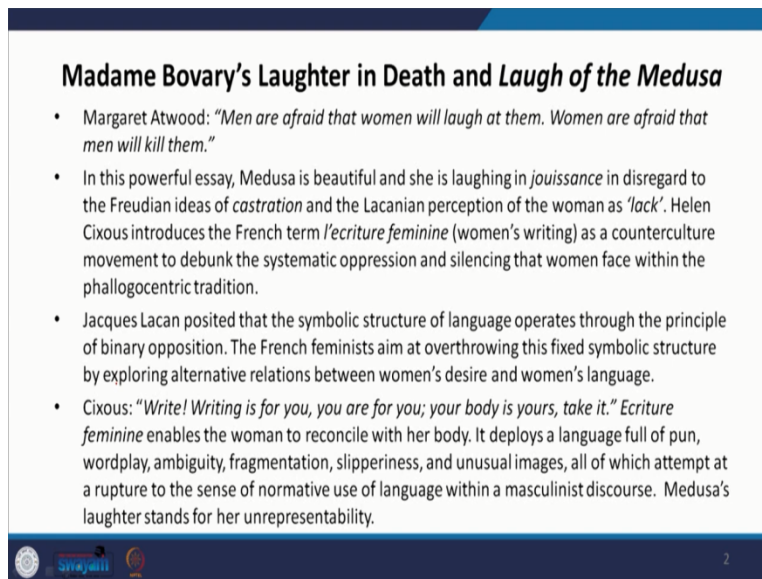


Narrative Mode and Fiction
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Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture - 36
Short Story in the Modern and Post-Modern Era - I

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on narrative mode and fiction. We are discussing short story in the modern and post-modern era. So, today we are going to start with the theorization of the genre of short story. Before I start with this new discussion, I recall I was talking about Madame Bovary's a few lectures back, I just wanted to add as an afterthought how Madame Bovary is laughter in death can be compared with reliance sources essay laugh of the Medusa.

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Madame Bovary's Laughter in Death and *Laugh of the Medusa*

- Margaret Atwood: "Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them."
- In this powerful essay, Medusa is beautiful and she is laughing in *jouissance* in disregard to the Freudian ideas of *castration* and the Lacanian perception of the woman as 'lack'. Helen Cixous introduces the French term *l'écriture féminine* (women's writing) as a counterculture movement to debunk the systematic oppression and silencing that women face within the phallogocentric tradition.
- Jacques Lacan posited that the symbolic structure of language operates through the principle of binary opposition. The French feminists aim at overthrowing this fixed symbolic structure by exploring alternative relations between women's desire and women's language.
- Cixous: "Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it." *Écriture féminine* enables the woman to reconcile with her body. It deploys a language full of pun, wordplay, ambiguity, fragmentation, slipperiness, and unusual images, all of which attempt at a rupture to the sense of normative use of language within a masculinist discourse. Medusa's laughter stands for her unrepresentability.

So, Margaret Atwood famously says that men are afraid that women will laugh at them and women are afraid that men will kill them. So, in this powerful essay by Helen Cixous Medusa is shown as the beautiful woman that she is and she is laughing she is almost scoffing in *jouissance*. It is regard to the Freudian ideas of castration and the Lacanian perception of the woman in terms of a lack.

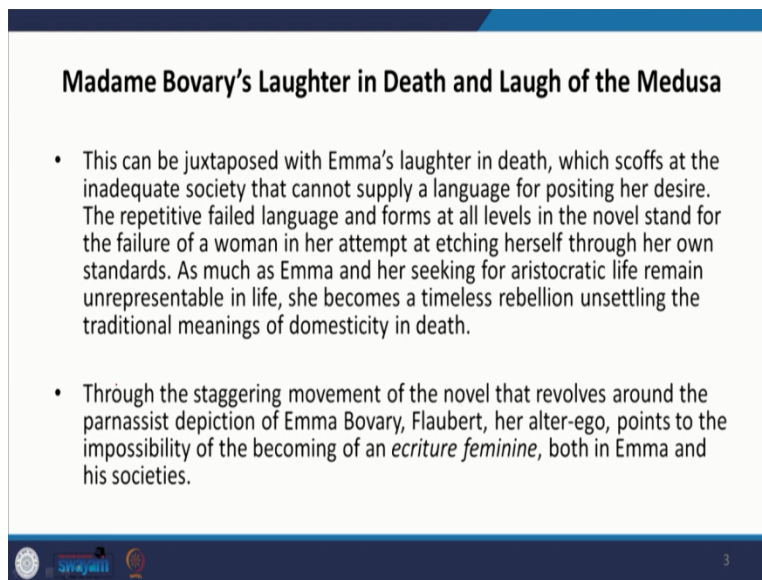
So, Helen's Cixous introduces a French term a l'écriture féminine or women's writing as a counter culture movement to debunk the systematic operation and silencing that women have a

