Effect and method in the short story

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EFFECT AND METHOD IN THE SHORT STORY

A thesis submitted by
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May 31, 1913 to the
graduate faculty of The
State University of Iowa
in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for
the degree of Master
of Arts.
The General Purpose.—The purpose of this writing is to discuss one phase of method in the short story. No attempt is made to develop aesthetical formulae, to establish tests for short story excellence, or to devise specific rules of composition. The study of the short story, even the study of method in the short story, has departments that are not within the scope of this investigation.

Many statements are made here that are applicable not only to the short story but to any other variety of prose fiction. No effort is made sharply to distinguish the short story from any other forms of narration; but where attributes peculiar to the short story were noticed, they are mentioned. The stories used have been taken largely from the work of contemporary American and English writers, because such material is thoroughly representative of the short story.

Effects and Elements.—This study of the short story is based upon what are called here effects and elements. Briefly defined, the effects are varieties of interest felt by the reader of a short story. The elements are those combinations of words which produce the effects.

The effects are:

1. Plot interest.
2. Character interest.
3. Mood.

The elements are:

1. Particularized action and appearance.
2. Dialogue.
3. Thought of characters.
4. Description of setting.
5. Generalized narrative.
6. Writer's observations and conclusions.

A clearer idea of effect and element may perhaps be had from the following. If one were to pause midway in the reading of a typical standard short story or at its conclusion, he would be able to analyse the composite quality of his interest into the three divisions or effects. If one were to take a thousand consecutive words from that same story or to take that story in its entirety, he might divide that passage or that story into parts of varied length, each of which would be an example of one of the six elements. Moreover, he could determine which effect or which effects each element most clearly produced.

The following pages deal in turn with each effect, defining it, analysing it, discussing the ways of producing it, its terms of existence. Also, in a similar though briefer manner, each element is considered, its typical features presented and its uses indicated by systematic analyses of twelve stories totalling some 73,000 words.

The Features of a Short Story. - Although no formal definition of the short story has determined the choice of material, still uniformity has been observed. The following features are common to all the stories read:

1. Each is a literary prose narrative dealing with personality.
2. Each has plot.
3. Each clearly purposes to create an impression less broad or complex than that produced by the novel, as *Vanity Fair*.
4. Each has well rounded presentation.

In the selection of these features an effort was made to secure a practical working basis of distinction between the short story and its related literary forms, the novellete, the
sketch, and the tale. No explanation need be offered concerning the first of these features, but others require comment. With regard to the second, it may be said that absence of plot converts what would otherwise be a short story into a tale. In this writing, plot in the short story is later more carefully dealt with.

The statement concerning purpose has this implication. Every fictional narrative presents (1) the indication of an underlying purpose, and (2) the more or less successful accomplishment of that purpose. The indicated purpose is the thing that identifies a writing as short story or novel. That is, according to this theory, a piece of writing which consists of 400,000 words, but which manifests a short story purpose is not a novel but, strictly speaking, an overdeveloped short story. Likewise a piece of writing which consists of 10,000 words, but which manifests a purpose that should be worked out in a novel, is not a short story but either a novellet etc or a poor novel, depending upon its effectiveness.

The statement concerning well rounded presentation has the following significance. A narrative which has plot, and which manifests a short story purpose may fail to be a short story because its background, characterization, and action are not developed. Such a writing would be a sketch, or a scenario, and not even a feeble short story.
SECTION II

PLOT INTEREST

Definition of Plot.- Plot is the framework of the story, but any given plot may be elaborated until its length is not far from that of the completed story. That is, strictly speaking, if the reader is to have full knowledge of a plot, he must be told every fact, both of action and explanation, that is essential to the progress of the story, although he need not be made to feel emotional interest. To arouse this feeling is the duty of the finished story. Such a plot statement would take the form of a detailed synopsis, sketch, or scenario. Plot as here considered is assumed to have rather full statement.

The plot, then, is a series of statements presenting facts both narrative and expository. There are two characteristics which make such a series a plot and not a mere tale outline. (1) It has unity: in its entirety it makes up just the one action, that and nothing more, which should accomplish the purpose of the story. It is complete and satisfying, leaving, so far as the logic of the action is concerned, nothing more to be desired. (2) Its action contains two opposed tendencies. There is nothing intentionally rambling: every plot statement is intended to define the tendencies or to show the nature of their opposition or to make clear the final adjustment.

Plot as Question and Answer.- As stated, plot facts unite to make one large unit, which is basically a body of information. To furnish means for giving this information is the duty of the plot. It accomplishes this in the way best suited to make its statements effective: that is, it makes the reader eager for the information; then bit by bit, detail by detail, always keeping something concealed until the end, the plot satisfies the reader's desire for the truth. This idea may be better expressed by saying that
the plot first suggests a question then answers it.

