or a group of individuals. Theme in fiction is dramatized in terms of private experience. Only in this way is fiction capable of achieving its unique emotional effect. The nature of the private experience, however, must be such that it becomes public experience, if the theme is to be significant and universal.

Theme is something more than a dramatization of a moral lesson. If a writer deals with a problem, he may choose to offer no solution, since problems often have no specific solutions, or any solution at all. A solution may be the right one for an individual or for a group of individuals, but solutions seldom exist that are effective for all. A writer may choose to identify a problem where none seemed on the surface to exist or where the nature of the problem was unclear. Adjustment to the problem may be a better solution to the conflict than resolution.

Man in search of a meaning to life is an ageless literary theme. Thousands of Fausts and Augie Marches have wandered endlessly through countless pages of literature seeking a fulfillment of some kind.
Many of these wanderers have found solutions of one sort or another; others have not. Still others, among them George Grebe in Saul Bellow's "Looking for Mr. Green" have become callous enough to keep trying despite their tacit acknowledgment that the search is hopeless. Within Bellow's story lies a very simple, human—perhaps even didactic—situation. Grebe, the protagonist, is looking for a certain Negro in order to give him a relief check. After encountering many hardships he, in the end, gives the check to a woman of questionable reliability who may or may not deliver it to the elusive Mr. Green. Because Grebe wants to believe in his success, he rationalizes his doubt away, causing his subsequent elation to be very obviously unjustified. Rationalization, although a very common human frailty, is hardly a solution to one's problems. Grebe, at the end of the story, says to himself, "Well you silly bastard... so you found him. So what?" implying that his was a hollow victory. Thus, a kind of hopelessness, or purposelessness, is the ultimate mood of the story. This effect is not simply created by the story's conclusion. Rather, Bellow strives for it throughout. In the opening paragraph, for instance, Grebe's face is described as "an indoors sort of face with gray eyes that persisted in some kind of thought and yet seemed to avoid definiteness of conclusion. The hopelessness of Grebe's situation is intensified still more by his sense of isolation. As a white man in a Negro community, he gets neither help nor sympathy from the people he encounters. Furthermore, he is burdened with his own reflective mind. After years of shifting around between jobs, he
finds within himself the desire "to do well, simply for doing-well's sake, to acquit himself decently of a job because he so rarely had a job to do . . . ." Finding Mr. Green, for the moment, is what makes his life worth while. "He had something to do. To be compelled to feel this energy and yet have nothing to do—that was horrible; that was suffering; he knew what that was . . . . He had six checks left, and he was determined to deliver at least one of these; Mr. Green's check." For Grebe, the search is the reality that temporarily gives meaning to an existence made up of appearances, and this dualism—reality and appearance—shapes the basic, underlying conflict both in the story and in Grebe's reflective mind. During his wandering in the slums, Grebe muses that cities are built, but soon crumble, destroying their original purpose. Thus, Grebe concludes, cities—or anything made by men—stood only for themselves by agreement, "and were natural and not unnatural by agreement, and when the things themselves collapsed the agreement became visible." In plainer terms, facade inevitably tries to conceal fact, but when the outer covering is torn away, the innards are hardly beautiful. Even beneath what appears to be human decency lies man's essential ugliness. Because men consent to the suffering of other men, there could not possibly be anything worth while to strive for. Grebe's reverie stops short of offering a possible solution because, perhaps, there is none. Seemingly, there is no hope for Grebe. If a faint glimmer of hope exists, however, it rests in the mere fact that he asks questions: "And why so painfully ugly?" "Because there is something that is
dismal and permanently ugly?" Without questions Grebe could not exist; but with questions—even if there are no answers—he can be sustained during his search for Mr. Green.

The quality of a theme of a particular story is based on the penetration and accuracy of the writer's vision and on its universality. The themes of formula short stories, just like their stereotyped characters, are based on platitudes: Mother love is sacred and stronger than any other love; it is worth all necessary sacrifice to preserve the sanctity of the home; courageous patriotism is more precious than life itself; when all else fails, religion is the answer to life's problems. Although these themes may be accurate in some areas of experience they are not automatically universal. Quality stories often deliberately violate these themes which are accepted by many writers and readers as the way life always is. A formula theme would place positive value on hero-worship, but Sherwood Anderson in "I Want to Know Why" suggests the almost inevitable disillusion that adolescents must face in hero-worship. The same theme is presented in Hemingway's "My Old Man." In both cases the young boys learn that their idolized heroes have human weaknesses. Faulkner's "Spotted Horses" also violates a formula by showing that evil doers often go unpunished and are successful in their community. In many modern quality stories mother love is shown as damaging to a son's life.

Ring Lardner's "The Golden Honeymoon" is clearly a subtle attempt to violate a formula theme. On the surface the story is a
touching and almost sentimental account of an old couple's wedding trip to Florida. They have their little quarrels and they exhibit their small-town complacencies and their trite and petty satisfactions. When the story is read closely the reader sees the author's contempt for this couple who have lived together for fifty years without liking each other or life itself and have lacked the necessary personal equipment for facing the reality of their situation and the meanness of their own lives. They live their empty lives together because they don't know what else to do. Lardner is saying that old age does not automatically produce wisdom, kindness, understanding, and all the other attributes that are associated with the romantic image of old age.

Theme is not a statement of an idea but the meaning that emerges from a dramatic situation or series of situations. Theme may be based primarily on plot, as in Williams' "The Use of Force"; it may be based primarily on character, as in Flaubert's "A Simple Heart"; it may be based primarily on an element of style, as in Jean Stafford's "A Country Love Story"; or it may be such a dominating element that the other parts of the story are simple projections of the theme, as in Walter Van Tilburg Clark's "The Portable Phonograph." In each case the theme which emerges is what makes the story significant. Clark's story takes place shortly after the final war on earth. Four men have survived--Professor Jenkins, a writer, a musician, and a fourth man. The four men huddle together to listen to the professor read from some books he has saved and to some recordings on a
portable phonograph. When they finish and go their separate ways into the desolate prairie, the professor seals up his books and phonograph in a hole and lies down to sleep, and "on the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe." The characters in this story are insignificant as individuals; three are not even given a name. There is little action and little conversation. Both of these characteristics would be weaknesses in most stories, but Clark has developed a theme in which such approaches to character and plot are appropriate. Theme is revealed early in the story by Professor Jenkin's statement of why he saved the books and the phonograph when he knew the end was in sight: "We are the doddering remnant of a race of mechanical fools. I have saved what I love; the soul of what was good in us is here; perhaps the new ones will make a strong enough beginning not to fall behind when they become clever." Both character and action are then depicted as belonging to a "race of mechanical fools." Clark's indictment of a civilization that has made such technological advances yet lacks the concomitant sense of human values is intensified in the last paragraph when the professor, the epitome of civilized man in his most familiar form, resorts automatically to caveman tactics.

Theme may be a fictional projection of a writer's philosophical position, as it is in the stories of Sartre and Camus. Existentialism is a philosophy that is extremely complex in nature, but some understanding of the underlying principles is essential for an appreciation of the stories of these writers. Hall and Langland
present the following clear and concise summary of the basic tenets of the philosophy as developed by Sartre:

Sartre's philosophy predicates a distinct discord between the outer world and man's yearning for wholeness and meaning. Man therefore lives in anguish, incompleteness, and futility; this state is intensified by the assumption that the universe is nothingness. There is an absence of any acceptable explanation of the causality between events; this invalidates the traditional idea of history, or institutions, or relationships—no matter how tender—between people. Thus man is alone in a hostile or an indifferent universe; he can rely neither on the satisfying concept of an anthropomorphic god, nor on the traditional assumptions of a rational, perhaps benevolent, organization of the world.

The ethical stances of Sartre which derive from his metaphysics are not an easy nihilism, or an excuse for self-indulgence, or an escape from social responsibilities. Though man must rely on himself, he can create values. By assertion, by action, by bringing resistance out of defeat (as in France during the war) man can become heroic, but without illusions. A man, therefore, is what he does; he is self-defining by his own decisions and his own deeds. If he does nothing, he is nothing. By his actions man comes to a kind of freedom, but this freedom is not a comfortable state. More likely this state is one of uncertainty, constant reevaluation and crisis.

In "The Wall" Sartre shows three people facing death in various ways. The scene is one of absurdity since all causality of a rational kind is missing. The polemic tone of the story is demonstrated in the handling of the leading character as Sartre's narrator and in the way

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14 James B. Hall and Joseph Langland (eds.), The Short Story, p. 128.
details of landscape and event are used as dramatic projections of Sartre's metaphysical speculations. The characters serve as pegs for the author's own foregone conclusions. Ideas are stuck on the charac-
ters instead of being embodied in them. Even when the reader brings a rudimentary knowledge of existentialism to the story, it remains somewhat of a puzzle, although the ideas are stimulating and engaging. The story fails, however, to achieve complete artistic unity. Camus' "The Guest" is also an embodiment of existentialist ideas. In this story, however, the ideas are embodied in the characters in such an organic way that they become the motivation of their inner lives and destinies. The characters have an existence apart from their creator. The central character is forced to make a personal moral choice. Either decision would cause him to lose fellowship with the community of mankind. The story ends with a dilemma and the hero is stripped to utter loneliness. Although an understanding of existentialism adds fullness of meaning to this story, it is not essential. The reader can grasp immediately the universal problem defined in this dramatization of a general idea in personal terms. This story is an example of rare achievement in the form and demonstrates that philosophical ideas can serve as the basis for literary art. Albert Maquet says of it, "I do not know if L'Hôte ('The Guest') has more right to our admiration than do the other stories, but its simplicity of plot and the bitter-sweet poesy which it distills confer a beauty and yes, a soundness upon it which has a disintoxicating effect."

Some writers have chosen fictional fantasy to reveal their themes. John Cheever, in "The Enormous Radio," uses a radio in a young couple's apartment that picks up conversations in the other apartments in the building. The reader is willing to suspend his disbelief because of the novelty of the situation and because he expects some worth while revelation. Also, Cheever makes a careful transition from reality to fantasy, from a radio that is mechanically deficient in sound, to a radio that logically picks up electrical sounds in the building, to a fantastic radio that picks up the conversations of the other tenants. The ugly and expensive radio with its "malevolent green light," and considered as an "agressive intruder" in the couple's apartment, reveals to the young couple a glimpse of the vileness and hypocrisy of human beings. What they hear is shocking and repulsive to them, but they repeatedly return to listen. By the end of the story a more important revelation is made to the reader--the same vileness and hypocrisy is present in the lives of the young couple. This theme is developed in a different manner in Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly." When the mask of social consciousness is dropped in the life of a man spiritually arid, ugly and devilish impulses and actions emerge--here, the purposeless torture of a fly.

D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner" uses a child's toy rocking horse as the link between the visible and invisible worlds. Young Paul rides his toy horse until he knows the names of winning horses at the racetrack. With his uncle's help he places bets in
order to obtain money for his mother's supposed needs. In the end he
dies of emotional exhaustion from riding to find the names of winners.
The reader accepts easily the fantasy in this story. The fairy tale
beginning--"There was a woman . . . ."--and the characterization of
a sensitive young boy who imagines whisperings in his haunted house
contribute logically to a kind of parable on the destructive money
lusts of modern society, a theme similar to that of Irwin Shaw's
"Main Currents of American Thought."

Style, as an element of the short story, is often neglected
by teachers. They are sometimes concerned more about what is said
than how it is said. Style contributes as much to the meaning of
the short story as the more easily identified elements of plot,
character, and theme. Compression and implication are necessary
stylistic elements of the modern short story form. The limitations
the form imposes on a writer necessitate that he say as much as
possible in a short space. Writers differ widely in their use of
diction, metaphoric language, sentence structure and rhythm; but
since everything in a short story must contribute to the total effect,
the writer must develop stylistic qualities that are consistent with
the effect he wishes to achieve. The quality short story is marked
by its careful wording, controlled sentence structure, clarity of
emphasis, and economy of means.

Flaubert is well known for his attempt to find the precise
words for what he wished to say, for his ability to observe even a
common object to discover its individuality and then select the words
that would express its differences from all similar objects. In the classic first sentence of "A Simple Heart" his concern for precise diction and economy of expression is evident. In seventeen words he tells the reader the names of the two central characters in the story, their relationship to each other, the place where they live, and the length of time they have been together: "Madam Aubain's servant Félicité was the envy of the ladies of Pont-l'Eveque for half a century."

