

# Short Fiction in Theory & Practice



ISSN 2043-0701 | Online ISSN 2043-071X  
2 issues per volume | First published in 2011

## 'Materiality in the Short Fiction of Alice Munro'

Guest edited by Corinne Bigot, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, and Christine Lorre, Sorbonne Nouvelle University

'People's lives, in Jubilee as elsewhere, were dull, simple, amazing and unfathomable—deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum.'

(Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women*, 1971)

Throughout her fourteen collections of short stories, Alice Munro has shown a clear interest in how her characters' inner life and perception of the world are defined by the material things most immediate to them, as exemplified in the epigraph, a well-known quotation from *Lives of Girls and Women*. Materiality is an integral dimension of culture (Tilley et al., 2006), and in Munro's work, it is central to an understanding of social, gendered and individual existence, as the two are interconnected. Material things nurture the imagination, where they stick and develop as significant, unfathomable images. They embody the mystery of life, being paradoxically, like landscape, both "touchable and mysterious" (Munro, 1974). They physically anchor characters in the here and now, but they also speak to mind and spirit. They can embody connections as well as disconnections. Whether they are kept or discarded, over time, they haunt the protagonist and lead on to chains of memories, repeatedly re-membered, and with variations. They may become symbols of something larger than themselves, but more often than not they remain images stored up in memory, as so many active links to the past that transform the perception of the present. Objects act as signs that relate to the signified – and often as an index of atmosphere – but also, beyond that, to coded concepts, in a dual dynamic that binds surface and depth, that fuses realism and myth.

The international, peer-reviewed journal *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice* (Intellect Books) is inviting original submissions for a Special Issue to be published in Spring 2025, that will explore material culture in Alice Munro's work. We welcome critical articles, short fiction, and reflections on practice that investigate any aspect of the question of materiality in Munro's short fiction.

Suggested topics might include, but are not limited to:


- Material domains: architecture, home furnishing, technology, food, clothing, style.
- Everyday materiality: houses and their contents, the materiality of domesticity.
- Materiality and social class: class markers, social distinction, social belonging.



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- The lifecycle of things: things made, exchanged, consumed.
- Things and their meanings: performance, transformation, obsolescence.
- Things and social identity: politics and poetics of displaying, representing, conserving material forms.
- Material forms and the (gendered) body: embodied subjects, body care, role of the senses, phenomenology.
- Material forms and sociality: subjectivities, intimacies, social and familial relations, worldviews.
- Materiality and remembrance: signs of time passing, change, transformation, evolving interpretation.
- Materiality and circulation: exchange and consumption, technology.
- Materiality and discards: remains, junk, waste.
- Archeological or ethnographic situations: materiality in alien settings.
- Material memory: cultural memory, monuments and memorials.

Articles should be 4,000–8,000 words long and must not exceed 8,000 words including notes, references, contributor biography, keywords and abstract. All submissions are peer-reviewed. Contributions should be submitted electronically through the journal webpage by clicking the submissions tab.

For style guide and submission details please see:

<https://www.intellectbooks.com/short-fiction-in-theory-practice>.

For further enquiries please contact the editor, Professor Ailsa Cox, [coxa@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:coxa@edgehill.ac.uk).


The deadline for submissions is **1 September 2024**.



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