The facts which question and answer present, have to do with personality. Even in stories where the human element is greatly subordinated, the animals and inanimate objects are personified, sometimes completely and most weirdly, as in The Venus of Ille. Probably no short story exists which does not have personalities as its principals in action. It may perhaps be possible to devise a narrative which manifests a short story purpose and which concern absolutely no thing endowed in the readers’ mind with the ability to feel and reason, to express thought, to act and be acted upon, to seem downright human. No such story, at least was found in this investigation.

At any rate, the typical short story is made up of a full presenting of plot question and answer that relate to personality. The body of fact so given has to do with character, with relation of character to character, or with relation of personality to the universe, most often with all these. A fixed condition may be made clear, a trait, a relationship, a mode of life; or changes progressing or completed may be shown. It is simply the detailing of question and answer on the basis of their plot statement, that constituted the substance of the short story.

Usually the body of information conveyed by the plot shows change in the relation of character to the world: Generally the answer sees the fortunes of the chief personages improved or impaired; for the short story reflects life and is not a mere psychological analysis. Even in Markheim the possibility of the hero’s being hanged is never lost sight of. On the other hand, the typical short story of the better class is not merely a "tale... signifying nothing": with change of fortune comes growth of character or clear exposition of its traits. In some stories the emphasis is upon the uncertainties of worldly fortune; in others,
upon psychological matters; but rarely is either psychological analysis or the narration of fortune's uncertainties unaccompanied by the other.

Question and Answer Illustrated.—Illustration will make all this clearer. Maupassant's *A piece of String* shows question and answer. The story opens at a market in the Norman village of Goderville. Old Master Hauchorne stoops to pick up a piece of string. He sees himself observed and feeling ashamed, hides his find in a guilty manner. Later, at an inn, comes the announcement that a pocketbook containing money and papers has been lost. Hauchorne is called before the mayor and accused of having picked up the pocketbook. The old man can not make the authorities believe that it was only a piece of string. Now the question is fully suggested: the reader asks Will Hauchorne be able to clear himself? The rest of the story is the answering of that question. First, possible answers are suggested: Hauchorne declares his innocence during that day; telling his story over and over; he does the same in the evening at another village. No one believes him, but the reader's question is not answered conclusively. Then comes what would seem to be final. Someone returns the pocketbook. But because the old man protests his innocence more loudly than ever, no one believes him; it is thought that he employed a confederate to return the money. The question is now all but disposed of, and just one fact remains untold to make it complete: Hauchorne's mind weakens under the strain and he dies.

Even the short story of less clearcut action than the foregoing will display question and answer in the plot. Sarah Orne Jewett's *A White Heron* represents the type. In the first scene little Sylvia is driving up her grandmother's cows from the wooded pasture. For all of her eight years Sylvia has lived in a crowded factory town and has been just a little while in contact with nature in the big outdoors. Sylvia is shown to be as much
a part of it all as any timid thing of the trees and the grass. She meets a young man who is lost and takes him to her grandmother's for supper. The young man, who is an ornithologist, determines to stay with them for some time, because he is looking for the rare white heron occasionally seen in that region. He offers ten dollars to anyone who will get a specimen for him. Sylvia has seen the strange, shy bird and she forms a great liking for the hunter. Now, the reader's question is all but formed: will she lead the hunter to the bird's nest? But other facts must be presented before the question is fully formed and the issue clear. One night Sylvia climbs a great pine, and at sunrise sees what she is looking for, the heron and its nest. The description puts the reader fully in sympathy with the heron and with nature, which the bird typifies. Now the question is fully suggested. Then very briefly comes the answer: in spite of the reward, in spite of her liking for the young hunter, some vague, strong feeling keeps Sylvia from betraying nature — and the bird is safe.

The Position of Question and Answer. — The analysis of these two stories suggests a fixed formula for position of plot question and answer; but there are variations. Sometimes facts of the answer are present with facts of the question. Such is the case in Balzac's *La Grande Breteche*, where, of the answer facts, two deaths and a will are mentioned before the plot question is entirely stated. This much is true, however, of the typical short story: The answer is never specifically known until the end of the plot. Not only are there variations in order, but also in clearness of question and answer. For example, the average detective story gives the reader every help, while such a story as Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*, emphasizing an entirely different effect, leaves more uncertainty. But whatever the short story, *Murders in the Rue Morgue* or *They*, plot question and answer exist.
Question and Answer Compared.—Made of the same stuff, the two differ very little outwardly. Perhaps they share the burden equally, present each the same amount of action and exposition; perhaps one is much briefer than the other, as in the question of The Minister’s Black Veil. Perhaps, as in Margaret Deland’s The Child’s Mother, the question is much more extended than the answer and does the work of fixing the characters of the story and making them appealing.