Meaning emerges more often in the short story through implication rather than by being stated directly and literally. Schneider et al. say:

Real people seldom describe themselves as honest or dishonest, as saints, sinners, or hypocrites. They reveal such things by what they say and do, indirectly, and we note the implication. Some authors want as much "reality" as they can get, and so do not want to insert morals or state meanings in literal terms. When we read such an author, we interpret what his characters say and do, just as we interpret real events. There is nothing unnatural about the process . . . . there are some meanings which cannot be stated directly, and certain other meanings lose force when stated directly . . . . the experience of reading fiction is not that of reading generalizations or lectures or sermons. It is, rather, an experience during which a good reader will feel the impact of characters, action, setting, and words, and will grasp essential meanings.16

In Hemingway's short stories the writer does not tell a reader what to think; he presents characters in situations and permits the reader to

16 Elisabeth W. Schneider, Albert L. Walker, and Herbert E. Childs, op. cit., p. 19.
draw the conclusions. He accomplishes this primarily by eliminating
author comment and stripping conversation of the non-essentials.
Dialogue is limited to a few short sentences with a "he said" or
"he asked." There is no need for "exclaiming," "questioning," or
"timidly replying" in a Hemingway story. The reader knows how the
characters speak, look, and act by what they say. Words carry the
emotional weight without stating the emotional response desired. The
thing that is not said is often the most important thing. Lengthy
sentences, properly balanced and subordinated, are the product of an
orderly society. Hemingway's syntax represents the disordered state
of society. He uses a simple sequence of clauses with little subordina-
tion. His sentences are filled with simple nouns and verbs, with few
adjectives and adverbs. The reader feels he is living the experience
rather than reading about it. Occasionally, Hemingway carried this
stylistic approach to an extreme. As O'Connor says, "Hemingway . . .
has so studied the artful approach to the significant moment that we
sometimes end up with too much significance and too little informa-
tion." 17 Hemingway has had a most profound influence on the style of
the modern short story, however.

The short story writer uses a number of poetic devices which
permit him to suggest more than he says. Metaphoric language permits

the writer to expand the significance of his meanings, whether it be
comparison by symbol, simile, or irony. Daiches says:

But the true creative writer drops his words into
our mind like stones in a pool, and the ever-widening
circles of meaning eventually ring round and encom-
pass the store of our own experience. And--to con-
tinue the metaphor--in doing so they provide a new
context for familiar things, and what has been lying
half dead in our mind and imagination takes on new
life in virtue of its new context, so that we not
only recognize what we feel we knew but see the
familiar take on rich and exciting new meanings.10

All short stories are in a sense metaphors. The experience of a quality
short story is a part of all human experience; therefore, the short
story experience is the reader's or like his. The writer uses
metaphor within the story, also, to heighten the meaning. A clear
example occurs in Virginia Woolf's "The New Dress." A young woman
goes to a party. Because she feels socially inadequate, she has worn
an unusual dress which she hopes will attract attention. At the
party she discovers that the dress does not create the impression she
desired and sees herself and all the other people at the party:

Like flies trying to crawl over the edge of the
saucer . . . . Now she could see flies crawling
slowly out of a saucer of milk with their wings
stuck together; and she strained and strained
(standing in front of the looking-glass, listen-
ing to Rose Shaw) to make herself see Rose Shaw
and all the other people there as flies, trying
to hoist themselves out of something, or into
something, meagre, insignificant, toiling flies.
But she could not see them like that, not other

10David Daiches, A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics,
pp. 32-33.
people. She saw herself like that—she was a fly, but the others were dragonflies, butterflies, beautiful insects, dancing, fluttering, skimming, while she alone dragged herself up out of the saucer.  

Irony is more than a literary device for compression; it is almost an essential ingredient of an art that attempts to get at the realities of life. Human life tends to be made up of a group of non-related ironical situations and one indication of an educated person is his ability to recognize and understand irony. A sharp awareness of irony in literature broadens and deepens a reader's understanding of his own experience. Irony may be developed within the plot structure, where an unexpected reversal reveals the meaning of the story, or it may be an attitude that is developed within the story, an attitude which simultaneously reveals contradictory ideas. Irony may be an element for resolving a conflict or it may reveal the essential reality of a situation. The first type is sometimes referred to as situational or dramatic, the latter, as verbal.

Several elements of irony, both situational and verbal, are evident in Eudora Welty's "A Visit of Charity." A young Campfire Girl makes a visit to an Old Ladies' Home to give someone there a potted plant. The usual connotation of the word charity as love or unselfishness provides the basis for the irony in the story. One usually assumes that charity is the act of voluntarily giving of one's

\[19\] Virginia Woolf, "The New Dress."
time and services without seeking anything in return; however, when
a nurse meets the Campfire Girl at the door the girl says, "I'm a
Campfire Girl . . . . I have to pay a visit to some old lady. She
can receive a minimum of three points for the visit and one extra
point if she brings flowers; if she reads to them from the Bible the
visit counts double. When she tells the nurse that any old lady will
do, "she pushed her hair behind her ears, as she did when it was time
to study Science." Such a detail further reveals the impersonal
nature of her act. The home, which might be assumed to be filled
with warm and friendly old ladies, is described as "reflecting the
winter sunlight like a block of ice." The reader's expectations of
warmth and kindliness are further contradicted. "There was a smell
in the hall like the interior of a clock." The mechanical attitude
is reinforced by the behavior of the nurse: "... she first extended
her arm, bent her elbow, and leaned from the hips—all to examine the
watch strapped to her wrist." The old ladies' noises are referred
to as the "bleating of sheep" and their hands are referred to as
"claws." The old ladies bicker over whether or not they enjoyed the
last Campfire Girl reading to them from the Bible. The acceptance
of charity carries with it the idea of appreciation, a belief that
is exploded in this story when the old lady to whom the plant was
given tells the Campfire Girl that the flowers are not pretty, they
are "Stinkweeds," and have germs. When the girl leaves, the old
lady asks, "Oh, little girl, have you a penny to spare for a poor
old woman that's not got anything of her own . . . just a nickel--
a penny--"
Symbols are a significant part of all people's lives, whether they be objective or subjective, concrete or abstract. Symbols permit people to think and talk about their experience. The more complex the experience, the more complex the symbolic system will be. Symbols in fiction are not parts of a puzzle a writer presents to a reader, but they are used consciously and artistically to aid in compression and to suggest the complexity of experience. Some ideas and feelings which cannot be conveyed directly and literally are expressed symbolically to suggest a more abstract kind of reality. Symbols aid the writer in suggesting dimensions of his story beyond the plot.

All language and events in a story are symbolic, in the sense that they stand for a kind of reality. Within this framework a writer may introduce a number of more abstract symbols. They may be of a traditional nature; the flag, a church, and Pearl Harbor immediately suggest certain ideas and emotional reactions to most readers. And most readers would respond similarly to them. Traditional symbols may be used in an untraditional way, however, as a sort of ironic comment. Some writers have developed a symbolic system that is uniquely their own and appears somewhat consistently throughout their work. Hawthorne developed a system around the symbols of the Puritan faith. John Updike uses the automobile as a symbol repeatedly in his stories. Some symbols become clear only in the context of a particular story.
Jean Stafford constructs "A Country Love Story" around a central symbol that is meaningful only as it is revealed in this story. The symbol is obvious for its implications, yet it functions so realistically at a literal level that it is unobtrusive. A young married woman, May, and her somewhat older husband, Daniel, buy a house in the country so the husband can recuperate from an illness. The opening of the story describes an antique sleigh that stands in the front yard. When the couple bought the house they planned to get rid of it soon. In a first reading of the story the sleigh appears to be a picturesque detail; however, the somewhat lengthy description of it and the indication of the characters' emotional reactions to it should suggest to the reader that it will serve as one means for meaning to emerge from the story. The reader soon learns that love and tender affection have disappeared from the marriage relationship between May and Daniel. There is a suggestion of hope for a renewal of their marriage vows in this country retreat as well as improved health for Daniel. "The rigors of a country winter would be nothing . . . when compared to the strain of feuds and cocktail parties." During the winter Daniel spends most of his time in his study, leaving May to the loneliness of the big house. ". . . it seemed to her that love, the very center of their being, was choked off, overgrown, invisible. And silent with hostility or voluble with trivial reproach, they tried to dig it out impulsively and could not--could only maul it in its unkempt grave." The sleigh remains a part of the scene. "Sunken in faithlessness, they stared,
at mealtimes, atrophied within the present hour, at the irrelevant and whimsical sleigh that stood abandoned in the mammoth winter."

Later, May realizes "that the sleigh, would stay where it was so long as they stayed there." Because of her loneliness May begins to imagine a lover and "one night, looking out the window, she clearly saw her lover sitting in the sleigh." When the winter was over May no longer saw her lover. Daniel began to spend more time with her, but May "knew now that no change would come, and that she would never see her lover again." In the last scene of the story she goes out into the yard and gets into the sleigh, "wondering over and over again how she would live the rest of her life." The sleigh functions throughout the story as a natural part of the physical environment. Yet, it also has more than literal meaning for May and Daniel and for the reader. The sleigh represents symbolically the dead love that exists between the couple, or more broadly, their changing marital relationship. The fancied lover is seen by May within the dead love. This is where new love must come from. And when May realizes that the situation will never change she sits in the sleigh—she rests passively in the dead love. According to this interpretation, then, some of the details at the opening of the story take on added significance. Miss Stafford describes the sleigh as follows: "Here and there upon the bleached and splintery seat were wisps of horsehair and scraps of the black leather that had once upholstered it."

The lady who sold them the house had called it "a picturesque detail . . . and, waving it away, had turned to the well, which, with
enthusiasm and at considerable length, she said had never gone dry."

But, "May and Daniel had found the detail more distracting than picturesque." Miss Stafford tells the reader:

They had planned to remove the sleigh before they did anything else. But partly because there were more important things to be done, and partly because they did not know where to put it (a sleigh could not, in the usual sense of the words, be thrown away), and partly because it seemed defiantly a part of the yard, as entitled to be there permanently as the trees, they did nothing about it.20

Making the distinction between allegorical and symbolic writing may sharpen some students' awareness of a difficult element of style. In allegory there is a specific idea or event behind every object, although pure allegory rarely exists in modern fiction. Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" reveals the allegorical technique, for example, in the name of "Faith" for the young wife. More often Hawthorne used symbolic rather than allegorical techniques; his symbols suggest possible meanings within a limited sphere rather than imply exact meanings. Katherine Ann Porter's "Flowering Judas" makes use of the myth of the betrayal of Christ, but the myth serves as an amplification of the meaning of modern life, not a parallel meaning. Several characters have the Christ significance and several characters have the Judas significance. The myth is not retold in allegorical fashion, but certain aspects of the myth serve to suggest fuller meanings to the story.


A reader's concern over symbols in fiction may distract his attention from the intended meaning of a piece. Mary McCarthy tells the amusing story of a group of college students and their instructor who struggled over a symbolic interpretation of some of the details in her story 'Artists in Uniform.' She says that the details in question merely happened to be a part of the autobiographical incident she was describing and her intent was nothing beyond the literal description through significantly selected details. Readers can sometimes try too hard to hunt for symbols. Miss McCarthy says:

... the great body of fiction contains only what I have called natural symbolism, in which selected events represent or typify a problem, a kind of society or psychology, a philosophical theory, in the same way they do in real life. What happens to the hero becomes of the highest importance. This symbolism needs no abstruse interpretation and abstruse interpretation will only lead the reader away from the reality that the writer is trying to press on his attention.

At the same time many writers do use details for their symbolic significance. In order for a symbol to be artistic it must be an integral and functional part of the story at its most literal level, as is the sleigh in "A Country Love Story." A symbol that appears to be merely stuck into the story for its effect or one that is used too obviously detracts from the unity of the piece of fiction.


22Ibid., p. 49.
The narrative point of view a writer selects also adds a dimension to a story's meaning. He can select from a first person narrator who is a major or minor character or someone repeating the narrative second-hand, or from the third person narrative which can be told from the viewpoint of one of the characters or from an omniscient viewpoint, or he may use a mixture. The choice is not an arbitrary one. Each viewpoint contributes to a different kind of narrative meaning. The first person narrative is limited to the perceptions and dimensions of the narrator, to the extent he is involved in the action, to his relations with other characters, and to his ability to interpret or reflect what he hears, sees, or learns.

