

Literary Texts II 8

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HELLO EVERYONE!

Today, we are going to talk about **Speech and Dialogue**. We are still in Part I. we will finish this part and start with Part II: The Short Story and the Novella.

As you know in all novels, we read and we expect to have conversations between one character and another, or dialogue. Sometimes, we come across a character talking to himself; we call this *speech*. But we focus on dialogue. The importance of dialogue/conversation is to give the reader a sense of realism. When we read, we should imagine or we believe that what we read is real.

The purpose of conversation is to show you something real like human beings, people talking, characters in the novels talking, etc.; this is what we call conversation. The main function is to give the reader a sense of realism.

Plus, it gives sense of dramatic effectiveness. We are going to discuss that later.

Speech and Dialogue:

One of the extraordinary achievements of realism (and not just in the novel) is that it gives us something that to us resembles the world even though it is formed and constrained by conventions of representation different from those that operate in the real world.

The novelist follows conventions in the representation of speech and dialogue with which we are so familiar that we are unaware of any conventionality. People in novels tend to talk in complete sentences, with few indicated hesitations, mistakes of grammar, 'urns' and 'ers', and so on.

The novelist has to convey exclusively in words what in ordinary conversation we convey by words, tone of voice, hesitations, facial expression, gesture, bodily posture - and by other means. Learning how

to do so was not accomplished overnight, and we can note a great difference between the way novelists of the eighteenth century represented dialogue the way later novelists have done so.

We have two forms of introducing dialogue. The first one is old fashion, and the second is modern. Now we are going to learn the characteristics of each one of these.

In old fashion dialogue we read and look at it and you discover that it is horizontal, continuous.

In modern fashion dialogue, we have vertical, non-continuous.

Let's take an example: when two characters are talking, let's say Elizabeth and Tom, usually in the play we say Tom and then Elizabeth.

In the novel, sometimes, the writer chooses the old fashion one which means instead of writing in vertical, he continues like that, he says: Tom said..., Elizabeth answers... , he said...., she replied..., this is what we call 'narrative tag phrases'.

So, in the old fashion dialogue we use the narrative tag phrases. We have the voice of the narrator, the narrator interferes. So, the old fashion dialogue is characterized by the interference of the narrator. This makes it difficult to understand and difficult to follow. It is full of (he said, she said..) sometimes we forget who said what.

Look at this idea in the book:

You will notice something odd about the layout of the page. Although conversation takes place all through this short chapter, the prose is set out in one continuous unparagraphed stream. Thus the writer has to keep including 'tag-phrases' such as 'he said' and 'she replied'. The result is not just that reading the chapter is rather hard work, but that the guiding presence of the narrator keeps intruding: we have narrative tag phrases in addition to the actual words spoken by the characters.

In the modern fashion dialogue the writer follows this in the novel: Tom said... and then all what he said. Each one of the characters is given a separate paragraph. It takes one continuous paragraph; although it might be divided into small paragraphs. Here it is non-continuous or vertical—the opposite of horizontal. The narrator chooses here to disappear most of the time. This can create dramatic effectiveness; which means that we see a certain dialogue from the

top like watching something.

Let us read the idea in the book:

Dialogue is presented in a recognizably modern form, with each new utterance by a different character given a new paragraph. Here the narrator may intrude or remain hidden at will. If necessary the characters can be left to speak for themselves with no interruption from anyone. This certainly increases the dramatic effectiveness of scenes involving dialogue; we feel that we are actually witnessing conversations taking place rather than being instructed by an intrusive stage manager who keeps pointing out what we have to notice.

In speech and dialogue, I just want you to focus on the purpose; which is giving a sense of realism, because in films, in real life sometimes we don't talk, we can communicate with something other than language, like using our hands or facial expressions. So, when we write a novel we cannot present life in a high extent. While here in real life, by the body language or gestures we have a place of description; this is why it is important. Sometimes two people in real life don't say a single word and they still understand each other. For example: If you are looking at a child and don't say a word he might understand your intention. In the novel you cannot do that, you have to use language, to use conversation.

