CHAPTER III

THE SHORT STORY AND THE REFLECTION OF HUMAN VALUES

The present chapter takes up the nature and characteristics of the short story in the reflection of human values. It studies the strength and potentiality of the short story as a literary genre in projecting these values. In order to develop the discussion in a logical manner, the general features of literature and its reflection of human values may first be considered.

3.1 Literature and the expression of human values

Literature reflects human values by presenting value experiences. In this context, Dorathy Lee, a philosopher on human values, made an insightful explanation when she observes:

We can speak about human values, but we cannot know them directly. We inferred them through their expression in behaviour.

This explanation has an apt relevance to the position of literature in the explanation of human values. Its significance is in recognizing the capacity of literature in bringing out the complex and abstract nature of human values through diverse human behaviour. However, from the literary point, the outward day-to-day living alone does not reflect all. This is made clear by E. M. Foster when he challenges the well known stand of Aristotle on the importance of action:
`All human happiness and misery,’ says Aristotle, ‘take the form of action.’ We know better. We believe that happiness and misery exist in the sacred life, which each one of us leads privately and to which (in his characters) the novelist has access.  

Literature is full of instances which demonstrate the author’s access to the characters’ thoughts and feelings. In the context of human values, a story need not present two persons to project human values through behaviour and reaction. In such cases, it is observed, there are direct focuses on the thoughts and feelings of characters. In fact this is an important development in modern fiction. Wilfred Stone et al while highlighting the absence of external drama in the short story, focus on this feature when they explain that “the real battlefield of the story is inside a character”. The selected Khasi short stories are also found to display not only the behaviour but the unseen thoughts and feelings of their characters. This has an important implication in relation to the subjective aspect of human values. These are the inner values, which cannot be seen, but must be experienced from within. Mayhead expresses this special capacity of literature, when he highlights the difference between the historian and the novelist:

The answer is that both Dickens and Hardy had more to say about life as they saw it, than they could possibly have said had they restricted themselves to the painstaking documentation of fact.

Literature achieves this by presenting mental and emotional conflicts and touches on life’s variety as manifested in the many-sided aspects of human life. In addition, it also presents the negative aspects of human
life, such as man’s suffering and the existence of the wicked and the immoral. However, presented through the author’s unique insight, these aspects all the more enhance man’s ideals and diverse values. In this connection, Foster clarifies the authors’ different approaches to life when he commented on the nature of novelists: “They come from different age and rank, they have different temperaments and aims, but they all hold pens in their hands.” Hence, the multifaceted human values each corresponding to the author’s personal vision.

But in projecting these, it is the author’s command of language and his personal expression which vitalizes literary language. Thus, Joseph Conrad refers to “the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel, it is before all, to make you see.” From this, it is clear that the style and techniques of the author features significantly in the reflection of his values.

3.2. The short story - an introduction

In the present study, a clear understanding of the characteristics of the short story is highly essential in order to examine its capacity and potentialities in value reflection. In projecting these aspects, it is considered relevant to also focus on a comparison with the folktale and the novel. Further, it is also felt important to remove obvious confusion between the implications in the concept ‘theme’ and ‘human values’. This will guide the study in a clear and acceptable manner and ensures clarity in the study of the selected stories. As the present chapter precedes the textual analysis to be taken up in chapter IV, the clarification between these two concepts is taken up in the present chapter.
The English short story in its modern form makes its appearance in 1837 with the publication of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s volume of “Twice Told Tales”. John Hadfield observes that most of the stories of this period were written as “magazine or newspaper stories”. As such their subject contents had to cater to the commercial demands of the times. But even at this early stage, writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Irving Wallace displayed appreciative moral intensity and dignity. Therefore, the author not only entertains, but seeks to impress the readers with some message. In this connection, Robin Mayhead’s description of the enjoyment of literature may be quoted:

It relaxes by exercising, bringing into play faculties of the mind that would otherwise lay dormant. It distracts not by offering a cowardly escape but by making living fuller and more meaningful.

The explanation “bringing into play ... lay dormant” is of particular significance in the case of the short story. It directs attention to the place of styles and techniques for projecting the author’s value perception within the brevity constraints of the short story. This is made clear specially in the context of the well-known single effect principle of the short story.

