

SHREE H. N. SHUKLA COLLEGE OF I.T. & MGMT.

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INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY FORM: PROSE

The word 'prose' is taken from the Latin '*prosus*' which means 'direct' or 'straight'. Broadly speaking, prose is direct or straightforward writing. In poetry, which is generally written in verse, a lot of things may be left to the imagination of the reader. In ordinary prose, the aim is to communicate one's thoughts and feelings. What is important then is (a) what one wants to say, and (b) how one chooses to say it. What is said is the topic or subject of the composition. How it is said is the style or manner in which the topic is expressed. The style of course greatly depends upon who we are writing for and what sort of personality we have. There are different topics and different styles. Whatever the number of topics, they all come under one or another variety of prose and each variety may have a distinct style of its own.

What then are the different varieties of prose? For purposes of analysis we have categorized them as (a) **descriptive**, (b) **narrative** and (c) **expository**. But these three are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes you find more than one variety in a piece of work. It depends on the skill and intention of the writer. For example, in a novel or, short story, we are likely to find all these varieties of prose worked together in interesting and innovative combinations.

Difference between Prose and Poetry

Prose is a form of writing that is based on spoken language. It is characterised by its natural flow and rhythm, as well as its use of regular grammar and punctuation. Prose is often used for novels, short stories, and essays.

Poetry, on the other hand, is a form of writing that is based on musicality and rhythm. It is often characterized by its use of figurative languages, such as metaphors and similes. Poetry is often used for poems and some of its devices are also used in songwriting.

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The major difference between the two is that poetry is a form of writing that uses rhythm and rhyme to create a musical or chant-like effect, whereas prose, is a form of writing that is more straightforward and doesn't rely on rhyme or meter.

Poetry often uses figurative language to create images or expressive ideas, while prose is more literal. Prose is usually used for novels, essays, and nonfiction writing, while poetry is more often associated with literature, lyrics, and storytelling.

Short Story

A short story could be defined as a short piece of fiction that concentrates on a single incident, a single character (or very few character), or the creation of a single effect or impression. It can be read in one sitting. With the growth of various periodicals, the short story has become the most widely read literary form.

Definition:

The term 'Short Story' first occurs in Oxford English Dictionary. There are many definitions available of short story by the critics and practitioners of short story. H.E.Bates states that many definitions have been and always are being attempted. Bates gives some such definitions in his book on short story. However, "the short story has never been adequately defined". Even the short story writers do not agree with regard to the exact nature and scope of short story.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines it as, "Short Story is a piece of fiction that is shorter than a novel, especially one that deals with a single event or theme."

Similar broad definition is given by New Webster's Dictionary as "A short prose narrative usually less than 10,000 words."

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Harry Shaw defines Short story as: “A relatively short narrative (under 10000 words) which is designed to produce a single dominant effect and which contains the elements of drama. An effective short story consists of a character (or group of characters) presented against a background or setting through mental or physical action.”

According to Edgar Allan Poe, “Short Story is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting, it presents an artistic and unified impression of life through many devices especially theme, characters, action.”

- The short story is a distinct literary form. It must not be regarded as a shortened novel.
- The short story contains all the major elements of fiction, such as plot, characters, dialogue and setting.
- The short story tends to focus on a single plot. It concentrates on one character or a very small set of characters, in a single setting, and the main action covers a short period of time.
- While the plot is usually not as complicated as that of a novel, the short story form can handle as a wide range of simple to heavy themes as the novel.
- The short story is a concentrated form of prose narrative. The writing is economical and dense. There are no leisurely descriptions as found in the novel. Writers whittle down anything that does not contribute to the overall effect that they intend to produce in the reader.
- It began 'in medias res', which means 'into the middle of things' and the ending is usually abrupt and open to interpretation. The short story can end in suspense, with a surprise, an anticlimax, an epiphany, or in many other ways.

Growth and Development of Short Story:

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Story has been existing since the dawn of the human civilization. Different kinds of stories prevail: stories, tales, fables, parables, anecdotes and folk-tales in different languages in all countries. However, the short story differs from them. Only the common thing in them is story telling. Short story is a story first and then it is a short story. The impulses behind short story and other types of stories are the same ; (1) The curiosity to know others (2) The desire for self assertion and (3) Love for story telling and listening.

Oral and written stories were found in the ancient times. Initially oral stories existed giving place to written stories. Afterwards such stories were called tales and they occur in The Old Testament and The New Testament. Most of the early stories were written in the verse. The first short prose stories appeared during the Renaissance period. Its example is Robert Green’s ‘The Conney Catching Tracts’.

The earliest examples of the short story can be seen in the stories written in 3000BCE in ancient Egypt. Another example of this genre is the Sanskrit collection *Panchatantra* from India. Other examples from East include the Arabic collection *Thousand and One Nights* and *The Book of Sindbad*. Two of the most well-known collections of early short stories from the West are the Decameron, a collection of a hundred tales by the Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio, and The Canterbury Tales, a book containing twenty-four stories by the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. Both were written in the 14th century.

There were several early forms of the short story such as :

- Fable: A short story conveying a moral, in which the characters are animals with human qualities; for example, the Greek fables of Aesop and the Sanskrit collection Hitopadesha.

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- **Fabliau:** A short, satirical or comic tale in verse, known for its bawdiness; for example, the medieval French tales ‘Gombert and the Two Clerks’ and ‘The snow Baby’.
- **Folktale:** Short stories of unknown origin which exist mostly in the oral form; for example English folklore related to Robin Hood, and Indian tales of the cleverness of the Birbal or the wit of Tenai Raman.
- **Exemplum:** It is an anecdote with a moral. In the middle ages, there were many books of exempla, which priests used in their sermons. A literary example of exemplum is Chaucer’s ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’ (from Canterbury tales) which illustrates the moral that ‘love of wealth is the root of all evil’.