The language and sentence structure the narrator uses also indicate the relationship between style and meaning. Character is often revealed through this device by a reader's awareness of the character's limited ability to react to what happens to him. The reader is sometimes permitted to see beyond the narrator's perceptions, a form of dramatic irony. What the narrator of Ring Lardner's "Haircut" recounts as a comic situation is seen by the reader as tragic and ugly. Sometimes the first person narrative, as in the stories of Maugham and Conrad, serves merely as a frame for the story to give an illusion of immediacy and reality. The story with the first person narrator customarily takes the form of a dramatic monologue. Anderson's "I'm A Fool" and most of Ring Lardner's stories imply an audience; the central intelligence is speaking to a listener or a group of listeners who are assumed to be present but do not themselves speak.
The third person narrative may be limited to the viewpoint of one character's perceptions or it may be told from the writer's omniscient point of view. The first permits the stream-of-consciousness technique ably demonstrated in Katherine Ann Porter's "Flowering Judas," Virginia Woolf's "The New Dress," and Eudora Welty's "The Winds." No audience is implied; the reader is permitted to experience, along with the central intelligence, the impressions and stimuli the writer chooses to produce. The character is generally spoken of in the third person, but all experience is viewed through the senses, the mind, and the emotions of a single character. This technique permits the writer to explore the inner workings of the mind for presenting the reality of thought, observation, and feeling, which would not be consistent with the first person point of view.

The omniscient point of view permits the author to comment directly to the reader. This method, which is often deliberately expository, is considered by most modern writers to be less effective than any of the others; however, a reader must judge the effectiveness of the point of view used according to its appropriateness for the meaning of the story and the intent of the author. Each method has its own uses and limitations. If the point of view used in a story seems to be the inevitable choice, or if the meaning would change if the point of view were different, then the writer's choice is more than likely the correct one.

In many stories the setting is closely allied to the central conflict and influences the action of the plot. A character's struggle
may generate from some factor in the setting, as illustrated in
Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat." Both Conrad and Poe placed great
emphasis on setting as a factor that contributes to the tone and mood
of the story. A writer may reveal setting by describing the external
details or characters themselves may reveal aspects of setting.
The setting of Steinbeck's "Flight" determines the nature of the
people and the course of events in the story. The following description
is important if the characters in the story are to be understood:

About fifteen miles below Monterey, on the wild
coast, the Torres family had their farm, a few
sloping acres above a cliff that dropped to the
brown reefs and to the hissing white waters of the
ocean. Behind the farm the stone mountains stood
up against the sky. The farm buildings huddled
like the clinging aphids on the mountain skirts,
crouched low to the ground as though the wind
might blow them into the sea.23

The isolation of the family on this lonely coast made Pepe naive about
city ways and values, but it taught him the outdoor wisdom that guided
him on his flight. The tenseness of the flight is definitely en-
hanced by the mountain settings. Pepe becomes a part of each of
these settings and the reader struggles and suffers with him as he
desperately tries to escape his pursuers. Each change in the setting
presents a different mood; each change presents a new situation for
Pepe to deal with to the best of his ability. Although the setting
changes frequently, only two settings during Pepe's flight are of
major significance. The cool "grassy flats" and "green streaks" mean

23 John Steinbeck, "Flight."
life. The hot barren, rocky ridges mean death. Pepe's flight is a continuous fight for his life. Each time he comes upon a green streak, there is hope that he will escape his pursuers and survive; for the green patches offer food, water, protection, and rest to him. However, with each step he takes on the barren, rocky slopes, his impending danger again becomes more threatening; for in this setting his greatest enemy is thirst, followed rapidly by exhaustion and exposure of himself to his pursuers. The setting is also very much a part of the plot. The story is full of action and suspense which is dependent upon the various scenes. The plot, of course, is Pepe's flight from his pursuers. Each setting adds to the tenseness of that plot, for the forces of nature are as much a part of Pepe's flight as the pursuers themselves are. Even the climax of the story, when Pepe, lacking protection on the rocks, is shot and his body is covered with a small avalanche of rocks as he falls, is directly related to the setting.

Formal literary analysis is only one approach to teaching the short story in the high school. Although careful analysis of stories in the classroom is an important part of an English teacher's method, the teacher must thoughtfully decide when certain concepts are to be introduced and the extent to which they should be pursued. He must also decide when such an approach would be unfeasible with a certain group of students or with a certain short story. Organization of the curriculum for the teaching of the short story will be the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER VI

METHODS FOR TEACHING THE SHORT STORY AND
ORGANIZING THE CURRICULUM

Two general approaches for teaching the short story are available to the English teacher in the secondary school. He may approach a short story or a group of stories as they apply to the students' personal problems and to social problems, or he may approach the stories as examples of a literary art form, with emphasis on the skills needed to appreciate and understand them. The two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Archibald MacLeish's statement about poetry applies equally well to the short story. He says, "... the magic of art combines with the magic of idea to give the reader a new knowledge of himself." J. N. Hook makes a more extensive list of six basic approaches to the teaching of literature: (1) the historical approach, in which authors are presented as human beings and a piece of literature is viewed in relation to the times in which it was written, (2) the sociopsychological approach, in which characters in literature are viewed both as individuals and as members of society, (3) the emotive approach, in which the pleasure of reading is emphasized, (4) the didactic approach, in which the emphasis is placed on identifying the intent of the writer in a particular piece, (5) the paraphrastic approach, in which the student is asked

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to restate the meaning of a piece or a passage in more comprehensible terms, and (6) the analytical approach, in which the emphasis is on the analysis of the various elements of fiction. Each of these approaches may be valuable, either alone or in combination, for a particular short story or for a particular group of students. All of them, however, can be classified under the two general approaches listed above.

When selecting an approach the English teacher must keep in mind his unique role in relation to teaching imaginative literature: he must first interest students in reading, help them see the values in reading, and keep them reading outside the classroom; he must help students to discriminate between quality and formula fiction so that their reading choices will be rational; and he must help students to develop the skills necessary for reading fiction meaningfully. When the teacher's purpose is primarily to interest students in reading, his approach will be closer to that of relating the literature to their own lives. When his purpose is primarily to teach discrimination and skill of interpretation, his approach will be through discussing the short story as a literary form. Students already motivated must be trained in skills if they are to be interested in reading more difficult stories. And a study of any art form is meaningless if it is not related in some way to the experiences

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of human beings. The short story, with its emphasis on brief, realistic, penetrating, subtle, and often elliptical human experience, requires both approaches in the classroom, although one approach might receive greater emphasis with a particular literary selection.

In the lower grades of the secondary school most readers are just beginning to read adult forms of literature. If these students are to accept literature as something more than assignments for the classroom, they must be helped to see it as a worthwhile factor in their own lives. The teacher will naturally stress at this point the relation of the literature to their own experience. Wolfe says:

Many students who study short stories and try to write them have the conception of a short story as a sally of imagination unrelated to realistic observation of character in ourselves and the people around us. If this is not always a flight from the necessities of art, it is a flight from reality by young people who are with our help attempting to face their problems, not run from them. In teaching the writing of short stories, as in showing how to probe their structure and meaning, the English teacher must help the student grapple with the stark and painful in life, knowing that only then will he have the resources to emerge triumphant from his own dilemmas.3

One report of a national survey of English methods in 1958 states, "In the past three years the teaching of literature in America intensified the emphasis of recent decades on the realistic identification of the reader with the social and personal problems set forth in the work of art."4 O'Brien recalls his first experience with short stories as meaningful because they opened up his own world for him. He says

3Don M. Wolfe, Creative Ways to Teach English, pp. 264-265.

of Willa Cather's collection of stories, "I can remember reading *The Troll-Garden* as a boy and being strangely stirred by its expression of what I had dumbly felt, and been unable to voice, in my own background."^5

In all quality stories the writer focuses realistically on human experience. If the stories for class use are chosen carefully they will deal with events that reflect adolescent experience or are at least meaningful in some way to adolescents. Class discussions then will be aimed finally at defining the meaning of the experience depicted in the story. If, for a class of untrained readers, stories easily read and understood are used, the class discussions will focus primarily on the meaning of the story in relation to the students' own lives. One danger of such a method is that the story is sometimes forgotten in a discussion of the problem. The story is sometimes used only as a springboard for discussions of social problems that might better be held in the social studies classes. A limitation of the approach, especially for young readers, is that it ignores the reading of stories for whimsical delight, such as O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief," or stories of mystery and adventure, or Poe's stories, such as "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Pit and the Pendulum," which have an emotional effect as their primary appeal. Stories do not have to deal with serious problems. Usually, the above kinds of stories require little, if any, class

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discussion. And sometimes, a humorous story, such as James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," is in reality an examination of a serious problem. Even when a discussion focuses on students' problems, a teacher will do well to exhibit a sense of humor in his method. Don Otto says:

The light touch in presentation and the use of some of their every day interests and experiences combine nicely to awaken in adolescents an understanding of and respect for what might otherwise seem heavy, unrealistic material, literature with a capital "L." Kids who have been told solemnly of the heavy responsibilities of growing up and who have encountered no end of petty frustrations in trying to accept these responsibilities welcome a dash of humor in a teacher's references to big problems. Their worries not only seem smaller, but they feel more free to discuss them together. Needless to say, the teacher responsible for the direction of the discussion gets a more attentive audience for anything else he may have to say in the classroom.6

When class discussions help students discover that stories offer interesting reading experiences because they concern things they know about, a teacher can then assume that his students will, with some guidance, continue to read stories on their own. Guidance will be important, however. Teachers will need to make suggestions and recommendations, take a personal interest in each student's reading habits, and occasionally provide opportunities for students to share their reading enthusiasms with the rest of the class.

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Once students have become interested in reading, once they have discovered the relation of stories to their own lives, they still need training in reading more difficult pieces of adult literature which will be more meaningful to them as they mature. B. J. Chute's "Kid Brother," included in Scholastic's collection of teenage short stories, _Hit Parade of Short Stories_, presents a straightforward account of an adolescent's problem. A young boy wants to win a basketball game to prove his worth to his older brother, but learns finally that winning the game is not the most important thing. Most young readers, unless they have severe reading problems, would be able to read and understand this story easily. If the story were discussed in class, the focus would be on the meaning of the story. What is the problem defined? How does the author solve the problem? Is the solution realistic in terms of the students' own experience? What is the significance of this story for the students' own lives? A discussion of how the meaning emerges through the technical aspects of fiction would be unnecessary, although time might be spent discussing conflict and characterization. The story serves little more than an illustration of the way fiction does deal with personal problems in a rather realistic way.

William Faulkner's "Two Soldiers" also deals with an adolescent's problem. A young lad, who cannot bear to see his brother go off to war, runs away to the city to try to join the army also. This story, like "Kid Brother," is told in a straightforward manner and is easy to read. It may be approached in the same way. At the same time, some discussion of the writer's craft will enhance
the meaning of the story for students. The effect of the use of humor in a quite serious story, the contribution each selected scene in the story has for developing the plot, what the opening scenes contribute to the meaning that is finally revealed, and the relation of fictional experience to real experience are all worth while topics for discussion in connection with this story.

Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" too is about an adolescent's problem. A young girl discovers that there are realities of life beyond her sheltered garden, and that the adults in the world are often indifferent to them. This story is not easy for young readers, although the problem is significant and meaningful for them. Before the problem could be applied to their own experience, students would need to discuss how the meaning is revealed through the techniques of fiction. These three stories, "Kid Brother," "Two Soldiers," and "The Garden Party," represent a logical progression of a young student's reading development in the form of the short story.