The singular feature of the short story is the presentation of episodes drawn from everyday life. Highlighting the nature of the short story, Bashford explains as follows:

It has for its material not merely people and events, but people in their relations to one another and to their
environment. In a word, the short-story material is a single situation. The modern short story differs in this respect from the novel, and also from the simple narrative or tale from which it sprang.\(^\text{10}\)

The above explanation highlights the general comparison between the short story, the novel and the folktale. The difference of the novel from the short story is mainly on its full length presentation which is due to its freedom to present things in inexhaustible details. The main features of a folktale, on the other hand, are its imaginary and strong moralistic element. Thus in value reflection, D. L. Alishmann refers to the tales as "carriers of didactic lessons" and as "psychological observations" or "social commentaries".\(^\text{11}\) In addition to these two features, B. N. Colby highlights the practical and prudential element when he draws attention to the "various types of useful behaviour and strategies"\(^\text{12}\) presented by the folktale. In the Khasi context, Rabon Singh’s collection\(^\text{13}\) of Khasi folktales are noted for their expression of human values.

Coming to the novel, Andrew Micheal Robert’s introductory article emphasized not only human values in the realistic context, but also illustrates social and cultural values as well as values pertaining to the romance, the humorous and the adventure. For such comprehensive coverage, Robert describes the novel as “a highly receptive and flexible literary form, so that there seems to be no aspect of experience which it cannot cover”.\(^\text{14}\) Compared with these forms, the distinction of the short story is its presentation of the wide ranging values as manifested in single incidents and episodes. Yet for the modern man, caught up in endless rush with traditional values swept away by a changing world, the brief
presentations are a welcome and affordable distraction from the cares and concerns of life. Therefore, the short story has achieved immense vogue in the modern era.

An important conclusion from these comparative projections in value perception is that all the three fictional forms do reflect human values in their multifaceted nature. These facts substantiate the philosophical and literary views highlighted in Chapter II. They establish the fact that human values are not only moralistic, ethical and altruistic, but embrace diverse human significances and possibilities sustaining and enriching the life of man as a human being.

3.2.1. The short story as a literary genre

The short story manifested many of the characteristics of the novel. In contrast to the novel, the short story generally confines itself to single incidents or to certain traits of human character. But of relevance to the present study is that both these reflect human values in the real life situation. We may start with the definitions of the short story. Emphasizing the episodic nature of the short story, R. Summer defines the Short Story as:

A vignette – a short representation of one’s of life’s little incident (usually ironic) can be and often is a short story.\(^5\)

Similarly, Author Waterman referred to the short story as “fragments taken from someone’s life”.\(^6\) However, Hudson points out that a story need not necessarily “be confined to a single incident or moment.”\(^7\) This point is also highlighted by Flannery O’Connor when
she explains that “the novel works by a slower accumulation of details
than the short story.”^18 The important point in these definitions is that
these are general in nature and do not have a direct bearing on the
reflection of human values. In this connection, the well known definition
of Edgar Allan Poe may be quoted:

> A short story is a narrative fiction, having a unity of effect or
expressions, the reading of which could be completed at one
sitting.\(^{19}\)

The definition clearly brings out the brevity and technique of the
short story. It also emphasizes the power to impact the readers with a
unity of effect. This is of special relevance in the context of human
values. However, the unity of effect as seen from Poe’s stories is the
effect of terror and the supernatural. As such it does not specifically
project the impact of human values. In this connection, in view of the
absence of definitions emphasizing human values, the explanation of
Flannery O’Connor regarding the projection of meaning in the short story
is found to be particularly insightful. Refuting the issue of brevity,
O’Connor aptly comments:

> What do we mean by short, being short does not mean being
slight. A short story should be long in depth and should give
us an experience of meaning.\(^{20}\)

While discussing her story “The Misfit”, O’Connor (p. 171) has
highlighted the grandmother’s action and gesture “which are both totally
right and totally unexpected” for these are “actions of grace in the
grandmother’s heart”. From this it is evident that the experience of
meaning is the experience of human values manifested in acts of sympathy and kindness. William Paden, a critic of the short story, has also expressed clarifying views on the value experience in the short story. He observes:

The story worthy of being read more than once – ultimately should be concerned with some aspects of the human experience.  

As explained, the human experience which makes a story worthy to read is an experience of human values. As projected, human values relate to the emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of life. As such the events, human relationships and character projections can have meaning only if these are shown to affect these aspects. As perceived by the author, these make up the essential reality of man and therefore these are meaningful to man as a human being. Hence, O'Connor declares, “I prefer to talk about the meaning in a story rather than the theme of the story” (p.170). The manner in which a short story conveys its values may be seen in its distinct characteristics. These are also displayed in its literary aspects such as the story, characters and narrative styles and techniques.