timely memorially faced within the phallogocentric tradition. We know that Jacques Lacan posited the symbolic structure of language is operating through the principle of binary opposition.

So, the French feminists aim at overthrowing this kind of a fixed symbolic structure through exploring alternative relations. That might be possible between the woman's desire and the woman's language. We are reminded how Helen Cixous famously says write, writing is for you, you are for you, your body is yours take it. So, l'écriture feminine is possible through reconciling a woman with her body.

It deploys a language that is full of pun, word play, ambiguity, fragmentation, slipperiness and unusual images, all of which are attempts at making a rupture to the sense of normative language normative use of language within a masculinist discourse. So, Medusa's laughter stands for the aspects of a woman the aspects of the feminine that defies representation the unrepresentability of the feminine.

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Madame Bovary's Laughter in Death and Laugh of the Medusa

- This can be juxtaposed with Emma's laughter in death, which scoffs at the inadequate society that cannot supply a language for positing her desire. The repetitive failed language and forms at all levels in the novel stand for the failure of a woman in her attempt at etching herself through her own standards. As much as Emma and her seeking for aristocratic life remain unrepresentable in life, she becomes a timeless rebellion unsettling the traditional meanings of domesticity in death.
- Through the staggering movement of the novel that revolves around the parnasist depiction of Emma Bovary, Flaubert, her alter-ego, points to the impossibility of the becoming of an *écriture feminine*, both in Emma and his societies.

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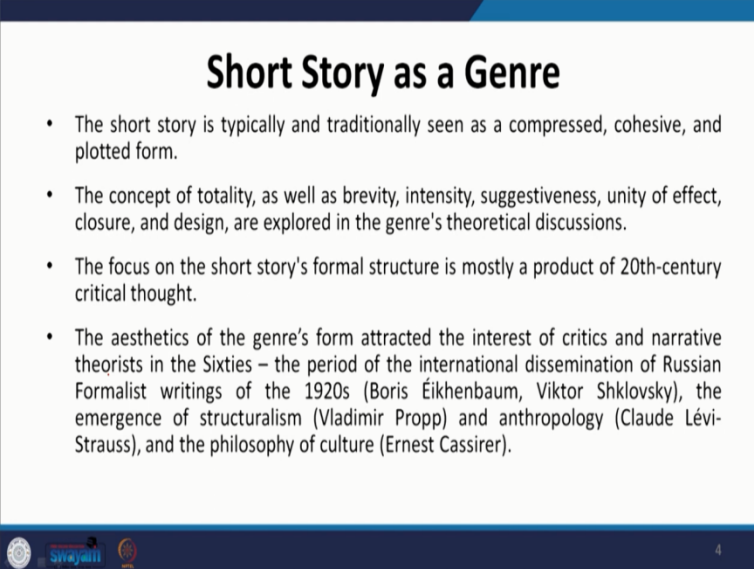
Now coming to Madame Bovary's laughter in death this can be juxtaposed with I mean you know the laughter of Medusa can be juxtaposed with Emma's laughter in death in her laughter in her death when she attempts suicide and she is about to die Emma scoffs at the inadequate

society that cannot supply a language for positing for holding her desire. So, the repetitive failed language that we have already discussed about when we were talking about Madame.

And you know the failure of forms at all levels in this novel stand for the failure of the woman in her attempt at etching herself through her own standards through her own discourse kind of etching out her own discourse and her own space within the society and a failure with that an impossibility of that the society the demands of the society and the demand of the woman cannot meet at any place there is no reconciliation. So, as much as Emma and her; seeking for aristocratic life remain unrepresentable in life.

