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“Lacking an emotional country…”: Motion, Instability, and the Female Cosmopolitan in the Fiction of Mavis Gallant

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A Thesis in the Field of English

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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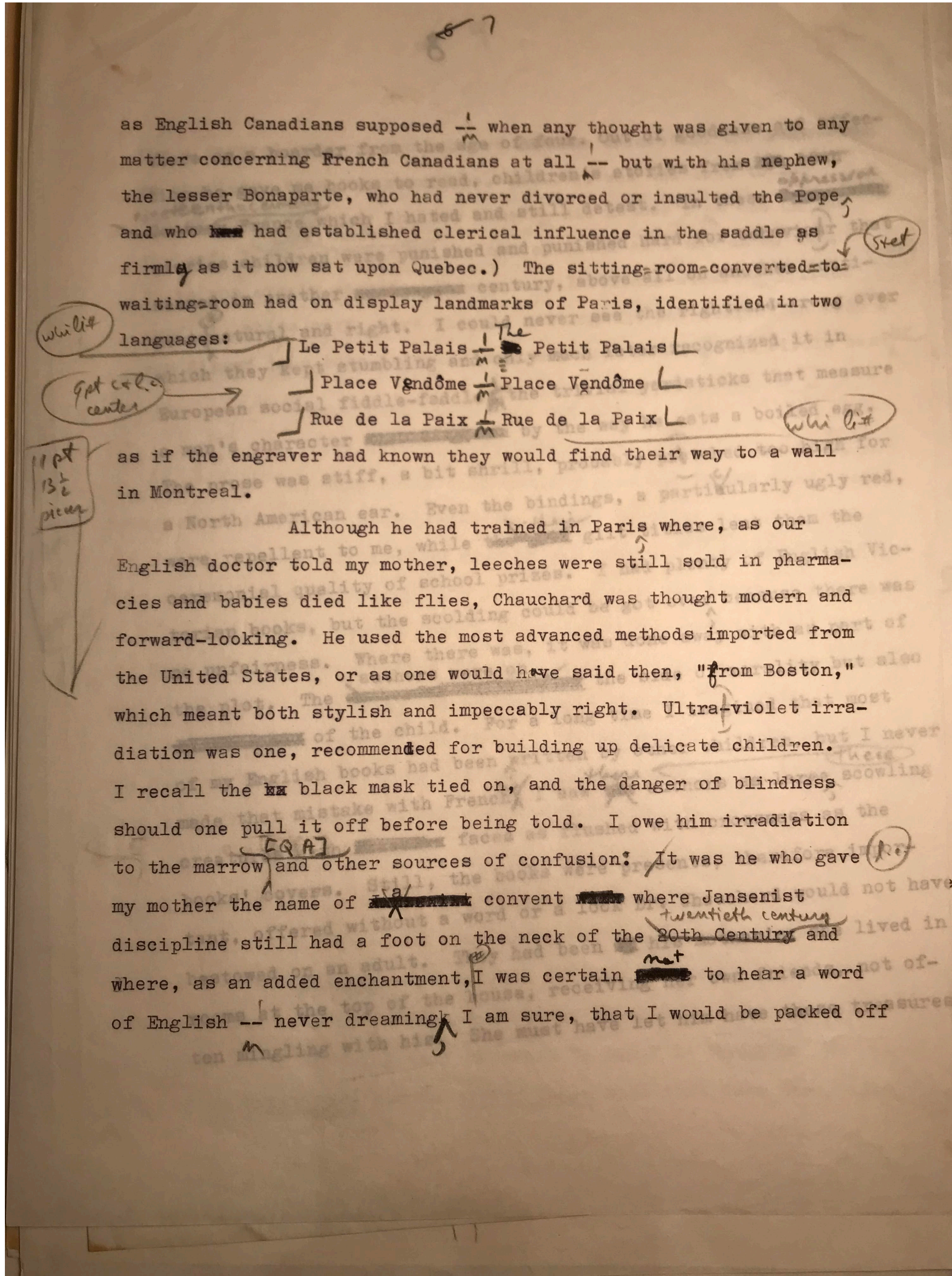
Abstract

Twentieth century Canadian expatriate writer Mavis Gallant (1922-2014) explores the lingering effects of authoritarian power on social instability through themes of transnational migration, displacement, and loss. A prolific author who published extensively in *The New Yorker*, Gallant writes stories that are exquisite yet disturbing reflections of life, many set in post-World War II Europe where travelers, migrants, expatriates, and exiles have been set adrift by the inhospitable conditions of social and political collapse. This thesis examines images of motion and instability that situate Gallant's work as the cosmopolitan condition that both responds to globalization and, most importantly, resists the standardization of Westernized global culture. I address the question Rebecca L. Walkowitz asks in *Cosmopolitan Style*, "Do the unsettling methods of cosmopolitan art serve to resist the adverse realities of cosmopolitan culture? Or do they facilitate them?" in order to argue that women in Gallant's fiction bear more of the weight of these "adverse realities" in their roles as mothers, daughters, and wives, entangled as they are in the continuing gender disparities of Western culture, and also in the more intimate power dynamics of marriage and family social structure (23). This thesis demonstrates that instability requires a broader awareness of the consequences of displacement as well as the abuses of authoritarian control.

Frontispiece



7

as English Canadians supposed -- when any thought was given to any matter concerning French Canadians at all -- but with his nephew, the lesser Bonaparte, who had never divorced or insulted the Pope and who had established clerical influence in the saddle as firmly as it now sat upon Quebec.) The sitting-room-converted-to-waiting-room had on display landmarks of Paris, identified in two languages:

Le Petit Palais -- Petit Palais
Place Vendôme -- Place Vendôme
Rue de la Paix -- Rue de la Paix

as if the engraver had known they would find their way to a wall in Montreal.

