



Oliver Twist (1948), directed by David Lean.

DOSSIER

The Novel

Consider what you have seen in the dossier **Drama**. One of the differences between a play and a novel is that the play goes through the mediation of the interpreters and lives through every new performance, like music, while **the novel passes directly from the author to the public**, like painting, and remains forever as the author has created it.

Here below you find a short passage from the script of a film version of *Oliver Twist*, a famous novel written by Charles Dickens. Next to the film-script is the same episode in the original written by Dickens. Oliver is a young boy who lives in England in the 19th century. He is a poor orphan, so he is brought up in a workhouse, an institution for poor people where he must work hard in return for food and board.

OLIVER TWIST, 1948

Directed by David Lean

With Alec Guinness and John Howard Davies

MR BUMBLE: Bow to the board.

MR LIMBKINS: What's your name, boy?

OLIVER: Oliver. Oliver Twist, sir.

MR LIMBKINS: Do you know it's your birthday?

OLIVER: No, sir.

BOARD MEMBER: The boy is a fool.

MR LIMBKINS: Boy, listen to me. You know you're an orphan, I suppose?

OLIVER: What's that, sir?

BOARD MEMBER: The boy is a fool, I thought he was.

MR LIMBKINS: Hush! You know you've got no father or mother, and that you were brought up by the parish, don't you?

OLIVER: Yes, sir.

BOARD MEMBER: I hope you say your prayers every night,

OLIVER: Yes, sir.

BOARD MEMBER: and pray for the people who feed you, and take care of you.

OLIVER: Yes, sir.

MR LIMBKINS: Well! Now you'll be educated (You have come here to be educated), and taught a useful trade. You'll begin to pick oakum tomorrow morning at six o'clock.



Roman Polanski's film *Oliver Twist* (2005), the most recent adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic novel.

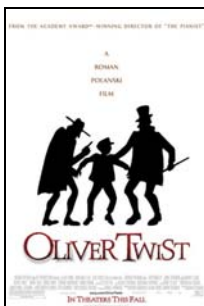


another scene of David Lean's film.

beadle: officer who helped in church (workhouses were administered by parishes).

gruff: unfriendly.
stammered: said brokenly and hesitantly.

oakum: fibre fallen from old ropes.
surlily: unfriendly.



Poster of Roman Polanski's adaptation of Dickens's novel.

Oliver Twist, 1837-1838

by Charles Dickens

Mr. Bumble gave him a tap on the head, with his cane, to wake him up: and another on the back to make him lively: and bidding him follow, conducted him into a large white-washed room, where eight or ten fat gentlemen were sitting round a table. At the top of the table, seated in an armchair rather higher than the rest, was a particularly fat gentleman with a very round, red face.

'Bow to the board', said Bumble. Oliver brushed away two or three tears that were lingering in his eyes; and seeing no board but the table, fortunately bowed to that.

'What's your name, boy?' said the gentleman in the high chair.

Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen, which made him tremble: and the beadle gave him another tap behind, which made him cry. These two causes made him answer in a very low and hesitating voice; whereupon a gentleman in a white waistcoat said he was a fool. Which was a capital way of raising his spirits, and putting him quite at his ease.

'Boy', said the gentleman in the high chair, 'listen to me. You know you're an orphan, I suppose?'

'What's that, sir?' inquired poor Oliver.

'The boy *is* a fool - I thought he was', said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

'Hush!' said the gentleman who had spoken first. 'You know you've got no father or mother, and that you were brought up by the parish, don't you?'

'Yes, sir', replied Oliver, weeping bitterly.

'What are you crying for?' inquired the gentleman in the white waistcoat. And to be sure it was very extraordinary. What *could* the boy be crying for?

'I hope you say your prayers every night', said another gentleman in a gruff voice; 'and pray for the people who feed you, and take care of you - like a Christian.'

'Yes, sir', stammered the boy. The gentleman who spoke last was unconsciously right. It would have been *very* like a Christian, and a marvellously good Christian, too, if Oliver had prayed for the people who fed and took care of *him*.

But he hadn't, because nobody had taught him.

'Well! You have come here to be educated, and taught a useful trade', said the red-faced gentleman in the high chair.

'So you'll begin to pick oakum tomorrow morning at six o'clock', added the surlily one in the white waistcoat.

