

Doints of view

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES

Edited by James Moffett and Kenneth R. McElhen

James Joyce • Katherine Anne Porter • Saul Bellow Stephen Vincent Benet • Henry James Joseph Conrad • Dorothy Parker • Nikolai Gogol Ambrose Bierce • Katherine Mansfield Truman Capote • Stephen Crane • Dylan Thomas Frank O'Connor • Jean Stafford Nathaniel Hawthorne • Ivan Turgenev • Irwin Shaw John Updike • Guy de Maugassant Bernard Matamud • Anton Chekhov • John Cheever and eighteen other great writers



points of view

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES

The range of this collection is vast, and the 41 stories which comprise it are not the familiar anthology pieces; they offer the reader fresh contact with masters of the short-story form. Equally important is the anthology's unique arrangement: editors Moffett and McElheny have grouped the stories according to narrative method, providing a total spectrum of the diverse fictional techniques inherent in the use of point of view. As the editors point out, 'Our ways of sharing and apprehending experience are themselves a crucial part of what we call experience.'

A PARTIAL LISTING OF THE CONTENTS:

FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON	Daniel Keyes
	Truman Capote
AANDP	John Updike
THE USE OF FORCE	William Carlos Williams
BAD CHARACTERS	Jean Stafford
JOHNNY BEAR	John Steinbeck
PATRICIA, EDITH, AND ARNO	DLD Dylan Thomas
	Bernard Malamud
	John Cheever
A FATHER-TO-BE	Saul Bellow
THE LOTTERY	Shirley Jackson

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POINTS OF VIEW:

An Anthology of Short Stories

EDITED BY

JAMES MOFFETT and KENNETH R. McELHENY

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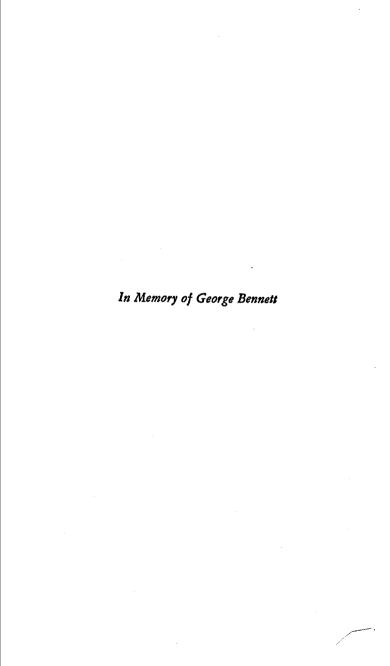


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Preface

Before explaining the idea behind the unorthodox arrangement of this anthology (see "Afterword"), we want to say that these forty-one stories have been chosen because they make good reading. Many of them have been tried out for a number of years at Phillips Exeter Academy, where students found them a pleasure and a stimulus. We feel sure that they are right not only for older adolescents and college students but that they will grip and absorb any adult lover of short stories. They run the gamut of experience, mood, and style. There is sober realism and unbridled satire, raw action and inner poetry, mystery and familiarity. As for variety of technique, that is thoroughly insured by the very format of the book—the grouping of the stories by various first-person and third-person narrations, and the arraying of these groups into a spectrum.

Our wish has been both to assemble a diverse collection of stories by superior writers of this century and the last, choosing each on its own merits, and to sort them according to the basic forms into which all fiction is cast. We have ordered these stories so as to call attention to who the narrator is. when and where he is telling the story, who he is telling it to. what relation to the events he stands in, and what kind of knowledge he claims. The technique of a story is defined both as a certain communication system and a certain information system. This order, we feel, requires practically no pre-interpretation, which is the hazard of thematic arrangement, and has the advantage over randomness that it can better set off the uniqueness of each story and at the same time make clear its relationship to all other stories. Although the groupings arrived at this way resemble roughly some conventional classifications of point of view, our theory insists on more discriminations among the various first- and third-person techniques and asserts that these techniques form a continuum.