Although he had trained in Paris where, as our English doctor told my mother, leeches were still sold in pharmacies and babies died like flies, Chauchard was thought modern and forward-looking. He used the most advanced methods imported from the United States, or as one would have said then, "from Boston," which meant both stylish and impeccably right. Ultra-violet irradiation was one, recommended for building up delicate children. I recall the black mask tied on, and the danger of blindness should one pull it off before being told. I owe him irradiation to the marrow and other sources of confusion. It was he who gave my mother the name of convent where Jansenist discipline still had a foot on the neck of the 20th Century and where, as an added enchantment, I was certain to hear a word of English -- never dreaming, I am sure, that I would be packed off

From the uncollected papers of Mavis Gallant, housed at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, Canada.

Dedication

To John, who has made all words possible, and to Alex and Sara, who have shown me the way.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Beth Blum whose unceasing encouragement and knowledge kept me going during a challenging summer of writing. I have been truly fortunate to study under her, and little of this thesis would have been possible without her guidance.

To Dr. Collier Brown, whose confidence in my project shaped something more than a term paper and who pointed me in the direction of Professor Blum.

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Chapter I.

Introduction

"…if you move from one social class to another you're a refugee, aren't you? Isn't a religious convert a refugee? Or someone who loses faith in ideas and people? If you move from one province to another you are a refugee of a kind. There is always something left behind."

--Mavis Gallant, 1977

In 1940, a young Canadian woman crosses the U.S.-Canada border by train, returning home to Montreal in the middle of the Second World War. Eighteen-year-old Mavis Gallant has been away from Canada for years and has no family left in her hometown. Displaced by her mother's remarriage and relocation to New York after her English-Canadian father's sudden death in 1932, she is now on her own at Windsor Station with only a suitcase and a wicker basket filled with books. What she returns to is not only a confrontation with the sentimentality of the past, but also with the notion of home as a fixed place of stability and comfort. Home has only ever been a starting point for traveling away.

Wartime makes employment for women possible, and Gallant finds work as a journalist with the *Montreal Standard* despite having neither experience nor a college degree. Creating a new identity as a young citizen of the world, she has already crossed borders of language and belonging. She is now Mavis Gallant, writer. Fluent in French, she reads Proust in the original and engages easily with French Canadians in Montreal, a

city still deeply divided by language, culture, and class. Always writing, Gallant fills her wicker basket with stories about refugees and exiles.

With the release of the first photographs taken after the liberation of the Nazi death camps, Gallant is tasked with writing the captions for images of the systematic genocide that had no precedent in human comprehension. “Imagine…having to write the explanation of something I did not myself understand,” Gallant recalled in 1977 (Hancock 99). This will become the defining moment of Gallant’s career. Her realization that “neither culture nor civilization nor art nor Christianity had been a retaining wall” signals Gallant’s concern with the pervasive instability of a world irreparably changed, a “retaining wall” that can no longer be relied upon to humanize society (99). And yet, Gallant’s judiciously spare captions are rejected by her editors at the *Standard* in favor of sensationalism and nationalistic flag-waving. This contested textual space lays the foundation for Gallant’s later explorations, through the short story, the novella, and the novel, of the forces of history, the distortions of memory, and the inadequacy of language to convey the truth of an unstable cosmopolitan world. Ultimately, Gallant will settle in Paris as an expatriate Canadian author writing in English about Europeans and North Americans for a predominantly American audience.

To read Gallant is to engage with an uncompromising vision of human behavior. Acutely aware of the political and historical forces that shape the trajectory of human suffering, Gallant is also concerned with the repercussions of global events on the lives of individual people displaced from home, and the ways in which this instability shapes human response to their situations. Cosmopolitanism as a social practice acknowledges the notion of common humanity, but it makes no provision for the loss of specific

markers of identity. Like Thomas, the narrator of Gallant's "The Latehomecomer," a prisoner of war who loses all coherent sense of self as he returns to the indifference of his hometown, Gallant's cosmopolitan figures are also "latehomecomers," for whom the particularities of home, identity, and culture have lost their distinguishing characteristics, plunging them into a crisis of transience and mutability. While prisoners of war face more challenging problems of adjustment than cosmopolitan travelers, both are confronted with the instability of their new social situations. Just as Gallant's portmanteau, "latehomecomer," elides the borders of separation between words, her cosmopolitan travelers are a diverse mass of borderless humanity, a "new category of persons, all one word" (52). When all borders are permeable, however, there may be no "retaining wall" capable of providing legibility. If, as Jakob von Beyer suggests, the "absence of a coherent definition of local/global binaries" results in a "less settled" notion of inhabiting a specific body or community of bodies, then Gallant's figures inhabit an uneasy cosmopolitanism that first must come to terms with the continuous displacement of globalization before addressing the issue of what moral obligations fellow humans have toward each other (198).

Central to this emphasis on displacement is Gallant's concern with the lingering effects of authoritarianism, both in political structures as well as in family hierarchies, in which the burden of the past complicates the present. Gallant's fiction is replete with nomadic figures who are in transit, fleeing repression or the impossible demands of an overbearing parent. While theories of cosmopolitanism emphasize the shared morality of the human community, a utopianism embodied in Kant's notion of "perpetual peace" in which "natural" laws shape the stability of moral "rightness," I argue that instability is at

the heart of Gallant's treatment of cosmopolitanism; therefore I intend to show the ways in which images of motion and recurring metaphors for displacement in Gallant's work embody a cosmopolitan world of pervasive disconnection. Furthermore, I argue that Gallant's cosmopolitan women, who bear the particular weight of instability through their entanglements in the continuing gender disparities of Western culture and also in the more intimate power dynamics of marriage and family structure, adapt to the disruptive challenges of rootlessness through their resistance to sentimentality and nostalgia. Rather than being the inevitable outcome of what Janice Kulyk Keefer in "Strange Fashions of Forsaking: Criticism and the Fiction of Mavis Gallant" ("SFF"), calls "the shattering events we own as history," instability allows Gallant to offer through her writing an unsentimental vision of cosmopolitanism in which identity and belonging are a process, transience is a survival strategy, and the individual is not bound to the fixity of the past (722).

