

---

## The Evolution of Indian Short Story in English

Ms. M. Parvathi, Asst. Professor of English ([parvathi.malepati@gmail.com](mailto:parvathi.malepati@gmail.com))  
Madanapalle Institute of Technology & Science, Madanapalle, A. P., India

Dr. P. kusuma Harinath, Professor,  
Department of English, S. V. University, Tirupati, A P, India

---

### Abstract

The development of English short story has been developed with the relation of human with nature and struggle of human being. A Short story is a brief work of literature, usually written in narrative prose. In modern times, the short story has become one of the most popular forms for literature. Origin of Sanskrit short stories was in the form of animals where all characters were animals which have been contributed by Indian writers. The short story in Indian writing in English may be superficially called an offshoot of the Indo-Anglian novel. The bulky output of Mulk Raj Anand, Manjeri S. Isvaran, R.K. Narayan, Khushwant Singh, and others in the form of short stories reveal their dedication to its development. Today, the Indian short story in English has very well served as a powerful vehicle of social awareness and a tool of painting the Indian social scene.

### Introduction

A short story is fictional work of prose that is shorter in length than a novel. Edgar Allan Poe, in his essay, The Philosophy of Composition, said, “A short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours.”

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, “A short story is an invented prose narrative shorter than a novel usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at unity of effect and often concentrating on the creation of mood rather than plot.”

“A short story is, or should be, a simple thing; it aims at producing one single vivid effect; it has to seize the attention at the outset, and never relaxing, gather it together more and more until the climax is reached.” - H. G. Wells, ‘The Contemporary Novel’

A short story is one of the oldest types of literature, existing in many forms such as myths, fairy tales, ballads, and parables. It began with the oral storytelling which led to the composition of epics such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The development of English short story has been developed with the relation of human with nature and struggle of human being. Origin of Sanskrit short stories was in the form of animals where all characters were animals. These stories have been contributed by Indian writers. Sir William Jones, Max Muller, David's also believed that animal tales have been introduced only in Ancient Literature of India compare to the other countries of the world.

2

### **Short Story, a Literary Genre**

The evolution of the short story first began before humans could write. A Short story is a brief work of literature, usually written in narrative prose. It is one of the oldest types of literature. It has existed in many forms such as myths, fairy tales, ballads, and parables. It began with the oral storytelling which led to the composition of epics such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These oral narratives were based of rhythmic verse that made the memorization of the story an easier task. The refined form of the short story emerged from various developments relating to this genre.

During the seventeenth century, the short story has further grown to encompass a body of work so diverse as to defy easy characterization with the contribution made by French writers. Madame de Lafayette (1634-1693) developed the novella form which attracted most of the coming writers. In 1704, Antoine Golan's first modern translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* or *The Arabian Nights* also had a great influence on the eighteenth century of the European short story and early writers such as Voltaire (1694-1778) and Diderot (1713-1784). Other forms of oral tales similar to *The Arabian Nights* began to be collected and published in the early nineteenth century, such as the Brothers Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (1824-1826) and Nicolas Gogol's *Evening on a Farm of Dikanka* (1831-1832). The tales that perhaps led to the emergence of a modern short story in the United States were Charles Brockden Brown's "Somnambulism" (1805) and Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), (Fatima, G. 2012, p.15).

In the twentieth century, the short story has undergone umpteen changes due to the impact of social and cultural life. Writers have come out with various social themes by employing different narrative techniques. At its most prototypical the short story features a small cast of named characters, and focuses on a self-contained incident with the intent of evoking a “single effect” or mood. In doing so, short stories make use of plot, resonance, and other dynamic components to a far greater degree than is typical of an anecdote to a far lesser degree than a novel. While the short story is largely distinct from the novel, authors of both generally draw from a common pool of literary techniques.

The short story has been considered both an apprenticeship form preceding lengthier works, and a crafted form in its own right, collected together in books of similar length, price, and distribution as novels. Short story writers may define their works as part of the artistic and personal expression of the form. They may also attempt to resist categorization by genre and fixed formation. Thus, in modern times, the short story has become one of the most popular forms for literature.

As a genre, the short story received relatively little critical attention through the middle of the 20th century, and the most valuable studies of the form were often limited by region or era. Short story began to be noticed and widely accepted as a literary genre in the nineteenth century. The credit for giving a form and shape to the short story goes to three American writers Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. A change in the strong base followed by these writers is seen with the appearance of Maupassant from France and Anton Chekhov from Russia. It was these writers who brought short stories closer to human life.

### **The Indian Short Stories in English**

The short story in the Indian sub-continent followed a more or less similar pattern of growth as it did in Europe and America. The development of English short story has been developed with the relation of human with nature and struggle of human being. Origin of Sanskrit short stories was in the form of animals where all characters were animals. These stories have been contributed by Indian writers. Sir William Jones, Max Muller, David’s also believed that animal tales have been introduced only in Ancient Literature of India compare to the other countries of the world.