TASKS

1. Why is the novel version longer than the film-script?

Because it must provide description of places and people, description of characters' behaviour, commentary.

There is something that the novel alone can give, being impracticable in the theatre. What is it? Discuss its relevance.

The novel can give the description of thoughts, feelings and memories. It also gives commentary. It helps to understand things better. Moreover, the commentary provides interpretation.

Now list the language functions present in the novel form.

Narrative: reporting an event or a series of events.

Description: of people, places, objects;

Dialogue : reporting what characters say.

Commentary: giving opinions, drawing conclusions, etc.



Press photos of
Andrei
Tarkovski's film
Ivan's Childhood,
(1962).

DEFINITION OF THE NOVEL

A novel is a **long narrative in prose** in which fictitious (i.e. invented) characters and events are presented as if they were true. The novel offers an experience of life through narrative, commentary and the interaction of characters in terms of behaviour and, above all, dialogue.

In a novel two main levels are identified: one consists of the **basic events or actions**, together with those who perform the actions and the circumstances in which they are performed. This level is **the story**, or 'fabula'. The other level comprises the **techniques and devices used for mediating the story** to the reader, i.e. the narration. In other words, one thing is the tale itself, one thing is the manner in which it is told.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE NOVEL

The main components of a novel are:

1. **plot**
2. **characters**
3. **setting**
4. **theme**

1. The **plot** – which must not be confused with the story – is the design of a novel, and includes the story as well as the action, the language and the imagery. In other words, the way an author chooses to present the story (in chronological order, through reports of a character, ...), the use of a certain tone (ironic, ...), the recurrence of characteristic imagery, and so on, are part of the plot of a novel and interplay with each other to create its meaning.

A very important part of the plot is the **sequencing**, i.e. the order in which information is presented. A writer can choose a *chronological criterion* and present the events in the order in which they happen in the story. Modern fiction tends to use other techniques, like introducing event *in media res*: the narration begins half way through the story, so that certain things are taken for granted or the reader discovers them reading on. Alternatively, the narration may begin at the very end of the story as in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* by Ernest Hemingway, where the events are reconstructed through backwards jumps in time, called '**flashbacks**'. Novels like *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley also begin towards the end of the story, which the reader learns through the reports of one or more characters, in *retrospect*. These are just the most frequently used types of sequencing.

2. A **character** is an imaginary person involved in the action of the novel. A round character is fully described, has a complete identity as a person, and develops in the course of the novel. Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, or Harry Potter in the different instalment of the cycle by Jane Rowling are round characters. A flat character is built around a single quality or stereotype, and does not change or develop throughout the narrative. Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, or Amelia Sedley in *Vanity Fair* are flat characters.



Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) chose a minor character, Nick Carraway, as the I-narrator of his novel *The Great Gatsby*.

3. The **setting** is both the *location*, i.e. London in the novels of Charles Dickens or the moors in those of Emily Bronte or Thomas Hardy, and the *historical time* in which the action takes place. The setting relates significantly to the characters and to the theme of the novel; for example, the physical ambience of Coketown in Dicken's *Hard Times* expresses the dull monotony of the lives of the working people, in the same way as the Buchanans' lavish property in *The Great Gatsby* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald is an embodiment of their material existence.

4. The **theme** is the central idea of a novel; some themes are recurrent, thus proving that certain human patterns of behaviour endure through time: society, adventures, murder, ambition, the threat of the unknown, alienation, etc. Great favourites have always been the theme of quest, love and marriage, the hero's development from childhood to maturity, the family, the mutability of life, the social machine which oppresses and denies freedom, just to quote the most frequent.

THE NARRATOR

The reader that an author has in mind when writing a novel and to whom the novel is addressed is called 'implied reader'. This hypothetical person shares with the author background knowledge, sympathies, standards of what is good or bad, etc. A narrative text implies a narrating voice, an implicit speaker who presents the content to the implied reader. In other words, the author is Charles Dickens or D.H. Lawrence, but to tell his stories he chooses a narrator. The choice of the narrator is one of the devices which form the structure of a novel. The narrator may appear to be distant or close at hand, an editor of printed materials or an eye-witness. There is a wide range of narrators, but the main categories can be reduced to:

a) **first- person narrator, or I-narrator:** the narrator is one of the characters and is inside the story;

b) **third- person narrator:** the narrator is outside the story, i.e. has nothing to do with the events presented in it.