However, the answer may show peculiarities not to be noticed in the question. The former is quite often more definite as to the significance of its facts; this is because the answer has the duty of dispelling all uncertainties, of bringing a sense of finish. This is noticeable in Without Benefit of Clergy. Also the answer is often compound in form, that is, made up of a series of facts all but the last of which seemed momentarily to be the answer sought, but which soon proved not conclusive. A good example of this sort of answer appears often in the detective story where events lay the guilt for a time on shoulders which later are clearly not deserving of the burden. Even such a story as Without Benefit of Clergy shows this quality of answer: the birth of Holden’s son seems for a moment to be the answer sought for the question, Will the happiness of Holden and Amee...  

Plot and Dramatic Structure.—As has been said, question and answer in plot are simply a means of giving the reader information. Of course, such a view of plot is very general; closer inspection will reveal in detail the mechanics of any plot structure. To make clearer some of the more common devices by which plot does its work, it will be helpful to compare plot in the short story with plot as it appears in the drama; for in the drama plot structure has been developed to its highest efficiency and thoroughly analysed.*

*See Ferry’s “A Study of Prose Fiction” for similar comparison with the Novel.
The most complete type of plot in the drama may be separated into the following divisions, often not so named as here:
The first scenes are devoted to the exposition, which acquaints us with the chief persons and with their surroundings. Immediately following is the exciting moment, where appears the first hint of complication, the start of the main action. Then comes the rising action, which fully develops the complication and "ties the knot."
Next appears the turning point, the first real victory of the power that is to dominate at the finish. The falling action, which follows, sees the slow untying of the knot, the progress of the victorious force. The moment of final suspense is the last serious conflict of opposed forces, the last clash of wills before the certainty of the catastrophe, which makes final disposition of the characters.

Potentially any short story plot however slight has all these parts, but often certain of them are so faintly marked in actual writing as to be almost unnoticeable. If the short story plot is, like the drama, primarily a conflict of wills, the similarity may be very striking; if the short story has in it no strife between wills, as Kipling's They, plot may be reduced to its simplest and lowest terms.

The exposition is never missing in the short story plot, though it may be very brief and hardly to be distinguished from the rising action. The exciting moment always appears, though it may come before the exposition. The rising action is never absent; often it constitutes the bulk of the story, containing plot question and much of plot answer. The turning point usually appears. Potentially it must be in the plot, but it may not be objectified in thought and deed. The falling action as known in the drama may or may not appear; for the change may come in the very last paragraph of the story, a thing never attempted in the drama. The moment of final suspense may or may not appear. The catastrophe may or may not exist.
Dramatic Structure Illustrated.- Reference to a typical short story will make all this clearer. *Justice and the Judge* has been selected for such analysis.

**Exposition.**

The setting of the action is first presented in some detail. Judge Morrison is briefly characterized and shown to be the personification of selfish coldness; his sister and submissive housekeeper Hanna is more vaguely portrayed. Then little Theophilus Bell, orphaned and friendless, comes to live with his uncle the Judge. The child is characterized and we are told how the present situation came about.

**Exciting Moment.**

Judge Morrison receives the boy harshly. Hanna is timidly kind.

**Rising Action.**

The odd character of the boy is fully presented - quiet self-contained but intense, oldish. Hanna becomes more real. Theophilus makes friends with a little Irish girl, the daughter of the Judge's poor tenants.

**Turning Point.**

This phase of plot is not clearly marked. The nearest approach to it is a scene where the Judge drives away Theophilus' little playmate. The boy begins seriously to dislike the old man; the latter begins to be interested in the boy because of the spirit he shows.

**Falling Action.**

Theophilus continues to show what the Judge calls "spunk", and comes more and more into his uncle's favor. But the boy's dislike increases. At length the judge is deeply interested in the boy, but is unable to relax his sternness. Because of an escapade of Theophilus and his playmate Kate Murphy, the Judge banishes the
Murphies. Now Theophilus hates his uncle, but the old man's interest has deepened to love. The lad, always frail, sickens and at last is very ill.

Moment of Final Suspense.

This is vaguely suggested in the story, being blended with the catastrophe.

Catastrophe.

Theophilus dies. At the end he apparently ceases to hate the Judge, but he has not the least love or liking for him.

The Nature of Plot Interest.—Plot has now been considered as to its essential nature and method. The most rudimentary quality of "plot interest" remains to be dealt with. Precisely to name and describe this quality is not easy; but its existence is hardly to be questioned, since to destroy plot in a narrative would be to take a very appreciable something away from the story, however much remained of mood and character interest; and since plot standing alone as a sketch or scenario, without any noticeable mood or character interest still has an effect of its own. The basis of this effect is probably curiosity of the sort that it purely instinctive constituting the impulse to see what is hidden, to know what can not be known at first glance. Supplemeting this impulse, plot adds the complexity that makes any puzzle so irritatingly attractive, or plot holds the attention through its cumulative nature, each fact adding to the importance of all the others.