It is possible to teach formal elements of fiction to young students. One junior high school teacher used Frank Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger," O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi," and Burr W. Leyson's "Jump!" to teach certain aspects of plot and Irwin Shaw's "Strawberry Ice-Cream Soda" to teach certain aspects of characterization. The success of this teaching was evaluated by the high quality of the short stories the students themselves wrote at the end of the unit.7

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The junior high grades represent a period of transition in the reading habits and patterns of students. The emphasis placed on reading and literature in the elementary grades is on reading as a basic skill. In the junior high grades students begin to read types of literature and begin to examine characteristics of different forms. Burton says, "For many pupils . . . the early junior high school may be a crucial period of transition from the enthusiasm for comic books and certain television programs to the liking for books and better television programs in which human experience is reconstructed in more mature forms." If junior high English teachers expect to interest students in the reading habit, they will select pieces of literature for study in the classroom that will appeal to students' interests and are within their reading ability. Burton identifies the characteristics of this "transition literature" as easy to read, reflecting experience compatible with the nature of the reader, lacking the gross distortion of experience characteristic of many comic books and television programs, and as easily available as possible. Two pervasive interests of the very young adolescent are animal and sports stories. This is one reason why so many of Jessie Stuart's stories dealing with animals and B. J. Chute's sports stories have been popular with junior high school students. Students soon lose an interest in animal stories, however,

8 Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High Schools, p. 15.
9 Ibid., pp. 15-17.
and such stories should usually not be used beyond the seventh grade.

English teachers in the junior high grades, especially, might wisely use the following three criteria for selecting a piece of literature for study in common with any class of students:

1) The piece of literature should appeal to students' interests. As students mature, their reading interests should broaden and they should be encouraged to explore a variety of interests. The junior high school English teacher will be wise to select many stories that deal with the students' personal problems. One survey found that questions and dilemmas about family, money, friends, love, and fears were uppermost among the students' personal problems. The trend, according to the same survey, was to begin with personal problems as the most concrete reality and then to extend the scope of the problems to their social and intellectual concomitants. A number of valuable resources and annotated lists exist to help teachers select materials both for class-wide reading and for recommendation to individual students. Among some of the most helpful are Good Reading, Your Reading, published by the National Council of Teachers of English for the junior high school grades, Books For You, for the senior high school grades, and Reading Ladders for Human Relations, which contains a bibliography of short story anthologies which deal primarily with personal problems; most of the

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textbooks on the teaching of English contain bibliographies of short stories appropriate for high school students.

2) The piece of literature should be within the reading ability range of most of the students in the class. The selection should not be so simple that it will offer no challenge, nor should it be so difficult that students will understand nothing by themselves.

3) The piece of literature should be teachable. The purpose of most class discussions of stories read in common is to help students develop skills and understandings that will enable them to read selections meaningfully by themselves. When class time is taken for discussion of a story, the story should require discussion for understanding. If students completely understand the story or if the ideas do not stimulate further explication, a discussion based on forced questions will dampen rather than stir enthusiasm. Some class periods may be set aside for students to discuss particular stories which they have read individually and which they wish to recommend to the other students in the class. Stories may be assigned for class-wide reading which demand no class time to render them understandable. If class discussions are centered around these stories the focus should be on questions which ask why the stories were especially pleasant reading experiences. The questions should not be labored and forced.

Some mature students can approach serious pieces of literature formally; they can appreciate them fully as works of art. Other
students, with limited ability, have difficulty coming to terms with the abstract concepts and formal terms underlying works of art. If a teacher feels that these weaker students must be exposed to the great pieces of their literary heritage, the most successful approach will more than likely be through relating the literature to their own experiences. In one study a teacher found that she could initiate exciting discussions about *Romeo and Juliet* with nonacademic students by asking such questions as these: "How could Romeo and Juliet have handled their problems better? Could they have won their parents to their point of view? What are you going to do twenty years from now when your daughter wants to marry a boy you consider unsuitable?" These students certainly did not consider seriously the play *Romeo and Juliet*. Some ideas from the play were used for discussions focusing on situations outside the play. Perhaps some students in the class may have been able to approach the play after the discussion, but the play was not discussed by the above questions. If this particular play had to be used with this class, perhaps the approach was the best one to be used. But certainly, selections more clearly within the reading abilities of the students would be more appropriate. Selections could be chosen which would permit discussions of the themes treated as well as of the non-literary experiences. No particular short story or play is essential in the curriculum. Selections

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will be made that are appropriate for students' interests and abilities and will help the teacher accomplish his particular purpose.

One problem in the secondary English curriculum, as well as in the curriculums of other subject-matter areas, is that there is not a clear sequence of the skills and concepts of the discipline. Year after year teachers teach the same thing or similar things with the same approaches to them. Thus, a lesson or a unit on the short story in the tenth grade often is little different from a lesson or unit on the short story in the eighth. The assumption seems to be that if students didn't understand the material the first time, they should be exposed to it repeatedly in the same fashion. A different assumption might be that students need to be introduced to ideas in a way that they can understand them, then helped to expand and develop these ideas in significant ways.

In an attempt to improve English instruction in the secondary schools many professional and scholarly groups and individuals are re-examining the content of the English program. James R. Squire identifies "redefining the content of English" as one of the major new developments in the research on the teaching of English. In a statement of the basic issues in the teaching of English made in 1959, the first two listed, which underly the other thirty-three, are:

1. "What is 'English'?"
2. "Can basic programs in English be

devised that are sequential and cumulative from the kindergarten through the graduate school?"\(^\text{13}\)

A significant contribution to curriculum design has been made by Jerome S. Bruner. He advocates a sequential and cumulative curriculum which emphasizes the internal structure of each subject or discipline. The internal structure of a discipline consists of those concepts which give the discipline its unique character. He says, "Grasping the structure of a subject is understanding it in a way that permits many other things to be related to it meaningfully. To learn structure, in short, is to learn how things are related."\(^\text{14}\)

An example from the study of the English language is given as follows: "Having grasped the subtle structure of a sentence, the child very rapidly learns to generate many other sentences based on this model though different in content from the original sentence learned."\(^\text{15}\)

Bruner believes that "any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form."\(^\text{16}\) Once a subject is reduced to its basic concepts, the concepts can be presented to a youngster meaningfully if the examples selected are within his range of comprehension. As a


\(^\text{15}\)Ibid., p. 8.

\(^\text{16}\)Ibid., p. 12.
child progresses through school, these concepts are developed and expanded in each successive year. Bruner says:

A curriculum as it develops should revisit these basic ideas repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them. Fourth grade children can play absorbing games governed by the principles of topology and set theory, even discovering new "moves" or theorems. They can grasp the idea of tragedy and the basic human plights represented in myth. But they cannot put these ideas into formal language or manipulate them as grownups can. There is much still to be learned about the "spiral curriculum" that turns back on itself at higher levels.

Literary critic Northrop Frye and his colleagues in the Toronto area, where a group of scholars and teachers met together to review the needs in all curricula, recommend an incremental program in English to be used as a guide, especially by the beginning teacher, but not to be followed rigidly. The talented and imaginative teacher must not be confined.

J. N. Hook states that the standardization of the English curriculum is neither possible nor desirable, since local control rather than centralized control is desired in American public education, students do not progress at the same rate, and there is no perfect agreement possible on the definition of English as a discipline in the schools; however, since much confusion, unwarranted repetitions, and undesirable omissions do exist in the public school English

\[17\] Ibid., p. 13.
programs, some kind of sequence is essential. He believes that some order and system of sequence can be developed through a redefinition of the discipline which puts a rather strict limitation on the subject matter, through average levels of expectation, by grade placement of demonstrably useful items, a consistent writing program, grade placement of instruction in reading skills, a common literature program, and opportunity for review. He states further that any established curriculum must provide for enrichment as well as being capable of dilution. Hook reflects Bruner's concept of curriculum development when he says:

The analogy of a spiral cone may be more helpful to curriculum makers than the more frequent analogy of an assembly line or that of piling block upon block. A spiral covers the same ground repetitively but on successively higher levels. A spiral in the shape of a cone, with the point at the bottom, likewise covers much of the same ground, again at steadily higher levels, but it also broadens as it ascends.19

No research is yet available which would offer definite guidelines for the literature teacher to develop a sequential program that puts the various elements of the short story into proper teaching perspective. Perhaps one difficulty of the whole theory is that literature cannot be reduced to clearly defined basic concepts.

Three of the six study centers sponsored by Project English of the

19 J. N. Hook, "If a Curriculum Is to Be Sequential," The English Journal, LI (February 1962), p. 84.
United States Office of Education are working on curriculum designs that may prove helpful. Hunter College Curriculum Center is working with the identification, development, and effective utilization of curriculum materials and methods in reading that will meet the particular needs of teachers and students in disadvantaged urban areas. Project English at The University of Oregon is attempting to develop a sequential curriculum for grades seven through twelve in language, literature, and oral and written composition. The Curriculum Study at Carnegie Tech is developing literary materials and methods for a senior high school English program--grades ten through twelve--for the able college-bound student.

A sequential program in literature should have sequence in several areas, developing simultaneously, although not necessarily at the same rate:

1) Development in understanding and appreciation of types and forms.

2) Development in understanding and appreciation of literature as an art form.

3) Development in the skills necessary for reading literature of all types.

4) Acquaintance with some of the great writers and titles, as well as the development of an awareness of the major areas which run through literature of all times.

Not all students in the public schools would be able to reach the same level of development in all of these areas, but each student
should be provided the opportunity and offered the encouragement necessary to develop his potential. Within this framework, a sequential program for teaching the short story might be as follows:

(The sequence is more significant than the suggested grade placements, since students develop at such varying rates.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>Interest students in reading. Help students to begin to make a distinction between the short story and other forms of prose fiction.</td>
<td>Use easy stories which deal with animals, sports, adventure, humor, and mystery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th, 9th Grades</td>
<td>Introduce students to the formal elements of the short story with emphasis on character and plot. What is the nature of fiction? What is the relation of fiction to personal experience?</td>
<td>Broaden the selection to include more mature subject matter. Select stories related to adolescent problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>Study the short story as a unique form of literary art. Identify the characteristics of the form. Discuss the contributions made to the form by various short story writers.</td>
<td>Explore a variety of themes used by quality short story writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th, 12th Grades</td>
<td>Once the short story has been understood as a form, use it, along with other literary forms to explore universal themes in literature.</td>
<td>Use short stories of world literature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The classroom learning situation should be organized so that there is considerable flexibility, both in method and content. The
traditional idea of subject matter in English was in blocks of content in literature, composition, and grammar. The goal of the teacher was to cover a certain amount of material in each area during a year’s period of time. Acquisition of information was considered the most important objective, rather than the development of skills in the practice of reading, writing, and speaking the language. The teacher often intermixed the blocks of content to add variety so that both he and the students did not tire of the material too quickly. The standard method of teaching used was the assign-study-recite-test method. Thayer was somewhat optimistic when he wrote of the passing of the recitation some thirty years ago.\(^2\) It is impossible and undesirable to prescribe a single method or a single pattern of curriculum organization for all teachers in all teaching situations. The individual teacher must intelligently and critically search for the methods and patterns that will best help him to accomplish his goals; and they must be continuously subjected to re-evaluation and always open for modification and refinement.

In opposition to the blocks of content approach is the unit approach to curriculum organization. In this approach subject matter is regarded as a tool rather than as an end in itself. Subject matter functions as a means of arriving at the solution of many kinds of problems. In literature, it might be anywhere from how does one

\(^2\)V. T. Thayer, The Passing of the Recitation.
best spend his leisure time to how does one interpret a piece of modern literature, such as Sartre's "The Wall." Loban, Ryan, and Squire say, "The unit, properly understood, is a strategy for evoking understanding rather than mere recall."\(^{21}\) Burton defines the teaching unit as follows:

A unit is any combination of subject-matter content and outcomes and thought processes into learning experiences suited to the maturity and needs (personal and social) of the learner, all combined into a whole with internal integrity determined by immediate goals . . . A unit, or unit of work, can be defined as a purposeful learning experience focused upon some socially significant understanding which will modify the behavior of the learner and enable him to adjust to a life situation more effectively.\(^{22}\)

The four broad skills of the English language arts program identified by the National Council of Teachers of English—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—stand as valid limitations of the subject area until a better definition of English for the secondary schools is produced. The unit approach in English attempts to integrate these skills into a unified learning experience instead of breaking them down into four separated and isolated areas. In a given unit one skill, or some aspect of one skill, might receive the greatest emphasis, but some attempt would be made to show the relationships

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\(^{21}\)Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire, *Teaching Language and Literature*, p. 162.

of all the skills in the process of communication by providing learning activities which require the use of more than one skill. Students might be asked to write and speak about the literature they had read; they might be provided with opportunities for examining the relationships between literature and the mass media; usage problems might be considered in relation to their writing; or the effective use of language might be examined in literary selections. These examples serve as only a few of the many ways that the English language arts skills can be integrated in the unit approach.