Gallant is a writer of images of motion over land and on the ocean, as well as through invisible psychic pathways that deviate into telepathy or madness. Travel, with its state of continuous dislocation, is how Gallant represents not only rootlessness, but also nomadic independence. Travel by train is of particular interest for her, with the slow unfolding of the landscape allowing for the contemplation of time and the past. In the post-Holocaust European landscape, however, trains are also fraught metaphors laden with disturbing implications, and yet the privilege of travel is also the embodiment of cosmopolitan freedom. Conversely, to be forced into exile is the erasure of the cosmopolitan subject caught within ideologically competing discourses of power, while to choose rootlessness as Gallant did, as well as an earlier generation of expatriate

modernist writers such as Joyce, Hemingway, Beckett, and Stein, is to shape instability into artistic vision.

Globalization has, of course, made border crossings possible, while also enforcing class distinctions according to those who choose to cross as opposed to those who must flee. For Gallant, the realities of a globalized world present not simply a challenge to class and personal identity, but also an approach to change. Implicit in Gallant's cosmopolitanism is the creative freedom to imagine new visions of the self. The cosmopolitan figure, crossing borders that once delimited nationality and selfhood, creates a new identity that may be estranged from the past but remains open to reinvention. This, for von Baeyer, makes "the creative freedom of the cosmopolitan…similar to that of the artist" (199).

My thesis explores the way that Gallant's work situates the instability of the cosmopolitan condition as a response to globalization and, most importantly, as the aesthetic resistance necessary to overcome the standardization of Westernized global culture. Gallant's work seeks to change the social and political milieu of mid-twentieth century literary production. I address the question Rebecca L. Walkowitz asks in *Cosmopolitan Style*, "Do the unsettling methods of cosmopolitan art serve to resist the adverse realities of cosmopolitan culture? Or do they facilitate them?" (23).

I am also concerned with the ways in which Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures seem to conform to what Doris Wolf calls "hysterical gothic women [who] enact their frustration at being pawns in political games not of their making…that ultimately keep one thing the same: their disempowered and second class positions" (12). I explore how this frustration is consistent with Walkowitz's implication that some forms of

cosmopolitan art facilitate “the adverse realities of cosmopolitan culture.” My argument will engage with these “hysterical gothic women” in order to demonstrate the ways in which Gallant’s narratives resist theories of feminist triumphalism: not only does Gallant suggest that some women cannot escape their positions as “pawns in political games not of their own making,” but she also demonstrates that women themselves are capable of just the same acts of oppression as are men. This exemplifies Gallant’s approach to feminism that demands not a utopian notion of sisterhood, but rather economic parity for all. For Gallant, a feminist cosmopolitanism is the crossing over from dependence to self -sufficiency. Thus, to explore the question of instability at the center of my thesis, I focus on the way that women’s bodies become border crossings as well, suggested by what Shameem Black refers to as “the cosmopolitan feminist vision of motherhood and fertility,” which becomes the source for a particular form of cross-border community that Black calls “cosmofeminism” (226). However, these cosmofeminist alliances prove elusive for Gallant, for whom solidarity must be considered a human endeavor not limited by gender.

Gallant’s tremendous literary output—one hundred twenty short stories, the majority of which were published in *The New Yorker* and collected into eighteen volumes, two novels and novellas, a book of essays and reviews, an unpublished journal, and uncategorized writing and letters held in the Gallant archive at the Thomas Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, in addition to her over sixty feature stories from her years at the *Montreal Standard*—presents a challenge to any scholar attempting to survey her entire career. Outside the scope of this thesis will be many of the short stories that nevertheless are crucial to a comprehensive approach to Gallant’s work. This

thesis examines the novel, *Green Water, Green Sky* (1959), the novella, "The Pegnitz Junction" (1973), and the Linnet Muir interconnected story sequence from the collection, *Home Truths* (1985). To do so, I engage with Gallant scholarship as well as contemporary cosmopolitan scholarship in order to offer readings of these three pivotal Gallant works. I argue that instability is the defining characteristic of her concern as a writer in three specific ways: first, through images of water, motion, and travel; second, through the shifting dynamics of power within family relationships; and third, through the tenuous hold of sentimentality and the past on individuals whose willful forgetting evades responsibility for the present.

While Samuel Beckett and James Joyce's identities as expatriate writers have not limited scholarly interest in their work, but rather have greatly expanded it, Gallant has not been afforded the same attentiveness. This may be a result of the difficulty in categorizing her: is she a late modernist outlier? Should she be grouped with other high-profile writers from Canada, such as Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, and Sheila Heti? Or does she, like Munro, Atwood, and Heti, transcend national labels and belong, also like Nadine Gordimer and Jhumpa Lahiri, to the greater literary world? Does Gallant really have a place in the contemporary discourse surrounding cosmopolitanism if she has been published primarily in a single magazine, *The New Yorker*, which is accessible only to a certain stratum of American privilege?

