Tamas Dobozy

"Designed Anarchy" in Mavis Gallant's *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories*

An anarchic aesthetic preoccupies both the early and later stories of Mavis Gallant. The texts in *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories*[1] challenge and expose the impulse to craft a "master narrative" that would subordinate or silence alternative renditions of history. Gallant's fiction allows a polyvocality of competing or multiple narratives to displace or subvert this master narrative, exposing "the story" as an aesthetic configuration, capable of infinite recombination, and storytelling as a tool whereby characters attempt to escape, master and subvert history. The stories expose the reader to an aesthetic not of collaboration, wherein plot, character and language unite under an overriding vision, but one of independence, wherein the disparity between various narrative components prevents the emergence of a unified vision. Gallant celebrates rather than eliminates anarchy.

Any aesthetic, including an anarchic one, requires coordination. For this reason, I refer to Gallant's stories as "designed anarchy." This paradox may sound purposefully provocative, but consider the writer in front of the typewriter, word-processor or notebook. Every story develops from a process of arranging text on a page. Even discussing a cut-up novel such as *Naked Lunch* (perhaps the most uncontrolled aesthetic yet devised), the critic recalls Burroughs' technique, as does Burroughs himself (Hersey 306). A reader experiencing "Grippes and Poche" for the first time may find its disjointed leaps unsettling, but after perusing several more stories like it, distinguishes disjuncture as a common stylistic feature of Gallant's work. In this way, her narrative incongruities may become predictable, even comforting. Perfect

anarchy (a paradox in itself) eludes spatial, and therefore fixed, arrangement on the page. Like Janice Kulyk Keefer, I find "order" within the chaos of Gallant's writing: "Gallant's fiction, then, imposes a purely nominal order on the 'useless chaos' of experience" (Kulyk Keefer 59). What the reader would call "chaos," or textual anarchy, represents nothing more than a rearrangement of standard fictional elements in an unfamiliar, disparate way. Rearrangement suggests design, hence "designed anarchy."

In designed anarchy, form and content cooperate in nullifying the emergence of any one supreme narrative. Relying on a statement made by Gallant herself, Danielle Schaub presents this cooperation in her essay "Structural Patterns of Alienation and Disjunction: Mavis Gallant's Firmly-Structured Stories": "Gallant once remarked that 'style is inseparable from structure,' so that both the expression and presentation of events, feelings, thought and conversations convey the message of fictional pieces" (Schaub 45). If the disjunction between paragraphs and sentences initially conveys arbitrariness, then the "message," that is, the meaning, of Gallant's words also reinforces this impression:

> He never told the same story twice, except for some details. He said he was picked up and deported when he was ten or twelve. He was able to describe the Swiss or Swedish consulate where they tried to save him. (Gallant 83)

The speed of these sentences, from "An Autobiography," mimics the terseness of a grocery list. The repetition of "he was" asserts not biographical truth but Peter's ability to manipulate history. The pronoun "he" drones mechanically, rendering a stylized and rhythmical, rather than earnest, set of sentences. Finally, the imprecise clause, "except for some details," suggests an equality between signifiers, an equality between his stories' features. Gallant wants us sliding on ice, not scuba-diving. Like anyone on ice the reader stands imbalanced, uncertain of where to place weight. Gallant's central design-principle is narrative instability.

Kulyk Keefer isolates this instability in Gallant's narrative strategy by filing the stories into three groups:

> Her own fiction can be divided into three kinds: short, "perfect" stories . . . which delight by the succinctness of their observations and the compression of their wit; longer "opaque" or discontinuous narratives . . . and, finally, fictions . . . in which wit opens rather than tightens the situation observed, and obliquity, not opacity, determines the "message" the fiction encodes. (Kulyk Keefer 66)

Kulyk Keefer's distinctions highlight key adjectives describing Gallant's

work: "short" and "perfect," "opaque" or "discontinuous," and "oblique." But even the earliest fiction in this collection, "About Geneva," published nearly ten years before "An Autobiography," presents a "message" as "encoded" as those of later stories, such as "Overhead in a Balloon."

Such dating, like the chronological sequence of stories in the collection itself, offers an illusory sense of "order" or "progression" in Gallant's aesthetic, where none may in fact exist. Gallant herself, in Geoff Hancock's "An Interview with Mavis Gallant," admits to "start[ing]" a story "in the sixties and then put[ting] it away" (Hancock 53). The long gestation of her works makes their compositional chronology difficult to determine. The interview also points out that Gallant's style, from the very start, avoided straightforward sequencing: "The story builds around its centre, rather like a snail" (45), and that William Maxwell, her editor at *The New Yorker*, remarked that the stories went "around and around" (46). Here, the interview suggests Gallant's style has grown increasingly "linear" (45), though she feigns ignorance: "I had no idea I was doing it" (46). However, the wide range of writerly devices Kulyk Keefer mentions above (among which we might include "linearity") does not evince progress so much as Gallant's wide palette: the range of techniques that recur *throughout* her career. Gallant herself testifies to the "shifting" or instinctive nature of her aesthetic: ". . . I've never read [my work] as something with a pattern. I can't help you there. I don't begin with a theory" (Hancock 24). Gallant's refusal "to help" provide any "patterned" or "theoretical" reading of the stories places responsibility for such an undertaking on the individual. Refusing the authoritative position, she simultaneously reminds and warns us that any reading (including the author's) is only one possibility among many; and throughout the interview she defers to Hancock's scholarly aptitude (Hancock 45). In the introduction to *The Selected Stories of Mavis Gallant*, Gallant counters the very idea of a programmatic reading: "Stories are not chapters of novels. They should not be read one after another, as if they were meant to follow along" (xix). In this way, she authorizes a reordering of the stories according to individual aesthetic or (in the case of this essay) theoretical prerogatives, challenging critics who would rank them in an developmental or maturational narrative. When all ordering procedures (history, narrative and chronology) are imposed and therefore unstable, we can, at best, make only provisional statements about a "mature" style.