Whatever the quality of plot interest, and however essential it may be, character interest and mood are far more noticeable. These are the interests that final writing emphasizes. Only in stories of objective and complex action is plot of primary importance; rarely does the average reader note it.

Summary.—Throughout the foregoing discussion of plot interest in the short story, an effort was made to generalize —
but not to generalize vaguely. If plot is plot as the term is used here, it should be essentially the same in Murders in the Rue Morgue as in They. In the attempt to study these general likenesses specifically, a definition of plot, a consideration of plot as question and answer, of plot in the short story and the drama, and of the rudimentary quality of plot interest, have been offered.

The Abstract Phase.—Not only does the character of the short story appeal through that may be termed corporeality, but also through abstract meaning. In other words, the occurrence of a man's name may bring not only a picture but a feeling that personified honor, kindness, right, or wrong has been called to bear on us. Often this is very marked in the short story, because the limitations of the form require that all emphasis be placed on one trait of each individual. However, a real attempt is usually made by the writer to humanize all the people of the story. If this is successful, we do not feel that anger or hate or right or wrong has been evoked by the mention of a man's name; to color the mental picture of him, and that with the picture is a very interesting something—best termed personality.
SECTION III.

CHARACTER INTEREST

The Concrete Phase of Character Interest.—In the short story, as in other forms of prose fiction, one important element in character interest is the feeling that the persons of the narrative have physical existence. That is, when a character is mentioned, with more or less completeness we see and hear that person in mental images of sight and sound. The average reader, even without aid from the author, very quickly forms in his mind’s eye for each personage some sort of picture which endures throughout the narrative. Usually most of the picturing details are furnished by the writer, but by no means all of them; for the demands of short story purpose commonly force the author to suggest rather than to particularize. Nevertheless the gaps in the picture will be filled by memories of like persons known to the reader in real life; the characters of the story will be visualized as physical beings, and felt to be realities of flesh and blood.

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An illustration of variations of character interests is
found by comparing Stevenson's Markheim with his Providence and the
Guitar. Markheim is the chief actor of the former, Monsieur Berthelini
of the latter; each is the center of an undoubted character
interest. M. Berthelini is very much a bodily presence. He is pictured
in detail by the author. Never is the reader allowed to forget the
striking features of M. Berthelini's dress; he is for ever tossing
his cloak, bowing with a sweep of his big hat, passing about his neck
the ribbon of his guitar. Markheim also has physical existence but
of a more shadowy nature. There is no description of his appearance;
yet to one reader at least, he is (vaguely of course) a small man
in a gray suit; his hair is disordered; he wears no hat. Across every
background of the somber house where murder has been done, passes
that small man in gray.

In the abstract phase of character interest M. Berthelini and
Markheim afford interesting contrast. M. Berthelini produces a
marked interest of the "personality" sort. He stands as type of no
such thing as right or wrong, however typical he may be of the
strolling player. He is first of all a definite individuality which
comes to the reader with each picture of the "artist", the man with
the "Spanish air and the flavor of Rembrandt at home." Quite clearly
too has Markheim an abstract quality, but it is not at all that of
personality. Markheim is any man of his class. The thing coming
nearest to setting him apart is a sort of ineffectiveness, hardly a differentiating mark. But notwithstanding this lack of
personality, Markheim is very powerfully an abstract thing: he is, man-who-has-just-committed-murder. With every mention of his
name and the picture it conjures goes this feeling: Markheim is
you or I or any man alone with his fear and his self.

The abstract quality exemplified in Markheim is very often
made use of, being valuable in stories of deep universal appeal.
In all such stories the fact that none of the reader's energy is
used in conceiving a definite personality, leaves the writer free to emphasize other interests, knowing all the while that his narrative is not weak in character interest. *Without Benefit of Clergy* is a case in point. Holden is not merely Holden, a British official of the Indian Service: he is you or I or any man of his class suffering through the brevity of human happiness. The reader feels this instinctively, and therefore the writer's effort is devoted to making perfectly clear the quality of the happiness that touches Holden, then is gone.

Kinds of Characters.—In any short story the persons about whom the character interest centers may be grouped into several classes. These are fixed characters and changing characters, non-individual characters and individual characters.

Fixed Characters.—A fixed character is one which is essentially the same throughout the story: it has definite traits that never vary in quality and rarely in number. Of course progress is to be secured in the portrayal of such a character; that is, at the conclusion of the story the fixed character may be known more fully to the reader than at the beginning. A majority of the important characters in the short story are in the fixed class; the same is true of the drama. According to Freytag, the dramatist prefers to show to what an extent a man is a miser, rather than to show how a man becomes a miser. But the novel has ample time to show in convincing detail how a man becomes a miser; hence in the novel there are numberless changing characters. Of course, minor characters in all forms of fiction are fixed.

