

Bettina Schötz

Ü/PS

The British Short Story

Wed (6)

HSZ 101

The Swedish Academy's decision to award the Nobel Prize in Literature 2013 to a "master of the contemporary short story," Canadian writer Alice Munro, has brought the genre to the fore of popular attention and critical debates. Taking its cue from this renewed interest in the form, this seminar will look at the development of the British short story.

We will start off by attempting to arrive at a satisfactory definition of the narrative subgenre that has been famously compared to a "chameleon" (Hans Bender). Having familiarised ourselves with the seminal contribution to the form made by the American "genre *Übervater*" Edgar Allan Poe (Barbara Korte), we will turn our attention towards famous examples of British short-story writing. Thus, we will discuss short fiction penned by Rudyard Kipling, Virginia Woolf, Ian McEwan, Hanif Kureishi, Jackie Kay, and others. In so doing, we are going to pursue the following questions: What makes a short story 'short'? Which narrative features do these stories share? Are there any common themes? What appears to be specifically 'British' about these short stories? Why does the short story form continue to be so popular with writers and readers alike?

Throughout the seminar, we will practise the application of the categories and methods necessary for the analysis and interpretation of narrative texts. This course is also aimed at students who have not yet attended the introductory lecture to Literary Studies.

All primary texts and a selection of relevant secondary literature will be made available in a *Reader* that you are expected to purchase at the beginning of the summer term at CopyShop an der Uni, Mommsenstraße 3, 01069 Dresden.

Please note: You are not required to enrol for this seminar in advance. If you would like to join this course, simply turn up at the first session and sign up then.