"About Geneva," therefore, offers, alongside "Overhead in a Balloon," not

so much an *earlier* (speaking developmentally) as *another* view into the language of Gallant's "encoded" fiction. The story depicts the characters' behavior as incongruous and un-psychological. "They might have known how much those extra twenty minutes would mean to granny" (Gallant 9). Use of the word "might" prevents any privileging of the psychological. Did they or did they not know? asks the infuriated reader, experiencing a moment of the opacity described by Kulyk Keefer. Words and sentences come on cue, ritualistically rather than naturally. An unease marks the border between sentences:

> She stretched out her arms to Ursula, but then, seeing the taxi driver, who had carried the children's bags up the stairs, she drew back. After he had gone she repeated the gesture, turning this time to Colin, as if Ursula's cue had been irrevocably missed. (9)

The gesture of affection turns mechanical; the grandmother switches the object of her gesture according to "cue" rather than emotion. A cogwheel has slipped but the gears grind on. Gallant mimics this mechanical slippage in her typically rapid-fire prose. The next sentence reads: "Colin was wearing a beret" (9). Instead of the expected break, as the focus of the writing shifts from Ursula to Colin, Gallant conflates the two into one paragraph. Together the syntax and structure convey disjunction in expected patterns of paragraphing and subject focus, as well as in patterns of human relationships.

The story ends in a sense of loss: the mother's realization that descriptions of events (such as walks and feeding swans) do not divulge the "message" she covets, namely, that the children esteem her above their father, a "message" that conveys her moral superiority as the innocent, injured party of divorce. "Perhaps, as she had said, one day Colin would say something, produce the image of Geneva, tell her about the lake, the boats, the swans and why her husband left her" (16). The "why" that Colin should "one day" explicate will hopefully provide the idealized image of herself as the better parent. But in the time-frame of the story the snippets of Geneva offer nothing to soothe her psyche, nothing "about" the children's feelings for their father. She gets the mechanism of the Geneva experience, its constituent parts, but not their understanding of the "why" of the divorce or the reason their father chose to live so far from them. Ronald B. Hatch critiques such an impulse for a "why" in his article, "Mavis Gallant and the Fascism of Everyday Life": ". . . fascism . . . is conservatism of the mind that endeavors to resolve the confusion of everyday life by imposing a doctrine

that gives total and unbreakable shape to all relationships" (Hatch 13). According to Hatch, Gallant's stories discover fascism not in the larger, historical picture, but in the "everyday," in the "conventional patterns" that dominate and order our existence; and the primary coordinator of experience is language, which, as Gallant's quotation in Hatch's article suggests, can brutalize as easily as a truncheon. Recalling an article Gallant wrote on the Nazi concentration camps, Hatch points out how the editors chose to replace her copy (calling for an investigation into German society) with "an article that 'was a prototype for all the clichés we've been bludgeoned with ever since'" (Hatch 9). The word "bludgeoned" gives conventional language (the cliché) an abusive power. The mother in "About Geneva" commits exactly this abuse against her children by attempting to elicit the expected narrative from them. Her desire for a definitive account dispelling the "confusions" around her marriage betrays a "fascist longing."

In her article, "The Fascist Longings in Our Midst," Rey Chow describes fascism as a process of "sacrificing . . . knowledge of history in submission to the mythic image" (36). The children in "About Geneva," by not offering "self evident" imagery (36) to describe the emotional tenor of the trip (for instance, that they missed their mother), refuse to validate the mother's "mythic image" as the superior parent. The children will not "submit" to her longing for "taking charge" (35) of the marital and family narrative, and of their imaginations (35), to elaborate only one conclusion. Gallant imparts paradox: the lack of any unifying principle or dominant message in the children's Geneva experience and its fallout *is* the message; the story observes and critiques the mother's impulse to generate fixed positions of value and reference, an ideal narrative to replace her children's experience (of history). The structure of "About Geneva," with its disjunctions and evasions, counteracts the mother's attempts at forging a comprehensive, and therefore dominant, psychological and narrative sequence befitting her expectations.

"Overhead in a Balloon" similarly attacks the domineering and bludgeoning positions fostered by narratives glossing over uncertainty or alternatives. Robert, in his avarice, fails to "understand [Walter's] story—something incoherent to do with the office safe" (Gallant 243). Instead of reacting to Walter's incoherence as a sign of desperation, he subjects it to his "understanding"; when his understanding fails to order it "coherently," Robert gives up and returns to his devious (but carefully premeditated and linear) plot to deprive Walter of his space. Robert's rejection of any narrative line

apart from one that he can subject to his own conceptions ultimately leaves Walter out in the cold. Likewise, Walter's emotionally vacant home life results from a lack of narrative surprise: "There were no secrets, no mysteries. What Walter saw of his parents was probably all there was" (Gallant 245). Gallant's fiction warns us against the tyranny of "all there was," its air-tight summation, its erasure of the individual. She denounces the fascism Robert falls into at the end of "Overhead in a Balloon," where he wonders "if there was any point in trying to say the same thing some other way" (246).

Just as Chow's article refers to the "ultimate authority" of the totalitarian "Stalin-image," which recrafts history in service of itself (Chow 35-36), Gallant's narrative depicts Robert using his authority as dream interpreter to recast Walter's position in the household. Chow distinguishes fascism as "a search for an idealized self-image through a heartfelt surrender to something higher and more beautiful" (26). Walter's search for the artistic ideal fixes on Robert: "Walter admired Robert's thinness, his clean running shoes, his close-cropped hair . . . . He could sit listening to Walter as if he were drifting and there was nothing but Walter in sight" (Gallant 231). Initially the illusion, the "as if," of Robert's perfect attentiveness acts as a mirror wherein Walter apprehends only his own presence, his own self in the midst of oration, his own discourse: "nothing but Walter in sight." In this way, Walter relies on Robert to validate his self-image. As Chow indicates, fascism breaks down the barrier between the inner person and the outer world; the "subject" identifies so closely with the "leader" that the two merge indistinguishably (Chow 30). Sacrifice soon enters into the two men's relationship. Boundaries marking private space and possessions entirely disappear. Robert stops returning Walter's books; the other tenants treat Robert's television as public property. Robert's readings of dreams do not leave the, by now, totally reliant Walter "reassured." Authority over reality (the "tracing of new boundaries" [Gallant 246]) transfers from Walter to his landlord. Robert hijacks Walter's dreams, superimposing his own narrative designs over Walter's fate, a design to which Walter meekly acquiesces. Robert deftly exploits Walter's search for the "ideal image" to his own ends. As any apartment tenant knows, the landlord narrative often substitutes for the master narrative. Against this "fascism of everyday life," wherein one character, such as Robert, by restricting narrative possibilities (or Chow's "imaginary"), controls another's self-actualization, Gallant offers the alternative of designed anarchy.