Changing Characters.—The changing character is one that alters essentially during the story. It is not merely a character better known at the end of the story than at the beginning. It is one that has developed traits which have crowded out or profoundly
changed those present earlier in the story. Judge Morrison in Justice and the Judge is a good illustration; Sylvia in The White Heron stands as typical of the fixed character.

Non-Individual Character. — A non-individual character is one that lacks what has been discussed as personality. In all fiction the minor characters are usually of this class. In successful long fiction the important characters are rarely non-individual; but in the short story the reverse is often true. The reason for this situation has been suggested in the discussion of character interest. In the novel there is more freedom: the author may easily emphasize all interests and take abundant time to establish individual personality without any sacrifice at all. Where the short story writer may do one thing well the novelist may do a dozen things equally well.

Individual Characters. — Individual characters have personality. Poe's neurotics are illustrations. The individual character may, in common with the non-individual character, represent type or class; but he possesses decided traits which separate him from that class. In the short story important characters are individual, but few are extreme in their individuality. The reason plainly lies in the restriction of short story limits. If one is to do more than characterize, he will, should he have power of choice, select a Holden rather than a Benvenuto Cellini; for in the latter case one must either sacrifice all to the characterization, or allow the troublesome personage to remain unconvincing and disillusioning.

Methods of Characterization. — In general there are two ways of presenting character, directly or indirectly. Indirect presentation makes use of other characters, setting, and author's observations about the character under consideration. Conversation between characters may detail the appearance of one not
present and may establish for the reader, the abstract phase of character interest. Setting may aid greatly in this latter work as also may observations of the author. Ordinarily the indirect method is employed in developing those plot facts which are not striking but merely expository.

In the direct method of characterization the man himself is brought before the reader: thought, speech, action, and appearance are detailed. The most noticeable variations in the use of this method are in amount of detail used, and vividness with which it is presented. Mary Wilkins-Freeman uses many details and states them frankly; Henry James in his short stories uses few details and suggests rather than states flatly. Mary Wilkins-Freeman will tell us just how the New England spinster hung out the family wash and just how she was dressed. Henry James, using the same method, would admit with elegant reluctance that the textiles were disposed thus and so, and would clothe the lady (modestly of course) in a mere aura of suggestion.

Character and Plot. - Whatever may be the means by which characters are given shape, there is always noticeable in stories of standard grade an agreement of plot and character interest; in other words, the characters fit the action. This is accomplished by the author under one or both of two situations. (1) Story tone and structure determine the characterization. (2) Characterization is to determine story tone and structure.

If the chief purpose of the story is not merely to characterize, plot will dominate the persons. It will limit the selection of characters to those which are congenial with the action and it will determine the number and quality of traits to be assigned to each person. If the character is of minor importance it may be a machine of plot, a thing to carry messages and shut doors, to bear in the lighter half of the burden of realism. If, however, the character
controlled by plot is important, only such traits will be presented as the plot needs, these often of the broadest sort. Markheim and Holden have been mentioned; the chief character in Poe's The Pit and the Pendulum is also clearly of this type.

If the chief purpose of the story is to characterize, the reverse of all this will be true. An action will be chosen which best displays the traits peculiar to the principal characters, and in all details plot will similarly conform. It is true of course that the purpose of any short story can not be to characterize and do nothing else. For this reason the less important details of characterization are usually made for the work of effecting not only the character interest, but of keeping events in motion.
SECTION IV.

MOOD

Mood and the Other Interests.- In a sense, mood or what is here called mood is not coordinate with plot and character interests; for it may be almost entirely induced by plot structure and characterization. On the other hand mood may be clearly coordinate with plot and character interests, since mood may be aroused by writing that is manifestly not intended to establish character interest or to cause the uncertainty that is the basis of plot interest: for example, mood and mood alone is often induced by description of setting. But mood, whether or not it be based upon character interest or plot interest, or whether it be based upon something outside of literature, is always the same - a vague powerful thing of the imagination emotions quite distinct from that which produced it; the mood in Herrick's poems may be just the mood in McDowell's To a Wild Rose.

The Nature of Mood.- Analysis of all the subtle variations of mood in the short story cannot be attempted here, but one or two important general qualities may be suggested. For example, there is a meditative or philosophical phase of mood in the short story; that is, the reader feels the theme or meaning of the narrative. He feels that something about life has been demonstrated. Perhaps Hawthorne has stamped a lesson upon the reader's mind and heart; perhaps Kipling has forced him to live for a time the very lives of other men; or Poe has taken him to a land of splendid horrors. In every good short story this quality of mood is noticeable, because very often the short story purpose is just this intention to demonstrate clearly some one thing about life.

But the vital quality of mood in the short story is quite different. It is the feeling that stays with the reader when the story is finished, for hours, even throughout an entire day. It is a
Lift and a glow at the heart; it is a transformation of trivial things to "symbols of a high romance;" it is a driving impulse to create what is beautiful; or it is an actual living of life with keener zest.