In the beginning of the 18th century short stories began to appear in the periodicals such as **The Tatler, The Spectator, The Adventurer**, etc.

The short story is a fictional prose form and it has developed besides the novel. The modern short story in its real sense of the term is a work of art. It is distinct literary form from the earlier types of stories. The modern short story originated in the second quarter of the 19th century in America, but its precursors are the earlier tales of adventures, the legends, mythologies, the tales told in the epics like The Ramayan and The Mahabharat, Aesopes Fables and Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels etc.

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The short story is relatively new literary fictional prose form. It has a brief history of 150 years only. The American writer, Edgar Allen Poe is regarded as the father of the modern Short Story and the publication of his story MS Found in a Bottle in 1833 is the first modern short story proper. His stories are known for his skill of his narration and the local color. His technique was different from the earlier short story literature. Poe gave his concept of the theory of short story writing in 1842 in his review of Nathaniel Hawthorn's Twice Told Tales, a collection of short stories. The other famous short story writers in U.S.A are Ambrose Bierce, Henry James, Mark Twin, Herman Melville, etc.

The short story passed from U.S.A. to Europe including England. The very well known European masters of short story in different countries are: Guy de Maupassant and Balzac(France), Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy(Russia), Sir Walter Scott and Mrs. Gaskel(England), R.K.Narayan, Jumpa Lahirl (Insian) etc.

It seems that the extreme machanisation of life due to heavy industrialization is the root cause of the birth of the modern short story. Readers have no leisure to read longer novels and to witness longer dramas at a stretch in the modern times. Naturally they depend on modern genre of short story to satisfy their love of the creative arts in one sitting. The fragmentariness of the short story suits to the fast life in modern times as an entertainment. The spread of education for the

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masses and consequently the rise of the magazines and periodicals helped the development of short story and its popularity in the public.

Novel

Like the short story, it is difficult to define a novel. When we talk about a novel, we usually mean a piece of fiction, written in prose and of a certain length. A novel is an individual vision of the novelist. It is a picture of life as viewed by the writer.

Definition:

According to The Shorter Oxford Dictionary, novel is “a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity”. Another definition by an anonymous author states that a novel is “a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length.” Both the definitions highlight the word ‘prose’ meaning the common or ordinary spoken form of language without the presence of poetic rhythmic structure. However, there are a few novels written in verse as well, such as Vikram Seth’s The Golden Gate and Alexander Pushkin’s Eugene Onegi. The other aspect of the novel is related to the length. The first definition points out ‘considerable length’ and second definition states ‘reasonable length’ to distinguish the novel’s unique feature as a genre. The length of some novels are

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similar to the length of short stories and hence a term such as ‘novella’ is often used for shorter novels.

The word novel is considered to have been derived from the Latin word novellus, Italian word novella (which meant a little new thing) and French word novella. It was Boccaccio who first used the term novella storia (short tale in prose) when he first experimented writing prose. Boccaccio popularized the vogue of collections of novella with his collection of ten short stories titled Decameron in 14th century. However, the meaning of the word novel meant the kind of short stories written and collected by Boccaccio until the 17th century. With the rise in the development of novels in the 18th century the meaning of the word underwent change from short tale in prose to ‘prose narrative of considerable length’ as stated by The Shorter Oxford Dictionary.

Thus with the understanding of the definition of novel, it is relevant to discuss which factors or situations provided opportunities for the rise of the novel in the 18th century.

Features of the novel:

- The novel is a narrative. It essentially tells a story that is narrated by one of the characters or by omniscient narrator (author). In this it differs from the drama, in which the story is unfolded through dialogue on the stage.

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- The novel is written in prose rather than in verse. The fact that a novel is almost always in prose distinguishes it as a form from long narrative poems.
- The novel is work of fiction, which differentiates it from other forms of prose such as biographies, autobiographies and histories.
- The novel is an extended prose narrative, unlike the short story which is much smaller in scope and length. The novel typically runs into several hundred pages and covers a larger period of time, with more action and characters than a short story.

Rise of Novel the in 18th Century:

Majority of the literary critics attribute 18th century as the time period in which novel took its birth, subsequent growth and development. With adequate literary predecessors such as Bunyan, Chaucer, Malory, Boccaccio and numerous other writers of the 17th & 18th century writers availed opportunities to further experiment and produce novel as a literary genre. Further the increase in literacy rate, industrial revolution, rise in the middle class and coming up of libraries created favourable situations for the rise of the novel. In the new form of literature namely the 'novel' the construct of the story departed from the romance and attempted at verisimilitude depicting the pragmatism and morality of the middle class people. Alexander Pope's dictum, "The proper study of mankind is men" influenced the interest of the people to study human character. Thus 18th century novels explored human characters with the

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novelist creating real life characters in their novels unlike giants, dragons and super human characters in the romances.

Factors that influenced the rise of novel:

Industrial Revolution

One of the major factors that contributed to the rise of the novel is the development in industries. With machinery work could be done faster and people could get more time for rest and leisure time during which people resorted to reading novels. Printing presses were available for production of multiple copies at cheaper rate. Even low income people could afford to buy and read books unlike in the past when only aristocrats were the reading public. Besides variety of reading materials such as newspapers, novels and magazines were made easily available due to printing press. The newspapers and magazines helped develop the habit of reading which ultimately led people to start reading novels. Some of the novels were also published in magazines increasing the access to novels besides the book form. Further they had desires to read about “their everyday experiences” which prompted authors such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding to write prose fictions depicting real life experiences.