The other thing that you have to focus is the forms of the speech and dialogue. One is called old fashion, and you have to know the characteristics of each form. This old fashioned one takes continuous paragraphs. The other form is the modern fashioned, which is non-continuous. You finish the paragraph, full stop, then you move to another line and it goes on vertical.

Don't confuse between 'paragraphed' and 'unparagraphed'; 'unparagraphed' means continuous and old fashioned.

Tag phrases are also very important in this part. It means when the writer uses phrases like: "he said", "she said", "he answered", "he replied", "she whispered", etc. we have all these words to identify full stop in the novel. These are very important. It is more enjoyable to read.

This is all for this chapter. Do you have any question?

Let's move to the following chapter which is called **The Short Story and the Novella**.

Part II:

THE SHORT STORY AND THE NOVELLA.

Remember that **narrative fiction** can be divided into three major categories:

1. *The novel.*
2. *The short story.*
3. *The novella.*

The Short Story:

The short story is a new artistic literary work, it is not old. Poetry is very old, the epic is very old, and grammar is very old whereas the short story appeared just recently in 1720s.

The first part of your book is all about the novel.

The second characteristic of the short story is that it is different from what we call episode in the sense that it has plot like novels.

Last time, we differentiated between the story and the plot.

Today, you have to notice the difference between the short story and the tale.

The tale is old; they used to tell tales all the time, sometimes they don't have written source. It is like tales narrated by your own grandmother, for example. Most religious books are also full of episodes that are neither tales nor stories. They are anecdotes. This shows you that a short story is really an art, something you keep narrating, and sometimes you forget about the characters.

We are going to talk about the novella later on. Now I want to talk about the differences between the novel and the short story.

Now, remember all the elements we studied in the novel; plot, characters, setting, point of view, theme, symbolism.

Let's focus on the characters first: how can we tell the difference between the characters in the novel and the characters in the short story?

In the short story, we have fewer characters who usually don't develop like the characters in the novel. Because the writer of the

short story writes about them assuming that they have already developed.

In the novel, there are more characters and they always develop. We have a wider space to change.

So, in the short story instead of following the characters while growing up or developing or changing, we focus on sudden moments of illuminations. While in the novel the writer first can introduce the characters, talk about the circumstances, and then we are told to follow the characters while they are growing up or changing or developing. So, in the novel we have all the time or the space we need to follow the character developing. In the short story, we don't have this time or space, we don't speak about introduction, family, background, we go directly to the most important moment in somebody's life and then speak about it, because short story means short in everything.

Let's read about these ideas in the book:

It has been suggested that our familiar tripartite division of prose fiction into the novel, the short story and the novella is one that simplifies a more complex and varied reality.

If the novel is very much the child of print, one might assume that at least superficial resemblances between the short story and oral narratives - tales, anecdotes, and so on might suggest that the short story has much older parents. One of the major critics argues that the short story, like the novel, 'is a modern art form; that is to say, it represents, better than poetry or drama, our own attitude to life'.

Is the short story perhaps a genre that offers a more detached view of characters and events than do many novels?

One reason for this may be that, as another Irish critic of the short story has argued, there can be no development of character in the short story. Of course, characters in a short story may undergo shocking experiences and they may experience dramatic illuminations, such that they are not the same at the end as at the start of the story and indeed many critics have suggested that such experiences are an almost essential component of the short story. For some critics, at the heart of the short story has to reside the writer's ability to make tiny bits of life speak for the whole of life. And this carries with it a range of technical necessities. In particular, the short story writer must be adept at

replacing direct telling by suggesting

Let us make a comparison between the short story and the novel.

Time and place are more limited in the short story. In the novel we rely on what we call *telling*, we replace telling in the short story with *suggesting*. Suggesting comes from symbolism. In the short story, the writers rely more on symbolism; using images and symbols.