Mood and Credibility.—To consider the means of securing this interest here called mood, is to consider what frequently contributes as well to other effects. One such means is that of securing acquiescence in the facts of the story. The powerful story sounds honest. However far-removed it may be from reality, the reader is carried along in the make-believe. He is kept in sympathy and therefore open to mood effects.

This is accomplished partly through plot. On the basis of plot the story must be made credible according to the tone demanded by the purpose. This task may be easy or hard. In the story of rapid and intricate action, the duty of making the whole credible rests largely with the plot; in the story of slight action or of romance, as The Minister’s Black Veil, or of burlesque as The New Arabian Nights, the plot carries a much lighter burden and the reader is drawn along with the story by more subtle means. Yet in every serious story is work for plot to do in establishing credibility; for example, in Markheim the story must end convincingly, and the dealer’s maid is the plot detail employed for that purpose; and in Kipling’s Greatest story in the World there must be something to prevent the writing of that impossible story—again a creature of plot does duty.

In characterization too there is aiding of credibility. The persons of the narrative are real according to the dictates of the story purpose. This may or may not necessitate emphasis upon personality. It may allow only the vaguest individualization, and it may require absolute abnormality of action.

Lastly the description of setting does much to establish
reality. It may include details quite beyond the reader's experience but it does not include details beyond the reader's imagination, details that are utterly beyond the possibilities of the material world as he knows it.

Mood and Diction.- Of course in securing mood, more important than the use of credible and otherwise suitable material, is the method of its use, that is, the wording. Upon words depends the vital quality of short story mood. This factor, diction, may be considered from the standpoint of the single word and from the standpoint of words in combination. With the single word, the qualities most helpful in producing mood are precision of meaning and accuracy and wealth of connotation or suggestiveness. The latter is especially important, for the single word may by appeal of sound or otherwise, evoke mood of great power and much complexity. Words in combination produce mood by interrelations of meanings and suggestions, by rhythm, and by harmony of sound. Within the mood-producing sentence there goes on a constant process of assertion and qualification; an accurate coincidence of logical emphasis and voice stress; an adaptation of pause and utterance to thought; a continual harmonizing of various sounds.

Mood and Description of Setting.— The richest combination of words in the short story is description of setting. Often it is used solely to produce mood and supports no part of the action. It offers a range of appeal to the senses as wide as the experience of man, and it determines at the writer's pleasure the quality of that appeal.
The Elements.- The elements of a short story have been named in the introduction. It will be remembered that they are, so to speak, quantities, combinations of words that produce the qualities called Effects. These elements will be considered in the order in which they were first mentioned.

Particularized Action and Appearance is writing that presents concrete descriptive details of personality, the color of a man's hair, the tone of his voice, the motion of his body in walking. Action is of necessity usually less detailed than appearance proper. In both action and appearance, short story purpose usually requires mention of a few suggestive details rather than lengthy enumeration.

Dialogue is direct quotation. It may be used very liberally, as in Kipling's "Soldiers Three" or very sparingly, as in James' "Brooksmith". It is employed chiefly for important scenes. Dialogue is often mixed with Particularized Action and Appearance.

Thought of Characters may be of two kinds: (1) presenting concrete sensory images and logical reasoning, (2) presenting mood and emotion. This element is valuable in making action and speech realistic and in making changing characters understandable. In any one story the thought of not more than one or two persons is presented; usually it is not greatly detailed. "Markheim" is a notable exception, since much of the narrative is purely this element.

Description of Setting is that writing which details the surroundings of the action; it appeals to all the senses. It may be very detailed and definite; it may be quite vague; it is always concrete. It appears usually in brief passages, often closely inter-
woven with other elements. As has been said, it is extremely valuable in fixing the tone of a story. Occasionally it has more active duties, influencing characterization and action.

Generalized Narrative, though made of much the same stuff as Particularized Action and Appearance, Dialogue, and Thought of Characters, differs from them in that it is not detailed. It tells us that the hero went into a far country, but it does not picture the manner of his going; it gives us the substance of Dialogue but not the exact words; it gives us the keynote of a man's thinking but does not detail moods and mental images. It is usually condensed and suggestive and in one sentence may epitomize a man's life. Sometimes it occupies climactic situations, but generally it is used to carry on the narrative between important scenes. The parable of the prodigal son contains much generalized narrative; many of Hawthorne's tales depend upon this element.

Writer's Observations and Conclusions are generally in small quantity in the story. This element is used to call the reader's attention to significant features that require emphasis. Perhaps it is most used in guiding characterization. Kipling uses it to introduce stories through the observation of a first-person narrator who is clearly and frankly the author and not a person of the story.

Analysis for Element and Effect. — Such are the elements that produce the effects of the short story. Concerning the use of these elements it is easy to make general statements which are accurate. The following analysis was undertaken in no hope of making discoveries, but to determine with some degree of precision: (1) just how much use the short story makes of each element; (2) by the use of just what elements each effect is commonly produced.