Scholarly attention to Gallant has been limited not only by her seeming obscurity as a Canadian citizen living in Paris, writing in English largely for a select American reading public, but also by her preference for privacy. Beckett's own well-documented desire for privacy may have been as strong as Gallant's, but this did not seem to slow the

tide of scholarly interest in his work. In *Reading Mavis Gallant* (*RMG*), Janice Kulyk Keefer contends that scholarly consideration of Gallant has been slow in arriving because she has created a fictive world commonly shared by reader and writer—that is, the often messy world of children and adults—as opposed to Beckett's minimalist limbo which has been "canonized as profoundly true and moving" (37). Furthermore, Kulyk Keefer argues, the literary establishment has been reluctant to accord major status to women authors who write about women and children (38).

It is important to note, however, that for Gallant, the family is not sentimentalized, but rather becomes a paradigm of political control. Gallant's acute historical and political sensibilities are further obscured when George Woodcock contends that "her mature work is in no way male and ideological; it is feminine and intuitive, and the rightness of detail and surface which are so striking come not from intellectual deliberation but a sense of rightness as irrational but as true as absolute pitch" (81). It is unfortunate that Woodcock chose to link "male and ideological" and "feminine and intuitive" in 1978 when his paper, "Memory, Imagination, Artifice: The Late Short Fiction of Mavis Gallant" was included in a special issue of the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* devoted entirely to Gallant. Woodcock, however, is correct to focus on Gallant's unerring sense of "rightness of detail and surface," which he regards as her ability to craft the artifice necessary to create an entirely plausible fictive world through language alone. No doubt he intended to praise these qualities in Gallant's writing as seemingly effortless—almost intuitive—rather than tethered to a rigid ideology of formulaic correctness, but implicit gender bias may have gotten in the way. To his credit, however, Woodcock's attention to the "sense of rightness as irrational" suggests that he

recognizes a subconscious current flowing through Gallant's writing which stands in contrast to the consciously "intellectual," and which I regard as her interest in the elusive and spectral qualities of the mind. These qualities—telepathy and madness—offer an alternative to utopian notions of cosmopolitan stability by destabilizing the rational, yet they also underscore the porousness of the boundaries between the seen and unseen world.

Other scholars writing on Gallant in the last quarter of the twentieth century focus on thematic and structural elements in her work. Charlotte Sturgess, in "The Art of the Narrator in Mavis Gallant's Short Stories," examines themes of thwarted communication within the urban metropolis and the breakdown of kinship connections in Gallant's fiction, "socially, between the rootless cosmopolitan and his environment, culturally, between the French and the English…individually, between husband and wife or parent and child" (183). Public and private authority is also divided, as is the past from the present. Moreover, Sturgess draws attention the importance of the urban space in Gallant's work and the sense of dislocation that can pervade a city: "[Gallant] renders an assumption of the cosmopolis not only as the space of representation…but as the locus of individual consciousness" (183). This suggests that within the urban space, instability and change are the defining characteristics of the individual immersed in urban multiplicity.

Humanism similarly becomes a particular focus of twentieth century Gallant scholarship. Ronald Hatch, in "The Three Stages of Mavis Gallant's Short Fiction," suggests that the larger theme of Gallant's work goes beyond the individual, entrapped in "liberal, romantic ideals" in order to critique humanism as a casualty of the "nightmare of history" (93). Hatch rightly engages with the political dimensions of Gallant's work that

foreground the continuing reach of authoritarianism in order to demonstrate that history itself is enfolded within the individual. Hatch argues that Gallant's use of the retrospective narrator in the Linnet Muir stories—the older Linnet who narrates the entire sequence, observing the younger Linnet—allows for a complicating dialectic between past and present narrative perspectives (108). This results, Hatch contends, in the younger Linnet not being simply the observer of her own history, but rather enfolded within the history of her father through her writing (109). I would add that the act of writing further complicates this dialectic by suggesting that the written account young Linnet creates is itself an act of observation. I will explore this in greater detail in Chapter V.

Structure is equally a concern of twentieth century Gallant scholarship. In "To Be (And Not to Be) Continued: Closure and Consolation in Gallant's Linnet Muir Sequence," Karen Smythe argues that the six Linnet Muir stories, in their extended form as a linked sequence of interrelated narratives, comprise an "anti-elegy" through Gallant's use of irony rather than mourning (75). Moreover, Smythe contends that the elegiac form is disrupted by Gallant's connecting the six stories, which comprise neither a novella nor a single, long short story, but rather an alternate structure of connected disconnections. This atypical approach to the elegy, in which beginnings and endings are reenacted six times and the breaks between stories rupture narrative flow, allows Gallant not only "to literalize" the process of the grieving mind to memorialize through repetition, but also to enact the fragmentation of grief itself (78).

In addition to theme and structure, twentieth century Gallant scholarship is concerned with championing Gallant as a writer worthy of scholarly regard. Two book-length studies, both emerging at the end of the 1980s, set the standard for in-depth critical

writing about Gallant. Neil Besner's *The Light of the Imagination: Mavis Gallant's Fiction* (1988) was the first comprehensive book entirely about Gallant, spanning her earliest *New Yorker* publication in 1950, "Madeline's Birthday," to her collection from 1984, *Overhead in a Balloon*. Besner tracks the evolution of Gallant's fiction from the complexities of social interactions between North Americans and Europeans within the postwar landscape, to the movements of time and memory. As part of his project to advocate for Gallant as a major twentieth century writer, Besner focuses on the particular qualities of her work that are haunting and elusive: "Gallant's fiction demands that we recognize how significance plays over her stories in flashes and sparks, and that we develop the imaginative agility to respond to these moments of light" (153). Most importantly, Besner is among the first to engage with displacement and defamiliarization in Gallant's writing. For Besner, Gallant's focus on displacement through migration and exile does not imply "a cyclical repetition of history; rather [it implies] subtle alteration, variation within each repetition, each return to a 'locked situation'" (151). Thus, displacement even in the act of returning home becomes entrapment. Each alteration of the political and emotional landscape, Besner contends, leads to more dislocation, creating the instability of Gallant's cosmopolitan figure, adrift in loops of return.

