

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SHORT STORY: FROM ORAL
TRADITIONS TO THE DIGITAL AGE.

Gaybullayeva Vazira Shokirovna ¹

¹ Asia International University, English Chair

vaziragaybulloyeva@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT:

ARTICLE
HISTORY:

Received: 21.02.2025

Revised: 22.02.2025

Accepted: 23.02.2025

KEYWORDS:

Oral tradition,
folktales, literary
evolution, modernism,
postmodernism, flash
fiction, narrative
structure, technological
impact.

The short story has undergone significant transformation from its origins in oral storytelling to its modern digital manifestations. This paper traces the historical development of the short story, examining its evolution from ancient oral traditions to the literary form established in the 19th and 20th centuries, and finally, to the digital narratives of the contemporary age. The study highlights key literary movements, influential writers, and the impact of technological advancements on the short story format, using specific examples and academic references.

INTRODUCTION. Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human expression, serving as a means of communication, education, and entertainment. The short story, as a distinct literary genre, has evolved over centuries, adapting to cultural and technological shifts. This paper explores the evolution of the short story, from its oral roots to its digital adaptations, analyzing how changes in storytelling methods have influenced narrative structures and reader engagement.

Main part. Before the written word, stories were passed down orally from generation to generation. Ancient cultures, such as those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, relied on myths, folktales, and epics to preserve history and convey moral lessons. Examples include: **The Epic of Gilgamesh** (circa 2100 BCE), one of the earliest known stories, combining myth and history (George, 2003). **Aesop's Fables** (circa 6th century BCE), short moral tales that laid the groundwork for modern storytelling (Perry, 1952). **The Arabian Nights** (One Thousand and One Nights), a collection of folktales that showcased a variety of short story formats (Haddawy, 1995).

The oral tradition emphasized brevity and memorability, key characteristics that later defined the short story genre. With the advent of writing, storytelling transitioned from oral

performance to text. During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, short fiction flourished in the form of fables, parables, and allegories:

- **Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*** (1353) featured a collection of 100 short tales, each illustrating human nature and social themes (Hollander, 1997).
- **Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*** (late 14th century) used a frame narrative to present a variety of stories, demonstrating the richness of short fiction (Boitani & Mann, 2003).

These early written works maintained the engaging qualities of oral storytelling while allowing for more complex narrative structures.

The 19th century marked the establishment of the short story as a distinct literary form. During this period, authors focused on compact narratives with strong character development and thematic depth. **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809–1849) defined the short story as a self-contained narrative that achieves a singular effect. His works, such as *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*, emphasized psychological intensity (Kennedy, 1999). **Nathaniel Hawthorne** and **Washington Irving** introduced moral and supernatural elements in their short fiction (Bunge, 1993). **Anton Chekhov** (1860–1904) pioneered character-driven stories, using subtle themes and open-ended narratives (Rayfield, 1997). **Guy de Maupassant** and **O. Henry** perfected the twist ending, adding surprise and irony to short fiction (Charters, 2003).

The industrial revolution and the rise of print media, including magazines and newspapers, created a wider audience for short stories. Publications like *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker* provided platforms for short fiction, further popularizing the form.

The 20th century saw short stories evolve in response to modernist and postmodernist influences. Writers experimented with structure, perspective, and language: **Ernest Hemingway** employed minimalism and the “iceberg theory,” where much is left unsaid (Baker, 1972). **Franz Kafka** introduced absurdity and existential themes (Gray, 2005). **Raymond Carver** used realism and understatement to portray everyday struggles (Meyer, 2001).

The short story became an essential tool for exploring contemporary issues, reflecting social change, war, and psychological depth.

The Digital Age: A New Era for Short Stories

The 21st century has witnessed the transformation of short fiction through digital platforms. Online publishing, social media, and new narrative formats have reshaped the genre:

- **Flash fiction and microfiction** have gained popularity, especially on platforms like Twitter and Instagram (Shapard & Thomas, 2007).

=====

- **Digital magazines and blogs** have provided new avenues for emerging writers (Brouillette, 2014).

- **Interactive and multimedia storytelling** incorporates visuals, audio, and hypertext, enhancing reader engagement (Ryan, 2006).

Notable digital projects, such as interactive fiction and serialized storytelling, demonstrate how technology continues to shape the short story's evolution.

Conclusion. The short story has continually adapted to cultural and technological shifts, maintaining its relevance across centuries. From oral traditions to digital narratives, it remains a powerful and flexible form of storytelling. As technology evolves, so too will the ways in which short stories are created, shared, and experienced, ensuring their place in literary history.

References:

1. Boitani, P., & Mann, J. (2003). *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Brouillette, S. (2014). *Literature and the Creative Economy*. Stanford University Press.
3. Shokirovna, G. V. TRANSCENDENTALISM IN EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY.
4. Gaybulloyeva, V. S. Q. (2024). THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY IN EMILY DICKINSON'S WRITINGS. *American Journal of Modern World Sciences*, 1(6), 61-66.
5. Gaybulloyeva, V. S., & Khamdamova, S. B. (2024). THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF EMILY DICKINSON'S EARLY POETRY. *Educational Research in Universal Sciences*, 3(1), 747-752.
6. Shokir-qizi, G. V. (2025). LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL ELEMENTS AND THEIR TYPES. *JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, MODERN VIEWS AND INNOVATIONS*, 1(3), 153-157.
7. Utkirovna, N. S. (2025). THE SPECIFIC STYLE OF US PORTER'S CREATIVITY AND ITS RECREATION IN TRANSLATION. *JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, MODERN VIEWS AND INNOVATIONS*, 1(3), 105-109.
8. Nasridinova, S. U. (2024). THE ROLES OF GAMES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: AN ENGAGING APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING. *American Journal of Modern World Sciences*, 1(6), 67-74.
9. Utkirovna, N. S. (2024). Teaching English through Short Stories: An Engaging Approach to Language Learning. *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION IN NONFORMAL EDUCATION*, 4(11), 119-125.

-
10. Utkirovna, N. S. (2024). The Intersection of Irony and Social Commentary in O. Henry's Short Stories. *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION IN NONFORMAL EDUCATION*, 4(10), 178-183.
 11. 4.Ракхимова, З. (2024). SIGNS OF A PUBLIC METHOD IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASS MEDIA. *Журнал универсальных научных исследований*, 2(5), 342-350.
 - 12.
 13. 5.Uktamovna, R. Z. (2024). Features and Analyses and of Social Life in the "The Kite Runner" By Khaled Hosseini. *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION IN NONFORMAL EDUCATION*, 4(9), 82-86.
 14. 6. Uktamovna, R. Z. (2025). Exploring Adolescent Psychology in the Works of Khaled Hosseini. *Spanish Journal of Innovation and Integrity*, 38, 190-192.
 15. Bunge, N. (1993). *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of the Short Fiction*. Twayne Publishers.
 16. Charters, A. (2003). *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. Bedford/St. Martin's.
 17. George, A. R. (2003). *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*. Oxford University Press.
 18. Gray, R. (2005). *A History of American Literature*. Blackwell.