The history of Indian English short story is not very old. 1898 was the remarkable year for the Indian English short story because English short story was published in this year for the first time. The name of the story collection was 'Stories from Indian Christian Life'. The remarkable book was written by Kamala Sathianadan. From that year the journey of Indian short story started on. In fact the Indian writers used to focus only social problems in their short stories but after twenty the scenario of the stories was changed. The writers made new experiments in the stories, amusement was seen in the story 'Descrated' Bones written by Habib, terror was seen in the story. Now writers tried to portray the story with description, the characters are deeply introduced to the readers besides, the family background of the characters, social and educational set up, psychology of the characters were described very well.

Then Indian short story in English was written systemically in India after 1920. That was the age of Gandhian philosophy where people were in the influence of Ganhiji's thoughts. Shankar Ram wrote the story, 'The children of Kaveri' in the year of 1926. He depicts Indian problems of India like superstitions, poverty, caste system etc. His other remarkable story is 'Creatures of All show' written in the year of 1933. The short story writers focused burning issues of India in their stories. A.S.P. Ayyer, K.S. Venkatramani, and K.Nagarjan were social reformers. This period was under the influence of Ganhiji, and national movement freedom thoughts were started aggressively at that time. The Indian English short story is successfully extended and acceptable with delight. Similar with the best continental short stories is enough evidence not only of their thematic and technical maturity but also of the confident ease with which the English language is being handled.

The short story in Indian writing in English may, on a superficial level, be called an offshoot of the Indo-Anglian novel. Right from Raja Rao down to Arun Joshi, every Indo-Anglian novelist, to be more precise, a good many of them, has produced at least one, if not more, collection of short stories. At the same time, there are writers like Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan who are equally prolific in the realms of the short story and the novel. They have contributed much to the emergency of the short story in English as a distinct genre and entity. It was only during the last four decades that the short story developed into a full-fledged mode of creative expression in the hands of great masters who took keen and serious interest in it as an art-form. The bulky output of Mulk Raj Anand, Manjeri S. Isvaran, R.K. Narayan, Khushwant Singh, and others in

the form of short stories reveal their dedication to its development. Today, the Indian short story in English has very well served as a powerful vehicle of social awareness and a tool of painting the Indian social scene.

## Conclusion

The English short story has been developed with the relation of human with nature and struggle of human being. In modern times, the short story has become one of the most popular forms for literature.

Thus, Indian short story in English was written systemically in India. The short story writers focused burning issues of India in their stories. The Indian English short story is successfully extended and acceptable with delight. Today, the Indian short story in English has very well served as a powerful vehicle of social awareness and a tool of painting the Indian social scene.

## References

- Admin, (2007). A Brief History of the Short Story in America, Aug-27-2007. Retrieved from: <http://bookcritics.org/blog/archive/a-brief-history-of-the-short-story-in-america>
- Arnold, M. (1859). "On the Modern element in literature" Lecture delivered in the University of Oxford, 14 Nov. 1859
- Background to the Short Story, article. Retrieved from: <http://ftp.collin.edu/mtolleson/2328online/2328notesshortstory.htm>
- Hammond, J.R. (1992). H.G. Wells and the Short Story – 1992, P.19 - Google Books Result Retrieved from: <https://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=0230376673>
- Fatima, G. (2012). A Short History of the Short Story: Western and Asian Traditions. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=1615991778>
- Fedderson. R. C.(2001). "Introduction: A Glance at the History of the Short Story in English," in Erin Fallon (ed.) A Reader's Companion to the Short Story in English, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001
- Hansen, J.A. (1980). Short story ,literature. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story>
- Khakpour, A. (2012). Methodology of comparative studies in education. Contemporary Educational Researches Journal. 1(2012) 20-26. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272492215\\_Methodology\\_of\\_comparative\\_studies\\_in\\_education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272492215_Methodology_of_comparative_studies_in_education)

- 
- McMichael, et al, (1927). Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed., p.6
- Mukherjee, M. (1967). "Raja Rao's Shorter Fiction," *Indian Literature*, Vol.10, Number 3, 1967, p.67.
- Parnam, S. (). The Emergence and Development of The American Short Story. Literature and Criticism (ISSN 2229 — 3868) Vol. III. No. I
- Seth, V. (1993). A conversation with Vikram Seth: Mixed Beasts and Cultural Products, Interview with MakarandParanjape, *Indian Review of Books*, Vol.2, No.6, - April 15, 1993, p.23.
- Singh, B. (1990). Indo-Anglian Fiction – An Assessment, ed. by P. P. Mehta, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1990. 41.
- The Hindusthan Times, (10<sup>th</sup> February 1974). Cited in P.S.Sundaram, R.K. Narayan as novelist (Delhi, 1988)
- The Short Stories (University Of Delhi). Retrieved from:  
<https://sol.du.ac.in/mod/book/view.php?id=855&chapterid=529>
- Venugopal, C. (1998).The Indian Short Story in English, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1998.
- Venugopal, C. (1976). The Indian Short Story in English (Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1976), p.67.
- Venugopal, C. (1974). "Technique in the Indian Short Story in English," Journal of Karnataka University, Vol.18, 1974, p.119.
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, (2018). Article on R. K. Narayan. Retrieved from:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R.\\_K.\\_Narayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R._K._Narayan)
- <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/cliffsnotes/subjects/literature/what-is-a-definition-of-short-story>
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/short%20story>