Many political and historical developments have influenced the countries of Canada and India. The effects of colonisation have nurtured an ambivalent sense of identity among the people of the two countries. Besides this, the Canadians have also dealt a feeling of displacement. This problem of identity is reflected in the literary work of the two countries, and the issue is intensified in writing by women. Women have been threatened not only by colonial influences, but also by the existing patriarchal ideologies. Women writers, therefore have begun to question the concept of self and the nature of feminine identity. The aim of the thesis is to analyse this concept of feminine identity, and the re-shaping of self that is undertaken by the women characters in the short stories of Alice Munro, and Shashi Deshpande. The thesis is structured into five chapters preceded by a preface:

Chapter One: **Mapping Out** charts the background of the thesis, and touches upon the important areas that underlie the study. Beginning with a brief introduction of the authors and their works, the chapter proceeds to study the concepts: feminine identity; the short story genre and women writers; postcolonial literary background; postcolonialism and feminism; and the concept of universal sisterhood.
Chapter Two: *A Man and A Woman* discusses what it means for women to be brides/wives/lovers and draws upon some of the short stories of Munro and Deshpande to understand the nature of man-woman relationships. At the same time, it also ponders and speculates on the existing relationship in terms of sex and sexuality.

Chapter Three: *Providence* examines the short stories dealing with mother-daughter relationships. It discusses the influence of mothers, and the bond that exists between mothers and daughters in families.

Chapter Four: *Voices* realises that women characters in the short stories have allowed other voices to nurture, and grow within them while they have thrust down their own true selves. This realisation becomes conspicuous when they view their childhood, or generational connections, or intercultural connections, objectively. They realise the problems of class and society, political bureaucracies, religious and moral values, history and time, nature and place, fear and madness, death and alienation as they develop self-awareness and review their places in society.

Chapter Five: *The Photographers* is the concluding chapter that assesses and sums up the writers’ works and their ability, in portraying women characters realistically. The writers are similar to photographers, for they capture all the nuances of womens’ lives. The chapter discusses
the characters who move from a loss of identity to a phase of self-realisation. It consolidates and attempts to explain the re-shaping undertaken by them.