

EDITORIAL

Short story is perhaps the most popular form of literature all over the world. It is as old as the mankind itself. A short-story has the capacity to capture such vibrant scenes of life in remarkably small space that no other form of Literature can claim. Since time immemorial, short stories in various languages of the world have recorded human joys and pains, triumphs and failures, struggles and human limitations to teach generations of mankind the basics of human life and its mystery. The short story that seems to be the product of the modern civilized society, has evolved out of man's tale telling instincts, very much like tales, fables, legends, lores in primitive societies and is a result of innumerable years of refinement as a literary form not only as a massive means of entertainment but also as subtle medium of moral edification. No history of mankind can ignore the impact of Aesop's Fables, The stories of *Arabian Nights*, the stories of *the Bible*, the *Puranas*, *The Panchatantra*, *The Kathasaritasagar*, the *Jataka*- stories and *Hitopadesa* on the collective memory of the young and the old alike. These monumental works of short fiction still provide classic *mantras* of story telling, in terms of themes and narrative techniques, to modern short story-writers all over the world and embellish this old form of literature with immense possibilities to interface realities of day to day life in the modern times.

When someone talks about Indian Short Story or precisely The Indian Short Story in English, it has two or rather three categories of short story writers, there is the first category where writers of short story, write in the 22 constitutionally recognized languages of India in the small towns of the country, they do not originally write in English, their short stories originate from their social and cultural scenes in the respective regions, their very important short-stories are translated in English by others, these selected story collections draw critical attention only when they are published by reputed publications like Oxford or Penguin. There is another category of short story-writers they write in their regional language as well as in English, they are better off as they can translate their popular pieces in English. They are fortunate like Tagore who could write in his mother tongue Bengali and could translate best works in English. Kamla Das and Laxmi Kannan are the examples who wrote in their mother tongue as well as in English with the same competence and confidence. It is quite obvious in Indian scene that they have an edge over the short-story-writers who need somebody to translate their works in English. But it the third category of the writers in general or short story writers in particular, who originally write in English, they claim the utmost attention. They are compatriots of the writers of Diaspora, their works, published from the world famous publications catch up quick publicity and recognition. When we switch over to the short story of the first category to the second and from the second to the third one, we cannot but think how there are shifts in thrusts and concerns in their short stories: there seems an exposure of the realities of India from rural to urban and to transnational.

In terms of themes and techniques, Indian Short Story in English embodies the rich cultural diversity, as it has the best of Indian short stories in English translation. Learning immensely from the ancient classics, modern Indian short story has come out of the simple format of the literary form that was successfully used for entertainment and the moral education of the young in the past. It has braced it up to include the spirit of Nationalism and pave a way for social regeneration by depicting the trauma of partition, the casteism, the women exploitation, the prevalent inequalities in the society, the voices of marginalized and the apathy of the governing systems. If the stories of Tagore sensitized the contemporary society to rethink about the status of women, the stories of R K Narayan and M K Anand portrayed the social inequities with a zeal to bring in social change and spread nationalism. Post-independence years saw the emergence of many important women and dalit writers who have raised the question of the identity of a woman and a dalit with a conviction that is equivalent to a social revolution through writing.

The present issue of *Dialogue* is an attempt to showcase some of the greats of Indian Short Story in English in modern times, we are hopeful that the readers will surely send their feedback regarding the quality and range of these research papers.

Dr S C Hajela

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