As long as she lives she becomes a timeless rebellion who is unsettling the standard meanings the traditional meanings of domesticity in her death. So, through the staggering movement of Flaubert Madame Bovary which revolves around the; Spanish depiction of Emma Bovary. Flaubert who is also seen as her alter ego points to the impossibility of this becoming of an equatorial feminine both in the society in which Emma lives as well as Flaubert's immediate society.

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Short Story as a Genre

- The short story is typically and traditionally seen as a compressed, cohesive, and plotted form.
- The concept of totality, as well as brevity, intensity, suggestiveness, unity of effect, closure, and design, are explored in the genre's theoretical discussions.
- The focus on the short story's formal structure is mostly a product of 20th-century critical thought.
- The aesthetics of the genre's form attracted the interest of critics and narrative theorists in the Sixties – the period of the international dissemination of Russian Formalist writings of the 1920s (Boris Éikhenbaum, Viktor Shklovsky), the emergence of structuralism (Vladimir Propp) and anthropology (Claude Lévi-Strauss), and the philosophy of culture (Ernest Cassirer).

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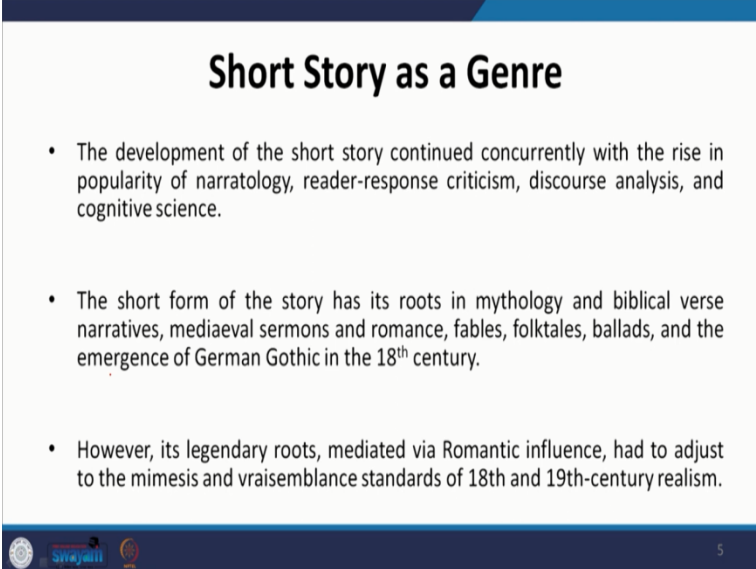
So, now coming back to short stories in genre we need to understand some of the characteristics that have been associated with the typical short story form. The short story is traditionally seen as a compressed, cohesive and a plotted form. So, the concept of totality of being there altogether

and at once as well as that of brevity, intensity, suggestiveness, unity of effect, a closure towards the end and a unity in design are explored through these genres theoretical discussions.

So, the focus of the short stories formal structure is mostly a product of 20th century critical thought. So, critics in the 20th century start trying to you know they try to note down certain enumerate the features that may come the short story. The aesthetics of the genres form attracted the interest of different critics and narrative theorists in the 1960s. So, the period of the international dissemination of Russian formalist writings of the 1920s.

When we talk of formalists we have in our mind Boris Eikhenbaum, we have Victor Shklovsky and then the emergence of structuralism with Vladimir Propp and a structuralist anthropology with Claude Levi-Strauss as well as the philosophy of culture with Ernest Cassirer.