There are different kinds of I-narrators. An extreme example is Tristram Shandy by Laurence Sterne, the intrusive narrator, who establishes a sort of personal relationship with the reader to the point of reporting the imaginary response given by the reader:

"- How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, That my mother was not a papist. Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir. - Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again, that I told you as plain, at least, as words, by direct inference, could tell you such a thing. Then, Sir, I must have missed a page.-"

In the same line are *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe and *Gulliver* by Jonathan Swift, who have their own psychological identity quite different from the author's, and constantly address and implicate the reader. An I-narrator may be the hero of the narrative like *David Copperfield*, or a minor character like Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*.

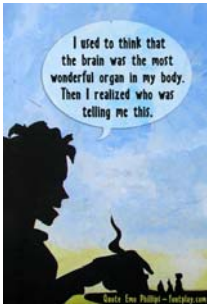
The I-figure can be treated ironically by the author; this is the case with Gulliver, who appears to be 'gullible' and represents the type of naive narrator. Sometimes, a narrator who is also a character may be unreliable, like Nellie Dean in *Wuthering Heights*, who is too involved in the events to be entirely credible, or Nick Carraway, whose moral relationship with several characters is ambivalent.



Gulliver, the I-narrator in *Gulliver's Travels*.



Ernest Hemingway, painted by Waldo Peirce for Time in 1937.



When the narrator is outside the story, we can have two main possibilities:

- a) an **objective narrator**, who mainly observes people and events and reports what he sees and hears. Hemingway's books are generally considered examples of non-committal, unobtrusive narration.
- b) an **omniscient narrator**, who has access to the characters' thoughts and feelings and takes on the absolute knowledge of the author. This type of narrator can also be intrusive, assertive, and can often intervene to give his own views, to comment on the actions of the characters, to direct and help the reader interpret things correctly. Such interventions are often cast in the 'timeless' present tense.

"Women only know how to wound so. There is a poison on the tips of their little shafts, which stings a thousand times more than a man's blunter weapon".

W.M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*.

"This state of things I have thought it necessary to premise for the information of the general reader, who might be apt to forget, that ..."

Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*.

NARRATIVE DEVICES

What does an omniscient narrator have at his disposal, to inform the reader of the characters' states of mind, reactions and motives? The following are common strategies:

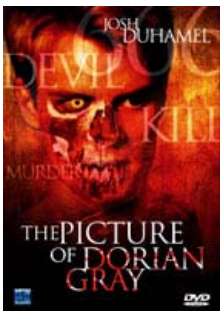
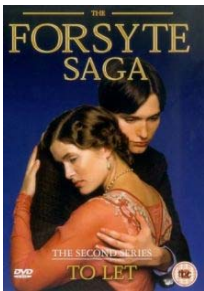
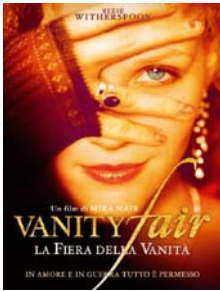
- a) the narrator directly describes what is going on in the characters' minds, or how the characters are feeling;
- b) the characters themselves declare their thoughts and feelings;
- c) the characters behave in such a way that they reveal their feelings;
- d) the words and phrases which introduce direct speech contain indications of the way how the words are uttered, like 'stage directions', thus conveying the characters' state.
- e) the narrator presents the thoughts of each character using free indirect style; the reader is put into close contact with the character's mind, and is therefore invited to see things from that character's point of view.

2. Make sure that you understand the meaning of these strategies, and discuss their implications with the class and your teacher. Then read the short extracts below, and decide which strategy each of them exemplifies.

d "Hello, Addy!" said the farmer, assuming the old form of address, but his tone cold. "How are you?" (D.H. Lawrence, *The Shades of Spring*).

b "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now; so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am". [...] "Nelly, I am Heathcliff - he's always, always in my mind - not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself but as my own being [...]". (E. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*).

a ... after placing Amelia on a bench, he left her to her own cogitations there, thinking, on his own part, that he had behaved very handsomely in getting her new clothes, and bringing her to the ball, where she was free to amuse herself as she liked. (W.M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*).