Decline of Romance and Drama

Since romances were mainly suitable to be read by elite, aristocratic or noble families, it could not sustain the readership. The common people got bored with romances for they had no relevance of any sort to them. In addition, the stories themselves being centuries old were no longer of interest to the people. The settings in which the stories in the romances took

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place were also unrealistic. Therefore, romances as a literary genre started to decline. People started to take interest in the contemporary issues. Unlike romances, the novels were written in first person (making it appear 'more personal and recent') with ordinary characters that the readers could relate with.

Decline of drama was also one factor that promoted the rise of the novel. In the 17th century, during the rule of Cromwell, theatres (which were so popular during the Elizabethan times) were banned. Moreover, novel could reach vast audience when theatre could reach only to a limited audience. When drama came back with the restoration age, it could not establish its essence since novels got well established then.

Rise of the Middle Class

One outcome of industrial revolution was the rise of middle class. The growth in industries brought about unprecedented corresponding growth with trade and commerce. The people were increasingly becoming wealthy with even poor people of lower rung being able to raise their status. Therefore, the additional newly attained middle class status, this group of people started behaving like the traditional landed gentry demanding books to read. Further, with improved living standard many (both men and women) could acquire education and be able to read. Women readers increased with greater leisure time with the rise of middle class and it was a fashion for high status women to remain engaged in reading literature. Further the new group of middle class people did not like the traditional medieval stories of the knights. Thus the novelist wrote about common people revealing the "the psyche of the middle

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class” (para.4) in their novels. Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Richardson’s *Pamela*, and Fielding’s *Tom Jones* were appealing to the readers.

Mobile Libraries

The start of mobile libraries facilitated the increase of reading public. Reading was promoted by providing easy access to books with books being brought to the homes if people joined the mobile library as members. Women readers benefited a lot since they used to stay at home and exchange books after they finish reading one from the mobile library.

Though industrial revolution, decline in romance and drama, rise of the middle class and mobile libraries played significant role in the rise of the novel, four authors namely Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne took the novel to “the highest point of glory”.

The Four Wheels of English Novels:

Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Lawrence Sterne, and Tobias Smollett are known to be four Wheels of English Novel. Further, Henry Fielding is also considered the father of English novel. In a first, all the four were great writers and pioneer to the novel as a genre, in the 18th century.

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)

He chanced to find the plot of his famous novel “Pamela” while writing model letters for all occasions. His aim in writing “Pamela” was definitely moral as the novel is also known by the name ‘Virtue Rewarded’. Encouraged by the success of his first novel, he wrote his masterpiece ‘Clarissa Harlowe’ which placed him on a pinnacle of glory.

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Writing of both these novels has an [epistolary style](#). In these novels, Richardson laid open the feminine heart and started the trend of psychological novel. Then followed his another epistolary novel “Sir Charles Grandison”. But this novel is hero-centric. Richardson cast a deep and lasting influence on the subsequent novelists both in England and Europe.

Henry Fielding (1707-1754)

He was the greatest novelist of the 18th century. He began by parodying “Pamela” for its over-insistence on morals in “Shamela”. You can find some element of ridicule in his “Joseph Andrews” too but later he came up with his comic masterpiece “Tom Jones” (1749). It is the greatest picaresque novel in the history of English Literature that centres on the character of a “Picaro”. It also proved extremely daring in its defiance of conventional morality. His last remarkable novel was “Amelia”

Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771)

Tobias George Smollett is famous for his three novels “Roderick Random”, “Peregrine Pickle” and “Humphrey Clinker”. His first notable contribution “The adventures of Roderick Random” is a picaresque novel and autobiographical in nature. But his most famous and best entertaining novel is “Humphrey Clinker” which he wrote towards the end of his life.

Laurence Sterne (1713-1768)

He is the important figure among the four wheels of English novel. Lawrence Sterne who wrote “Tristram Shandy” and “A Sentimental Journey”. He became overnight famous by writing the novel titled “Tristram Sandy”. The form of this novel is vague and capacious as a sack which is full of everything a novelist can look for. Another famous novel is “A Sentimental Journey” based on sentimentality. Moreover, his novels have nice blend of Humour and pathos.

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Sterne laughs at sorrow and finds matter for pathos in a comical mishap. His characters are sentimental in nature.

Elements of Novel and Short Story:

The novel and the short story are made of the same elements as drama- plot, characters, dialogue, setting and so on. The 19th century American writer Francis Marion Crawford called the novel 'pocket theatre'. However, unlike drama, the novel and short story are pure literary forms that are not dependent upon the conditions of the stage and the performance of the actors.

Plot

Plot is the sequence of interconnected events within the story of a play, novel, film, epic, or other narrative literary work. More than simply an account of what happened, plot reveals the cause-and-effect relationships between the events that occur.

- The plot of a story explains not just *what* happens, but *how* and *why* the major events of the story take place.
- Plot is a key element of novels, plays, most works of nonfiction, and many (though not all) poems.

The Difference Between Plot and Story

Perhaps the best way to say what a plot is would be to compare it to a story. The two terms are closely related to one another, and as a result, many people often use the terms interchangeably—but they're actually different. A story is a series of events; it tells us *what happened*. A plot, on the other hand, tells us *how* the events are connected to one another and *why* the story unfolded in the way that it did. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster uses the following examples to distinguish between story and plot:

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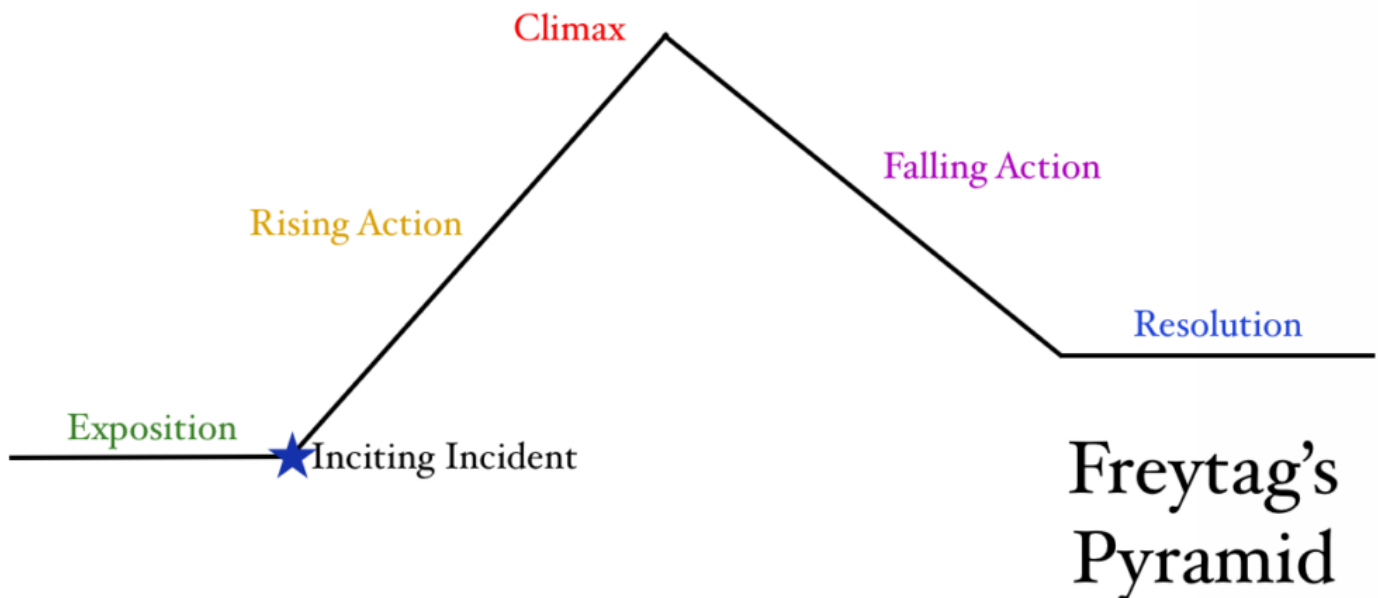
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“The king died, and then the queen died” is a story. “The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: “The queen died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king.” This is a plot with a mystery in it.

Therefore, when examining a plot, it's helpful to look for events that change the direction of the story and consider how one event leads to another.

Freytag's Pyramid

One of the first and most influential people to create a framework for analyzing plots was 19th-century German writer Gustav Freytag, who argued that all plots can be broken down into five stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement. Freytag originally developed this theory as a way of describing the plots of plays at a time when most plays were divided into five acts, but his five-layered "pyramid" can also be used to analyze the plots of other kinds of stories, including novels, short stories, films, and television shows.



1. Exposition is the first section of the plot. During the exposition, the audience is introduced to key background information, including characters and their relationships

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to one another, the **setting** (or time and place) of events, and any other relevant ideas, details, or historical context. In a five-act play, the exposition typically occurs in the first act.

2. The **rising action** begins with the "inciting incident" or "complication"—an event that creates a problem or conflict for the characters, setting in motion a series of increasingly significant events. Some critics describe the rising action as the most important part of the plot because the climax and outcome of the story would not take place if the events of the rising action did not occur. In a five-act play, the rising action usually takes place over the course of act two and perhaps part of act three.
3. The **climax** of a plot is the story's central turning point, which the exposition and the rising action have all been leading up to. The climax is the moment with the greatest tension or conflict. Though the climax is also sometimes called the *crisis*, it is not necessarily a negative event. In a tragedy, the climax will result in an unhappy ending; but in a comedy, the climax usually makes it clear that the story will have a happy ending. In a five-act play, the climax usually takes place at the end of the third act.
4. Whereas the rising action is the series of events leading up to the climax, the **falling action** is the series of events that follow the climax, ending with the *resolution*, an event that indicates that the story is reaching its end. In a five-act play, the falling action usually takes place over the course of the fourth act, ending with the resolution.
5. **Dénouement** is a French word meaning "outcome." In literary theory, it refers to the part of the plot which ties up loose ends and reveals the final consequences of the events of the story. During the dénouement, the author resolves any final or outstanding questions about the characters' fates, and may even reveal a little bit about the characters' futures after the resolution of the story. In a five-act play, the dénouement takes place in the fifth act.

While Freytag's pyramid is very handy, not every work of literature fits neatly into its structure. In fact, many modernist and post-modern writers intentionally subvert the standard narrative and plot structure that Freytag's pyramid represents.

The order of unified plot is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle, and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow; and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more; we feel satisfied that the plot is

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complete. The structural beginning need not be the initial stage of the action that is brought to a climax in the narrative or play. The epic, for example, plunges in medias res, “in the middle of things”, many short stories begin at the point of the climax itself.

Types of Plot:

Loose plot and organic plot:

Plot could be defined as a series of events developed in a meaningful manner. Based on the structure of the plot, one may categorise it as either a ‘loose plot’ or an ‘organic plot’. In a story with a loose plot, a series of a separate incidents are strung together. Often, when setting out to write the story, the author herself/himself is not aware of the direction it might eventually take. Loose plots are often seen in picaresque novels. The main reason a novel of loose plot is regarded a ‘novel’, and not a collection of short stories, is the protagonist, whose Examples of novels with loose plots are Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe(1719), Charles Dickens’s The Pickwick Papers(1836), and William Makepeace Thackeray’s Vanity Fair(1848).

In a story with an organic plot, the incidents are connected to each other and there is gradual development of the story by the author. A good example of this would be the short stories of P.G. Wodehouse. In order to write such a story, the author should have a clear idea of the plot at the beginning itself. Examples of novels with organic plots are Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones (1749) and Charles Dickens’s Bleak House (1853).