Publishing her own book-length scholarly work a year after Besner, Janice Kulyk Keefer contextualizes Gallant within the modernist literary cannon. In *Reading Mavis Gallant* (*RMG*), Keefer argues that Gallant's work belongs side-by-side with that of Beckett, Joyce, and Chekov. Moreover, Keefer pushes back against the reductive nationalism that regards all writers only as a product of their individual citizenship: "For her the 'national sense of self' is not an affair of essences, but rather of difference: she is

Canadian because she is not British or American, or any other nationality" (4). Keefer quotes Gallant herself commenting on the nationalist labeling affixed to her work because of her Canadian citizenship, asserting, "I'm a writer in the English language. Was Katherine Mansfield a New Zealand writer to you?" (104). In her only book of nonfiction, *Paris Notebooks* (*PN*), Gallant asserts that identity "swings like a metronome. The writer is not two things at once, but one thing slightly modified" (232). It is important to note that being an expatriate or a cosmopolitan does not erase the significance of one's place of origin. Rather, establishing one's life beyond the borders of one's birth allows for the creative instability of multiple perspectives and influences. However, as in *Green Water, Green Sky*, immigration and exile can also expedite the loss of cohesive markers of identity, such as family and home, thus imposing a sense of estrangement. Home for Gallant, as it was for other expatriate modernist writers such as Joyce, Beckett, Hemingway, and Stein, is often a construct of nostalgia and longing.

Twenty-first century Gallant scholarship shifts away from earlier critical writing that first and foremost advocates for Gallant's recognition as a major writer in order to focus on themes of transience and displacement. These are concerns that resonate in the contemporary political climate of border walls, the resurgence of nationalism, and forced migration. In "(Dis)playing Différance: 'Across the Bridge' by Mavis Gallant," Agnès Whitfield examines what she calls Gallant's "paradoxical" approach to displacement in language. Whitfield employs Derrida's spelling of "différance," deliberately spelled with an "a" to establish the two meanings of "différer" that are linked to his theory of language: the first that articulates time—to defer for later—and the second that occupies space by comparison with something else—to differ (49). Words refer to something that

is always absent, and thus meaning is constantly deferred and displaced. Whitfield argues that Gallant's use of deferral—what Keefer calls her "impression of authorial evasion or indifference"—is tied to her being an Anglophone writer fluent in French, living and speaking in French, but choosing only to write in English and in fact, warning of the difficulty in translating her works into French. "What happens," Whitfield asks, "when the Anglophone writer transcribes the conversations of her many French characters, not in their native language, but in an English already displaced, rewritten, transformed through difference?" (52). This, I argue, is crucial to understanding the role of language in Gallant's writing, and I will explore this more fully in my reading of "The Doctor" in Chapter V.

Spatial displacement is of major concern for twenty-first century Gallant scholarship, as well as the implications of gender on instability. Maria Noëlle Ng's "Women Out of Place: Hotel Living in Mavis Gallant's Short Stories" focuses on a particular kind of female experience specific to women living in the "negotiated space of the hotel" (93). Hotels, along with train travel, are pervasive throughout Gallant's fiction. These transitory spaces that temporarily displace home are nevertheless structured to enforce codified rules of behavior, often placing scrutiny on women according to class, gender role, and nationality. While a hotel stay requires a certain level of economic privilege, what Ng refers to as "an overt economic gesture," there is no real privacy, since walls and doors do little to separate private space from the public (94). Identity is called into question, because there are no markers of individuality in a hotel, except for the ability to spend money, that would determine what Ng quotes Pierre Bourdieu as calling the "habitus" or the structuring principles of home and belonging (95). These are the

crucial determinants, according to Bourdieu, that define one's place in society. Moreover, women living in hotels, Ng argues, are "sexualized by default" since their status is categorized by their relationships to men (109). I would add that this notion extends to impermanent living space underwritten by men not just economically, as it is for Bonnie in *Green Water, Green Sky* and Christine in "The Pegnitz Junction," but also through the gendered hierarchy of patronymic and lineage, as it is for Linnet Muir, for whom Montreal represents a return to the urban space colonized by her father. For Ng, transience "accentuates the disconnected state Gallant's women characters are in and their unstable identities" (109).

The effects of gender on transience and displacement also concerns Di Brandt in "Fascists, Mothers, and Provisional Others in 'The Pegnitz Junction'." Brandt pushes back against previous Gallant scholarship that regards the displacement of the family in her work as indicative of Gallant's negative worldview. While Brandt focuses on Gallant's critique of the conventional nuclear family with its "fascistic underpinnings," she also demonstrates, through her readings of Kristeva, Irigaray, and other feminist scholars of maternal discourse, that Gallant's atypical family structures offer "a range…of experimental relationship patterns" that allow for alternatives to the disempowerment of women in traditional families (46). Complicating this are Gallant's portrayals of "bad mothers" who beat their children, such as in "Ernst in Civilian Clothes," or ignore their need for individuation, as does Bonnie in *Green Water, Green Sky*. What is equally as complicating is Gallant's emphasis on the importance of motherhood as a reparative force in society, not in the Victorian sense of the "moral mother," but rather taken on as a conscious decision to engage with caregiving that, only

through its generosity, can repair the traditional nuclear family. Christine, in "The Pegnitz Junction," accepts the role of mothering in order to connect with her lover's child, Bruno, thus uniting them in a new kind of family that may be better equipped to resist the fragmentation of the world around them. This is what Brandt calls "motherhood as authentic choice," even if one is not a mother through the act of birth (46). Since the family, for Gallant, is the model for larger political structures, Brandt regards Gallant's maternal figures as the creators of "reparative political possibilities" that will generate new patterns of relationships (48). It is only through resistance to the normative and constricting patterns of maternal care that alternative family configurations will be able to challenge the authoritarianism of traditional social and political structures.