This "everyday" fascism recurs throughout Gallant's stories, early and late. Her "fiction as a whole presents aspects of human nature that indicate the vulnerability of individuals and societies to potentially fascistic systems of thought" (Hatch 9). Like Walter, the character of Jeannie in "My Heart is Broken" exemplifies a "vulnerability" to fascist "systems of thought," to relinquishing her individual rendition to a master narrative. From the start of the story Mrs. Thompson overrides Jeannie's story with a different "Jean" story, supplanting fallout from the rape with the fallout from Harlow's death. Her opening speech spirals into greater and greater digression, as if to control even the incidental details: "All the men were unemployed in those days, and they just sat down wherever they happened to be. You wouldn't remember what Montreal was like then. *You* weren't even on earth. To resume what I was saying to you . . ." (Gallant 28). The tangential writing attempts a kind of omnipresent consciousness to account for *everything*. The "you," or audience, changes position three times: the person addressed in the first sentence, then the "you" who wouldn't remember Montreal, followed by the unborn "you." The last sentence returns to the audience "you" of the first line. Using aspect, which Laurel J. Brinton describes as "a matter of the speaker's viewpoint or perspective on a situation" (Brinton 3), Mrs. Thompson manipulates the subject in time, accounting for all aspects of the "you's" relation to her story, tyrannizing the subject's viewpoint. The circularity of her statement, returning to where it started, attempts to contain and speak for all perspectives on the story, censoring any dissent. Mrs. Thompson's ventriloquism silences Jeannie's narrative: "Jeannie had nothing to say to that" (28).

Though published twenty-three years previous to "Overhead in a Balloon," "My Heart is Broken" displays the hallmarks of Gallant's designed anarchy. Near the end, she begins to withhold what we think we need to know: "Jeannie might not have been listening. She started to tell something else: 'You know, where we were before, on Vern's last job, we weren't in a camp'" (35). Does Jeannie react to Mrs. Thompson's dialogue with dialogue of her own, or do her sentences reel off spontaneously, out of trauma? Gallant nixes the psychology behind the remarks, heightening instead the presence of narrative. Again, the use of the word "might" indicates Gallant's manipulation of aspect: "In the most general sense, aspect is 'a way of conceiving the passage of time'" (Brinton 2). Gallant purposefully denies the passage of time; her auxiliary verb, "might," leaves time suspended, or at least the

notion of linear consequential time. The reader's position, generally thought inviolate, cannot take cognitive stock, and therefore control, of the story. The progress of Jeannie's psychology remains outside the reader's vision. In fact, the story hinges on the presence of three simultaneous narratives: Jeannie's, Mrs. Thompson's and the reader's. Mrs. Thompson lobbies for a reactionary view of rape; Jeannie tries desperately to stop her naiveté from impeding her reaction; the reader forages for psychological links between the two women's confrontation. The story never quite coalesces into a uniform line. Mrs. Thompson commiserates and condemns at the same time. Does she want to gossip about the culprit or not? Has the rape had any long-term effect on Jeannie? The lack of a certain frame, psychological or narrative, around the picture imparts a sense of flux. When the topic is rape, the lack of moral certainty that a progressive, psychological narrative would have provided leaves us uneasy and imbalanced. Gallant's use of aspect crumbles the reader's all-knowing and therefore all-powerful position; it exposes our culpability (along with Mrs. Thompson's) in wanting Jeannie to conform to our vision, ignoring the trauma this may cause her; but Gallant's aspectual disorder makes us aware of the fascist longing embodied in our desire for a unified storyline; we are cautioned.

This aspectual manipulation, however, is lost on Mrs. Thompson, whose recounting of Harlow's death throws further blame on Jeannie for the rape. The allusion to "harlot" (which Harlow's name inspires) suggests a judgment passed by Mrs. Thompson over a certain "type" of woman, whom Jeannie emulates with her "nail polish" (Gallant 29), "high-heeled shoes" (30), the short skirts she must "[pull] around her knees" (31), and "Evening in Paris" perfume (32). This judgment victimizes not only Jeannie but a whole class of women whose dress and manners Harlow epitomizes. In short, Mrs. Thompson regards Jeannie as the prime culprit in the rape: "Some girls ask for it, though" (34). When she tells Jeannie that she "let it happen" (33), Mrs. Thompson supports the contention of Mr. Sherman, who considers a man incapable of raping a girl by himself, implying that either Jeannie allowed the act to proceed or that she invented the entire story. Mrs. Thompson suggests that household chores provide the best outlet for female energy in the work camp (33). The older woman reads events strictly according to her own vision of cause and effect, rendering a verdict not only on Jeannie but on herself and all women: unless they behave according to pre-established conventions, dire consequences will ensue, consequences

for which they can only blame themselves. "In winter it gets dark around three o'clock. Then the wives have a right to go crazy. I knew one used to sleep the clock around" (33). The women must earn their right, through suffering, before exhibiting individuality or affecting behavior outside the conventions. Mrs. Thompson refuses to allow Jeannie to tell a different narrative: one in which she represents an individual rather than an icon and in which the norm of behavior for a man is not rape. Through Mrs. Thompson, Gallant hints at an even larger narrative, one that not only stifles Jeannie's story, but that of Mrs. Thompson and all women as well: the patriarchal order determining the role of women in history and society. By downplaying Jeannie's version of events, by subordinating the younger woman's story, Mrs. Thompson endorses the dominant order.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, in her book *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, argues that subordinate narratives within a larger narrative inscribe hierarchy. "Such narratives within narratives create a stratification of levels whereby each inner narrative is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded" (91). In a story such as "My Heart is Broken," Gallant counts on the reader to notice the patriarchal, master narrative ruling the "embedded" narratives of Jeannie and Mrs. Thompson, and, in doing so, to question that narrative "stratification," or hierarchy, itself. The disparity between Jeannie's, Mrs. Thompson's and the reader's sense of narrative forms an essential strategy of Gallant's designed anarchy: to expose the various strata; their existence made plain, the status quo cannot reassimilate these contrary renditions into a seamless hierarchy, and Rimmon-Kenan's (and the patriarchy's) "stratification of levels" falls to pieces.

