

Editorial

Short Story as a genre of literature is as old as mankind itself. It has developed in form and content from generation to generation, catering to the demands of the hour. Modern Short Story as a distinct form of art came into being in the wake of industrialization in Europe at the end of 19th century when a newly emerged middle class reader preferred brevity of expression, immediacy of effect and directness of purpose to the elaborate descriptions (often irrelevant), multiplicity of themes and concerns of novels. Modern Short Story according to W. J. Dawson, shuns irrelevant details and descriptions, it excels in its direct appeal to the readers or listeners, avoiding all excrescence that is unnecessary to the theme. It often revolves around one person, one incident or one moment so dramatically that a reader's attention is hooked from beginning to the last. It is short because it cannot be long. Like all great works of art, it is suggestive than prescriptive. It is varied in techniques and styles but hardly compromises with the centrality of aim, its *motif*. Here is the world inhabited by great souls - a Dickens, a Kipling, a Hardy, a Quiller Couch, a Stevenson, a Washington Irving, a Hawthorne, a Poe, a Tolstoy, a Kafka, a Faulkner, a Manto, a Tagore, a Prem Chand, and many more like them who have reflected on truths of life from their personal experiences, presenting snaps of life in their short stories to enrich man's understanding of life and its affairs with newer experiments in language and technique. Dawson in a very insightful article entitled "The Modern Short Story" (1909) talks of the cardinal questions to be addressed to a writer of short stories in these words :

"The cardinal questions to be addressed to a writer of short stories are these : Has he any vital message to communicate? Has he any sincere experience to impart? Has he seen life for himself, from his own angle of vision, and seen it truthfully and completely? Has he the creative force that makes us see what he sees, feel what he has felt, comprehend what he has comprehended? These are the inexorable questions, and the greatest writers of short stories have been those who could answer them most thoroughly" (*The North American Review*, Vol. 190, No. 649 p.810).

Since Dawson made the above remarks, Modern Short Story has taken a long leap and all the elements of the short story have been re-fashioned and revitalized in the Post Modernist Contexts, still short story has not lost its popularity among the readers of literature, perhaps because, it is closest to our hearts and lives, and it defies all confines.

The present issue of *Dialogue* consists of nine articles on the short stories of some of the celebrated writers of the present time, this issue should be read as a corollary to *Dialogue's* previous issue on Indian Short Story in English, Vol. IX, No. 1, June 2013. Hope the readers of this issue will find it useful for further rethinking on this most popular form of literature.

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