The purpose of all teaching is to make it possible for learning to take place; therefore, a teacher must know how learning takes place best before he can effectively organize learning experiences. According to Faunce and Clute, if learning is considered as "modification of behavior through experience," the teacher, when planning learning experiences will consider the following: (1) individual experience is required, (2) the learner behaves as a total organism, (3) the learner has purposes, (4) learning involves action, (5) learning is problem-centered, (6) learning involves critical thinking, (7) the behavior of each learner results from his unique perceptions, (8) learning is directly influenced by the learner's attitude towards himself and others, (9) group relationships affect learning, and (10) repeated effort is required to bring about changes in behavior.  

23Roland C. Faunce and Morrel J. Clute, Teaching and Learning in the Junior High School, pp. 56-65.
According to Krathwohl, studies have shown that students can retain more material in their memories for longer periods of time if the material is organized in some meaningful way. Since effective mental functioning is dependent on a person's ability to recall relevant experience, improving memory improves one's effectiveness. Learning effectiveness can be improved by increasing the number and range of significant associations made by students. Integration has been one of the major purposes behind unit planning. Dressel has described the essential elements of integration as follows:

Integration assumes the existence of parts which can be so related as to make a whole. Part and whole are here relative terms. Thus, a set of related facts may yield a generalization or principle. Relating this principle to other facts or principles may yield a still more general principle or possibly a theory. Integration involves the adjustment, the proper relationship of part to part, part to whole, and whole to part, and the combining of these parts into a complex whole. Society, for example, is made up of groups, and the groups in turn of individuals. An individual interacts with other individuals and with several groups. The individuals of a group interact, and each group interacts with other groups. If this interaction of parts and wholes builds toward a greater and more closely knit whole, integration is taking place.²⁵

Dressel discusses two kinds of integration which have major implications for the organization and planning of learning units, Integrated experience and Integrating experience. This is not an either-or

²⁴ David R. Krathwohl, "The Psychological Bases for Integration," The Integration of Educational Experiences, p. 44.
²⁵ Paul I. Dressel, "The Meaning and Significance of Integration," The Integration of Educational Experiences, pp. 11-12.
situation; a combination of the two types of experience is needed. He discusses the two as follows:

Educational experiences may be planned with the hope that the basis for organization (integration) will be grasped by the students; or educational experiences may be planned so that each individual is encouraged to make his own organization. In the first case an integrated experience is provided. If grasped, this serves a double purpose: (a) it acquaints the individual with meaningful integrations achieved by others; (b) it provides him with a model which may become the take-off point for achievement of his own integration. In the second case, an integrating experience is provided. If successful, this also serves a double purpose: (a) it provides the individual with his own integration of the immediate experiences; (b) it develops in the individual some ability and satisfaction in seeking for meaningful organizations and relations of his later experiences. The father may build his son a house from a set of blocks or he may encourage the child to build his own house.

The first approach—fully integrated experiences—carried to the extreme could lead to docile acceptance of authority and to inflexibility in the face of changing situations. The first approach, though useful, must, therefore, be tempered by the second—integrating experiences—for these hold the possibility of developing even greater insight into and respect for the integrations made by great minds of the past. Integrating experiences also hold some promise of developing a flexible individual who is self-reliant in adjusting to new conditions. In one case, the integration is done for you. In the other, you do it yourself.26

26 Ibid., p. 7.
Krathwohl, discussing integration from the point of view of a psychologist concerned with the teaching process, says:

Defining integration as "an organizing experience that takes place in the mind of the learner" points to organizing as central in integrative behavior. Since organizing is related to the effectiveness of learning, integration is a factor in learning effectiveness. In fact, relating new experiences to past learning is a more important part of effective learning. Without such organization, learning would be an unrelated sequence of perceptions analogous to the snap-shots recorded on camera film—each significant item stored in a separate compartment or picture. Learning, as we know it, would be impossible.²⁷

Four sources of units are available to teachers—textbook units, commercial resource units, units prepared by groups of teachers in a single school system, and units prepared by individual teachers for individual classes. The textbook unit is in most widespread usage. The major weakness of the textbook unit is that it covers too much for too many. Literary selections are often only fragments of longer works. Since a literature anthology covers all types of literature the number of short stories included is limited. The novel is usually excluded. The teacher has little chance for selection; he uses what is provided. Since textbooks are published for use all over the United States, individual differences receive little attention. The following is the comment of one beginning teacher after

²⁷Krathwohl, op. cit., pp. 45-46.
his examination of the textbook anthologies he was to use:

Generally, the anthologies looked like poorly conceived hybrids of Reader's Digest and Life! They were nothing but a polygot of condensations, excerpts, and abridgements; and of photographs and sketches, liberally sprinkled with color plates designed, I suppose, to instill a sort of interest in the pupils and to motivate. Attractive and appealing as they were, no doubt, closer inspection showed that they were as false as Macbeth's smile.28

The textbook anthology is of most use to the English teacher if it is used merely as another resource at his command when he organizes a unit. The teacher's supplement which usually accompanies an anthology is often a hindrance rather than an aid to imaginative and creative planning for learning. Another first-year teacher says, "With the freshman literature book came a handy guidebook . . . . After about six weeks, I lost the guidebook and discovered that teaching literature had suddenly become stimulating and exciting."29

Replacing the textbook in many classrooms are volumes of source units or course-of-study units. Burton describes them as follows:

Source volumes are extensive collections of possible problems, materials, and experiences which may be organized by the teacher around either subject-matter cores or pupil purposes.


The contents are so extensive and varied that a teacher cannot possibly use the material as the basis for day-to-day teaching. He will use it instead as a handbook of guidance and assistance, as a reservoir of ideas and suggestions, and as a source of many teaching plans for individual units. These source volumes are constructed usually by committees or other organizations within a curriculum program. They represent the pooled suggestions and contributions of many teachers, the results of many teaching try-outs. They should be in loose-leaf, mimeographed form and be revised constantly.

Currently, the most widely used commercial units in English are the Scholastic Literature Units for grades seven through ten. They are organized thematically and provide for class-wide reading in an original anthology, for small-group work, for reading in common, and for individual reading. The language arts skills are integrated throughout all phases of the unit—writing and speaking activities are included as well as reading. Differences in ability are provided for in the variety of literary selections included. The following units have been published: Animals, for grade seven; Courage, Family, and Frontiers, for grade eight; Mirrors and Moments of Decision for grade nine; and Survival and Personal Code for grade ten. The units are suggested for use with the above-mentioned grades, although there is no fixed grade placement for each unit. The Animals unit might be appropriate for some seventh grade classes or for some eighth grade classes. Bantam publishers have more recently

introduced form units, such as *The Art of the Drama*, and *The American Novel: Melville, Dreiser, and McCullers*. They also publish thematic units, such as *The Many Faces of Courage: Heroism and Cowardice* and *The Individual and Society*.

In certain respects, the commercial unit approach is preferable to the textbook unit. It permits greater flexibility in selection of materials and, in most instances, complete selections are included. For a teacher with little experience or training in developing units, commercial units may be helpful. Like the textbook, however, these units are prepared for students all over the country. Although there is an attempt in the units to provide for a wide variety of interests and abilities, the materials are not organized with a specific group of students in mind. Also, both a teacher and the students will show more enthusiasm and interest in a unit they have organized and developed for themselves. Units prepared by groups of teachers in a single system permit consideration of more specific groups of students. They know generally the reading abilities and interests of the students and what their past learning has been. Also, teachers working at the preparation of units will be better able to put the units into operation effectively. A unit prepared by an individual teacher for a particular class is even better. Merely using a unit approach does not make an effective teacher. Units which are essentially alike in pre-planned organization might be radically different from one another in presentation, depending upon where the emphasis is placed by the teacher. He may
emphasize subject matter and substantive outcomes therefrom; he may emphasize the learning experience, or the processes of problem-solving, critical evaluation, or other patterns of thought.

Two preliminary activities must precede the organization of a unit or series of units: (1) the characteristics of the individual learners and of the group must be studied, and (2) the course-of-study documents and all available aids in the school and in the community must be studied. Goodlad, presenting his thinking about "organizing centers of learning," develops the idea of pre-planning more fully:

In planning for teaching, the skilled teacher visualizes a synthesis of the student, something to be learned, and a process through which student and something to be learned are to be united . . . the kind of synthesis depends on the teacher's internalized conception of where he hopes to go with a given group of learners and certain insights into his own ability to carry the group forward. It is conditioned, too, by the materials, facilities, time and space at the teacher's disposal. In effect, the teacher poses certain organizing centers for learning—catchhold places—for moving forward educationally. In large measure, the adequacy of these centers is dependent upon the adequacy of the organizing framework—developed by the teacher.31

The teacher's "span of control" encompasses, then, the following items: (1) self-understanding, (2) a sense of direction, (3) insight into learners, (4) insight into the learning processes, (5) understanding of content, and (6) time, space, and materials.

The question of how much responsibility should be given to students in planning is often easier to answer in theory than in practice. In contrast to the organization man in society today, the student in the school is perceived by thoughtful teachers and educationists as an individual capable of unique growth. Although the aim of optimum development of the individual in the classroom has been subscribed to in theory for some time, classroom method has not always supported this position. Central to this conflict is the teacher's position regarding the pre-planning of learning experiences. Pre-planning has always been pretty much just a frame-of-reference structure for teaching. The differences have been in the teaching of these structures. Too often, teachers have not been able to move away from the frame-of-reference, but have accepted it as gospel, assuming for example, that a textbook organization of instruction is desirable for all students in the entire country. This unfortunately, leads directly to the organization man. Even teachers who have organized their own pre-planned programs, are often inflexible in the execution of them. Such teachers assume that content, possibly, is more important than the learning, thinking, and growing process; if a self-concept is involved, every student evidently needs to develop the same self-concept as the teacher. In contrast to this, there is a need for unlimited flexibility as the teacher and students move together through a pre-planned program, as long as the teacher is alert to the vicissitudes of the learning process involved.
Pre-planning is desirable. The teacher is a professional person with varying degrees of experience and is competent to make some calculated hypotheses as to what should and will happen with a certain group of students. Goodlad's statement of the list of understandings a teacher must have in planning for a group, the "span of control," is sensible and realistic. The unique contribution he makes to the more conventional lists is the teacher's insight into and management of self, an idea that has received little attention until quite recently, but is a necessary concern if the teacher is to approach the classroom climate realistically.

A commercial pre-planned unit program is often better than a textbook unit, especially with an inexperienced teacher who has no help from his colleagues. The most effective type of pre-planning, however, is that which is done by the teacher or teachers who will be involved in the teaching of the programs.

Beginning teachers especially are likely to be lacking in the skill of flexibility in planning. A teacher walks into a tenth-grade English class in a rather low socio-economic community. He is faced with a class of students with little ability. In his methods class he has worked out a program of instruction that he feels would be essential for tenth-grade students. Silas Marner and Julius Caesar are usually taught there. Students should be writing themes rather regularly. But the students in this class have difficulty reading much simpler literature than Silas Marner and find it difficult to write a sentence, let alone an entire theme. The teacher can continue
with the traditionally pre-planned tenth-grade program, and, after he discovers that no one completes or even attempts the assigned work, be frustrated for the rest of the year, or he can throw out the program completely and develop some learning situations that have some direct relationship to the students' experience. Reading the newspaper and some rather simple magazines might be a starting place for the reading of these students. Writing simple, short notes, asking for information, might be more useful for this group than the unsuccessful attempts at themes. Fortunately, not all classes are like this; some run to the extreme in the opposite direction. But the theory holds true in either situation. Pre-planning must be realistic in terms of what can actually be accomplished with a certain group in a specific environment, rather than as an unrealizable and undesirable idealism.

In the English class, a teacher can provide a great variety of learning materials, including *Silas Marner* as well as a simple short story in a magazine and *Crime and Punishment*, and try to motivate students in the class to read to their ability. The student, however, must do his own structuring of the material if it is to have meaning for him. In pre-planning, the teacher can only provide some possible structures which he believes will act as guides for the individual students. When pre-planning a unit a teacher sets up a series of "catch-hold points" or "organizing centers for learning" that will initiate certain desired reactions on the part of students. When students come into contact with them, however, these
pre-planned units should be capable of considerable variation and modification.