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Short Story as a Genre

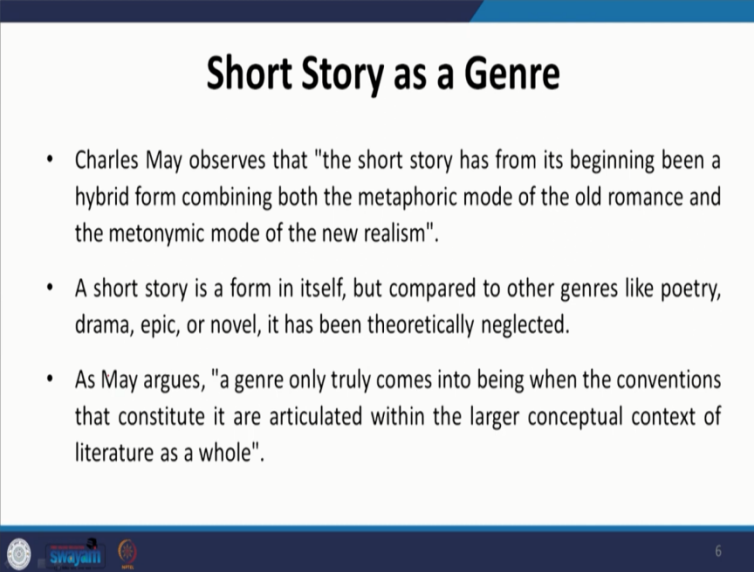
- The development of the short story continued concurrently with the rise in popularity of narratology, reader-response criticism, discourse analysis, and cognitive science.
- The short form of the story has its roots in mythology and biblical verse narratives, mediaeval sermons and romance, fables, folktales, ballads, and the emergence of German Gothic in the 18th century.
- However, its legendary roots, mediated via Romantic influence, had to adjust to the mimesis and vraisemblance standards of 18th and 19th-century realism.

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So, the development of the short stories constitute concurrently is constituted concurrently with the rise of the popularity of narratology, with the inception of reader response criticism, discourse and analysis discourse analysis and cognitive science. So, the short story form has its roots in mythology and biblical verse narratives in medieval sermons and romance, fables, folktales, ballads and emergence of the German Gothic in the 18th century.

It is legendary roots are mediated via romantic influence and they had to it is legendary roots that are mediated via romantic influence had to adjust to the mimesis and vraiseemblance, vraiseemblance are very similitude, the very similitude standards of the 18th and 19th century realism. The realist movement and the romantic movements have had a great influence on the form of a short story.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Charles May observes that "the short story has from its beginning been a hybrid form combining both the metaphoric mode of the old romance and the metonymic mode of the new realism".
- A short story is a form in itself, but compared to other genres like poetry, drama, epic, or novel, it has been theoretically neglected.
- As May argues, "a genre only truly comes into being when the conventions that constitute it are articulated within the larger conceptual context of literature as a whole".

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Charles May observes that the short story has from its beginning been a hybrid form combining both the metaphoric mode of the old romance and the metonymic mode of the new realism. As a form short story can be compared with, I mean the short story when compared with other genres like poetry drama epic or novel is relatively seen as neglected its theoretical premises have been formulated much later as compared to other genres like poetry, drama, epic and novel.

So, as Charles May argues a genre only truly comes into being when the conventions that constituted are articulated within the larger conceptual context of literature as a whole, unquote.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Theories about the short story as a genre tend to be "interdisciplinary and gender-bending".
- Discussions of the short story relate the form to myth, folklore, romance, genre theory, cognitive science, narratology, discourse analysis, and visual arts.
- The short story drew both on the lyric and the novel from the very beginning, yet within its confines it came to display a protean diversity.
- As Penn affirms, the short story **"has genres of its own invention"**.



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So, theory is about the short stories the genre tends to be interdisciplinary and gender bending. Discussions of the short story relate the form to myths, to folklore, romance, genre, theory, cognitive science, narratology, discourse analysis as well as visual arts. So, short story draws both on the lyric and the novel from the very beginning, and yet within its confines it displays a protein diversity. It can contain within itself a wide range of possibilities.

So, the short story has genres of its own invention within short story an area of possibilities can be experimented and explored.

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Short Story as a Genre

- The short story is closely related to the novel and the lyric form, as well as **the essay** (Hesse), **the letter** (Pasco), **the cinema** (Bowen, Bates), and **the photograph** (Cortázar), as well as **the visual arts, painting, sculpture** (Hanson).
- Due to its long-standing theoretical neglect, the short story appear to be **"a form at the margins"**.
- Contrary to Poe's original vision, the short tale became to be associated with the avenging powers of the oppressed and undervalued since it was perceived as eccentric and at the bottom of the hierarchy of arts.