In addition to studying dislocation in Gallant's work, twenty-first century Gallant scholarship seeks to locate her within the greater context of cosmopolitan scholarship. Jakob von Baeyer's "The Displaced Cosmopolitan: Canadian Nationality and World Citizenship in the Fiction of Mavis Gallant" focuses on the implications of Gallant's specific cosmopolitan vision. Drawing a contrast between the cosmopolitanism that Kwame Anthony Appiah and Gayatri Spivak regard as "euphoric visions of transcultural exchange," and Gallant's more problematized sense of cosmopolitan displacement, von Baeyer argues that it is the reflection of Gallant's own identity as an expatriate Canadian in her writing that complicates a message of utopian cosmopolitanism: "It is precisely Gallant's slippery Canadian identity, as articulated in her texts and (to a lesser degree) in her own life, which offers a useful starting point for an exploration of the cosmopolitan in her fictions, as well as broader implications for cosmopolitan study" (188). For von Baeyer, Gallant's cosmopolitan world is not a comfortable place. While her characters

are indeed world travelers, they manage, as von Baeyer points out, “to remain outsiders in the truest sense, living international lives while alienated from both their adoptive country and their native one” (188). Worldliness is inextricably linked to alienation, and the instability caused by being unsettled leads to the absence of a cohesive sense of home or self. This, however, according to von Baeyer, allows for complex new identities to emerge: it is the process of crossing borders that makes possible “acts of creative reinvention” (201). Thus, Gallant’s cosmopolitanism depends on instability in order for a new citizen of the world to effect change.

In contrast with Gallant’s concern with the instability of “creative reinvention,” the history of cosmopolitanism as a moral and political practice traces a utopian vision of the stability of a borderless and egalitarian world. The earliest instances of cosmopolitanism may have arisen in the writings of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten, unearthed in a 1907 archeological dig (Harris 1). These Levantine origins were then absorbed into Hellenic culture, emerging into a philosophical construct by the fifth century BCE. From the ancient Greek word, “kosmopolitês,” meaning “world citizen,” cosmopolitanism seeks to sweep away all borders and limitations in order to unite every individual in the community of shared world citizenship. For Immanuel Kant, cosmopolitanism had been the pursuit of “perpetual peace,” in which natural laws govern individual behavior to ensure the stability of moral rightness. This would mean that the goal of a cosmopolitan society would be to create a unified, global approach to morality, thereby ending all conflict. Postcolonial critiques of cosmopolitanism, however, have pointed to the inherently Western values of capitalism and hierarchical political structures that have too easily been adopted as the only model of “moral rightness.” Continuing

crises of material inequalities, forced migration, and perpetual war have only increased the criticism of cosmopolitanism as another instance of Western colonial aggression against less powerful nations.

However, to regard cosmopolitanism as a postcolonial failure risks simplifying the complexities of a theoretical construct that takes as its starting point the absolute need to avoid the kind of stability characterized by authoritarian regimes. Both postcolonialism and cosmopolitanism reject systematic political and economic oppression. Thus, the concepts of diversity and access to individual freedom are fundamental to understanding cosmopolitanism. Tom G. Palmer suggests that cosmopolitanism first became relevant in the ancient Greek marketplace in order to insure that traders from the East would not be subjected to unfair laws unilaterally imposed by the Athenians (3). It is also crucially important to recognize the non-Western origins of cosmopolitanism, because the notion of cosmopolitanism itself requires thinking across borders and categories of culture, not ontologically, but rather rhizomatically, spreading laterally, but not hierarchically. In this way, cosmopolitanism aligns with postcolonial thought in its rejection of political structures that seek control through the stabilizing forces of authoritarianism. Bruce Robbins further critiques the idea that cosmopolitanism, in its altruistic and often utopian values, is mere "cultural egocentricity" by asserting that cosmopolitan practice in the contemporary global sphere operates as the "density of overlapping allegiances" (314). This is the notion that globalization seeks to standardize these allegiances for the economic and political benefit of Western corporate entities, whereas cosmopolitanism celebrates the differences inherent in these allegiances—the "overlapping" affinities of local culture and values —in order to construct a global community of free individuals.

Cosmopolitanism promotes differences, while globalization expects conformity. Instability, then, becomes interwoven into cosmopolitan thought, not as a negative effect, but rather as a dynamic force that generates new modalities of interaction.

Similarly, nomadism is another dynamic force essential to cosmopolitanism that normalizes displacement as the functioning of free cosmopolitan citizens. In "Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory," Rosi Braidotti argues that only a nomadic cosmopolitanism can counter the debilitating effects of globalization and the perpetual cycles of war. Nomadism disperses what Braidotti calls "postmodern systems" or the institutions of global surveillance disguised as the Internet, which produce "micro-fascisms" rather than connectivity (5). These are similar to the "every day fascisms" that Gallant finds in the way ordinary people react to the threat of disempowerment. What Braidotti seeks instead is a "new pan-humanity" that will inhabit "a new cosmos-polis," or a shifting, nomadic state of being that has neither fixed coordinates nor an inherent ontology of the human mapped onto its citizens (12). This is a cosmopolitanism that values displacement and instability by promoting a "nomadic becoming" that is "neither reproduction nor just imitation, but rather emphatic proximity, intensive interconnectedness" (5). Braidotti's nomads, like Gallant's displaced characters, remain perpetually in motion. While Gallant's cosmopolitans inhabit solitude rather than proximity, Braidotti and Gallant have returned cosmopolitanism to a fluid state not simply of being in the world, but of becoming others, an intertwined and shifting consciousness of the relationships between oneself and the world.