Simple plot and Compound plot:

Another important aspect of the plot is the study of the unity in its structure. The plot of novel may be simple or compound. In a simple plot, there is one story only, whereas a

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compound plot features several stories woven together. An example of a novel with a simple plot could be Chetan Bhagat's Two States(2009).

Other examples of stories with simple plots would include fairy tales (such as 'Red Riding Hood') or detective fiction (such as Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories or Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot stories). Novels such as Thackeray's Vanity Fair, George Eliot's Middlemarch and Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina have multiple plots that are not fused together.

Characterization

Characterization is the representation of the traits, motives, and psychology of a character in a narrative. Characterization may occur through direct description, in which the character's qualities are described by a narrator, another character, or by the character him or herself. It may also occur indirectly, in which the character's qualities are revealed by his or her actions, thoughts, or dialogue.

- Early studies of literature, such as those by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, saw plot as more important than character. It wasn't until the 15th century that characters, and therefore characterization, became more crucial parts of narratives.
- Characterization became particularly important in the 19th century, with the rise of realist novels that sought to accurately portray people.

In terms of importance of their roles, a character who plays an important role in a story is called a major character, while a character who does not play a significant role is called a minor character. For example in Mark Twain's The Adventure of Tom Sawyer, Tom Sawyer is major character.

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In terms of their roles, a character who plays the central role in a story is called the protagonist and the one who opposes her/him is called the antagonist. Dorothy is the protagonist of L. Frank Baum's children's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, while the Wicked Witch of the West is the main antagonist. A story may have more than just one protagonist or antagonist; for example, J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Direct and Indirect Characterization

Authors can develop characterization in two ways: directly and indirectly. It's important to note that these two methods are *not* mutually exclusive. Most authors can and do use both direct and indirect methods of characterization to develop their characters.

Direct Characterization

In direct characterization, the author directly describes a character's qualities. Such direct description may come from a narrator, from another character, or through self-description by the character in question. For instance, imagine the following dialogue between two characters:

"That guy Sam seems nice."

"Oh, no. Sam's the worst. He acts nice when you first meet him, but then he'll ask you for money and never return it, and eat all your food without any offering anything in return, and I once saw him throw a rock at a puppy. Thank God he missed."

Here the second speaker is directly characterizing Sam as being selfish and cruel. Direct characterization is also sometimes called "explicit characterization."

Indirect Characterization

In indirect characterization, rather than explicitly describe a character's qualities, an author shows the character as he or she moves through the world, allowing the reader to infer the character's qualities from his or her behavior. Details that might contribute to the indirect characterization of a character are:

- The character's thoughts.

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- The character's actions.
- What a character says (their choice of words)
- How a character talks (their tone, dialect, and manner of speaking)
- The character's appearance
- The character's movements and mannerisms
- How the character interacts with others (and how others react to the character)

Indirect characterization is sometimes called "implicit characterization."

Round and Flat Characters

Characters are often described as being either round or flat.

- Round characters:** Are complex, realistic, unique characters.
- Flat characters:** Are one-dimensional characters, with a single overarching trait and otherwise limited personality or individuality.

Whether a character is round or flat depends on their characterization. In some cases, an author may purposely create flat characters, particularly if those characters will appear only briefly and only for a specific purpose. A bully who appears in a single scene of a television show, for instance, might never get or need more characterization than the fact that they act like a bully.

But other times authors may create flat characters unintentionally when round characters were necessary, and such characters can render a narrative dull, tensionless, and unrealistic.

Character Archetypes

Some types of characters appear so often in narratives that they come to be seen as archetypes—an original, universal model of which each particular instance is a kind of copy. The idea of the archetype was first proposed by the psychologist Carl Jung, who proposed that there were twelve fundamental "patterns" that define the human psyche. He defined these twelve archetypes as the:

- Creator
- Explorer
- Hero

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- Lover
- Magician
- Orphan
- Rebel
- Ruler
- Sage

While many have disagreed with the idea that any such twelve patterns actually psychologically define people, the idea of archetypes does hold a lot of sway among both those who develop and analyze fictional characters. In fact, another way to define round and flat character is to think about them as they relate to archetypes:

- **Flat characters** are easy to define by a single archetype, and they do not have unique personal backgrounds, traits, or psychology that differentiates them from that archetype in a meaningful way.
- **Round characters** may have primary aspects that fit with a certain archetype, but they also may be the combination of several archetypes and also have unique personal backgrounds, behaviors, and psychologies that make them seem like individuals even as they may be identifiable as belonging to certain archetypes.

Good characterization often doesn't involve an effort to avoid archetype altogether—archetypes are archetypes, after all, because over human history they've proved to be excellent subjects for stories. But successful authors will find ways to make their characters not *just* archetypes. They might do so by playing with or subverting archetypes in order to create characters who are unexpected or new, or more generally create characters whose characterization makes them feel so unique and individual that their archetype feels more like a framework or background rather than the entirety of who that character is.

Characterization in *The Duchess of Malfi*

In his play the *The Duchess of Malfi*, John Webster includes an excellent example of direct characterization. In this speech, the character Antonio tells his friend about Duke Ferdinand:

The Duke there? A most perverse and turbulent nature;
What appears in him mirth is merely outside.
If he laugh heartily, it is to laugh

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All honesty out of fashion.

...

He speaks with others' tongues, and hears men's suits

With others' ears; will seem to sleep o'th' bench

Only to entrap offenders in their answers;

Dooms men to death by information,

Rewards by hearsay.

Ferdinand directly describes the Duke as deceitful, perverse, and wild, and as a kind of hollow person who only ever laughs for show. It is a devastating description, and one that turns out to be largely accurate.