Television and cinema have always been interested in adapting novels.

c June bit her lip till the blood came, and walked back to her seat without another word, but she could not help the tears of rage rolling down her face. (J. Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*).

c ... he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. (Ch. Dickens, *Oliver Twist*).

d "Where?" he asked.
"Down the middle path", she murmured, quivering. (D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*).

b "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!" [...] "I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose?" (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*).

c Paul snapped at the laces of his boots angrily. (D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*).

b "Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it, I assure you;" (J. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*).

a He knew quite well what she had been for him. And gradually he was realizing that she was something quite other, and always had been. (D.H. Lawrence, *The Shades of Spring*).

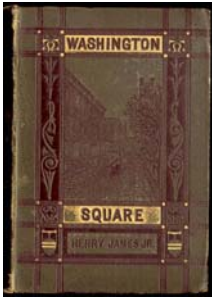
d "And which way are they gone?" said Isabella, turning hastily round. (J. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*).

e She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening. (J. Joyce, *Eveline*, in *Dubliners*)

b "I believe - no, I don't believe. I don't know. At the time I was certain. They all went down; and I don't know whether I have done stern retribution - or murder, whether I have added to the corpses that litter the bed of the unreadable sea the bodies of men completely innocent or basely guilty. I don't know. I shall never know". (J. Conrad, *The Tale*).

c Heathcliff stood near the entrance, in his shirt and trousers, with a candle dripping over his fingers, and his face as white as the wall behind him. The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his agitation was so extreme that he could hardly pick it up. (E. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*).

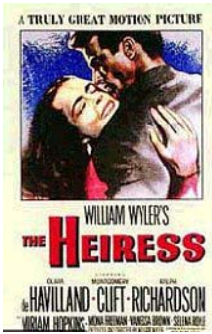
e He moved slowly down the Row towards Knightsbridge, timing himself to get to Chelsea at nine-fifteen. What did she do with herself evening after evening in that little hole? How mysterious women were! One lived alongside and knew nothing of them. What could she have seen in that fellow Bosinney to send her mad? (J. Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*).



1880 first edition cover of *Washington Square*, by Henry James.



Two posters of *The Heiress* (1949), William Wyler's adaptation of *Washington Square*.



POINT OF VIEW

3. Here below you find two summaries of a well-known novel, *Washington Square*, by Henry James. In both summaries the basic facts are the same; what makes them different is the point of view from which the events are presented. Read carefully the two versions, and state whose point of view – Catherine's or Morris's – is reflected in each of them.

(A)

Washington Square is the story of Dr. Sloper, a rich and intelligent widower, and his only child, Catherine, a sweet-natured woman who is a great disappointment to her father, being physically unattractive and mentally dull. They live in Washington Square, New York, in the end of the 19th century.

Sloper's beloved wife, along with a promising young son, died many years before. His silly sister, the widowed Lavinia Penniman, is the only other member of the doctor's household.

One day, poor Catherine meets the charming Morris Townsend at a party and is swept off her feet. Morris courts Catherine, aided by Mrs. Penniman, who loves melodrama. Dr. Sloper strongly disapproves, believing him to be after Catherine's money alone. When Catherine and Morris announce their engagement, he checks into Morris's background and finds him to be penniless and parasitic. The doctor forbids his daughter to marry Townsend, and the loyal Catherine cannot bring herself to choose between her father and her fiancé. Despite Catherine's distress, Dr. Sloper seems to almost enjoy the situation. In an effort to resolve the matter, he announces that he will not leave any money to Catherine if she marries Morris; he then takes her on a twelve month grand tour of Europe.

Catherine holds firm in her desire to marry. Upon her return, however, Morris breaks off the relationship when a conversation with Catherine convinces him that her father will never relent. He leaves town. Many years pass, and Catherine grows to middle age a spinster. Dr. Sloper finally dies and leaves her a sharply reduced income in his will out of fear that Townsend will reappear. In fact, Morris does come back to Catherine, but she refuses his advances outright. In the last sentence, James tells us that "Catherine,... picking up her morsel of fancy-work, had seated herself with it again – for life, as it were."

(B)

Washington Square is the story of Dr. Sloper, a rich and intelligent widower, and his only surviving child, Catherine, a sweet-natured woman who is a great disappointment to her father, being physically unattractive and mentally dull. They live in Washington Square, New York, in the end of the 19th century.

Sloper's beloved wife, along with a promising young son, died many years before. His naïve busybody sister, the widowed Lavinia Penniman, is the only other member of the doctor's household.