The short story can be used effectively and appropriately in a variety of unit structures where literature receives the major emphasis—the thematic unit, the types or genre unit, the single work unit, the chronological survey unit, or the skills unit. The type of unit used by a teacher should be determined by the maturity, experience, and needs of the learners in relation to desirable goals.

Teachers often feel that the thematic unit is most appropriate for junior high school grades, where the primary purpose is to interest students in reading. Reading organized around a central, appropriate theme appeals to students' interests. Short stories, because they are short and can be used in quantity for both reading in common and for individual reading, are especially effective for this purpose. Short stories may be used exclusively in a thematic unit or they may be combined with selections from other literary forms which treat the same theme. John H. Bens suggests that the play Our Town be studied in combination with Shirley Jackson's story, "The Lottery," or Anderson's stories in Winesburg, Ohio, in order to examine two opposing views of the same subject. Teachers must be careful not to force selections into their theme at the

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Within the overall plan of the unit, literature is still to be read as literature—for aesthetic pleasure and appreciation—and no objectives concerned with other matters should be allowed to swallow up this one. Students should not complete units with the idea that the reason for reading *David Copperfield* is "to find out how they lived in England in the early nineteenth century," that the *Ancient Mariner* is somehow tied into Be-Kind-to-Animals Week, that *Treasure Island* is a preaching against piracy, and that *Othello* is a study in race relations. The main purpose of the unit approach is to broaden the base for the presentation of subject matter, not break it up and draw it down to comparatively narrow, overly specific objectives of the kind that produce the responses like those suggested above.³³

A thematic unit can be used effectively for advanced and mature students as well as for junior high school students. Units on the nature of tragedy or man's search for knowledge of self are appropriate for advanced groups. A chronological survey unit can often be enhanced if it is organized around a central theme. A thematic topic which would appeal to a wide variety of student interests would be: **Learning to Face the Realities of Maturity.** All of the following stories reflect the problems of an adolescent as he faces a revealing crisis in his life:

Katherine Mansfield: "The Garden Party"

William Faulkner: "Barn Burning"

Frank O'Connor: "The Idealist"

Sherwood Anderson: "I Want to Know Why"

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³³John S. Lewis and Jean C. Sisk, *Teaching English, 7-12*, p. 50.
One school system was able to develop a varied approach to sequence in its secondary English program through the use of thematic units for grades seven through twelve. In its approach several broad categories of themes are developed and expanded as they extend through each grade.

A types or genre unit might be most effective with students in the ninth or tenth grades in order for teachers to acquaint them with the variety of literary forms and the unique characteristics of each. Units may be devoted to the study of the short story, novel, drama, essay, biography, or poetry. The depth of a unit on the short story would depend upon the nature of the class it was prepared for. Teachers might be concerned with such topics as definition of the form, historical antecedents of the form, contributions of major short story writers to the development of the form, formal elements of plot, character, theme, and style, and discrimination between formula and quality short stories. Many short stories would be read

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in common and many others individually. Written and oral activities would be developed around the topics discussed in class and relevant topics which interest individual students.

A single work unit is usually most appropriate for use with longer forms, the novel, the drama, or the biography. A short unit might be devoted to a single short story, however. One short story could be studied carefully in class by all students. They might be asked to write short papers about the story. Additional short stories, selected for their relevance to the purpose of the study, might be read individually by students. Oral activities could emerge from this individual reading, such as panel discussions, dramatizations, or short speeches which describe the manner in which the short story read individually illustrates the same formal element emphasized in the story read in common or how it treats the same theme.

The short story is especially useful when a teacher develops a chronological survey unit. If the whole of American or English literature is covered in a year's time, students are not able to read complete representative long works of all writers. A teacher will do a sketchy job if he actually examines the work of every major writer. But even if he selects a few representative writers, he must make a careful selection of pieces to be read. If the literature of the American Renaissance is to be studied, for example, students will be unable to read both The Scarlet Letter and Moby Dick.
Short stories of either Hawthorne or Melville could be read in common rather than excerpts from their longer works. The novels could be used for individual reading by more advanced students in the class. Another approach to this type of unit would be to organize a period of literature around a representative single work. If The Scarlet Letter is read in common, then short stories by Hawthorne and other writers of the period could be used as they reflect similar or different ideas of the period. A teacher using the chronological approach should spend more time on fewer pieces so that students will be able to understand what is read in depth rather than merely garner a number of literary facts. The students can later, through wide reading, expand the concepts they have actually developed.

Although some attention is paid to the basic skill of reading throughout the secondary English program, especially in the area of vocabulary development, a unit focusing on this basic skill is perhaps most appropriate for the seventh grade. Short stories permit students who have in previous years been able to read with meaning only contrived paragraphs from readers to feel a sense of accomplishment at being able to read with meaning an entire story. Oral activities, short written assignments, and dramatizations can contribute to this pleasure as well as serve as aids to some students who still have difficulty with reading.

A resource unit, planned by the teacher, will include more material than can possibly be used. Daily lesson plans will be
developed from the resource unit as the work progresses. A resource unit usually contains the following parts:

1) **General introduction.** Identification of the unit approach to the material (thematic, type, individual work, period, or skill); if known, identification of the particular group for whom the unit is prepared (grade, ability, class organization, and possibly the type of community); defense of the appropriateness of the selected unit for the particular group; indication of the place of the unit in an entire year's work (the skills or concepts the unit is building on and the concepts or skills that will naturally develop from this unit).

2) **Statement of objectives.** Although all or most of the English language arts skills will be a part of the unit approach, what will receive special emphasis in this particular unit?

3) **Indication of the scope of the unit.** An amplification of the statement of major emphasis. A survey of the approaches to be used to help achieve the objectives, such as reading two novels in common, or using individual reading to explore a theme in literature. Indication of the way in which the other English language arts skills will be incorporated into the unit. Indication of the time to be spent on the unit. Indication of the nature of the various phases of the unit's development.

4) **Suggested activities.** Possible activities for initiating the unit, for developing the unit, and for culminating the unit. Activities should be included for different abilities and for different
interests as much as possible in a particular unit structure so that when the unit is put into operation the teacher can select rather than follow.

5) **Suggestions for evaluation.** What kinds of tests or other types of evaluation procedures will be used? What would be the purpose for using them? How will the teacher know whether his purposes for the unit have been accomplished? How will he know whether any learning has taken place?

6) **Lists of references and teaching materials.** These lists should include references and materials for both students and the teacher.

The unit which follows illustrates the beginning steps in the formation of a resource unit. At this stage, it is too general, since it is not developed for a specific group of students. It serves only as a guide for a more complete development when it is put into operation with a particular group. It contains suggestions for students of different ability, but the imaginative teacher should be able to add extensively to the list. After a teacher has taught the unit, he will certainly add suggestions to all parts of it.

**UNIT: THE FORM OF THE SHORT STORY**

I. **Introduction:** The unit approach is through type, form, or genre. All students in the school can profit from a study of the form, since short stories presumably will be a part of their own
reading out of school. The scope of the unit will depend upon the ability of the students in the class. Such a unit is suggested for a tenth grade class, although some students may be ready for this approach earlier and some groups may profit from a repetition of the approach, either from a different point of view or in more depth, at a later time. The unit is suggested for a heterogeneously grouped class, although all students are expected to have developed adequate reading skills and have varied interests. The unit can be modified for students with less ability. If the students are generally weak in reading ability, perhaps they are not yet ready for this type of unit approach. The unit is capable of greater modification for students with exceptional ability.

A form unit on the short story could reasonably be placed near the beginning of the school year. The unit is placed here on the assumption that the students are already interested in reading, that they have read and discussed many short stories in school, that they have some understanding of the nature of fiction, and that they have been introduced briefly to the elements of plot and character, although they have not studied these elements in depth. Following this unit might be a composition unit in which some short stories would serve as the basis for part of the students' writing, or a unit on the form of the novel, or a short thematic unit, including short stories.
II. Statement of Objectives: (Some of these might be eliminated for some groups of students.)

A. To help students understand the unique characteristics of the form of the short story.

B. To help students read short stories meaningfully.

C. To help students discriminate between formula and quality short stories.

D. To help students understand some of the important contributions of major short story writers to the form.

E. To provide students with writing and speaking experiences in connection with their reading and to help them see the relation of reading, writing, and speaking to each other in the process of effective communication.

III. Scope of the Unit: The major emphasis in the unit will be upon the skill of reading—to understand the characteristics of the form in order to read short stories perceptively and to be able to discriminate between quality and formula stories. Some historical material may be relevant for some groups. This may be given by teacher presentations, by student presentations, or, preferably, it may be approached inductively as students read carefully selected stories and discuss together the contributions each made to the form. The unit provides for reading in common and for individual, guided reading. Provision is made for oral and written activities in connection with both kinds of reading. Some of the activities should be required of all students; others may be chosen according to individual
interests and abilities. The sequence of the unit might be developed as follows: (1) introduction, (2) students read stories in common and arrive at a tentative definition, (3) students are introduced to some of the influences various writers have had on the development of the short story, (4) students examine the formal elements of the short story--plot, character, theme, and style, (5) individual reading, writing, and speaking projects are presented, and (6) evaluation. Such a unit might last from four to six weeks.

IV. Suggested Activities:

A. Initiating Activities:

1) Class discussion of short stories that have been read by all students previously. Why did students enjoy particular short stories? Why do people read short stories? Where are short stories available to readers?

2) Bulletin Board display. Dust jackets of short story volumes. Pictures of important short story writers. Story pictures (the front covers of The Saturday Evening Post are often quite appropriate for this purpose). Students might be asked how a short story could be developed around the incident depicted in the picture in order to help them arrive at a definition of a short story. Students might be asked to add to the display as the unit progresses.

3) Classroom library. Many volumes of short stories should be readily available to students in the classroom--anthologies, volumes of stories by a single author, and textbook collections.
Also, a great variety of magazines (they need not be current) which have short stories in them should be available. Often, students will make contributions from their home castoffs. The teacher can present and discuss some of the various sources to the students. Class time should be provided for students to examine the materials available.

4) Read and discuss the following essays: Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" and review of Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales, Brander Matthews' "The Philosophy of the Short Story," Herbert Ellsworth Cory's "The Senility of the Short Story," and Sherwood Anderson's "Form, Not Plot." Excerpts from them may be read by the teacher to the class. Students should begin to make a tentative definition of what they consider a short story to be. During the unit and at the end of the unit this topic will be developed more fully.

B. Developing Activities:

1) Concentration on the reading and discussion of stories read in common to gain common understandings. The individual work later will be based on these understandings.

2) Teacher lectures where necessary or expedient.

3) Writing assignments in common. All students will write one or two short critical papers about the short stories read in common. A wide range of topics should be provided for students of different abilities, such as "Why I Enjoyed a Particular Story" or "The Writer's Use of Plot in a Particular Story." Class discussion of writing problems concerning the writing of a critical paper—the
organization of the paper, the use of quoted material in the paper, the relation of the student's ideas to the writer's ideas. Class time will be spent discussing mechanical writing problems that show up rather commonly in the writing done.

4) The reading of some short stories as a basis for discussing the development of the short story. Many of these short stories are in paperback collections. Each student could be provided with one or two books and additional stories could be read from anthologies in the classroom during study time provided.

United States:
Washington Irving: "Rip Van Winkle"
"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "Ethan Brand," "Wakefield"
Herman Melville: "Bartleby the Scrivener"
Bret Harte: "Tennessee's Partner," "Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"
Ambrose Bierce: "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," "A Horseman in the Sky"
Sarah Orne Jewett: "A White Heron"
Stephen Crane: "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel"
Sherwood Anderson: "I'm A Fool," "I Want to Know Why"
Ernest Hemingway: "The Killers"
Great Britain:


Rudyard Kipling: "The Man Who Would Be King," "Without Benefit of Clergy"

James Joyce: "Araby"


A. E. Coppard: "The Cherry Tree"

D. H. Lawrence: "The Rocking-Horse Winner"

Virginia Woolf: "The New Dress"

France:

Prosper Mérimée: "The Etruscan Vase"

Gustave Flaubert: "A Simple Heart"

Guy De Maupassant: "The Necklace"

Alphonse Daudet: "The Last Lesson"

Anatole France: "Our Lady's Juggler"

Jean-Paul Sartre: "The Wall"

Albert Camus: "The Guest"

Russia:

Gogol: "The Cloak"

Anton Chekhov: "The Lament," "Gooseberries," "A Day in the Country"

5) Possible short story assignments for discussions of the formal elements of fiction. A single short story may be used for more than one element.
Plot:


Nathaniel Hawthorne: "The Great Carbuncle," "Young Goodman Brown"


W. Somerset Maugham: "The Verger," "Mr. Know-All"

Saki (H. H. Munro): "The Open Window"

Ring Lardner: "Haircut"

William Carlos Williams: "The Use of Force"

John Updike: "Walter Briggs"

Character:

Willa Cather: "Paul's Case"

Anton Chekhov: "The Lament"

William Faulkner: "A Rose for Emily," "Raid," "Barn Burning"

Gustave Flaubert: "A Simple Heart"

Caroline Gordon: "Old Red"

James Joyce: "Araby"

Ring Lardner: "Haircut"

John O'Hara: "Do You Like It Here?"