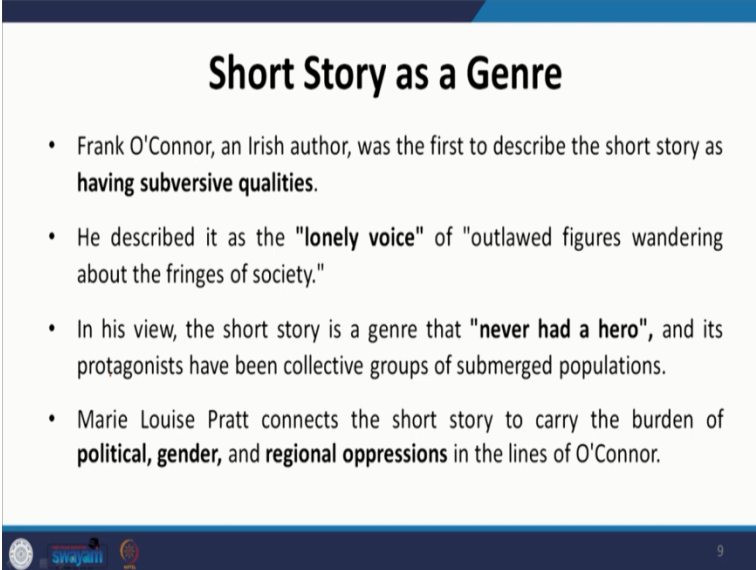


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So, the short story is closely related to the novel the lyric form as well as the essay, the letter, the cinema, the photograph as well as the visual arts, painting, sculpture. So, we see for example experiment experimentation through interviewing short story and photograph in the case of Julio Cortez's, short stories and in the case of I mean Claire Hansen theorizes a short story, we are looking at how it incorporates qualities of visual arts, painting and sculpture.

So, due to its long-standing theoretical neglect the short story appears to be a form at the margins. Contrary to Edgar Allan Poe's original vision the short story later on you know came to be associated with the avenging powers of the oppressed and undervalued since it was perceived as eccentric and you know coming from the bottom of the hierarchy of arts. So, Frank O'Connor an Irish author was the first to describe the short story as having subversive qualities.

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Short Story as a Genre

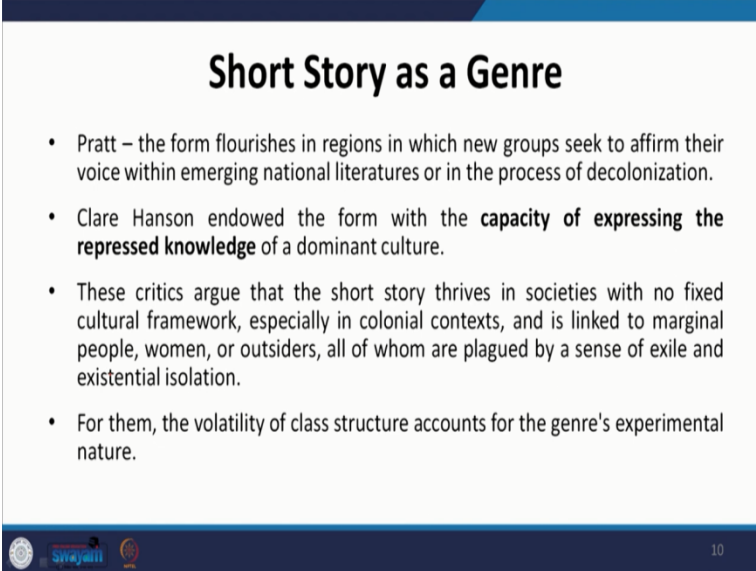
- Frank O'Connor, an Irish author, was the first to describe the short story as **having subversive qualities**.
- He described it as the "**lonely voice**" of "outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society."
- In his view, the short story is a genre that "**never had a hero**", and its protagonists have been collective groups of submerged populations.
- Marie Louise Pratt connects the short story to carry the burden of **political, gender, and regional oppressions** in the lines of O'Connor.

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He described short story as a voice of the lonely, representing the voice of the lonely or that of the outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society. According to O'Connor the short story is a genre that never had a hero and its protagonists have been collective groups of submerged populations. Further we see Marie Louise Pratt connecting the short story with you know political, gender and regional questions short story caring you know oppressions at you know carrying the question of oppression that happened at different levels.