"Grippes and Poche" illustrates Gallant's continued obsession with the "stratification" of narrative "levels," with the manifold versions of narrative, this time adapting designed anarchy to a discussion of aesthetics (the nature of the interface between author and world, and the way experience composes fiction). Testing a fickle public's taste for politically paradoxical stories, Grippes maneuvers his writing to mass popularity:

> The fitfulness of voters is such that, having got the government they wanted, they were now reading nothing but the right-wing press. Perhaps a steady right-wing heartbeat ought to set the cadence for a left-wing outlook, with a complex, bravely conservative heroine contained within the slippery but unyielding walls of left-wing style. (Gallant 219)

As the translation of his name suggests, Grippes shimmies between political

stances like influenza between hosts. He infects doctrines with his personal experiences. Gallant's parodic language (mocking the jargon of academic response) makes it difficult to decipher exactly what she means in the above passage. How can "a steady right-wing heartbeat . . . set the cadence for a left-wing outlook?" Her words leave us deeply aware of language as a surface. How can a left-wing "outlook" present a "bravely conservative heroine?" The answer arrives with the last words, "unyielding walls of left-wing style." Gallant's art functions by opposition, in this case (mirroring results of recent democratic elections) a right-wing heroine struggling against the limitations imposed on her by an "unyielding" left-wing dogma. "Grippes and Poche" offers a warning against political legislation: "He had transformed his mistake into a regulation and had never looked at the page again" (Gallant 218). Multiple viewings of the page (or multiple "aspectual" levels on a page) would preempt the formation of regulations, of the single narrative line unflinchingly followed by the bureaucrat, Poche. Grippes offers several contradictions: a populist writer recognized in academic journals, a tax-cheat who invariably votes left, a humanist who feeds parasitically on others' lives. Poche represents "the pocket," the neatly organized dossier, the cubicle in the office, the boxes filled out on a tax form, the man, guided by regulation, from whom nothing should escape. Yet the slipperiness of the printed word prevents his capture of Grippes' storyline in a "pocketable" way. Conversely, Grippes channels Poche's story into a hundred variations. "No political system, no love affair, no native inclination, no life itself would be tolerable without a wide mesh for mistakes to slip through" (209). The fallacies inherent in reading provide for a tolerable life. Poche's misreading of Grippes' tax forms gives Grippes the excitement and inspiration necessary for art. Misreading, or multiple reading, forms a crucial issue in Gallant's storytelling. Through the example of Grippes, though satirical, Gallant shows how an aesthetic of designed anarchy, of encouraging alternative narratives, can disrupt, alter, or confuse the legislated plotline, allowing a space for the individual to "slip through."

The notion of life as a plot that is subject to aesthetic strategy also appears in the accretion of anecdote and description in "Grippes and Poche." The extended discourse on Karen-Shue (204) highlights a digressive narrative, arbitrary as the dawning of inspiration. Grippe's critical analysis seems forced in the face of Grippe's and Poche's confrontation (only later does its relevance emerge, and in a way that pertains exclusively to Grippes). The

digression into Prism (215), as the name suggests, diffracts what seems the essential storyline: the human relationship. Meandering away from confrontation becomes central to the story's explication of the irresolvable divide between the two men:

> Poche turned over a sheet of paper, read something Grippes could not see, and said, automatically, "We can't."
>
> "Nothing is ever as it was," said Grippes, still going on about the marbled-effect folder. It was a remark that usually shut people up, leaving them nowhere to go but a change of subject. Besides, it was true. Nothing can be as it was. Poche and Grippes had just lost a terrifying number of brain cells. They were an instant closer to death. Death was of no interest to Poche. (211)

Aspect becomes important in unraveling this excerpt. Brinton divides the aspectual into "aspect" and "aktionsart," into a subjective and objective view of action within time: "Aspect is subjective because the speaker chooses a particular viewpoint, whereas aktionsart, since it concerns the given nature of the event and not the perspective of the speaker, is objective" (Brinton 3). Poche's verb "can't" signifies an absolutism, a denial of change, whereas Grippes' transition of the verb "was" to "is" signifies a complete change over time. The two speakers subject events to their particular "viewpoints" on the temporal. Grippes, in fact, employs his notion of action (change) within time to alter Poche's absolutist viewpoint, but fails because "death was of no interest to Poche." Grippes attempts to communicate change and possibility by deploying aspect, and his paragraph uses the continuous, present, past and future verb tenses. Typically, Poche responds with the absolute of "was." This excerpt evinces the lack of communication and world-views between the two men. Poche ponders information unavailable to Grippes and speaks not out of himself but "automatically." Grippes, on the other hand, talks of something else entirely, and not to involve Poche in debate but to shut him up, to evade Grippes' comment, to reach a new plane ("subject") of discourse. As each man attempts to subject the other to his way of ordering or disordering a tax history, the conflict revolves less around an interplay of human passions than around the unassimilable difference between two aesthetics (bureaucratic and artistic) and their application.

As "Grippes and Poche" continues, Poche, and his restrictive aesthetic, disappears amidst the convolutions and contingencies of the story. By jettisoning straightforward drama for a construction based on digression, dislocation and alternating aspect, Gallant again exposes us to instability, to a shift away from the narrative's perceived centre (and the expectations this

entails). "Poche did not send for Grippes again. Grippes became a commonplace taxpayer, filling out his forms without help" (Gallant 216). The relationship, as this turn in the story indicates, did not, and will never, occur from Poche's point of view. The narrative continues after their relationship officially ends, and the issue of Grippes' artistic inspiration fills the narrative void left by Poche's removal; the story becomes an artist parable. Yet, until this point Gallant gave no indication of Poche's extraneous position (allowing the character a potential never ultimately realized). In the end, her fiction draws attention not to the facts of life in Paris or America or the threat of economic legislation but to how personal aesthetic determines reality: ". . . he had got the woman from church to dining room, and he would keep her there, trapped, cornered, threatened, watched, until she yielded to Grippes and told her name (as, in his several incarnations, good Poche had always done)" (222). "Yielding" the name for artistic use implies that identity, the ultimate signifier of being, hinges not on legislated position but on aesthetic strategy. Like the Mother in "About Geneva," Grippes harasses his subject until it "yields" a serviceable story; but Grippes' position differs from hers in that he doesn't know beforehand the story he wishes the subject to "yield." He remains open to the many possibilities of narrative, not trapped in eliciting a particular viewpoint. In the process, Gallant raises our own awareness of aesthetic strategy and expectation.