Setting

Setting is *where* and *when* a story or scene takes place. The *where* can be a real place like the city of New York, or it can be an imagined location, like Middle Earth in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Similarly, the *when* can be a real time period (past or present) or imagined (the future). Other aspects that determine a setting include landscape, architecture, time of day, social context, and weather. For example, the setting of Jane Austen's [*Pride and Prejudice*](#) is the upper-middle class countryside of 19th century England, while the setting of Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* is a park bench in New York's Central Park.

- Setting is sometimes also called "the scene" or "sense of place."
- Far from being just a "backdrop" for the story, the setting of a piece of literature often shapes the story's main events and motivates the characters to act as they do.
- Many works of literature have multiple settings—whether that means moving between the interior and exterior of the same house, different countries, or different centuries. It is important to note how plot developments and character developments correspond to changes in the setting.

Setting is an essential component of literature, and it's one of the first things a writer considers when he or she invents a story. It not only influences a story's characters and events, but also enhances the reader's ability to imagine those characters and events. In other words,

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setting the scene lets the reader know what type of literary world he or she is entering, so that he or she can get "grounded" and experience it more fully. But well-developed settings don't necessarily need to be richly detailed. Consider Samuel Beckett's play [Waiting for Godot](#). To set the scene, Beckett writes only two lines:

A country road. A tree.

Evening.

The playwright's spare description of setting isn't underdeveloped—rather, it's quite carefully considered. In this case, Beckett chooses to create a sense of "nowhere" or "no-place" because he feels this will best complement the absurd, existentialist mood of his play. This sense of being "nowhere in particular" is just as effective and important to *Waiting for Godot* as a highly specific description can be to a work of historical fiction.

Fictional and Non-Fictional Settings

Settings can be either imagined or real. It's worth noting that the categories of "imaginary" and "real" don't necessarily correspond to fictional and non-fictional works, respectively—a fictional story can be set in a *real* location, such as Alabama, New York, or Paris. In fact, when an author is very familiar in real life with the setting of his or her story, he or she can use that familiarity to craft a convincing and detailed literary world.

James Joyce is one example of a fiction-writer who worked in an innovative way with non-fictional settings. Joyce grew up in Dublin, and all his most famous works are set in the city. Scholars and fans who attempt to retrace the steps of his characters have found that, with very few exceptions, his descriptions of the city's geography are remarkably accurate to the last detail. In the example section below, we've included an excerpt from *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to show how Joyce's descriptions of Dublin's landscape mirror his characters' shifting emotions.

Setting and Exposition

The most important components of setting, such as the overarching time period and location in which a piece of literature takes place, are usually introduced in the [exposition](#) of a text (which is often at its beginning). However, it's wise *not* to tune out once you know the general *where* and *when* of a narrative, since setting often shifts. Observing changes in the time of day, the seasons, the weather, the geography and the landscape throughout any given

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story will enrich your understanding of its characters, their relationships to place, as well as their social and national identities.

Aspects of Setting

The setting of a story can involve a number of elements:

- **The physical location:** The physical realities of where the story takes place, including geography, landscape, and other factors (urban or rural; domestic or wild; inside or out; on earth or in space).
- **Time:** When does the story take place? In the past, the future, the present? What are the particular details of that time.
- **The social milieu:** Setting is not *just* about the physical aspects. It's also about the social world. Is the setting wealthy or poor? Homogenous or diverse? Are things improving or getting worse?
- **Change:** Setting can also be affected by how it changes, either over time (the changing seasons or the construction of a house or town or city), or suddenly (a terrible storm). The changes that do (or don't) affect a setting are as important as the setting itself.

The more specific an author can be with their setting, the more real the story will feel and the more the setting will start to "reach out" and affect the characters and their actions, in the same way the world around living people affects how they act and think.

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

[Pride and Prejudice](#) takes place in 19th century rural England. The relationship between the novel's protagonist (Elizabeth Bennet) and her wealthy suitor (Mr. Darcy) is central to Austen's investigation of class and character. In the example below, Elizabeth pays her first visit to Darcy's estate—Pemberly—after having rejected his marriage proposal, in part because she perceives him as snobbish and stuck-up:

Elizabeth, as they drove along, watched for the first appearance of Pemberly Woods with some perturbation; and when at length they turned in at the lodge, her spirits were in a high flutter.

The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent.

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Elizabeth's mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road, with some abruptness, wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills;—and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!

Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley is a turning point in her relationship to Darcy. When they encounter Darcy on the estate, Elizabeth finds him to be greatly "altered," and not at all uptight as she once thought: he greets her with warmth and is polite to her relatives, even though they are from a lower social class than Darcy. In short, Darcy behaves with the same lack of pretension and "natural" grace that Pemberley possesses. Austen uses her description of Darcy's setting—his *home*—to shed light on his true character.

Essay

An essay could be defined as a short piece of writing that reveals the writer's views or analysis of a particular subject. As a literary form, it is difficult to study systematically since it varies greatly in style, treatment and method. It could range in length from Francis Bacon's brief pieces of concentrated wisdom, running into a page or two, to the book-length pieces by John Locke, Lord Macaulay and Herbert Spencer. The essay could vary in subject matter too. For example, Bacon shared his views on various subjects ranging from love, death and atheism to travel, marriage and gardens. The essays of the French Renaissance philosopher Michel de Montaigne are an assortment of random thoughts, quotations and anecdotes. Even with regard to treatment, each writer has his or her own style in approaching the

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subject. Charles Lamb employed a conversational style, taking the reader through a gamut of emotions, while Jonathan Swift used biting satire to attack his opponents in his essays. So, a definition of the essay cannot be made based upon its length, subject matter or treatment.