One day, the charming Morris Townsend, intelligent but penniless, meets Catherine at a party. He knows about her limitations and about her father's fortune, and decides to court her. He also knows how to make Mrs. Penniman, who loves melodrama, be on his side.



Henry James wrote 20 novels, 112 short stories, and 12 plays in addition to a number of works of literary criticism, notebooks and letters.



Dr. Sloper strongly disapproves the relationship, believing him to be after Catherine's money alone. When Catherine and Morris announce their engagement, he checks into Morris's background and finds him to be poor and parasitic. The doctor forbids his daughter to marry Townsend. Despite Catherine's distress, Dr. Sloper seems to almost enjoy the situation. In an effort to resolve the matter, he takes her on a twelve month grand tour of Europe.

However, Catherine holds firm in her desire to marry. Upon her return, Morris meets her again. A conversation between them convinces him that Dr. Sloper will not leave any money to his daughter if she marries him. Desperate and convinced that her father will never relent, he breaks off the relationship and leaves town.

Many years pass, and Catherine grows to middle age a spinster. Dr. Sloper finally dies. Morris, now balding, bearded, heavy and without the same light in his eyes, but still somewhat attractive – comes back to Catherine, hoping that she will have received a fortune in her father 's will. She refuses his advances outright.

ANSWERS: A: the point of view of Catherine.
B: the point of view of Morris.



Olivia de Havilland and Montgomery Clift, Catherine and Morris in William Wyler's adaptation of James's novel, directed in 1949.

Point of view can be defined the **angle of vision and perception** from which a story or an event is focalized. The choice of point of view is called **focalization**, and it is extremely important because it determines the way people and events are presented.

There are two main types of focalization:

- **external**: the narrator is outside the story and reports what he/she happens to see and hear;

- **internal**: a) the narrator is inside the story, i.e. is one of the characters of the story, and presents things from his/her own point of view;

b) the narrator is outside the story but is 'omniscient', i.e. knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters. The point of view varies, so that the events are presented through the eyes of several characters.

The ability to understand all these complex strategies of narration allows a deeper perception of the text and of the communicative aim of the author.



4. Go back to the narrative passage from *Oliver Twist* and, in groups, discuss the narrative techniques employed by Dickens.

Then define:

- a) the type of narrator
- b) the focalization

(Support your answers with evidence from the text).

Now rewrite the same passage, making the changes necessary to pass to one of the following:

1. first-person narration
2. external focalization
3. Mr Bumble's point of view
4. the gentleman in the high chair's point of view

As an alternative, some groups could write a summary of a famous novel using the same criteria to introduce their variations.

a) 3rd person, omniscient because he has access to Oliver's feelings. He often intervenes with ironic comments to clarify things and bring home the message he wants to convey.

b) The scene is focalized through Oliver's eyes: men are referred to through physical aspect, not name or role: because this is how the child sees them.



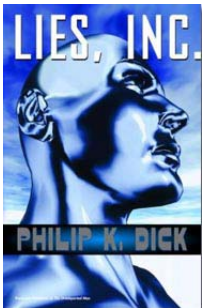
Oliver Twist (1995), a graphic novel by Kim Deitch based on the original book.



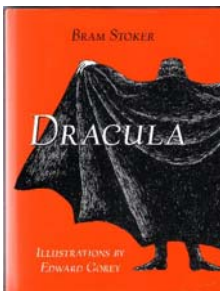
Title page of the 1554 edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes*.



Ivanhoe (1819), set in 12th century England, was one of Walter Scott's most famous historical novels.



Lies, Inc (1963) one of Philip K. Dick's paranoid visions of future.



Dracula (1897), by Bram Stoker, is one of the most famous epistolary novels.

TYPES OF NOVEL

Classifications in literature are always difficult, because each literary work of art has its own identity. Some major types of novels, however, have been identified as follows:

The picaresque novel. It deals with a series of separate adventures happening to the hero, who is usually a rogue or a vagabond. The word 'picaresque' seems to come from the Spanish 'pícaro' (rogue), and the first example was *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). In England two novelists of the 18th century wrote picaresque novels: Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, but also later writers owed much to this tradition. The **adventure story** developed from the picaresque line.