So, Marie Louise Pratt connects the short story as carrying the burden of oppressions from different levels oppressions at the level of the political the gender and the regional and this is very much in line with what O'Connor already says.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Pratt – the form flourishes in regions in which new groups seek to affirm their voice within emerging national literatures or in the process of decolonization.
- Clare Hanson endowed the form with the **capacity of expressing the repressed knowledge** of a dominant culture.
- These critics argue that the short story thrives in societies with no fixed cultural framework, especially in colonial contexts, and is linked to marginal people, women, or outsiders, all of whom are plagued by a sense of exile and existential isolation.
- For them, the volatility of class structure accounts for the genre's experimental nature.

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So, Marie Louise Pratt for example says that the form of short story flourishes in regions where new groups you know new social groups are seeking to affirm their voice within emerging national literatures or in the process of decolonization. Clare Hanson endowed the form with the capacity of expressing the repressed knowledge of a dominant culture. All these critics therefore argue that the short story thrives in all such societies where there are you know no fixed cultural framework especially in colonial contexts.

And therefore, this form is linked to marginal people, women, to outsiders of a society all of whom are plagued by a sense of exile and existential isolation or existential crisis. For these subjects for these peripheral subjects, the volatility of culture the volatility of a class structure accounts for the genres experimental nature.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Until half a century ago, those who theorized about the genre were not literary critics, but practitioners of the form themselves.
- Since the 1960s, there has been a steady increase in interest in short stories, and since the late 20th century, critical and theoretical studies of the genre have flourished.
- Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville and Anton Chekhov in the 19th century; and Henry James, Flannery O'Connor, Julio Cortázar and Eudora Welty, among others, in the 20th century.



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So, we see that till a recent past those who theorized about the genre of short story were not literary critics but practitioners of the form themselves. Since the 1960s however there has been a steady increase in interest in short stories and since the late 20th century critical and theoretical studies of the genre have flourished. So, we see short story you know eminent short story writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Anton Chekhov in the 19th century.

And then Henry James, Flannery O'Connor, Julio Cortazar, Eudora Welty among you know other authors from the 20th century who are trying to theorize the short story as a form as a channel.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Poe's critical comments towards the middle of the 19th century are responsible for the birth of the short story as a unique genre.
- As the first short story theorist, he brought into discussion issues of form, style, length, design, authorial goals, and reader affect, developing the framework within which the short story is discussed even today.
- He placed the short story **second only to the lyric** form in the pantheon of artistic genre status, giving it a very high ranking.

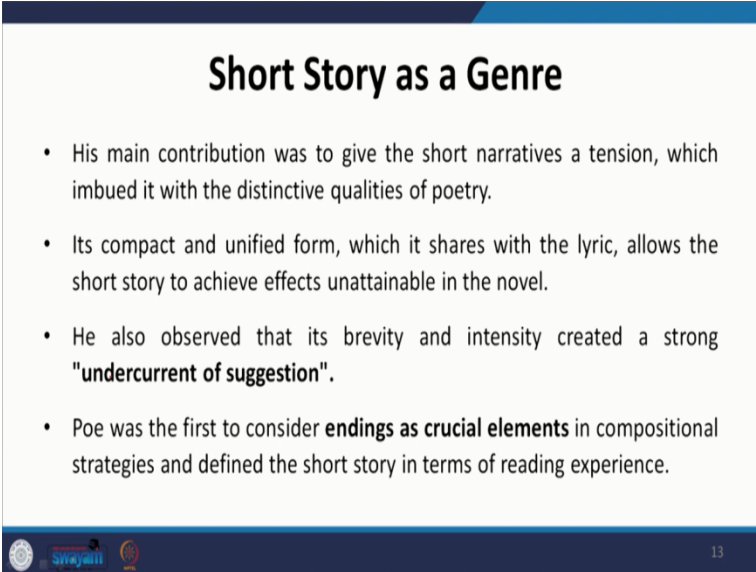


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So, Poe's critical comments towards the middle of the 19th century are in fact responsible for the birth of the short story as a unique genre. As the first short story theorist who brings in a discussion you know, so Poe brings in discussions about the form about the style, length, design, authorial rules and reader affect vis-a-vis, the short story and developed the framework within which the short story is discussed even today.

He placed the short story second only to the lyric form in the pantheon of the artistic genre status and gave it a very high ranking.