3.2.2. The distinct characteristics of the short story: the unlimited range

The distinction of the short story is that it captures human values evolving from wide ranging incidents and episodes. The stories of Conrad Aiken as described by Waterman reflect the range of themes covered by the short story:
Their range is astonishing, we met professors, prostitutes, farmers, business men, journalists, writers, nurses, taxi drivers, tourists, carnival performers, children, and the ubiquitous everyman... And the moods they express are equally varied: humorous, sad, ironic, satiric, macabre, cruel, insane, sentimental, erotic and melancholy.  

The above characters and moods presented in the short story remind us of Paul Hunter’s description of the “recognizable situations” and “identification with characters” presented by the novel. Therefore, both the novel and the short story shared this capacity and thus differ from the folktale. However, certain distinct features are manifested by the short story.

**The sense of intimacy and familiarity**

Another important feature of the short story compared with the novel, is that the episodes are as those which we come across in our everyday lives. This conveys a sense of intimacy and familiarity which is lacking in the novel. This is because the full length projection of the life of the hero and heroine in a novel makes us to visibly feel the distance. This is greatly subdued in the short story. Thomas Gullason articulates this point when he says:

> For generations writers have gone to the short story not because it is easier to write, but because they feel that the experience of a story or a cycle of stories more closely approximates the reality and truth of everyday life.  

Gullason supports his opinion by pointing out that for writers like Ernest Hemmingway, “the novel – not the short story is the artificial
Gullason clarifies this by highlighting Hemingway’s viewpoint explained as follows:

By contrast, stories capture life as it really is, in process.... Revealing perceptions and understanding that are only briefly uncovered which are experiences from everyday life.26

This is the strength and possibility of the short story. It vividly captures human values emanating from situations such as personally experienced in day to day life. The narrated incidents may be common place ones. In R. A. Scott-James’ explanation these “fly past us carelessly regarded, dulled by use-and-wont – a matter of sleeping and waking”27. However, when presented through the vision of the author and coloured by his language, these manage not only to delight, but also impress us with their value explications. Thus the mundane experience of buying an overcoat in the intensely cold Siberian climate in Gogol’s “The Overcoat”28 could profoundly stir our compassion and move us to the depths of our humanity. Whereas Katherine Mansfield’s “A cup of Tea”,29 a routine, daily life affair, pierces through the outward appearance to show that the generosity of the rich is often only vanity. The Khasi short story “Ka Akor Kaba Tarn” (Politeness Counts) by S. J. Duncan30 which narrates a common affair of selling a car, insightfully projects the Khasi traditional values of politeness and decorum without losing sight of the values of prudence and practical sense.
The short story as a presentation of significant moments

Philosopher like Soren Kierkegaard\(^3\) highlights the moral significance of moments as ‘moments of choice’. In the moral context, however transitory, these mark the stage of moral change in men. This has a keen relevance to the value reflection of the short story. Among its value projection, the uniqueness of this form is the presentation of such moments. Therefore, for Virginia Elwin, the importance of the short story is the presentation of “significant or even crucial moments”. Observing the impact of moments in the life of characters as captured by the short story, she explains:

For some of them the moment is one during which they reveal themselves in their true character. For some it is a moment of change, a moment at which they arrive at some very important understanding about life and people. For still others, the moment is one in which they deal with “life and death” itself.\(^2\)

This reminded us of Anne Porter’s story, “The Grave”\(^5\) in which the sight of dyed sugar sweets, vividly brought back the childhood memory of the unborn rabbits in the womb of the skinned mother rabbit. At that instant, it flashed back with life-like vividness the childlike intuitive knowledge of the mystery of life. But in the context of human values, such moments may be James Joyce’s “epiphany” explained as the moment of revelation or Sean ‘O’ Foilain’s “point of illumination” referred to by Wilfred Stone et al.\(^3\) These reflect an understanding of change or moral truth through self realization. The objective of this study is to find out the literary capacity of the Khasi short story writers in presenting the value implications of such significant moments. This
unique feature of the short story convincingly justifies the status of the short story as a literary genre. It refutes the charge of lack of depth and brevity. To guide the story to this point, the author uses his creative ability in handling his material. This takes us to the literary aspects of the short story through which the author creatively exploited to reflect his sense of values.

3.3. Literary aspects of the short story
The Plot of the short story
As in the case of the novel, the same rules of arrangement of events and emphasis on situations are important in the short story. The different parts of the story are so organized and details so strategically highlighted that each logically contributes to the author’s value perception. This remind us of Poe’s advice that irrelevant details to the pre-designed effect are not to be included. However, the story cannot fully express its values without the characters who enacted value demonstrations. Their place in the reflection of values may be highlighted.