Telling in the novel is direct, suggesting in the short story is indirect. So, the short story focuses mainly on indirect narration.

In the novel: plot is always complex. In the short story it's less complex. The plot in the short story can be compound, but not complex. Sometimes it is simple.

The maximum length of the short story is 30 pages. The novel is expected to be 200 pages long or more.

The short story can be read in one sitting; if you begin reading it, you will not be able to leave it until you finish it. We call this less reflective and more concentrated an experienced whereas reading the novel is impossible to finish in one single sitting.

So, any short story can be finished in less than an hour.

Let's read from the book:

The short story is normally read at one sitting - Edgar Allan Poe in fact suggested that this was a necessary feature of the short story. Because of this the reading of a short story tends to be less reflective and more concentrated an experience; we rarely stop several times for prolonged thought in the middle of reading a short story. The short story typically limits itself to a brief span of time.

Short stories rarely have complex plots; again the focus is upon a particular episode or situation rather than a chain of events. Thus much of the skill of the short story writer has to be devoted to making characters appear three-dimensional in spite of the fact that we see them for only a very short period of time. In addition, care has to be taken to render atmosphere and situation convincingly.

Less reflective means when you read the novel and you take your time to stop and think, pause and think.

The Novella:

Finally, the novella. The novella has the same characteristics of the short story.

We have two things to focus on here:

1. The novella used to be popular in Germany.
2. The novella tends to use central key basic system of symbolism.

When I say a key: it means the writer deliberately or intentionally chooses one major symbol and then develops all the characters and theme around this major symbol.

We have a very famous novella called *Heart of Darkness* written by Joseph Conrad who is a very talented writer. It was published in 1899 or something like that. It is important to remember the name of the novella and the name of its writer, but don't worry about the date.

Look at the description of the novella in your book:

The novella has had less theoretical attention devoted to it than has the short story, and especially in its modern and its Anglo-Saxon manifestations. This is a pity, because it is clear that it does represent what we can perhaps call a sub-genre, one which is possessed of very distinct and interesting characteristics, in spite of its close affinities with both the novel and the short story. It is usually rather longer than a short story, and would not normally be read in one sitting.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* can be seen as a classic novella, and any reader of this work will probably understand that the terms 'novel' and 'short story' seem somehow inappropriate to describe it.

The novella has flourished far more in Germany than elsewhere, and theories of the novella are often constructed with particular reference to the German novella tradition. This apart, it does seem to be the case that the novella often has a dominant symbol or complex of symbols at its heart, and that it is these rather than the complexity of its plot that give the novella its depth and significance. The novella is typically more limited in its concerns, often restricting itself to a single state of affairs, set of relationships, or setting. It thus has some of the concentrated power of the short story, but without the frequent one-dimensionality that characterizes many short stories. It is hard to imagine many short stories that could have generated the enormous body of interpretative responses that *Heart of Darkness* has done, and this has something to do with the symbolic richness of many novellas.

That's all about this chapter.

Next time we are going to read *First Confession* by Frank

O'Connor. We will apply the theoretical features that we talked about on this short story.

Next week, I expect everyone to have read the short story.

I want to focus on five terms before you read the short story:

1. **Stream of consciousness:** When the character's mind becomes open to the reader; thinking loudly. The character is still silent and the writer or the novelist can represent the stream or the flow of the character's mind.

2. **Monologue:** When the character speaks to himself.

3. **De-familiarization:** It means thinking the ordinary in an extraordinary manner, treating ordinary objects in an extra ordinary way. 'Making things strange.'

4. **Suspense:** It is when we have ambiguity or vague plot. The purpose of suspense is to capture the reader's attention or arouse the reader's curiosity, to force the reader to follow the literary work he is reading.

5. **Mystery:** When we don't know how the novel or the short story or the novella going to end. It is impossible to solve the plot.

These characteristics can be found in the novels, in the short stories, and in the novella.

They are mentioned in your book but without definitions.

«THANK YOU»



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