As in "Grippes and Poche," the structure of "The Ice Wagon Going Down the Street" offers a contrast between narrative versions. The story opens long after the end of the main narrative episode. The opening unveils Peter and Sheilah as paragons of wisdom: people who have lived and learned. "Now that they are out of world affairs and back where they started, Peter Frazier's wife says, 'Everybody else did well in the international thing except us'" (37). "Back where they started" indicates a return to beginnings. Gallant leads the reader to believe that the Fraziers, because of an inevitable return (the word "now" conveys the inevitable) to their beginnings, have realized their folly in leaving. But, in fact, as the story progresses, this statement instead functions ironically to reveal their resignation, defeat and immaturity; they have learned nothing from the foreign experiences. The story does not return to where it begins. The structure develops character in reverse, not from past into present, but from the present into the past. Gallant departs from the standard linkage between character and structural development. The past of the story functions as its future, and the story

approximates Kulyk Keefer's moebius strip rather than a circle; in showing the past, Gallant makes the initial, secure position untenable. The story might convey a sense of maturation only if read back to front. "No, begin at the beginning: Peter lost Agnes. Agnes says to herself somewhere, Peter is lost" (64). The last sentence becomes the first sentence and the Fraziers' sense of maturity a naiveté and delusion. The narrative employs other red herrings: the supposed relationship between Peter and Agnes and between Sheilah and Simpson prepare us (an expectation based on social setting) for torrid love affairs that never materialize; the extended description of the relationship between the Fraziers and the Burleighs (42) points to a plot development on this axis, whereas the Burleighs have only an incidental role in the story. Gallant plays with convention to indicate not how stories converge, but how they diverge (the opposite of readerly expectation). Both Peter and Agnes consider the other lost, fallen outside of their narrative conception of the world.

After this ending, the first page of the story finds a Peter and Sheilah still interred within their exclusivist thinking. Both consider it fated that they never achieved any successes abroad. They whisper the names of those who did like magical incantations (37). They consider the Balenciaga dress a notable trophy of their travels, a "talisman," a "treasure." ". . . And after they remember it they touch hands and think that the years are not behind them but hazy and marvelous and still to be lived" (38-39). What initially strikes the reader as a quiet act of optimism now appears as self-delusional escapism. By admitting to not being "crooked" or "smart" they evade responsibility, placing their actions into the context of a random and capricious fate. This stands in direct opposition to a character like Agnes, who believes in hard work and self-promotion as a sure road to success. In the last long paragraph, Gallant refers to the sense of sight seven times, using words like "sees," "watched," "eye" and "looking." Freed from Sheilah's piecing together of "puzzles" for him, Peter has a revelation: "Let Agnes have the start of the day. Let Agnes think it was invented for her" (64). Gallant stresses here the need to let others have their illusions, raise their own effigies. But Peter ultimately hands his story over to Sheilah's authorship, and turns his back on the lesson of Agnes. Peter (like Netta in "The Moslem Wife") relinquishes control over the past to avoid a more painful narrative (though infinitely less horrific than Netta's war-time experiences); Peter avoids the narrative that would disclose his immaturity and irresponsibility.

By doubling back into the past, the story in fact advances our knowledge of the Fraziers, whereas we expect the past narrative to affirm the initial impression. Moreover, we expect the incidental narratives touching on their time in Geneva to lend further credence to the mood of recovery present in the initial scene, but it only undoes it further, pointing to the Fraziers as disconnected, deluded and grasping characters.

Gallant's anarchy, however, does not stop at narrative structure and character portrayal. Neil Besner's *The Light of Imagination: Mavis Gallant's Fiction* illustrates how Gallant deploys designed anarchy on the level of language as well. Besner invokes Roland Barthes' "Style and its Image":

> . . . Barthes suggests that a text should not be thought of as "a species of fruit with a kernel . . . the flesh being the form and the pit the content," but as an "onion": the text, writes Barthes, is a "construction of layers (or levels, or systems) whose body contains, finally, no heart, no kernel, no secret, no irreducible principle, nothing except the infinity of its own envelopes (which envelope nothing other than the unity of its own surfaces) [10]." (Besner 37)

This theory does not apply evenly to Gallant's texts, but helps us understand further how "form" and "message" interrelate in the stories under discussion. Using words like "systems," "secret" and "principle," Barthes (or rather Besner, because he quotes this snippet to furnish his argument) speaks of how a text resists reduction to a core meaning, instead containing a multiplicity of meanings that overlap, support, and contradict each other. The words "levels," "envelope" and "surfaces," almost suggest some kind of architectural metaphor working underneath Barthes' conception. The form a story takes, then, distinguishes the issues at play within it, and, as already seen, Gallant fuses form and meaning in such a way that a discussion of either necessitates a discussion of the other. However, this does not preclude another writer melding a similar structure to an entirely different system of issues or principles. Form and content may be separately discussed at the level of critical abstraction (or when comparing two different writers on a purely technical level) but in the moment of application to any one particular text distinctions between them usually blur. But I do not entirely agree with Barthes. Placing his onion under the critical microscope exposes a very basic unit of structure: the word. If overlapping systems render it impossible to locate a core of meaning in a story, words still supply the originary point of all texts and syntax invariably tells us something substantive.

Earlier, discussing Schaub, I pointed out how word choice, punctuation

and sentence construction lie at the heart of Gallant's narrative, like, say, a kernel in a fruit; but this "heart" remains resolutely anarchic. In "When We Were Nearly Young," Gallant admits:

> I did the Petit Jeu, the Square, the fan, and the thirteen, and the Fifteen. There was happy news for everyone except Carlos, but, as it was Sunday, none of it counted.
>
> Were they typical Spaniards? I don't know what a typical Spaniard is. (Gallant 22)

The sentence ending "none of it counted" kills the painstaking and terse list of variations on fortune-telling in the preceding sentence with its own device: plain, laconic assertion. Gallant turns the monosyllabic rhythm against itself. The series of "ands" creates a series of identical alternatives; no matter what the choice, "none of it count[s]." The second sentence negates the first and itself loses definitive primacy by the complete break and ninety-degree tangent of the following; this sentence, in turn, needs to be stripped of its scene-stealing position and the final sentence provides the required negation. The abrupt sentences, stacked one on top of the other, recall the limited picture offered by the narrative and foreshadow the abruptness with which the divergence between the narrator and other characters arrives. These parsimonious sentences imitate economic poverty; poverty anchors both the phrasing and characters, who drift in various directions but can never leave. "Poverty is not a goad but a paralysis" (23). Gallant's anarchic technique, which constantly seeks to undercut the primacy of individual sentences and therefore narratives, gives one the sense of a very careful, meticulous arrangement.