Characters of the Story
The characters are the main agents through which the author illustrates his vision of human values. Compared to the novel, the short story limits its presentation only to a certain trait or facets of character. However, as in the novel, the requirements in characterization are consistency, individuality and complexity for credibility. According to Knickerbocker et al., consistency is of special importance in the short story as this form cannot afford developments or changes. This rule stands the short story in good stead for it ensures the impact of certain
human value with the required intensity. What is achieved is a character projection so sharply edged that it remains in our memory long after the story is forgotten.

To effect individuality Stephen Minot drew attention to the element of the unusual, certain personal expressions in a person’s character and therefore ensures a semblance of reality and interest. It is observed that the short story does not have the advantage to analyze the psyche of its characters or to present full physical details. However, through brief details of physical appearance of the main character, his thoughts and action, mannerism, the opinion of other characters, dialogue or comments can reveal a great deal about a man or woman. These can create a vivid mental image suggesting value impression. In addition to these, the dramatic touches as in the expression of emotions and reactions are the important elements in characterization. This ensures the needed result in conveying the author’s vision of human values.

In the context of value reflection, the highly essential role of characters is insightfully explained by no other than a philosopher. Explaining the nature of values, Paul Roubiczek observes, “they must be embodied to be experienced; we cannot know goodness or beauty in the abstract”. The significance of the characters is the manner and extent in which the author shows how they exemplify or personify values. But the characters may also reflect negation of perceived values. These concrete and realistic presentations enable the readers to understand and have insight into the meaning of human values. Thus the story and the characters are inextricably integrated, each complimenting the other.
Eudora Welty aptly observes this fact when she says: “plots are, indeed, what we see with. What’s seen is what we’re interested in”.

**Styles and techniques**

However, both the presentation of the story and the characters greatly depend on the narrative styles and literary techniques. As in the case of the novel, the narrative style include the point of the author’s perception from which the story is to be narrated and also narrative devices. The use of techniques pertains to literary techniques such as imageries, symbols and language usages. However, in view of its brevity, the short story cannot afford to indulge in commentaries and summaries. In addition, the handling of the language, such as diction and literary techniques is extremely important for effective results. As proposed these will be discussed separately in Chapter V assigned for these aspects.

**Problems in story telling**

To sum up, it may be pointed out that critics like Stephen Minot has warned of two dangers in the plotting of the short story and its narration. These are the lack of significance after the author has presented interesting details. The second problem is the tendency to ramble. Minot describes the second problem as “being philosophically discursive or heavily symbolic”. The main danger is the impression of an interfering author. The short story should avoid such lapses in its artistic effort to convey the human values of its story. These drawbacks are to be kept in mind in the study of the present selected Khasi short stories.
3.4 The Khasi Short Story

Coming to the Khasi short story, its written form may be said to have originated between 1885 to 1896 with John Robert’s publication of his Khasi Readers. He introduced the short story element in the Biblical stories published in his Khasi Readers. The values reflected by these stories are obviously human values as part of the Christian values. However, after this humble beginning, there is no appreciative development in the Khasi short story according to the accepted criteria of realistic presentation. Writing on the history of Khasi literature covering a period between 1888 to 1970, R. S. Lyngdoh made a reference only to the short stories included in Primrose Gapthoh’s two books. These are Sawdong ka Lyngwiar Dpei (Around the Hearth) published in 1931 and Ki Umjer Ksiar (The Golden Dews) published in 1941. Although these are on the pattern of the biblical stories based on ancient stories, Lyngdoh appeared to consider these as ki khana lyngkot (short stories). These are different from other stories included in the books which he refers to as ki Puriskam (tales). Their difference is that the stories are essentially based on relevant human issues and human values. This is an important step in the development of the Khasi short story and a significant manifestation of human values as part of Khasi literary efforts.

However, an important development in the Khasi short story is with the publication of S. J. Duncan’s Phuit! Ka Sabuit! bad kiwei de ki Khana in 1968. This book contains a collection of eleven short stories. The merit of these stories is that they fulfil the accepted criteria of the short story being based on the real life episodes of men and women. The publication of these stories caught the attention of talented writers. The
period from 1985 to 1989 witnessed a number of important stories from three authors. These are Hughlet Warjri, Wan Kharkrang and Paul Lyngdoh. With these stories, the Khasi short story has come to age. This is specially seen in the way that these authors provide not only delightful stories but impressed us with the exposition of wide-ranged human values. It is this value preoccupation of these stories which is of immense literary significance, enriching the quality of Khasi Literature in general. Thus the stories established themselves as a credible literary form for literary endeavour. It is on these short stories and their reflection of human values that the present research focuses its attention.