The domestic novel, or novel of manners. It portrays social behaviour, or domestic life, and presents the conversations, the habits, the mentality typical of a historical period, usually the writer's own time. Jane Austen's novels are in the line of domestic novels.

The historical novel. This type of novel, mainly associated with the Scottish writer Walter Scott, is set in a past period and describes people and events of that period. The characters may be real or fictitious; the main events narrated are historical.

The gothic novel. Born in the 18th century, it aims at arousing terror and is characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. It is still popular thanks to its appeal to emotion, and to the fantastic and supernatural element in it.

The **Bildungsroman** (from the German 'Bildung': formation, cultural training). It describes the development of the hero from childhood to maturity, with particular attention to the contribution of life experience and education on personality. Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* and James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* can be considered examples of Bildungsroman.

Science Fiction. This type of fiction, brilliantly introduced by the French writer Jules Verne, deals with imaginary developments in science and technology.. Its increasing success seems to indicate that it appeals to popular imagination, while at the same time answering the demand for scientific realism. Among the most famous science fiction writers are Herbert George Wells, Ray Bradbury, Issac Asimov and Philip K. Dick. The cinema has contributed to the popularity of science fiction, and several films are now considered classics.

Then there is the **epistolary novel**, or novel in form of letters, the **autobiography**, the **detective story**, the **thriller**, and so on.

The 19th century saw the flourishing of serial publications: a novel appeared in parts, published in a magazine. To capture the interest of the public each instalment had to reach a certain climax, or create suspense, in order to encourage the reader to buy the next number. In some respects this type of publication anticipated our television serials, and likewise the writers were liable to be influenced by the response of the public and developed the story according to the requirements of their readers.

In the 20th century the evolution is psychological analysis has influenced the narrative style, leading to the creation of a language suitable to convey subtle shades of meaning and the complexity and elusiveness of the human mind. James Joyce in particular created a prose style which was defined 'stream-of-consciousness technique' and was considered a turning point in novel writing.



Russian writer **Anton Chekhov** (1860-1904) made formal innovations which have influenced the evolution of the modern short story. For him, the role of the artist is *to ask questions, not to answer them.*



Raymond Carver (1938-1988) was a short story writer and poet. His voice, distilled and perfectly measured, leads us beneath the surface of common life.

dénouement: the moment when all of the knots of the story are untied. It should not be confused with the end of the story.

THE SHORT STORY

The main differences between a short story and a novel can be summarized in terms of

- **length:** the most obvious feature of the short story is that it should be short; when it is longer it turns into a novella, an intermediate form between the short story and the novel
- **structure:** the short story is self-contained and has only one plot which tends to be simple and preferably focuses on a single incident, while the novel is more complex and has a layering of sub-plots
- **characters:** only one or a few *versus* more characters
- **span of time:** short in the short story, much longer in the novel – sometimes covering several generations
- **theme:** the short story is built on one theme, while a novel can convey more

The British and American short story developed in the mid-19th century. It began to appear in magazines, and this may be the reason why it is more accessible to the average reader, 'the man in the street'.

It can also represent a revolt against established forms of higher literature, even if many writers start with the short story, and go on with the novel.

Since the 20th century the short story has developed, becoming a very important literary form with distinctive features: succinctness, careful construction, form.

Rudyard Kipling is a recognized master of the short story, and has been defined "an innovator and a virtuoso" in this field. Other remarkable short story writers are D.H. Lawrence, E.A. Poe, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, Joseph Conrad, Ernest Hemingway and more recently, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Roald Dahl, Raymond Carver, just to mention some famous names. Today the short story is a great favourite both with writers and readers because of its conciseness and intensity.

COMPOSITION

With the help of your teacher choose a short story and analyse it. Then, in groups, plan your own short story. Decide about the following:

- **setting** in terms of place (e.g. in Spain, abroad, a big city, a small town, countryside or seaside, ...)
in terms of time (our own time, the past –in this case briefly considering the main features and the way of life during the period chosen, an imaginary future...)
- **characters** (age, social class, personality, relationships, aims in life; physically or psychologically described, ...)
- **story** (the event/s, the moment of crisis, dénouement, i.e. the moment when everything is explained,...)
- **narrator and focalization** (inside/outside the story, ...)
- **sequencing** (in medias res, chronological,...)

You should also decide which share to give the dialogue, description, narrative, and/or commentary.