

The primary focus of this doctoral thesis has been on the thematic and formal experimentations with the genre of short story as exemplified in the works of the Nobel Laureate Alice Munro (from Canada) and the Jnanpith awardee and the pioneer of the Hindi *nayi kahani* Nirmal Verma (from India). The writers have been instrumental in shifting the focus of the short story from the social-realist 'progressive' concerns over the socially, politically and economically oppressed that informed the English-Canadian and the Hindi literary consciousness of the late-colonial modernity. They have, instead, embarked upon an exploration of the new-age urban middle-class psychological concerns over the crisis of values caused by the individualism, changing gender equations, fragmentation within families, estrangement in interpersonal relationships and a continuous tussle between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' that formed an integral part of the mid-late twentieth century postcolonial modernity within their respective socio-cultural milieu. It is by locating their literary sensibilities at the cross-roads of modernist and postmodernist tendencies that the two literary contemporaries achieve this end, thereby elevating the genre of short story to new heights in terms of its canonical status, commercial viability and academic prestige. Using the methodological tools of genology and thematology, this thesis has looked into how the literary experimentations of Munro and Verma have helped the short story emerge as the most potent literary vehicle for postcolonial urban 'modernity' across literary paradigms and cultures set far apart. Further, by identifying and interrogating congruent trends in the evolution of the short story within English-Canadian and Hindi literature, it has striven to understand how literary consciousness has followed a similar trajectory of thought and expression in a particular period of history, across cultures and nations.