3.5 The difference between human values and theme

The points highlighted in the earlier sections established the conclusion that all fictional forms interpret human values not only in the moral context but also in the social, practical and the well being context. The short story with its brevity characteristic, its unlimited range also reflected human values in the same manner. These facts support the scholarly interpretation of human values discussed in Chapter II. Therefore on these basis, the analysis of the Khasi selected stories in Chapter IV will show the capacity of the Khasi short story to project these values. However, a study of human values involves considerable confusion. This is because the concept ‘human values’ is misunderstood with the concept ‘theme’. These two terms are used interchangeably and as such there appeared to be no dividing line in their implications. In this consideration, compassion, love, patriotism which are human values may also be the themes of the stories. Therefore, at this stage of the study, a clarification is felt necessary so as to chart the study in the right direction.
This will remove all confusion and provide the scholar with the needed guidance. This problem may be discussed under the following heads.

**Meaning of Theme**

According to Stephen Minot, the theme is not always associated with moral implications but it is the author’s vision of life. Thus theme is stated to be:

> The primary statement, suggestion or implication of a literary work. The term is used here interchangeably with “central concern”. It does not have the moral implication of “message” nor the didactic element of “thesis”. A thesis states or clearly implies a particular conviction or recommends a specific course of action.\(^\text{45}\)

In contrast to this explanation, human values as projected by scholarly views direct attention to the human significance in things, men and action. As such human values implies a message for man. On the other hand, Christ Baldick indicates the relation of theme to human values when he explains: “While the subject is described in terms of action, its theme or themes will be described in more abstract terms (e.g., love, war, revenge, betrayal)”.\(^\text{46}\) By way of illustration, the theme of Charles Dickens *Hard Times* is about the social injustice to the poor in industrial England; the theme of the story *The Windmill Man* is about the premonition of an overriding fate.\(^\text{47}\) In the first, the theme which is the social picture of the sufferings of the poor implies human values of fellows feelings, justice and equality. In the second story, the theme is man’s will against the negative forces influencing his life and death, thus projecting human values of man’s moral will. These stories clarify the
meaning of theme. But an important manifestation of the difference between theme and human values, is illustratively projected through their mode of expression. This is of particular relevance in the study of human values and may therefore be discussed in more details.

**The Expression of Theme**

While discussing the difference in human values and theme, the expression of theme in any literary work is clearly pronounced. According to Robert Scholes, the title of the story or important passages are simple clues suggesting the theme. The title of Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice” or Pearl Buck’s “The Mission” are examples. The Khasi story, *Sian kum ki Bsein* (Be Clever as Snakes) clearly projects prudence as the theme of the story. Further, Scholes pointed out that the theme may also be explicitly conveyed through certain passages such as the verbal expressions of the characters or the commentaries of the author. As an example, the verbal outbursts of the hero in D. H. Lawrence’s novel “The Phoenix” against the ugliness of industrial England explicitly conveys the theme of protest against the negative aspects of industrialization. Thus, the expression of theme or central idea is explicitly conveyed.

**The expression of human values**

In the context of value expression, the observation of Wilfred Stone et al is found to significantly clarify the difference. Their observation may be considered:

Stories are not sermons. They tend to present than to preach. Their values are often implicit than explicit. Yet no matter how objective a writer is, no matter how giving to showing
over telling, his values seep into his stories - into his subject matter, his way of defining characters, his plots, his very tone.\footnote{51}

An analysis of the above explanation directs attention to two modes of value expressions. These are highlighted as follows:

(1) The first value expression is in the statement “seep into his stories into his subject matter” evidently constituted the meaning and therefore the theme which may also be a statement of value. As mentioned this is clearly pronounced and readily emerged towards the end of the story. In the quoted critics’ explanation this is the integrated part of the story and its subject matter and therefore part of its theme.

(2) The second mode of expression is the statement “seep into... his way of defining characters, his plots, his very tone”. This forms part of the author’s values reflected in the course of narrating his story. These value expressions are part of the dynamic creative process reflected through characters and plot details. The values may also find expression through details of physical appearances, humorous digs on habits and foibles or mannerism. In simple words Richard Abcarian and Marvin Klotz explains the position as follows:

\textit{Everything that happens in a work of fiction - every figure, every tree, every furnished room and crescent moon and dreary fog - has been purposely put there by the creator.} \footnote{52}
These touch the readers responding chords for as explained by these critics, “the landscapes and the personalities that people them, incorporate moral imperatives that reflect the value system in the readers world”.