J. F. Powers: "The Valiant Woman"

John Steinbeck: "The Leader of the People"

James Thurber: "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"

John Updike: "Friends from Philadelphia," "Should Wizard Hit Mommy?"
Theme:
Sherwood Anderson: "I'm A Fool," "I Want to Know Why"
Saul Bellow: "Looking for Mr. Green"
Ivan Bunin: "The Gentleman from San Francisco"
Erskine Caldwell: "The People vs. Abe Lathan: Colored"
Albert Camus: "The Guest"
A. E. Coppard: "The Cherry Tree"
William Faulkner: "Barn Burning"
    "Winter Dreams"
    "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "Ethan Brand," "Young Goodman
    Brown," "Wakefield"
Ernest Hemingway: "My Old Man," "The Killers," "The Snows of
    Kilimanjaro," "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," "Soldier's Home"
Shirley Jackson: "The Lottery"
Ring Lardner: "The Golden Honeymoon"
D. H. Lawrence: "The Rocking-Horse Winner"
    "The Fly"
Carson McCullers: "The Sojourner"
Flannery O'Connor: "The River"
Frank O'Connor: "The Idealist"
J. D. Salinger: "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," "A Perfect Day for
    Bananafish"

Jean Stafford: "Children Are Bored on Sunday"

John Steinbeck: "Flight"

Robert Louis Stevenson: "Markheim"


Style:

Conrad Aiken: "Silent Snow, Secret Snow"

Anton Chekhov: "The Lament"

John Cheever: "The Enormous Radio"

Walter Van Tilburg Clark: "The Portable Phonograph"

Stephen Crane: "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel"

Ernest Hemingway: "The Killers"

William Hope Hodgson: "The Voice in the Night"

James Joyce: "Araby"

Ring Lardner: "Haircut," "The Golden Honeymoon"

Katherine Anne Porter: "Flowering Judas"

Jean Stafford: "A Country Love Story"

John Steinbeck: "Flight"

John Updike: "Toward Evening"

Eudora Welty: "The Winds"

Virginia Woolf: "The New Dress"
6) Writing assignment concerning the following short stories: (1) Irwin Shaw's "Main Currents of American Thought," (2) Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party," (3) D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking-Horse Winner," (4) John Cheever's "The Enormous Radio," (5) Walter Van Tilburg Clark's "The Portable Phonograph," (6) Eudora Welty's "The Winds," and (7) William Faulkner's "Raid." Choosing one of the topics below, write your own thesis sentence and write a theme of from two to three pages. You may agree or disagree with the statement of the topic. Base your writing (1) on the insights gathered from your reading of the short stories and (2) on your own experiences and other reading. Take care to show first the relation of the topic to the events of the story and then enlarge your discussion to include broader aspects of the problem. Themes which consist entirely of personal experience narrative, a mere summary of the story, or unsupported judgments will not be considered satisfactory.

Topics:

a) A person, or nation, that has a strong faith in an ideal can endure hardship unflinchingly even in the face of inevitable defeat.

b) "Was each wonder original and alone like a falling star . . .?" One of the penalties of maturity is giving up the magic of the commonplace.

c) An individual owes it to himself, his family, and society to develop his ability to his fullest potential even though circumstances seem to be against him.
d) Because of the emphasis on material acquisition, modern society suffers increasingly from "man's inhumanity to man."

e) Human cooperation is impossible without mutual trust.

f) The necessity of earning a living robs man of the opportunity to become a finer, nobler human being.

g) Sympathy must not be tinged with condescension.

h) The person who matures is the one who recognizes his limitations.

i) All people, regardless of station in life, share certain universal emotions.

7) Writing assignment: When the meaning of a character, an incident, or the basic conflict in a short story reflects a part of the total human condition a reader can say that it is a metaphor. The experience or condition depicted in the short story is like or similar to the experience or condition of all people, or that experience or condition is like or similar to the reader's experience. Consider such metaphors in several of the short stories read and discussed in class (the teacher might list several specific ones) in terms of your own personal experiences. In what way can you furnish the second half of one of the metaphors? In the first paragraph of your theme identify and clarify the specific metaphor you plan to use. Then move, with a smooth transition, into the personal experience which furnishes the second hook of the metaphor. Plan your paper carefully before you begin to write, and include an outline with your final paper.
C. Culminating Activities: (Some of these activities might be used in conjunction with the developing activities.)

1) Individual written or oral report: Ask students to make a study of the stories in one of the popular magazines. They should read as many stories as possible from different issues. Do the stories in the magazine that they have chosen follow a formula? If they were awarding a prize for the best story that appeared in the magazine during the time they covered, to which story would they give the award? Why? Suggested magazines: Atlantic Monthly, Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, New Yorker, Harper's, The Saturday Evening Post, Seventeen, Boy's Life, Literary Cavalcade.

2) Individual written or oral report: Ask students to read a collection of modern short stories and discuss the collection as a whole. Do they notice any particular trend, or pattern in the collection? How do the stories reflect the atmosphere of the times?

3) Writing assignment: Students might use the pictures on the bulletin board as ideas for writing several short stories of their own.

4) Panel discussions: Each member of a panel composed of advanced students, trained in perceptive reading, might prepare one or several thoughtful questions concerning a story or several stories to be discussed. Each student might be responsible for one aspect of the story, such as character, theme, plot, or style. The entire class would be asked to read the stories also and to join the discussion at the discretion of the discussion leader. Criteria for
effective panel discussions might be discussed with the class when the assignment is made, or reviewed briefly if this activity has been used with the group previously.

5) Panel discussion: Each member of a panel might report on the kind of stories he found in a particular magazine.

6) Mass media: Short stories are often used by television writers. Students might make a comparison of an original and a television version of a short story. The same activity might be used in relation to movies. Outstanding examples from the past include "The Killers" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." Such a discussion would reflect a student's understanding of the definition of a short story, or it may help him to arrive at such a definition.

7) Oral reports: Reports may be given on various periods or writers. Some students may be interested in reading biographies of various short story writers and reporting on them to the class.

8) Dramatizations: Individuals or groups may be interested in re-writing a short story for the screen or the stage. These may be presented before the class.

9) Oral story-telling: Use pictures from the bulletin board.

10) Newspaper: News items from the newspaper could be brought into class and read. Students could be asked how such accounts might serve as the basis for a short story. Some students might write short stories based on these news items.

11) Creative activities: Some students who have artistic ability may wish to make some illustrations for a particular story
or group of stories. These illustrations should reflect the students' understanding of a character or incident in the stories. The illustrations could be presented to the class during an oral talk and then added to the bulletin board display.

V. Evaluation.

1) The ideal test of a student's understanding of the short story might be to have him write a story of his own. Several studies in The English Journal are based on this assumption.35 One of them points out one of the weaknesses of the assumption. Schmidt says:

Original short stories are useful in getting young people to realize the value of their own experience. But the decision on the part of the student to use his own life and world as a basis for a story is not enough to insure either a new insight or a decent literary product. He must be taught to extract the real drama from his own experience rather than to impose upon it a contrived and artificial drama.36

Not all students can be taught the art of creative composition, although many of them can learn to appreciate the skill necessary to write imaginative fiction. Students' creative ability should be developed whenever possible, but to ask all students to create a short


36Schmidt, op. cit., p. 536.
story for a classroom assignment is unreasonable. They should be encouraged to do creative writing and provided opportunities for it. And students should know that the teacher will read what they write. Many students will presumably choose a short story as their final writing activity if permitted. They should, however, be provided the choice of some kind of expository writing.

2) Objective quizzes might be given throughout the unit to serve as a check on student reading. An objective final examination that asks only for knowledge of information is not consistent with the purposes of the unit.

3) An essay examination might be developed as follows: Make a list of the titles of some of the stories the entire class has read and ask the students to answer several of the following questions regarding them. No one story should be used more than once in a student's answer.

a) Choose a story which you feel has unusually good characterization and point out ways in which the author achieves his effect. Show the motives that animate the character.

b) Choose a story that seems a good example of a "metaphor." Discuss its theme and the symbols that are used to extend the meaning beyond the narrative level.

c) Discuss the nature of the plot structure of one of the stories. Discuss the type of conflict involved in reaching the climax. In what way was the outcome satisfactory? Was the conflict resolved?
d) Choose a story in which the setting plays a significant role and show how the environment affects the characters and the action.
e) Discuss a story that had great appeal to you. Point out the elements in both technique and content that gave you pleasure.

4) A long critical paper, such as suggested under the culminating activities, might serve as a means of evaluating whether or not the objectives of the unit have been achieved.

5) Students might be asked to read a story they had not read before and then answer questions about it or write a critical discussion. Directions: As you discuss the quality of this short story keep in mind the techniques of writing which are characteristic of quality stories and those which are characteristic of formula stories. Do not make merely generalized statements about the story, but support your points with evidence from the text of the story. Spend a sizable amount of time thinking about the story before you begin to write. You might even prepare a brief outline of the items you wish to consider in your discussion so that your writing will be brief, clear, and to the point.

6) A variation of the same approach is the following: All attempts to find out exactly what an author is saying presuppose, of course, knowledge of principles such as those discussed throughout this unit. A reader can apply these principles only through abundant and careful reading. He develops taste through consciousness of what is going on in every piece of literature he reads, whether it be a magazine serial, a Hemingway short story, or an Elizabethan play.
After reading O'Hara's short story "Do You Like It Here?" discuss through careful analysis (a) what the author is trying to communicate, (b) what affective elements help him to convey his meaning, (c) what elements, if any, obscure his communication, and (d) how successful, on the whole, the author is in conveying his ideas and feelings to the reader.

VI. References.

For the Student: (Paperback Anthologies)


For the Teacher:


CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The present study has indicated that the short story is an especially appropriate form of literature for helping the English teacher interest students in reading and in developing the necessary skills for achieving the most for their effort. Many more short stories, different in content and style, can be read and discussed with students than can entire novels. Thus, students can be introduced to a greater variety of material and more interests can be appealed to. A short story can be read easily as an over-night assignment and can usually be discussed thoroughly in a single class period or less. It frequently illustrates clearly one or two of the characteristics of literature. Thus, a comparison of different treatments of the same technique can be made. In the matter of style, for example, several writers can be examined, a procedure which would be more difficult with novels because of the time element. The short stories of many writers allow a teacher to approach their ideas when time would not permit a reading of their longer works. Also, reading their short stories, where the focus is limited, sometimes prepares students for the longer, more difficult works of selected authors. The modern short story more often than not focuses realistically on the problems that students face or are concerned
with. Its brevity, its limited focus, its compression, and its implicit statement are closely related to the increased awareness today of the fragmentary nature of experience. The temporal quality of the short story is more nearly akin to adolescents' perceptions of their own experiences.

In order to help students discriminate among the various kinds of literature available to them, the teacher must develop, at least in his own thinking, a critical theory of art which will enable him to make thoughtful judgments about different pieces of literature. Four basic critical theories have been used and are still being used to approach answers to such questions as "What is art? What is art in literature? What is reality? What is the relation of literature or art to reality? What is the relation of the artist to the art? What is the relation of the art to the reader?" They are (1) mimetic theories, which approach art as imitation of nature or of various aspects of the universe; (2) pragmatic theories, which conceive of art as a means to an end, that of evoking a response in the reader; (3) expressive theories, which place the focus upon the author and the creative act; and (4) objective theories, which disregard all the elements in the situation of a work of art except the work of art itself. All of these critical theories are valid ones, depending upon the way the critic wishes to orient himself; each one has been used by thoughtful critics to explain the nature of art. A reasonable theory for the teacher of literature, however, and the theory underlying this dissertation, is an eclectic one.
Each theory may serve as a valuable approach to get at some aspect of a certain piece of literature. One aesthetic theory for handling certain aspects of poetry may not be the best for dealing with a particular piece of fiction. Different theories might be used if the approach were focused on the creation of art, or on the art object, or on the appreciation of art. The four are separable only in theory; all contribute to the total significance of a work of art.