Gallant's chaotic patterning of language recalls the musical form of the fugue, in which composite and often contrary musical elements rise to the surface only to fade out as others replace them, and then resurface and fade again. For example, in "Grippes and Poche," Gallant juxtaposes death against the relationship between the two men. "Even his aspect, of a priest hearing a confession a few yards from the guillotine, seemed newly acquired" (201), or, "But he had suddenly recalled his dismay when as a young man he had looked at a shelf in his room and realized he had to compete with the dead (Proust, Flaubert, Balzac, Stendhal, and on into the dark)" (205), or, "Don't praise me. Praise is weak stuff. Praise me after I'm dead" (213); these phrases connect the notion of mortality with the relationship between the two men. Rather than flatly address the nature of this connection, Gallant lets the topic rise to view and then recede, rise and recede, never fully

explaining its relevance, and always recalling it in a slightly different context. As Kulyk Keefer suggests, language forms the matrix, the cement, binding the narrative elements:

> Were it not for the sharpness and rightness of the language these narratives might collapse at their joints, work themselves loose, and rattle away from both characters and readers. They tend to be filled with unexpected, unconnected observations and incidents: the narratives sometimes resemble odd bits of string dexterously knotted into one peculiar line. (Kulyk Keefer 67)

The stories fascinate the reader precisely because of the "dexterous" way in which Gallant uses language to bind these disjunctive or dissimilar elements, and to mold the chaos on the level of character, plot and theme into a "peculiar line"; syntax permits us to force a "design" on anarchy, to create a self-sustaining narrative out of the odd and disparate components of our lives.

In the protocols governing conversational syntax Gallant detects the vocabulary needed to subvert master narratives in the individual's favor: "She chooses and rejects elements of the last act; one avoids mentioning death, shooting, capital punishment, cremation, deportation, even fathers" (Gallant 152). The "act" comprises various "elements" chosen and rejected depending on their level of social sanction. Gallant knows, like Linnet, which words offend the "peacetime" sensibility, which words affect wartime tragedies. She uses these conventions to unite the incongruous elements of life. Linnet's intrusion on (or, more precisely, interrogation of) her father's friends allows for her self-definition, not within the "fable" (146) "they" have constructed, but in opposition to it. When Archie McEwan tries to contextualize her, she stymies him by not supplying the missing word. "Who inherited the — ?" he asks, and Linnet replies, "The what, Mr. McEwan?" (150). Linnet's refusal to provide language denies him entry into a "sensible context," into absorbing her presence according to his disposition. Linnet recognizes the source of her power: "He had not, of course, read 'Why I am a Socialist'" (150). Again, because he does not have access to the text, the grouping of words, he cannot splice her into his narrative. In the end she abandons the vocabulary that binds her story to the stories of her father's friends: "I wrote in my journal that 'they' had got him but would not get me, and after that there was scarcely ever a mention" (153). Linnet recognizes that a command of language gives her a command of time; by setting down her experiences in her journal she relegates them to a page she can turn over or revisit as she desires. Linnet's awareness of language as unfixed

and strategic allows her to avoid entrapment in her father's history.

Time, and its configuration, plays a crucial role not only in "In Youth Is Pleasure," but throughout Gallant's fiction:

> The home ground of her fiction is the amorphous and exigent present; she chronicles our attempts to close it off, to contain and control it. Even those of her fictions that remember time past . . . seem a species of narrative magic, transforming memory into present consciousness, making the border between past and future vanish into an all-inclusive but shifting present. (Kulyk Keefer 59)

As Kulyk Keefer says, mastery of the present depends upon memory informing consciousness. In Gallant, a character's power results from his or her ability to assimilate "past and future" into a present whose "shifting" they engineer. *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories* does offer control over, and escape from, time. Her manipulation of time-frame within the narrative often has an analogue of a character, such as Linnet, manipulating time within the story itself; she ends with " . . . time had been on my side, faithfully, and unless you died you were always bound to escape" (Gallant 155). Unlike the Spaniards in "When We Were Nearly Young," whose anticipation of the postman bringing fortunate news casts time in the role of a savior capriciously bestowing opportunities (opportunities you can see coming if you watch for the signs), Linnet considers time a tool, something to manipulate to her advantage. The narrative of her future does not remain contingent on that of her past because she has recognized that, through language, she can alter both narratives at will, freeing her from a particular position in time. The Spaniards, on the other hand, do not deploy language as Linnet does: "But they had thought I was waiting in their sense of the word (waiting for summer and then for winter, for Monday and then for Tuesday, waiting, waiting for time to drop into the pool)"(26). Linnet supplies words to give the present meaning while the Spaniards impotently accept the time-worn designations of "summer" and "Monday" and bind their futures to the static and undifferentiated cycle those words represent. As the phrase "their sense of the word" indicates, the significance of "waiting" depends entirely on an individual's "sense" of the term, and the Spaniard's sensibility regarding time remains entirely passive, a "waiting for time to drop into the pool." Where Linnet crafts time, the Spaniards allow time to craft them. They do not grasp the escape offered by language.

Like Linnet, Thomas, in "The Latehomecomer," also manipulates time through language to overcome the narrative imposed on him by Martin's

generation and to replace it with his own. Willy tells Thomas that the key to recovery rests in the ability to "forget" (130), but Thomas knows that precisely the opposite lends him his power; the ability to put the past into language guarantees him a central position in the present and future: "French was all I had from my captivity; I might as well use it. . . . 'Translations' and 'scholarship' were an exalted form of language . . ." (132). A language (in this case French) represents opportunity, and the appropriation of certain privileged titles such as "translation" and "scholarship," both textual occupations, cedes him primacy, just as his invocation of war-time experience grants him power over Martin. His use of the past undercuts the present immediacy of the Toepplers' lives. Gallant undercuts the structural primacy of the present narrative with Thomas's war-time experiences. Ensuing revelations about Thomas nail home the source of his discontent:

> . . . Martin Toeppler need not imagine he could count on my pride, or that I would prefer to starve rather than take his charity. . . . He had a dependent now (a ravenous, egocentric, latehomecoming high-school adolescent of twenty-one. The old men owed this much to me) the old men in my prison camp who would have sold mother and father for an extra ounce of soup. . . . (133)

History has no remedy, only a pay-back, and vengeance will not come in the way of physical reprisal but a slow parasitic dependence that seeks compensation from the institutions it suffered for. Thomas knows that ultimate power depends on the ability to suppress the stories of others. He uses this knowledge to overcome his step-father: "He [Martin Toeppler] looked at my mother as if to say that she had brought him a rival in the only domain that mattered (the right to talk everyone's ear off)" (128). From now on "The Latehomecomer" takes its momentum not from what happens in the Toeppler's household, but what might happen after each of Thomas's revelations; the flashbacks guide the present narrative. David O'Rourke suggests in "Exiles in Time: Gallant's 'My Heart is Broken'": "Exile may well be Gallant's preoccupation, but it is not so much exile of space as it is one of time" (98). In this case, the exile attacks from a position of experience, while Toeppler takes the weaker, philosophical (and therefore abstract) stand. By not having any roots in the Germany of the present, Thomas can forge the links he wishes with the past, varying the facets of an unrecoverable history to suit his needs. However, as a counterpoint to Thomas's need for vengeance (and here the psychology becomes complicated) Thomas cannot shake hope and therefore the desire for recovery. The paradox of the human heart consists

of a knowledge of the irrevocable versus a desire to regain time. "As for me, I wished that I was a few hours younger, in the corridor of a packed train, clutching the top of the open window, my heart hammering as I strained to find the one beloved face" (Gallant 135). Like the readers of tarot cards in "When We Were Nearly Young," he wants the moment before possibility narrows to disheartening fact. Thomas remains cut off from restitution; control over history only helps him exact vengeance.