The author’s values may also be reflected through his style and techniques and the tone of his narration. The second mode which is more in the implicit form tend to be submerged by the main statement of value which may be part of the theme. Therefore, other values may not be readily perceived by the reader so long as he is satisfied with the apparent meaning. Such values are conveyed through subtler forms as in the use of imageries, symbols, literary devices, tone, irony, diction even names of characters. These contribute insights into the value implications which the author perceives in a situation or a character. Hence the connotative use of the word ‘seep’ by Stone et al which resulted in more than one effect as also emphasized by Thomas Gullason.\(^{53}\) Therefore, in the light of the implicit mode, the study and analysis are the essential prerequisites, if the author’s values are to be fully projected.

For clarification of these two modes, we may consider Sherwood Anderson’s story “I’m a Fool”\(^{55}\). Its theme is the typical brazeness of a teenage boy gaining self realization of his folly. But side by side we are also given insights into the value implication of practical experience. This is in the revelation of the boy’s description of “boys raised regular in houses who never have a fine nigger like Burt for a friend and go to high school and college and never steal and get drunk a little”. Therefore, from the point of practical realities and zest of life “such fellows know nothing at all” \(p.\,79\). But for all his brazenness, we are drawn to the boy for his
susceptibility to the beauty of nature. This is seen in his spontaneous references to “the nice hickorynut and beachnut and oak and other kinds of trees along the road, or brown and red and the good smells and birds singing a song” (p.80) while returning home. With this, Sherwood in a subtle manner unfolds the refreshing values of nature which charm and enrich the life of man. Immersed in their beauty, the boy experienced peace with himself and with the world at large.

It is such innumerable value reflections which convinced Gullason to develop a new approach as far as the reflection of human values is concerned. And so he is of the opinion that though on the surface there appears to be one theme or effect, a good story projects more that one effect.56

In view of the above facts, many critics advise readers to be creative in their approach so as to draw as many values as the author’s value sensibility projects.

3.6 The objectives of the study

Before winding up the discussion in the present chapter and taking up the study and analysis of the selected stories, it is felt that such study be guided by clearly spelled out objectives. This is necessary to fully project the different types of human values to the maximum possible extent. Therefore, based on the facts on human values projected in Chapter II and the characteristics of the short story in the present chapter, the following objectives have been framed:
1. The extent and the manner in which the human values are reflected.

2. The values that reflect the intrinsic and universal nature of human values.

3. The Khasi essence of human values that are focused upon or questioned.

4. The styles and techniques used to present the views of human values as perceived by the authors in different situations and human characters.

The next two chapters which will take up the analysis of the selected stories as per the stated objectives will highlight the types of values projected by the stories. The chapters will also bring out the capacity and extent to which human values are reflected.

3.7 Summary

This chapter discusses the characteristics, capacity and strengths of the short story as a literary genre in the reflection of human values. This is explained by highlighting the advantage of literature in expressing human values not only through a presentation of men’s action and behaviour, but as E.M. Foster states, in men’s thoughts and feelings. The speciality of the short story in this respect is the manifestation of human values as evolved in what Author Waterman describes as “fragments from someone’s life”. In this respect, compared with the fictional forms of the folktale and the novel, human values are reflected not only in their moral aspects but in their diverse human significance and human possibilities. A focus on the short story and its reflection of human values
highlights Flannery O’connor’s viewpoint of the depth of meaning conveyed by a short story. Its distinct characteristics, is the sense of familiarity of the narrated episodes articulated by Gullason’s as ‘life, as it is in process”. The other possibility of the short story as emphasized by Virginia Elwyn is “the presentation of significant or even crucial moments” reflecting change and realization in the life of men.

In conclusion, the chapter takes cognizance of the confusion existing in the close relation of the concept theme and human values in a short story. While these are used interchangeably, their difference is highlighted by their mode of expression. The expression of theme which is the central meaning of the story is obvious, while the expression of human values which seeps into the author’s subject matter may be implicit or explicit. Hence the creative approach is advised by Thomas Gullason to project all the values reflected by the author.

Lastly, to guide the study and analysis of the selected stories in Chapter IV in a sound and acceptable manner, the objectives of the study are highlighted.
End Notes


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.


45. Duncan, *op cit.*