Some definitions of an essay

The word 'essay' has been applied to nearly every kind of writing except poems, plays and stories. For the sake of convenience, we could define the essay as a brief composition in prose on any particular subject or branch of a subject. According to Samuel Johnson, an essay is 'a loose sally of the mind; an irregular, undigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition. A good essay', said E.V. Lucas, 'more than a novel, a poem, a play, or a treatise, is personality translated into print.' Aldous Huxley defined the essay as 'a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything'.

Montaigne (1533-92) could be considered the father of the modern essay. It was he who first used the term 'essais', meaning 'attempt', 'experiment' or 'endeavour', for this type of writing (in 1580). His essays were informal in nature and had a warmth and grace about them. In 1597, Francis Bacon (following Montaigne) applied the word 'essay' to this genre for the first time in English. Bacon is considered to be a pioneer of this form.

Origin and growth of the essay

In Bacon's view, the letters of the Roman writers Cicero and Seneca could be considered essays rather than mere letters as these contained their thoughts on various matters.

Plutarch, another classical writer, could also be seen as a forerunner of this form. The personal essay, however, owes its existence to Montaigne, who first used the word 'essai' to describe such writing.

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Francis Bacon, who wrote several essays in English, followed a style of his own, favouring concentrated, business-like prose. This was very different from Montaigne's leisurely style and amused tone. Abraham Cowley, who wrote in the 1660s, followed the personal and informal style of Montaigne. Other writers who wrote in this form were Sir William Temple and John Dryden. Temple and Dryden were responsible for paving the way for the development of the essay in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They had a great impact on the essayists Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. In the hands of Addison and Steele, a sub-genre called the 'periodical essay' became very popular.

The essay has been flourishing since then thanks to writers such as Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Thomas de Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Macaulay, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, R.L. Stevenson, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, E.V. Lucas, Robert Lynd, and several others.

Features of the essay

- The modern essay tends to limit its length and range as far as the treatment of the subject goes. When the essay grows too long and attempts an exhaustive view of the subject, it ceases to be an essay and the term 'dissertation' or 'thesis' could be applied to it. The difference between the essay and the dissertation is that the essay is addressed to the lay person while the latter is for the consumption of the specialist.
- An essay does not attempt to give the reader an exhaustive or comprehensive understanding of its subject. According to the British author William Henry Hudson, 'selection and the proper distribution of emphasis will ... be found among the elementary principles of essay writing'. A good essay does not attempt too much.

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- In spite of being only about a part of a subject, a good essay nevertheless gives the reader a sense of completeness in its treatment.
- The subject matter of the essay is unlimited and the form could cover a vast range of topics.

Let us now take a look at some well-known types of literary essays.

1. APHORISTIC ESSAY

It was Francis Bacon who was responsible for making the essay popular in England. In his hands, the subjective and self-revealing essays of Montaigne (which were his inspiration) underwent a sea change. Bacon's essays were highly objective and impersonal. In them, Bacon does not reveal himself, but offers counsel in short, crisp sentences that sound like aphorisms (sayings or maxims). Some examples of his aphorisms are: 'Imagination was given to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humour to console him for what he is'; 'Reading make the full man; and writing an exact man'.

His essays contain a series of sentences like the ones quoted above. They fall like the strokes of a hammer without any literary frills and flounces. As a result, Bacon has been criticised as being abrupt and rugged. Some of his best essays are 'Of Truth', 'Of Friendship' and 'Of Revenge'.

2. PERSONAL ESSAY

The style is informal in such essays, and the author shares his views with the reader in an intimate manner. The subjects of such essays are usually everyday happenings rather than heavy matters like politics or spirituality. One could compare the personal essay to the lyric,

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which is another expression of personal feelings and emotions. The personal essay is autobiographical in nature, reflecting the author's inner thoughts and feelings.

Montaigne was the father of the personal essay. He wrote two volumes of essays that talk about his experiences in life and reflect his views on topics such as 'idleness' and 'lying'. In the hands of Charles Lamb, the personal essay scaled new heights. He wrote about the people he knew and about events from his own life. He had an excellent style of writing, taking his readers through a roller coaster ride of emotions. He combined humour, sentiment and common sense in an inimitable style. Some of the best examples of the personal essay can be found in the two collections by Lamb-Essays of Elia and The Last Essays of Elia. Other writers who wrote in a similar style include Leigh Hunt, Thomas De Quincey and William Hazlitt.

3. CHARACTER SKETCH

The character sketch is a brief but detailed description of the appearance and habits of either an individual or a generalised type. The intention is to amuse readers and to praise or satirise the person or type being described. This kind of writing became very popular in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. Examples of the 'character' (as such essays was called) include Thomas Overbury's 'A Good Wife' and 'A Drunken Dutchman Resident in England', and Joseph Hall's 'The Witless Gallant' and 'Of the Flatterer'. The vogue for such descriptions even extended to places and institutions; for example, John Milton's 'Character of the Long Parliament'.

The classical Greek writer Theophrastus (371-287BCE) pioneered this form. During the Renaissance, classical writers were rediscovered and imitated. The development of drama

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(which depicted various types of characters) was influenced by character writing. This close connection between character writers and dramatists is obvious when we study the plays of Ben Jonson, whose plays depict the vices and virtues of men and women. In the seventeenth century, character sketches, with their detailed descriptions of various types of personalities, suited the growing taste for satire. In the eighteenth century, many essays by Addison and Steele may be seen as extended character sketches, and count as among the last popular examples of this form.

4. CRITICAL ESSAY

A critical essay is an essay that evaluates, discusses and interprets literary works. It was John Dryden who made this type of essay popular. His critical writing began as early as 1664, when he wrote a preface to his first play, *The Rival Ladies*. Many of Dryden's prefaces, as well as his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (which is in the form of a dialogue), are excellent examples of the critical essay. He could be considered the first literary critic in the English language. (Philip Sidney's *Apology* was not strictly literary criticism, as it focused more on defending poets and poetry.) In the seventeenth century, literary works were discussed and reviewed in coffee houses. During the Neoclassical period, several critical essays were written. Samuel Johnson was another eminent man of letters who wrote critical essays.