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Short Story as a Genre

- His main contribution was to give the short narratives a tension, which imbued it with the distinctive qualities of poetry.
- Its compact and unified form, which it shares with the lyric, allows the short story to achieve effects unattainable in the novel.
- He also observed that its brevity and intensity created a strong "**undercurrent of suggestion**".
- Poe was the first to consider **endings as crucial elements** in compositional strategies and defined the short story in terms of reading experience.

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So, whose main contribution to theorizing short story was to give the short narrative attention which imbued it with the distinctive qualities of poetry. And I will tell this how I mean I will explain this further where as we discuss the short story and its form. So, how the; short story has certain important similarities with the genre of wood tree. So, like we know the poem the way the new critics have understood whom the poem, has this inner organization the poem has it is a well bounded structure.

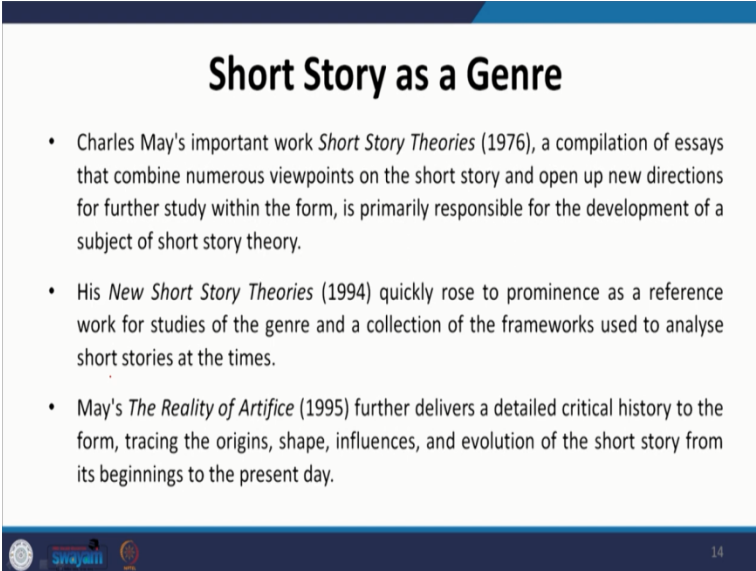
And a kind of you know pattern where individual words do not matter but the effect overall is much more important. In the similar way for a short story, it is a compact and unified fired form, the compact and unified form of a short story is very much symptomatic very much typical of its

form. A short story in other words is known by its your compactness and its unity which it shares with the lyric and which allows the short story to achieve effects that are unattainable in a novel.

So, a novel may you know experiment in different ways it is a passage in time I mean the way we see events developing in time concatenated in time until a lot more experimentation that than that is ever you know possible in a short story. A lot more experimentation than that is ever possible you know short story due to the scope of time and temporality also the time the space that a novel occupies is not possible for a short story.

A short story has to tie up it is loose ends within a shorter span of time. And so, Poe was observes that a short story is brevity and intensity creates a strong undercurrent of suggestion, the language itself differs smart differs a lot from that of the novel who was the first to consider endings as you know crucial elements in compositional strategies and he defined the short story in terms of one's reading experience.

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Short Story as a Genre

- Charles May's important work *Short Story Theories* (1976), a compilation of essays that combine numerous viewpoints on the short story and open up new directions for further study within the form, is primarily responsible for the development of a subject of short story theory.
- His *New Short Story Theories* (1994) quickly rose to prominence as a reference work for studies of the genre and a collection of the frameworks used to analyse short stories at the times.
- May's *The Reality of Artifice* (1995) further delivers a detailed critical history to the form, tracing the origins, shape, influences, and evolution of the short story from its beginnings to the present day.

So, Charles May important work short story theories is a compilation of essays that combine numerous viewpoints on the short story and May's work opens up new directions for further study within the form, and it is primarily responsible for the development of a subject of the short story theory. So, in new short story theories may rose to prominence as a you know one of the seminal critics that theorized short story.

It became a work you know that is referred for the study of the genre of short story and a collection of the frameworks that are used for readily analysing short story. So, with May's new short story theories we find some of the; we as readers we have some ready features that define the short story. May's reality of artifice further delivers a detailed critical history to the form by tracing the origins, shape, influences and evolution of the short story form.

So, tracing the; evolution of the short story form right from his beginnings to the present day. So, with this I would like to conclude today's lecture and I will meet you again for another round of discussions, thank you.