The Indian short story, vulnerable and influential, especially a pointed moral tale or an animal fable, is the most popular literary form of the twentieth century. It is no surprise therefore to find good collections of stories by writers like Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie who are more at home with the length and scope of the short story though they are known for their novels primarily. The aim of the present thesis is to make a close study of how these four writers have successfully dealt with the themes and tenets of the short story, exploring different variety of themes in their volumes of stories, The Cow of Barricades and Other Stories, The Policeman and the Rose, Games at Twilight, Diamond Dust, Darkness, Then Middleman and Other Stories, and East, West. The study aims at making a thematic study of the short stories in the chronological order even as it attempts to explore the technical virtuosity of these writers.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides a by way of a general introduction to the four short story writers Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, and Salman Rushdie, their creative output and attempts to place appropriately in the history of English short story. The second chapter deals with the stories that concern themselves with the theme of alienation, a characteristic trait in the works of diasporic writers writing from their native and in their adapted countries.

The third chapter offers a critical analysis of how the four writers deal with the theme of human relationships in the native and alien nations, in select stories. The fourth chapter adumbrates how the four writers have dealt with the problems faced by the protagonists of their stories in the societies of both the native and in their adapted...
countries. An attempt is made in the fifth chapter in two sections on the technical virtuosity of the four writers. It is an attempt to analyse how the four writers have dealt with the tenets of the short story, the narratology, irony, imagery and symbolism and the language. The concluding chapter relates to the summing up of all the preceding chapters placing the four writers in the genre of the short story.

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