5. PERIODICAL ESSAY

A periodical essay is an essay that appears in a journal or a periodical. This form rose to prominence in the early eighteenth century, which witnessed the growth of journalism. It was very well suited for social and literary criticism and for character studies.

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Daniel Defoe's Review was the earliest periodical featuring essays, although the periodical essay form was made popular by the journals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, managed by Richard Steele and Joseph Addison. These journals contained essays that held up a mirror to the vanities, vices and foibles of contemporary society. The essays were intended 'to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality' (Addison). George Saintsbury, in his *Short History of English Literature*, pointed out that they taught the eighteenth century how it should, and especially how it should not, behave in public places, from churches to theatres; what books it should like, and how it should like them; how it should treat its lovers, mistresses, husbands, wives, parents, and friends'. Other famous essayists who employed this form include Dr Johnson (who contributed regularly to *The Rambler* and *The Idler*) and Oliver Goldsmith (whose series 'Citizen of the World' appeared in *The Public Ledger*).

Types of Novels

Historical Novel

In this form of fiction, the author attempts to reconstruct history imaginatively, and sometimes romantically

Features of a historical novel

- This novel is set in a past historical period, and describes the events and manners of that period. Through the imaginative recreation of a bygone age, historical novels add color to the events of the past and bring them to life.

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- It may be peopled by both real and imaginary characters. Historical personalities may play either a major part in the action or a minor part in the fiction.
- Authors of historical novels extensively research the period they intend to depict. They pay attention to minute details regarding dress, manner of speaking, food habits, customs, and other social aspects that were prevalent during that
- Close attention is paid to the historical events of that time, age. e usually incorporated into the plot which are usually incorporated into the plot.
- Writers try to avoid anachronisms (the inclusion of some action or object in a work which could not have existed or occurred in the historical period being depicted; a famous example is Shakespeare's reference to a clock in his play Julius Caesar). Sir Walter Scott (who made the historical novel popular), although an excellent storyteller, is guilty of several anachronisms in his novels.

Walter Scott's Waverley (1814), Rob Roy (1817), and Ivanhoe (1820) are some of the most memorable novels in this genre. The popularity of the historical novel, even in the present day, may be seen in the several examples we have of this form-The Three Musketeers (1844) by Alexandre Dumas, A Tale of Two Cities (1859) by Charles Dickens, War and Peace (1869) by Leo Tolstoy, I, Claudius (1934) by Robert Graves, Flashman (1969) by George MacDonald Fraser, The Other Boleyn Girl (2001) by Philippa Gregory, and the Empire of the Moghul' series (2009-13) by Alex Rutherford, to name a few.

Science Fiction Novel

This term encompass novels and short stories that represent an imagined reality that is radically different in its nature and functioning from the world of our ordinary experience. Often the setting is another planet, or this earth projected into the future, or an imagined parallel universe. The two terms are not sharply discriminated, but by and large the term science fiction is applied to those narratives in which-unlike in pure fantasy-an explicit attempt is made to render plausible the fictional world by reference to known or imagined scientific

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principles, or to a projected advance in technology, or to a drastic change in the organization in society.

Features of a science fiction novel

By basing the plot and other story elements on actual scientific facts, principles and technology, science fiction creates an illusion of reality. However, the stories also often involve plausible laws or theories that are partly fictitious or speculative.

- The stories are usually set in the future, in space, on a different planet, in a different universe, in an alternate dimension, or in an alternate history.
- The novels depict situations that are different from the present or from the known past or the conceivable future.
- Science fiction narratives may involve elements such as dystopia, advanced technology, time travel, space travel, and extraterrestrial life.
- Science fiction novels often depict the effect of new scientific discoveries and advances in technology upon human beings.
- Novelists often use science fiction to comment on social and cultural issues such as class inequality, greed, war, political authoritarianism, the misuse of technology, the dangers of environmental exploitation, the ill effects of acquiring knowledge irrespective of consequences, and so.

Mary Shelle's *Frankenstein* (1818) is one of the earliest novels to belong to this genre. The French writer Jules Verne and the English author H.G. Wells made this form very popular.

Verne authored *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1869), while Wells' famous novels are *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). These are regarded as the classic works of science fiction. Other prominent writers of science fiction are Isaac Asimov (*Foundation*, 1951), Ray Bradbury (*Fahrenheit 451*, 1953), Robert A. Heinlein (*Stranger in a Strange Land*, 1961), Philip K. Dick (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, 1968) and Arthur C. Clarke (*Rendezvous with Rama*, 1973).

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STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL

Stream of Consciousness is a narrative technique which attempts to capture all the emotions and thoughts which flow through a character's mind in a random manner. The term 'stream of consciousness' was coined by the American psychologist Wiliam James brother of novelist Henry James) in his book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). In literature, it is often used interchangeably with the term 'interior monologue'. Many modernist novels use this device to present before the reader the unfiltered thought processes of a character.

Features of a stream of consciousness novel

- The traditional concepts of plot and characterization are given up.
- The standard techniques of description, narrative and dialogue are replaced with interior monologues.
- The author emphasizes memory, intuition, sense perceptions and feelings, along with a character's thoughts.
- The focus is on capturing the fluidity of the inner life and depicting the myriad feelings and thoughts passing through a character's mind.
- These novels are often anti-romantic (a story featuring an unsure or indifferent protagonist who fails in her/his quest/journey).
- There is a great degree of artistic aloofness and impersonality on the part of the author.

Dorothy Richardson was among the first modernist writers to employ this technique. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) are well known examples of stream of consciousness novel.