The concept of the maternal body, in which pregnancy can be regarded as both the colonization of the mother by the fetus and as Braidotti's "emphatic proximity,

intensive interconnectedness," is essential to the bridging of feminist theory and cosmopolitan thought. Just as Braidotti uses poststructuralist feminist scholarship to redefine the subjectivity of the nomadic figure, Shameem Black examines the cosmopolitan feminist figurations of womanhood and child-bearing in "Fertile Cosmofeminism: Ruth L. Ozeki and Transnational Reproduction." Cosmopolitanism, for Black, has a specific meaning for women and women's bodies in the contemporary world. Because women engage in a "discourse of reproduction" that locates their bodies within the politics of social policy, public health, and corporate profiteering whether or not they have children, the "rhetoric of childbearing" suggests that a woman's body is a border, with childbirth the experience of crossing from one state of being to another (226). This means, Black argues, that women themselves embody transcultural values of cosmopolitanism when they accept certain ideologies of femininity.

However, Black is careful to note that the "problematic conceptual tools" of biologism and maternalism, which essentialize women according to their reproductive capabilities, complicate the idea that women across the globe are united in their roles as mothers or potential mothers (233). What Black calls "cosmofeminism" is a way "to encode an elusive ideal within imperfect histories" (228). While she cites the objections that feminist theorists have about the rhetoric of "global sisterhood," especially as a form of American imperialism that imposes white middle-class, liberal feminist ideals on all women throughout the world, Black also believes that cosmofeminism allows women to participate and maintain a dynamic of power that previously has been denied to them (229). These alliances of cosmofeminism, however, are antithetical to Gallant's Linnet Muir, who rejects the "global sisterhood" of the few women in her workplace while

demanding economic equity with her male colleagues in order to assert her own competence and self-worth, qualities her male colleagues maintain as their only access to power. For Black, feminist visions of powerful alliances influence cosmopolitanism's attempt to bridge local and global knowledge, while for Gallant, romantic notions of sisterhood only constrict women by relegating them to a separate and unequal sphere of influence. I would suggest that a more powerful alliance is forged between Gallant and Linnet Muir, her autobiographical alter ego: as the embodiment of Gallant's brand of feminism, which insists on economic equality, Linnet represents Gallant herself and the cosmopolitan life Gallant is able to lead because of her success as a writer in a literary world still dominated by men. For Black and Gallant, feminist ideology and cosmopolitanism intersect in disparate yet complementary ways as a means to access the power of economic and political independence previously denied to women.

It is only through the act of self-narration that Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures reclaim a sense of their own agency, thereby translating their experiences into the story of the cosmopolitan self. Translation as the process of interaction between personal agency and the ethical consideration of others is important to Gayatri Spivak and a new conception of cosmopolitanism that develops the question of difference. Thus, just as translation is not simply finding the equivalent word in different languages, but rather honoring the untranslatable differences, such as Freud's "unheimlich," which is not quite "uncanny," so is the process of imagining "alterity," or the differences between bodies and systems, also the act of holding these differences as irreconcilable. This is crucial to developing a theory of cosmopolitanism that takes into account the "ethical semiosis" of the other, an acknowledgment that for Spivak is the essence of being human (13). Similar

to the literary semiosis that links the reader with Gallant's texts in a relationship of signs and signification, Spivak's ethical semiosis is the essence of cosmopolitanism. It is "the animating gift of life," Spivak believes, that intends us toward the other in a relational network that depends not on "dialectical negations" or the simple, contrasting binaries of male/female, rich/poor, North/South, or even local/global, but rather as "underived alterity," or the irreducible differences that are inherent and undeniable (73).

Spivak calls for imagining "planetarity," rather than accepting the global; she advocates for the planet, "which is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system" instead of the technological and capitalistic hegemony of the globe that exists as an artificial and digitized simulacrum of reality, an imaginary globe "which is on our computers" (72). This means that a cosmopolitan planetarity affirms differences. It is important to understand, however, that Spivak does not mean that the planet is just a larger version of the globe: the planet and the globe are incomparable entities, and they cannot be thought of as existing in an easily graspable relationship, or perhaps in any relationship whatsoever.

For Spivak, the globe invites domination; the planet resists being known. As an altogether different "species of alterity," the planet is a system beyond human comprehension, a "cosmos" that extends infinitely, not a "politês" that has a fixed location. These are the same differences Gallant's Linnet Muir faces in the English and French Canadian communities in Montreal that can be aligned only by affirming their irreconcilability. Thus, cosmopolitanism has evolved into a state of imagining that which Spivak and Gallant see as the (im)possible, unstable, yet necessary way we must inhabit ourselves and the world.

Our existence as humans is inherently interconnected. What takes place in one part of the world inevitably affects another. Pandemics and climate change are two of the most pressing challenges that face humanity, and since our collective future as a species hinges on how we respond to these crises, shared political and social action will be crucial to our survival. For this reason, cosmopolitanism, the borderless conceptual space that regards the ethics of consideration and the importance of differences as the defining factors of planetary citizenship, also defines a fundamental instability that generates change. Cosmopolitanism, then, may be the moral and political practice best positioned to influence collective action against these existential threats.

For Gallant, however, the cosmopolitan self is solitary, living only within the shifting, borderless construct of motion and memory. The existential threat each faces is the specter of stasis, and this is why Gallant's cosmopolitan figures must stay in motion. Thus, the experience of instability and displacement for Gallant's cosmopolitan figures imparts what Edward Saïd calls "our truest reality…expressed in the way we cross over from one place to another [as] migrants and perhaps, hybrids in, but not of, any situation in which we find ourselves" (164). This liminal moment of "crossing over" is the instability at the core of Gallant's writing.