For this analysis twelve stories were selected. These were chosen because they are representative of typical styles and
tones in the short story, and because they illustrated varying qualities of the three effects discussed.

In the analysis each story was considered part by part, sentence by sentence or phrase by phrase if necessary. Thus the story was divided into the elements. The number of words in each element was estimated; also each element, bit by bit, was credited to the effect toward which it most clearly contributed, in some cases to the two effects toward which it equally contributed. Below is a specimen of the data secured.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Harr.</td>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be seen of course that the results of such an investigation cannot be mathematically accurate. For one thing the judgment of the investigator is liable to err; again, while an element may contribute chiefly to one effect, it may at the same time contribute very slightly to other effects. Also, the plot effect is not given full justice, since only the more mechanical phase will be obvious in the story. In fact the results of the investigation as tabulated are approximations. As approximations, they have their value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Number of Occurrences of Elements</th>
<th>Number of Words Plotted in Elements</th>
<th>Number of Words to Character in Elements</th>
<th>Number of Words to mound Elements</th>
<th>Total Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooksmith</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gift Horse</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Honest Soul</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A March Wind</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mark of the Beast</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markheim</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministers Black Veil</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nice People</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pit and the Pendulum</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanity and some Sables</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Benefit of Clergy</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The "Average" Story. - The foregoing tabulation is largely self-explanatory, but a few comments seem needed. These observations are made with reference to the average of the twelve stories. The length of this hypothetical story is about 6000 words. (Last column) It has (as indicated in the second six columns) a fixed amount of each element. The total amount of each element in the story is divided among a definite number of appearances. (First six columns) Also, these elements contribute to the three effects as shown in the remaining divisions of the tabulation.

It is interesting to notice that the effect most insisted upon is mood, as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Total Words</th>
<th>% of Total Words in Average Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This indicates that the average story is intense. Plot and character effects are skillfully combined and subordinated. The analysis of a novel for effect and element might show a quite different condition; a long continued strain would destroy its own effectiveness.

It will be seen (Table II) that more words are devoted to plot effect than to character effect. This condition does not indicate that character effect is slighted; it shows rather that much care is required to keep in adjustment the delicate mechanism of the 6000-word short story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Use of Elements in Producing Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effects</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above tabulation is not limited to available data, but by no means limited to the number of stories considered.
In the foregoing table (III) it is to be noted that plot is greatly supported in the average story by generalized narrative. Dialogue is next in amount as an aid to plot. There is just a little interference by the writer in his own character; it is rarely necessary for the skilled manipulator to explain in person what is toward among the puppets.

In character interest, however, (Table III) the author more frequently comes into the story to comment or praise or blame. But the chief dependence is generalized narrative and dialogue. Thought of characters seems to have small characterizing value. Another interesting feature is the touch of description of setting used to aid character interest; a feature, it will be noted, which appears in but two of the twelve stories. (Table I.) That the total number of words credited to character interest is not larger, is doubtless due to the fact that character interest is more often an auxiliary of mood than is plot.

Mood (Table III) is supported - so far as this analysis may determine - by thought of characters and by dialogue. Description of setting is sparingly used, a fact which must show one of two things: - that its total effect is of minor importance or that it has great suggestive power, - clearly the latter. However, the words credited to mood are more evenly distributed among the elements than are the words of any other effect. Since mood is the effect most insisted upon, we may conclude that our average story makes good use of available material and is by no means limited to one or two elements.
The foregoing table (IV) shows that dialogue and generalized narrative are the elements most used in the average story. Particularized action and appearance is next in amount. It is to be remembered that generalized narrative can be made to present the same action which is detailed by particularized action and appearance, dialogue, and thought of characters. The fact that generalized narrative falls so far below the total of the three just referred to, is evidence of the clear cut, dramatic quality of the average short story. While description of setting is small in quantity, it is used chiefly to produce mood; every word of it counts. Writer's observations and conclusions are used noticeable though sparingly; this element contributes chiefly to mood and character effect. (Table III). The presence of this element and the relatively large amount of thought of characters tends to keep the story from being overwhelmingly objective.
From this table (V) it will be seen that particularized action and appearance is used frequently in small amounts. Six and one-half lines of dialogue for each average appearance seems very long, but not all the talking is done by one person. Generalized narrative appears always in substantial amounts; writer’s observations and conclusions appear infrequently but each time in considerable quantity.

The Twelve Stories Classified.—For purposes of comparison the twelve stories analysed have been grouped in the following manner. This is not an attempt to present a complete classification of short stories. Doubtless one could be worked out on the basis suggested here, that is, the basis of dominant interest.

Stories of Depth and Seriousness.
A—Not greatly dependent upon individual characterization.
I.—Dependent chiefly upon tone and style.

