

The American Short Story: Special Focus on Poe, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner

RITIKA SINGH

For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn.

– (Ernest Hemingway)

The history of the short story goes far back to the animal fables, legends, myths and oral narratives passed down from one generation to the next. It constitutes the art of storytelling itself. However, it was the twentieth-century that studied the short story not as a concise prose narrative but rather for the characteristics that give it its unique rubric. “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving were two seminal successes that established the short story genre in the early nineteenth century, but it was Irving’s *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, commonly referred to as *The Sketch Book*, that gave the short story form, the American locale. Compact sketches and tales employed by German writers like Ludwig Tieck, Wilhelm Kleist and E.T.A. Hoffmann were the main influences for the origin of