O'Rourke's notion of exile in time also informs "The Moslem Wife," but to present a different handling of history. The narrative of the war years at Netta's hotel undergoes an abrupt shift (represented by a blank between paragraphs) when, five years after the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, Netta contacts Jack. This blank, between the beginning of the war and Jack's return, belongs exclusively to Netta, to fill by choice. Positioning the blank before Netta's recapitulation of the war, Gallant turns narrative into a personal decision to occupy space on the page. Netta says: "That lack of memory is why people are unfaithful, as it is so curiously called. When I see closed shutters I know there are lovers behind them. That is how memory works. The rest is just convention and small talk" (192). When the doctor immediately questions Netta's supposition about the presence of lovers behind shutters, she sticks to her original line. Knowledge depends upon whittling away the possibilities. Netta's problem with the word "unfaithful" suggests its inappropriateness to the application of memory, since memory entails not safeguarding but a choice of certainties. Any other form of memory (or history) originates solely in convention and the ephemera offered by "small talk." But the way Netta fills the blank space proves too much of an ordeal: "No one will ever realize how much I know of the truth, the truth, the truth, and she put her head on her hands, her elbows on the scarred bar, and let the first tears of her after-war run down her wrists" (194). Netta "knows" the truth about the war just as she "knows" the truth about the rooms behind closed shutters. Gallant designates her tears as "after-war," indicating that the experience during the war does not cause the tears but the memory of that experience, the mind setting out the experience in one particular narrative line, as in the "writing" of Netta's letter.

Unlike Thomas, Netta cannot use her position of exile (she is the "only one who knows," separating her from the rest of the characters) to create narrative momentum; she remains trapped in a design very much like the one her father and husband envisage for her. Yet, in some way, she learns

something about narrative possibility that escapes Thomas. By relinquishing the "truth" about the war to Jack, Netta hands over the responsibilities of narrator to him (as Peter relinquishes his story to Sheilah). Thomas passes the responsibility on to no-one and remains incapacitated by the awareness of his exile from the possibilities of a time that eludes his machinations. Now Jack will once again dish up Netta's happiness. At the end of the story Netta realizes the debilitating effects of precision in memory: "And I am going to be thirty-seven and I have a dark, an accurate, a deadly memory" (198). Instead of remaining rooted within her version of events (which, as the word "deadly" suggests, means a kind of death) Netta opts for the freedom of Jack's immediacy, his refusal to become fixed by precedent: "Memory is what ought to prevent you from buying a dog after the first dog dies, but it never does" (199). Netta's darkness and ghosts represent a solid reality that Jack's reality of imminent sensual experience (presented in the "dance" of light off mirrors and the "indestructible beauty" of visual appearances) effectively counteracts. Netta chooses Jack's free-flowing, unhindered narrative over her own, straitjacketed one: "What else could I do, she asked her ghosts, but let my arm be held, my steps be guided" (200).

The end of the story returns us to the beginning, where Netta's father announces the end of all "man-made" catastrophes in Europe, and Netta's unquestioning acceptance of his version of "life" as a commercial enterprise (Gallant 156). Only now, Netta returns by choice to a viewpoint more bearable than memory's offering. Just as Gallant permits the unexpected, the unexplained, and the tangential to enter her stories (in fact, purposefully constructing her stories to allow this interplay) Netta also allows Jack's outlook to mingle with, and ultimately control, her version of events. She allows his design of history to suppress her own narrative, a suppression that, paradoxically, frees her from the ache of memory to return to a life and place otherwise uninhabitable.

Unlike the Mother in "About Geneva," Netta, Thomas and Linnet's success in manipulating narrative arises from the fact that they understand the provisional, subjective and strategic aspect of history, an aspect they use to prevent the narratives of others from converging on and determining their lives. They remain aware that alternative narratives do exist, while the weakness of those around them originates in their failure to recognize this fact. The Toepplers, Spaniards and Montreal businessmen remain beholden to one particular history, one particular "fable" or image, while Netta,

Thomas and Linnet erase and/or redesign history at will, knowing that no particular narrative need assume primacy. The failure of the Spaniards in "When We Were Nearly Young" and the Mother in "About Geneva" to conceive alternative histories leaves them enslaved to one particular version of it. Chow writes, "When fascism took power, it took charge of the imaginary" (35). The surrender of the Spaniards and the Mother to one particular rendition represents a surrender of the imagination, a subjugation to narrative tyranny. The Mother's happiness becomes reliant on the image of herself as better parent, an image (because of her children's indifference) she cannot verify. "The glorifying films have the effect of mummifying and monumentalizing Stalin, so that it is the Stalin-image which becomes the ultimate authority, *which even Stalin himself had to follow in order to 'be'*" (Chow 35; emphasis mine). As Chow's paraphrase from André Bazin (40) suggests, the Mother creates a version of herself that she must "follow in order to be." But, since the reality of this image requires not only her own projection, but the (withheld) corroboration of her children, the mother literally finds herself deprived of a satisfactory self-image. She cannot divert her children's story to coincide with her preferred history; the children prove too adept at neutralizing language. Because of its communal criteria, the very image she created for herself confines her. The story ends in a sense of her "mummification," the "monumentalization" of her unattainable self-image, while Thomas's, Linnet's and Netta's stories end in an understanding of narrative fluidity, in some possibilities for release and fulfillment.