Nothing is lost by making an arrangement of stories that might have been a miscellany. Something can be gained, we concluded from our experience as teachers, by creating a spectrum of fictional techniques. Orange is no less orange for appearing between yellow and red; on the contrary, we know orange better when we see it blend with its neighboring colors. The differences in a spectrum are differences of degree: to go from violet to red you keep increasing the wavelength. In our spectrum you keep increasing the distance between the speaker and his listener, and between the speaker and his subject. Thus the central concept is the trinity of first, second, and third persons—I, you, and he. What determines movement along the spectrum is some shift in the relations among them. Differently named, the three persons are narrator, auditor, and story; informer, informed, and information; transmitter, receiver, and message. The too-often neglected second person is brought back into the picture, and the generality of the trinity permits easy translation from art to everyday communication, from literature to life.

Like all trinities, this one is a unity. One change entails others. When the distance in time and space increases among I, you, and he, so does the distance in thought and feeling. The gradual divergence of first, second, and third persons necessarily traces other progressions that are of human and literary interest. Point of view displaces; perspective broadens. As focus travels from the infra I to the ultra they, an expansion occurs in the communication system between speaker and audience. and in the information system between speaker and subject. Plot, character, theme, and style are factors of these shifting systems. The fictional ways people tell stories are modeled on the real-life ways they talk and learn.

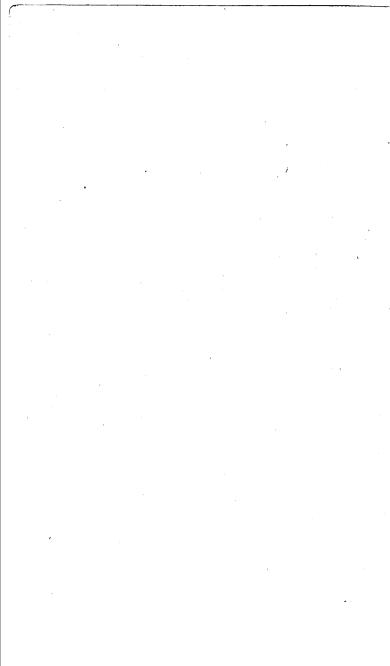
We think that this comparison will enhance the pleasure and understanding of both the casual reader and the student of fiction. After you have read one of these stories and decided what it is about, ask yourself why the author employed for that story the technique that he did. Your answer may be a real revelation. If you read the stories in the order of our arrangement, you may find yourself undergoing a very curious experience that is cumulative, a bit like undergoing one of the stories themselves. By beginning one place and ending somewhere very different, this book intends to unfold a kind of tale -the story of form.

At this point the stories must speak to you. We hope that

they will speak doubly.

POINTS OF VIEW:

An Anthology of Short Stories



INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

In these first two stories somebody is speaking to himself, thinking. We merely overhear his thoughts. These stories are the equivalent of soliloquies in the theater, except that a character thinking alone on stage would have to talk aloud so that the audience could hear his thoughts. Reading these stories is like listening to a soliloquy.

If the speaker is reacting to his immediate surroundings, his interior monologue will tell the story of what is going on around him. If his thoughts are memories, his soliloquy will review some past events associated with something in the present. If he is mainly reflecting, his train of thought does not record a present or recall a past story—it is the

story itself.

Interior monologue is flexible, though generally limited. The two stories following show something of how it can vary. Few stories are told entirely in this way, but since James Joyce's Ulysses and Virginia Woolf's The Waves the technique has been widely used for long passages in novels and has had great impact on recent French novelists like Nathalie Sarraute and Claude Mauriac (the latter's The Dinner Party consists entirely of alternated interior and dramatic monologues). Like The Waves. Faulkner's As I Lay Dying moves in rotation among the minds of a group of characters. Edouard Dujardin is generally credited with having invented interior monologue as a fictional device in his 1887 novel We'll to the Woods No More. Such poems as Amy Lowell's "Patterns," T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and Browning's "Soliloguy of the Spanish Cloister' are interior monologues.

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