"Markheim".—Stevenson.
"The Minister’s Black Veil".—Hawthorne.
II.- Depending mainly upon action.

"The Mark of the Beast".- Kipling

"The Pit and the Pendulum".- Poe.

B.- Greatly dependent upon individual characterization.

I.- With unusual and intense action.

"The Gift Horse".- Owen Wister.

II.- With significant commonplace action.

"An Honest Soul".- Mary Wilkins-Freeman.

III.- With striking but not unusual action.

I.- With fixed characters.

"Amélia".- Margaret Deland.

"A March Wind".- Alice Brown.

2.- With changing characters.

"Brooksmith".- Henry James.

Stories That Entertain.

A.- Depending upon complication and surprise.

"The Nice People".- H.C.Bunner.

B.- Depending upon complication, surprise, and style.

"Vanity and Some Sables".- O.Henry.

Element and Effect in the Twelve Stories.- "Markheim" and the "The Minister's Black Veil", so far as distribution of elements goes, place little emphasis upon character interest : mood is the effect most insisted upon in each story. There are, however, some clearly marked differences. "The Minister's Black Veil" makes by far the greater use of generalized narrative. What particularized action and appearance it employs is in a few extended passages; that in "Markheim" is in much shorter passages and is more skilfully handled. "Markheim" uses description of setting liberally; "The Minister's Black Veil", sparingly. "Markheim" uses much the great-
er amount of thought of characters.

"The Mark of the Beast" and "The Pit and the Pendulum" likewise do not insist upon character interest, but concentrate upon mood. Dialogue does much of the work in "The Mark of the Beast"; Thought of character is liberally used in "The Pit and the Pendulum". There is little description of setting in "The Mark of the Beast"; much in "The Pit and the Pendulum", because the action is very closely related to the setting.

In "Without Benefit of Clergy" more attention has been paid to character interest than in any other story of its general class. In fact there is marked individual characterization in this story, but that is by no means the chief interest. Every element is employed, dialogue and generalized narrative being freely resorted to. Description of setting contributes chiefly to mood and hardly at all to plot; in other words, the action of the story is not so intimately related to the surroundings as is that of "The Pit and the Pendulum". The character interest in "Without Benefit of Clergy" is secured by concrete means, that is, by dialogue and particularized action and appearance. Mood depends greatly upon dialogue.

"The Gift Horse", like all the stories of its class, puts emphasis upon characterization. It also devotes many words to plot interest; this may be partially due to the fact that the structure is rather loose. There is much of writer's observations and conclusions; the story is told in the first person and it is an easy matter for the author to step in and join the talk. Description of setting is liberally used, chiefly for mood.

"An Honest Soul" too has many words to be credited to plot. This condition seems avoidable, since the story is very much a character story. Character here is established chiefly by concrete means, especially by dialogue.

"Amelia" and "The March Wind" employ every element and
are well rounded in development. They are similar in more than one way, noticeably in use of description of setting. There is more thought of characters in "A March Wind" than in "Amelia". The mood work that is done in the former by dialogue and by particularized action and appearance, is done in the latter by generalized narrative.

"Brooksmith" contains the largest use of writer's observations and conclusions; this element is employed freely in character interest. This story, like "The Gift Horse", is a first person narrative, and in "Brooksmith" the narrator is even less in the story than is the tale teller in "The Gift Horse". "Brooksmith" has a large proportion of generalized narrative and but little dialogue. It is highly literary, a fact which is demonstrated somewhat by the use of description of setting at times merely to characterize. Mood is established here by a well-balanced use of the elements.

"The Nice People" and "Vanity and Some Sables" show considerable attention to plot interest. In proportion to total length there is a noticeable use of writer's observations and conclusions. "Vanity and Some Sables" uses almost no description of setting, but much generalized narrative; the latter is a good medium for the O. Henry type of wit. "The Nice People" has better balance in the use of elements, pays more attention to character interest, uses more thought of characters, is in fact more literary and well rounded.
SECTION VI.
CONCLUSION

To summarize briefly, the foregoing pages have set forth a study of the short story in element and effect,—in other words a study of one phase of method. No attempt has been made to develop conclusive aesthetical laws; this has been rather a study of externals.

The three chief effects in the short story were defined and briefly analyzed. As far as possible each was considered separately. In the story they are closely combined; but with the method of their combination we have not been concerned.

In the second place, the materials composing the effects were considered merely as they are represented in words,—as if one were to study men with reference to their physical features and without reference to their peculiarities of soul and mind. These elements were defined and numerical estimates were made of the amount of each in the short story. The method of their combination has not been considered; that is another field.

Though the range of this investigation is limited, being not an exhaustive study of the short story, but the study of only one phase of method, this writing has accomplished its purpose if within its limits it has merely clarified and made definite, facts heretofore generally but vaguely known.