The short story as a distinct genre did not become fixed in literature until the first part of the nineteenth century. The form clearly has many antecedents, however. The oldest record of prose stories is an Egyptian collection of tales contained in the ancient papyri, *The Tales of the Magicians*, dating from 4000 B.C. to 2700 B.C. The oral tradition in literature is responsible for many stories that are read today. The invention of printing not only permitted the story teller to reach a wider audience, but required him to polish his stories to a greater extent. Pieces of short prose narrative before Poe which closely approximate the short story are commonly labeled as tales. Many are refined and polished in style, yet they lack some of the essential qualities of fiction. The emphasis is on linear action; the writer is presenting a narrative of events in chronological order. There is little ordering of events beyond what happens next, and quite frequently irrelevant matters are included. The writer often makes no attempt to reorganize experiences in order to give a sharper picture of reality. The reader remembers a series of events rather than a suggested impression. These tales usually
lack organic unity in terms of content, form, and style. The tale interests the reader for what it says rather than by the way it says it. The tale in general requires or implies an audience. Washington Irving brought the tale to its highest development, and in such tales as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" approached very near to the short story form. The short story achieves its artistic literary status when it shifts from the mere narration of events to the selection of events which reinforce a writer's vision of experience, since an art form demands deliberate selection and arrangement of materials.

Although the short story has many antecedents, Poe is most often cited as the first person to define its artistic principles. His theory of art is contained in his "The Philosophy of Composition" and in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*. He states that the short story must have unity of effect, its length should be such that it requires from a half-hour to one or two hours to read, all incidents in the short story must be subordinated to the climax, and the story should reflect the invention, creation, imagination, and originality of the writer. Essentially, these principles remain useful critical tools for classifying and judging the quality of short stories since Poe's day if form is kept distinct from method and content.

To define a short story with complete exactitude is impossible. Certainly a rigid definition of the form is undesirable. If a story is to be considered as literary art, however, some classic definition
of form is necessary. Its artistic proportions are based on aesthetic principles which are derived ultimately from the way the artist focuses on experience. Even if the organization of the writer's vision is one of chaos, a focus has been made and a vision defined. The order here reflects a view of life that is formless. For purposes of classification, a short story must not only embrace an artistic vision, but must follow generally the conventions of the form. The rather broad statements made by Poe concerning unity, length, limited focus, and plot still serve as meaningful limitations of the form. To call any piece of prose fiction a short story, or to completely remove the label, is to rob the genre of its status as art. The limitations of the form still provide for great versatility of performance, as evidenced by the diversity of the work of the writers who have used it successfully.

The history of the short story from Poe to the present time, although not lengthy, is complex. Once the technique of short story writing was established, it became a popular form in almost every civilized country of the world. The literatures which have contributed most to the development of the form through demonstration or influence, or both, are those of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia. The short story has been a prominent part of the literature of the United States for a longer period of time than in any of the other three countries, with the possible exception of Russia. Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne are important for their roles in establishing the form. Hawthorne, although he wrote
stories before Poe, achieved distinction as a short story writer after Poe's critical attention to his tales. Hawthorne's stories, which possess psychological depth, can best be classified as stories with a moral purpose, while Poe uses atmosphere and skillful narration to entertain the reader. Both use a central situation to give unity to the story. The most significant trend in the development of the American short story in the second half of the nineteenth century was the story of local color. Bret Harte and Ambrose Bierce are two important writers in this style. Bierce, especially, demonstrated that quality stories could use setting as more than just a place for action. Literary naturalism, indicating a particular manner of viewing life as it focuses its attention on that part of man's experience in which he is most closely allied to nature, has had a strong influence on many writers, including Stephen Crane, Erskine Caldwell, and John Steinbeck. Henry James' method, in which he views experience from the inside, or examines life from a subjective center, has greatly influenced the writing of fiction in the twentieth century. Just as Poe is regarded as the founder of the short story, Sherwood Anderson is looked upon as the founder of the modern American short story. He was the first writer to revolt against a mechanical technique and a mechanical view of life, and his rebellion came at a time when people were ready to listen. He objected to stereotyped formalism both in form and content. The two writers of greatest stature that have emerged since Anderson are Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. The modern short story in America is noted for its volume and experimentation. Many important
writers have continued to explore with varying degrees of success the possibilities of the form since its liberation by Anderson. That the short story is an essentially American form and an appropriate form of literary expression for today is illustrated by the number of leading writers who are using it extensively and in many cases almost exclusively. It is practiced with more variety and artistry here than in any other country.

Robert Louis Stevenson was the first English writer to devote serious attention to the short story. Rudyard Kipling was the first great master of the short story form in England. He raised one kind of journalism to the level of art and was responsible for much vivid color and finely wrought action in later fiction. James Joyce and other short story writers in Ireland brought a poetic quality to the short story that it had not known before. Katherine Mansfield is to the English short story what Sherwood Anderson is to the American, although she, along with A. E. Coppard, was more a means for transmitting certain influences, especially those of her master, Chekhov, than originating them. In her hands the short story became more compressed and impressionistic. Other British writers of the modern period, most notably D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Bowen, and Rosamund Lehmann, have also made contributions to the form as they explored its possibilities, although the short story in Great Britain has never achieved the importance that it has in the United States.

The short story has never been as distinct a literary genre in France as it has been in the United States and Great Britain, or
in Russia. French short stories, with the exception of those of Maupassant, have generally been by-products of other literary movements and have been produced by writers interested chiefly in some other form. Short stories have appeared, however, that parallel or are influenced by the chief literary movements in France. Literature in the first part of the nineteenth century in France found expression as a part of the romantic movement that was spreading over the entire Western world. Romantic tendencies are evident in the stories of the fantastic, in the exotic and picturesque settings, and in the historical and pseudo-historical episodes. Prosper Mérimée had written short stories demonstrating the art of single effect and unity before Poe's first tale was published. In the second part of the nineteenth century realism and naturalism began to emerge out of romanticism. In literature the ideas were expressed chiefly in the novel, but some of them spilled over into short stories. Balzac, Zola, and Flaubert all prepared the way for Maupassant, but he developed his precise style and method of patient observation under the tutelage of Flaubert. Maupassant is unique in French literature in that he devoted himself almost exclusively to the writing of short stories. In his comment on his method he emphasizes the fact that a short story is an interpretation of life according to the writer's vision rather than a portrayal of events. Maupassant mastered the form of the short story, individualizing its economy and unity. The Impressionists, the Parnassians, and the Symbolists all influenced the writing of the short story in France.
and in other countries; although these groups were not interested in producing this literary form. Sartre and Camus are the two most important writers who have contributed to the short story in France during the twentieth century.

The short story is a staple of Russian literature. Like the writers in France, the writers of the short story in Russia have been concerned usually with other forms of literature, but in Russia the short story has always been considered a respectable and worthy form. The philosophical ideas underlying Russian literature follow generally the same trends of those of other countries. This is revealed in the romantic tales of Pushkin and Lermontov, the psychological stories of Dostoevsky, the realistic methods of Chekhov, the philosophical problems of Kuprin, and the symbolic stories of Andreyev. Many people believe Chekhov to be the greatest master of the short story of all time. His stories partake of the unfinished nature of experience—they are irregular, complex, paradoxical, and contradictory. Yet there is unity of effect in each story. Chekhov is especially skillful in using the natural scene to enhance and support mood. Current Soviet short stories tend to be rather long and avoid the tightly controlled plot. They are in the tradition of great literature the world over and represent an attempt to restore Russian literature to the place of importance it has held in world literature in the past.

The short story has come far since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It has developed independently and interdependently in the various literatures of the world. Great writers as well as
lesser ones have found the form to be an appropriate medium for their vision of life. Each has shaped and molded it by his own method and style, building on what had gone before. The short story has developed from a somewhat artificial form that was separate from the real and vital aspects of life to a form that penetrates deeply into experience. Only the writers of the future can determine whether or not the form will continue to serve their ends.

Formal literary approaches can be made to the short story in various degrees of depth throughout the secondary English program. In order to arrive at a full comprehension of a short story students must become perceptive in sensing the order and essential relationships of its parts. The parts must be studied with painstaking care, but students should never be permitted to confuse the parts with the whole. Parts must always be seen in relation to the context of a story's meaning. The basic elements of a short story that can be treated separately are plot, character, theme, and style. Style covers such items as the writer's use of language, setting, point of view, and symbol, irony, and metaphor. To these can be applied an eclectic critical theory of art to discriminate between formula and quality stories. Does the story aim at some aspect of human truth and reality? Does the story have something to say that is meaningful and worth while for the reader? Does the artist have a serious intent? Is the story put together in artistic proportions?

Two general approaches for teaching the short story are available to the English teacher in the secondary school. He may approach a short story or a group of stories as they apply to the students'
personal problems and to social problems, or he may approach the stories as examples of a literary art form, with emphasis on the skills needed to appreciate and understand them. The two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Each, however, may be useful and appropriate for a particular story or a particular group of students.

English teachers might wisely use the following three criteria for selecting a piece of literature for study in common with any group of students: (1) the piece of literature should appeal to students' interests, (2) the piece of literature should be within the reading ability range of most of the students in the class, and (3) the piece of literature should require class time for understanding it.

One problem in the secondary English curriculum, as well as in the curriculums of other subject-matter areas, is that there is not a clear sequence of the skills and concepts of the discipline. Year after year teachers teach the same thing or similar things with the same approaches to them. The assumption seems to be that if the students did not understand the material the first time, they should be exposed to it repeatedly in the same fashion. A different assumption might be that students need to be introduced to ideas in a way that they can understand them, then helped to expand and develop these ideas in significant ways. In an attempt to improve English instruction in the secondary schools many professional and scholarly groups and individuals are reexamining the content of the English
program to determine what kind of sequential and cumulative programs can be devised. A possible sequential program for teaching the short story in the secondary school follows: (1) interest students in reading and help them begin to make a distinction between the short story and other forms of prose fiction, (2) introduce students to the formal elements of the short story with emphasis on character and plot, (3) study the short story as a unique form of literary art, identify the characteristics of the form, and discuss the contributions made to the form by various short story writers, and (4) once the short story has been understood as a form, use it, along with other literary forms, to explore universal themes in literature.

The unit approach to teaching offers the English teacher the opportunity to integrate functionally the four basic skills of the English language arts—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Such an approach to curriculum organization views subject matter as a means of arriving at the solution of many kinds of problems rather than as content to be covered in a year's period of time. Four sources of units are available to teachers—textbook units, commercial resource units, units prepared by groups of teachers in a single school system, and units prepared by individual teachers for individual classes. Units prepared by teachers in a single system or by a teacher for a single class permit consideration of more specific groups of students. These teachers know generally the reading abilities and interests of the students and what their past learning has been. Also, teachers working at the preparation of
units will be better able to put the units into operation success­fully. The short story can be used effectively and appropriately in a variety of unit structures where literature receives the major emphasis--the thematic unit, the types or genre unit, the single work unit, the chronological survey unit, or the skills unit. The type of unit used by a teacher should be determined by the maturity, experience, and needs of the learners in relation to desirable goals.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Periodicals**


I, David Miller Cook, was born in Martinsburg, Pennsylvania. My elementary and secondary education was obtained in the Flora, Indiana, Dallas Center, Iowa, San Bernardino, California, and Ontario, California, public schools. I received from The Ohio State University the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1952, the Bachelor of Science degree in 1954, and the Master of Arts degree in 1959. From 1956 to 1958 I taught English, speech, and dramatics at Lincolnway Community High School, New Lenox, Illinois. During the time I spent working on my Master of Arts degree, I was a part-time assistant to Professor Eberhart at The Ohio State University. From 1959 to 1961 I was an assistant professor in the English Department at Indiana State College, Indiana, Pennsylvania. From 1961 to the present time I have been an instructor in the Department of Education at The Ohio State University.