

THE ESSENTIALS OF A STORYTELLING: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is an art which is cultivated by an author through rigorous and hard practices. To measure the art of storytelling is very hard, but after reading of prose very minutely and getting the main idea, we are also encouraged to do so. The authors have a particular style of storytelling, but one can also learn it through practice and learning the tricks of the trade. In storytelling, we generally follow three types of narrations-first person, second person and third person. First person is not used generally as the author adopts it only to express his or her personal experiences which lead to autobiographical mode of the storytelling. Second person narration is hardly used by the storyteller. Third person narration is the common mode of narrating the events of a story used by the narrator. Third person narration of the story embodies third person singular narration and third person plural narration of the events. Plot, an essential part of the storytelling, contributes largely to the compactness and logical connection of the events in a good storytelling. It is an integral part of any narration as propounded by Aristotle in his famous work, *Poetics*. A compact and well-knit plot involves five elements- **exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution** which are to be taken into consideration. The setting of the story, too, contributes in the art of storytelling which involves both physical location and point in time in which your plot takes place. For some stories (like the fantasy novels mentioned above) setting is a huge part of the story. It is a fact that setting almost acts as its own character in your tale.

KEYWORDS: Literary, Narrative, Rigorous, Storytelling, Style, Texture.

I. INTRODUCTION

The definition of storytelling varies from person to person. If the question is asked from a sociologist's point of view, it is a mankind's way of preserving history and identity. On the other

hand, an anthropologist will interpret it as what distinguishes from the rest of the animal Kingdom. In fact, storytelling is an art of weaving language into a concrete narrative in order to create rich and believable experiences. In order to achieve this type of effect, what the storyteller does is to tie together character and plot that result into other creation of stories. In other words, storytellers do not depend on fact; rather they use words in a way that the listeners can get themselves in the story as a part and parcel of it. This is justified in case of scientific fantasies when the writer uses horror to create stories just as believable as writers of literary fiction. Although in case of non-fiction, having different techniques of storytelling, the writer and poets manifest their mastery over the art of storytelling. The real power of a storytelling is a reflected by the magic of storytelling (way of a storytelling). Some writers do not know the difference between story and situation and, that is why, they create bewilderment. The reason behind it is that they are not able to clarify between story and situation vividly.

There are number of elements of storytelling which contribute in making the texture of art of storytelling enriching. Plot is considered as the backbone of the art of storytelling. By depicting realistic and life-like characters, a storyteller can create an everlasting impression on readers. You can have a magnificent prose style, but in the absence of logical flow of your ideas, everything will make mess of the art of storytelling. If you want that story should portray real life, it needs to follow a real life like series of plot. There is no fixed criterion to follow the chronological order. There can be many storytellers who jump over decades of time or they weave the ideas by using past and present tense. But, we should keep in our mind that time is only the thread which is used to weave the structure of the storytelling. The role of character is also equally important and vital in the art of storytelling. It is because every incident that takes place in the storytelling is generated by your characters' perceptions, emotions and actions, Sometimes, the plot of the story is not compact, but it is characters' response to the conflicting situation that makes the story worth and significant. It is by means of certain attributes of characters that their depth, understandable motives, and mixture of merits and demerits that the readers are engrossed. It is beautifully summed up by Stephen King in his observation: "I try to create sympathy for my characters then turn the monster loses".

It is only when the author relates to the characters in a story that he/she starts caring about what happened to them. We also follow the characters' motive in the direction in which they move. The characters should be life-like whether it is protagonist, antagonist, flat characters or round characters and the territory character. Another significant point in storytelling is point-of-view

which governs who is communicating to the readers and from what angle. The narrator in the story considerably influences how the story is told and what information the readers get. In writing any short story, we have five important points- of-view through which the story is told. In the first person point-of-view, the narrator narrates the story on behalf of the protagonist. It is generally known as the intimate way of a story telling. The narrator is intimately and closely attached to the protagonist. This method is generally adopted to make the readers familiar with the incidents. Nick Carraway in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Robinson Crusoe in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* are excellent examples of such narratives. In the second person narration, the narrator portrays the readers as the central character of the story. But, it is very difficult to adopt the second person narrative technique.

The third person narrative technique is of two types-limited third person and omniscient third person narrative. In third person limited point of view narrative, the narrator only knows what is known to the protagonist. On the other hand, in third person multiple points of view, the main advantage is that the story is narrated through multiple points of view. Even before starting the story, the reader knows about the characters and the situations in the novel. It is presumed that is omniscient narrator knows already each and everything. What we get from the narrative point of view is that it largely and considerably affects the storytelling techniques and strategy that are used by the authors. Setting in storytelling plays an important and indispensable role. Besides, it also has numerous functions to perform. The relationship between setting and character largely contributes in affecting plot, conflict pace and even the thematic concerns.

The characters are also in some way or other defined by the setting of the story. Setting also implies culture, worldview and language even if the characters in the story try to push back against their upbringing. Setting also plays a dominant role in affecting the dialogues and actions of short story. Setting of the short story also helps in building symbolism. The living of the protagonist in a broken down house symbolically suggests his or her flimsy life. Whereas, if the protagonist is living in refurbish apartment, then the poor neighboring might appear snobbish and elitist to the world around him or her.

In other words, we can say that setting of a short story is one of the many influences on a character's psyche and world view. Style is also one of the chief parts of storytelling. It generally refers to the matchless way that an author tells the story. It can be seen both at a line-level and a global level. As far as the line- level is concerned, it gets influenced by the words that the storytellers choose compared with syntax, sentence structure, length and author's observational

details. On the other hand, at global level, story's pace affects the style and the way the story conveys information, the length of scene and chapters coupled with the author's own literary influences. We find a marked difference between the novel written by Haruki Mura and Margaret Atwood. Conflict is also a vital part of a story telling. In fact, conflict is the soul of storytelling without which the character cannot grow and flourish. They are also unable to complete their journey without this element. Conflict is of two types- internal and external. It can be seen in diverse forms. In Christopher Marlowe's play, *Doctor Faustus*, the internal conflict of the main protagonist, Faustus leads to his mental agony.

The conflict between society and protagonist in *Burmese Days*, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and *A Clergyman's Daughter* can be include in the category of external conflict. Sometime a character suffers from internal as well as external conflict as we find in case of Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. The obstacles in the way of the protagonist do not allow him to attain his or her goals. The protagonist wants something else, but the problem created by protagonist is a big hindrance and obstacle. The antagonist also uproots the protagonist's life. So, all these conflicts are generally faced when we come across the storytelling. What makes the great stories is the road to resolve conflict which is never easy and comfortable. All the above mentioned elements of storytelling lead to the culmination of its theme. Theme of a story or any genre generally implies what is the story all about.

There are certain issues around which the plot, character and conflict of the story revolve, for example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the recurrent themes are love, family and fate; in Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, the central thematic concerns are war, revolution, justice, power and corruption. In other words, theme indicates the main concern of the story. Being the central concern of the story, the element of conflict is closely connected with theme. The chief features of the theme in a story telling are- it should be open ended, debatable and thought provoking. The theme can be interpreted according to the angle of perception and temperament of the readers. In this way, a close a minute study of different elements of a storytelling leads to the conclusion that every element enriches the texture of the art of storytelling. It is by means of a very careful use of all these elements that a writer can leave an indelible impact on the mind of this or her readers.

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