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HISTORY OF THE NOVELLA; MAIN FEATURES AND
IMPORTANCE AS A GENRE

Yuldosheva Zulfizar Sobir qizi

Uzbekistan State World Languages

University, English teacher

Abstract. *This current article is about the genre of the novella, its history and importance in literature, its impact on the spirituality of people and main features of the novella as a genre. In addition, the most well-known novellas are listed in this article.*

Keywords: *novella, history, main features, genre, heroes, Animal Farm, Of mice and men.*

A novella is a narrative prose fiction that is shorter than a book but longer than a novelette or a short story. The English term novella is derived from the Italian novella, which means a short fiction based on actual events.

This affiliative impulse has been true since the novella's paradigmatic emergence in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a novella cycle written and circulated a century before print. Despite the classical sovereignty of verse fiction on the one hand and oral storytelling traditions on the other, the novellas of the *Decameron* established a new kind of modern literature written in prose and telling of everyday events. Set within societies shaped by citizens, these early instances already carried the pointed, argumentative form that would be perfected during the nineteenth century, effectively allowing novellas to become narrative amplifications of unresolved issues of civic life. The Italian genre novella grew out of a rich tradition of medieval short narrative forms. It took its first major form in the anonymous late 13th century *Libro di novelle et di bel parlar gentile*, known as Novellino, and reached its culmination with *The Decameron*. Followers of Boccaccio such as Giovanni Fiorentino, Franco Sacchetti, Giovanni Sercambi continued the tradition into the early 15th century. The Italian novella

influenced many later writers, including Shakespeare. It wasn't until the late 18th and early 19th centuries that writers developed the novella as a literary genre with principles and norms, often in a realistic style. At the period, Germans were the most prolific novelle writers. A novella, according to German writers, is a fictitious tale of undetermined length—a few pages to hundreds—restricted to a single, tense event, circumstance, or conflict leading to an unexpected turning point, resulting in a logical but surprise ending. Novellen often have a physical symbol that serves as the narrative's focal point.

The novella affected the evolution of the short story and book throughout Europe. In the late nineteenth century, Henry James was one of the first English language reviewers to coin the term novella to describe a narrative that was longer and more sophisticated than a short story but shorter than a novel.

In English-speaking nations, the modern novella is seldom classified as a unique literary form, but is commonly used to refer to a short novel.

A novella is a type of written fiction that exists between a short story and a full-length novel. Here are some major **features** of a novella. **Length:** Typically, novellas range from about 20,000 to 40,000 words, although some definitions can stretch this range slightly. They are longer than short stories but shorter than novels.

Focused Narrative: Novellas often concentrate on a single theme, idea, or character arc. This focus allows for a deeper exploration of a specific topic or situation without the complexity often found in longer novels.

Character Development: While novellas may have fewer characters than novels, they still provide enough space for meaningful character development. The characters are usually well-defined and undergo some form of transformation or realization.

Plot Structure: Novellas typically adhere to a clear plot structure, often following a traditional narrative arc (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) but in a more condensed form.

Themes and Motifs: Novellas often explore significant themes or motifs, allowing for a rich examination of ideas within a shorter narrative. This can include social issues, personal dilemmas, or philosophical questions.

Pacing: The pacing of a novella tends to be brisk, with fewer subplots and distractions. This allows the story to progress quickly while still providing depth.

Language and Style: Novellas often feature a concise and impactful writing style, with careful attention to language and imagery. The brevity of the form encourages writers to be economical with their words.

Emotional Impact: Many novellas aim to evoke strong emotions in the reader, often through intense situations or conflicts that resonate on a personal level.

The novella, with its distinct combination of brevity and depth, has made major contributions to the literary landscape and society, serving as an effective medium for authors to communicate meaningful stories. Let us look at some popular novella examples to demonstrate the literary form's significance and reach.

“Animal Farm” by George Orwell. A satirical story about the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and later into the Stalinist period.
“Of Mice and Men”, by John Steinbeck. A narrative about the desires of two migrant workers who want to live off the "fat of the land."

The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka This novella explores themes of guilt and isolation through its protagonist's transformation into a monstrous insect.

The Stranger by Albert Camus The story of an emotionally detached, amoral young man named Meursault.

Therefore, novellas have played an essential part in literature as a unique type of narrative. They are a distinct literary genre that is somewhere between a short story and a full-length book in terms of length and complexity. They provide a shorter reading experience than a full-length novel, but with greater depth and complexity than short stories.

One of the main benefits of novellas is that they provide a unique framework for authors to experiment with new ideas, characters, and literary styles. They allow authors to experiment with new narrative forms, as well as explore subjects and concepts that might not be appropriate for a full-length novel or short story. Novellas have helped to popularize particular genres, such as science fiction and fantasy, by allowing authors to tell complex and thought-provoking stories that would otherwise be too long for a short story or a novel. Novellas also allow authors to delve deeper into topics and characters than a short tale, while being more focused and succinct than a full-length novel. This allows for a more straight and to-the-point narrative, which may appeal to readers who favor that type of storytelling. Furthermore, novellas have been utilized to introduce new and emerging authors to the reading public, giving them a platform to demonstrate their skills and achieve recognition. They have also contributed significantly to giving a forum for experienced authors to experiment and push the frontiers of writing.

In conclusion, novellas are an essential type of literature because they provide a unique framework for authors to experiment with new ideas, characters, and literary styles. They provide a shorter reading experience than a full-length novel, but with greater depth and complexity than short stories. They have played an important role in popularizing various genres and introducing new and emerging authors to the reading audience. They are an integral part of the literary landscape and have contributed significantly to its evolution.

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