In destabilizing narrative and syntactical patterns, Gallant's designed anarchy reacts against the fascist absolute implicit in the conventions of "totality" and "unity of effect" (Poe 66) governing earlier short stories. Susan Lohafer's article, "A Cognitive Approach to Storyness," in elaborating various paradigmatic endings for short stories throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, finds that nineteenth-century stories employed a far more regulated syntactic, visual and internal structure. Certain conventions within the nineteenth-century form allowed readers to prepare for the closure of stories more easily. In the twentieth century, however, she notes that such pace-makers have either disappeared or been altered and subverted. This change demands that the reader bring new modes of cognition to reading: "This is a change to which the text processor, whether human or artificial, must adapt: in twentieth-century stories, signals of closure are less reliably encoded in the visual structure of the story" (Lohafer 304). No

longer can we claim a "master narrative," a model of short storyness that panders to expectations or, in Chow's words, offers an "ultimate authority" either in an aesthetic or hierarchical sense. The nineteenth-century world of imperialism and cultural imposition has lost out to an urge for greater democracy, more individual interaction. This reflects in the products of the culture, such as *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories*; Gallant is aware of a need (particularly after the Holocaust) for a deregulation of the narratives through which we enforce history.

Throughout her career, Gallant blasts away assumptions delimiting the organization of experience offered by the traditional short story. Her stories require constant adaptation, an ability not only to follow a new set of structural clues to a different "ending," or conclusion, but to decentre the reading self from a position of security (in aesthetic, citizenship, nationhood or culture) to a provisional position whose major characteristic consists of enjoyment of language for the sake of language, not for the fact that it affirms or teaches any one particular system. Her stories very much require an altering of "cognition," of the way in which we process the text. In this case, the processing itself takes precedence, not the end product of that processing. None of her stories posits place or character as prime, but the sudden shifts in structure draw our attention to that on which Gallant does place the most emphasis: the ambiguous ability of language both to fix history and meaning and to reroute them: "Eventually they were caught, for me, not by time but by the freezing of memory. And when I looked in the diary I had kept during that period, all I could find was descriptions of the weather" (Gallant 27). "When We Were Nearly Young" closes on the irresolvable displacement of memory by the equalizing force of language. In "The Ice Wagon Going Down the Street" neither Geneva nor Canada nor Paris acts out any unique function, the three places becoming interchangeable fields of failure; nor do relationships or emotions absorb our attention. Perhaps "The Latehomecomer," more clearly than any other story in the collection, undoes the standard relationship between the master and peripheral narrative. In this story the peripheral narrative dominates the central story:

> "I know that you are judging me. If you could guess what my life has been (the whole story, not only the last few years) you wouldn't be hard on me." I turned too slowly to meet her eyes. It was not what I had been thinking. I had forgotten about her, in that sense. . . . What I had been moving along to in my mind was:

Why am I in this place? Who sent me here? Is it a form of justice or injustice? How long does it last? (Gallant 134-35)

The presence of one narrative does not disqualify the existence of others. Though Thomas "forgets" his mother's "story," Gallant does not; nor does she allow the reader to overlook its presence.

Throughout *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories*, by consistently showing the strategies by which one particular narrative silences the other voices (the other stories) whose presence prevents history from ossifying into an inescapable vision, Gallant instructs us on how to avoid falling prey to the "master narrative." She uncovers history as a series of stories impinging on each other, existing simultaneously, or history as a choice, a willful relinquishing of personal experience to an alternate, and more acceptable, narrative. Nowhere does she allow the reader to escape responsibility for permitting history to assume a particular design. As proof against the master narrative she gives us stories of estrangement, renditions meeting in opposition or connection, and a "designed anarchy" rendered in exceptional language.

NOTE

1 This book provides a cross-career sampler of Mavis Gallant's short fiction. The stories under discussion in this paper date from the following collections: "About Geneva" (*The Other Paris* 1956), "When We Were Nearly Young" (*In Transit* 1988), "My Heart is Broken" (*My Heart Is Broken* 1964), "The Ice Wagon Going Down the Street" (*My Heart Is Broken* 1964), "In Youth is Pleasure" (*Home Truths* 1981), "The Latehomecomer" (*From the Fifteenth District* 1979), "The Moslem Wife (*From the Fifteenth District* 1979), "Grippes And Poche" (*Overhead in a Balloon* 1985), "Overhead In A Balloon" (*Overhead In A Balloon* 1985). The aforementioned citations and dates are taken from David Staines's "Acknowledgements" to the same collection. Prefacing his chronology, Staines addresses its provisional character: "The year printed at the end of each story indicates its original date of publication. In this collection I have reprinted the text of each story as it appeared in the author's most recent published version...." (6). Since I use Staines's "version" of the texts, I have retained his dating, though it differs somewhat from those given in Gallant's *Selected Stories*. Gallant's canon problematizes the determination of definite dates for, or versions of, specific stories.

WORKS CITED

Barthes, Roland. "Style and Its Image." *Literary Style: A Symposium*. Ed. and trans. Seymour Chatman. London: Oxford University Press, 1971. 3-10.
Bazin, André. "The Stalin Myth in Soviet Cinema." 1950. Trans. Georgia Gurrieri. *Movies and Methods*. vol 2. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. 29-40.

Besner, Neil. *The Light of Imagination: Mavis Gallant's Fiction.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988.
Brinton, Laurel J. *The Development of English Aspectual Systems.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
Chow, Rey. "The Fascist Longings in Our Midst." *Ariel* 26:1 (January 1995): 23-50.
Gallant, Mavis. *The Moslem Wife and Other Stories.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993.
—. "Preface." *The Selected Stories of Mavis Gallant.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997. ix-xix.
Hancock, Geoff. "An Interview with Mavis Gallant." *Canadian Fiction Magazine: A Special Issue on Mavis Gallant* 28 (1978): 18-67.
Hatch, Ronald B. "Mavis Gallant and the Fascism of Everyday Life." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 42 (1990): 9-40.
Hersey, John, ed. *The Writer's Craft.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.
Kulyk Keefer, Janice. *Reading Mavis Gallant.* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989.
Lohafer, Susan. "A Cognitive Approach to Storyness." *The New Short Story Theories.* Ed. Charles E. May. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994. 301-311.
O'Rourke, David. "Exiles in Time: Gallant's 'My Heart is Broken'." *Canadian Literature* 93 (Summer 1982): 98-107.
Poe, Edgar Allan. "Poe on Short Fiction." *The New Short Story Theories.* Ed. Charles E. May. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994. 59-72.
Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics.* London: Methuen, 1983.
Schaub, Danielle. "Structural Patterns of Alienation & Disjunction: Mavis Gallant's Firmly-Structured Stories." *Canadian Literature* 136 (Spring 1993): 45-57.