In contrast to the rootlessness of her characters, there is a fixed home for Gallant's papers. I was privileged to spend two days researching in the Gallant archive at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. There, with the incomparable help of the librarians and archivists, I surveyed the fourteen boxes of Gallant's manuscripts, notebooks, proof copies, letters, and uncategorized writing. Gallant herself organized everything into folders affixed with handwritten labels and

introductory notes tucked inside for future scholars, thereby ensuring her work would be studied. What is not contained in the archive, however, may be even more significant in understanding the differences between Gallant's struggles as an expatriate and her image as a successful, self-supporting writer she was at pains to project. Gallant's journals, initially scheduled to be published by Bloomsbury in 2017, have been held up in estate litigation, and the one box in the library that contains personal memorabilia is not allowed to be opened.

What remains are only a few excerpts from these journals published in *The New Yorker* as "The Hunger Diaries" (1952) and "Don't Describe It, Remember It" (1954), which reveal a portrait of her years after emigrating from Canada that were marked by insecurity, rootlessness, hunger, and pervasive feelings of inadequacy. These small fragments show her experiencing some of the same episodes of instability and personal trauma as many postwar citizens of Europe. Stranded in Madrid with visa complications and no money, she was forced to sell her typewriter to buy food, thus making her unable to write the stories that were earning her money. The miscarriage she suffered in 1954 at the end of a failed relationship with a married man is painfully revealed, suggesting a deeply intimate yet disturbing experience: "If I had not myself suggested a clinic, he would have let me miscarry in a hotel, washing his hands of it, saying, 'The risk is yours'" ("Don't Describe It, Remember It" 21). With Gallant's antipathy toward her own mother, and given the corrosive aspects of family and motherhood she captures in the Linnet Muir sequence, it would seem uncharacteristic of Gallant to want to become a mother, and yet she mourned the loss of her pregnancy: "I was afraid for the embryo, the

thread-like cell. I wondered if it would ever know, or care, that I had wanted it and fought for it. *Against everyone*, even my doctor" (21-2).

This image of Gallant in emotional distress contrasts with the stability and organization of the Gallant of the archive, yet both are the same writer. While the experience of miscarriage may explain Gallant's tenderness toward children, like young George in *Green Water, Green Sky*, it also deepens her writing of motherhood by emphasizing her fierce desire for motherhood—"I had wanted it and fought for it"—-but without sentimentalizing its loss. This is Di Brandt's "authentic choice" of the maternal as the reparative experience of care, yet it is a choice denied to Gallant. One could presume that stories become Gallant's children, conceived as an expression of generosity and aesthetic care, and in their multiplicity, offer a response to the standardization of global culture. Gallant, herself a refugee from the complexities of the family, transforms the family into art. Here, then, is the instability at the core of Mavis Gallant, the cosmopolitan writer, and the competing forces of literature, relationship, and life, which have generated such a rich and enduring legacy of work.

Chapter II, "Travellers Must Be Content," builds on my discussion of cosmopolitanism in order to demonstrate how Gallant's traveler, engaged in the act of being in transit, embodies the contradictions of rootlessness and the instability of the self. Chapter III, "A narrowing shore, a moving sea," focuses on the novel, *Green Water, Green Sky* (*GWGS*) and my argument that psychological instability is both Gallant's metaphorical rendering of a society in crisis and a retreat from its pressures. Chapter IV, "fine silver crystals forming a pattern, dancing, separating, dissolving…," discusses the implications of post-Holocaust Germany in the novella "The Pegnitz Junction" from *The*

Collected Stories (CS) and the empathic imagining that Gallant suggests may be the only possible reparation. In Chapter V, "My life was my revolution," I discuss the Linnet Muir short story sequence in *Home Truths* (*HT*) and the vanquishing of sentimentality that drives Linnet's "revolution" against the past. Chapter VI consolidates my argument by discussing the implications of cosmopolitan instability revealed in Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures who both resist and submit to the "adverse realities" of a globalized world.

To recognize instability in the work of Mavis Gallant is to begin to advocate for a broader awareness of the consequences of displacement and against the continuing abuses of authoritarian control. Gallant's fiction upholds a relational mode of thinking within a cosmopolitan vision of our obligations to each other, a vision that responds to the pressures and the depersonalization of contemporary life. Her work suggests that "lacking an emotional country, it might be possible to consider another person one's home" (*GWGS* 168). Learning about instability in Gallant's work allows us to participate in her literature of protest against the uniformity of global culture and, most importantly, to find a new sense of solidarity in the search for home.

Chapter II.

"Travellers Must Be Content"

Many mid-twentieth century readers of *The New Yorker* would be familiar with the transnational culture and cosmopolitan locales of Mavis Gallant's short stories, one hundred sixteen of which were published in that magazine between 1951 and 2012. Even if travel in the era of propeller planes and ocean liners had been more arduous and time consuming than it is today, the allure of foreign travel might have impelled these sophisticated mid-century readers opening their copy of *The New Yorker* to the first page of a Gallant story to expect the kind of writing that evoked the European milieu and polite ennui of a contemporary Henry James. For Americans looking abroad during the second half of the twentieth century, Europe may still have represented a cultured past, marked by the drama of wars and immense suffering—none of which, with the exception of Pearl Harbor, had occurred on American soil. For these readers, Gallant's fiction provided a first-hand view of European postwar life, without the necessity of actually crossing the Atlantic.

But the Europe that Gallant presents to the readers of *The New Yorker* is not the image of a refined, lingering past filled with museums, cafés, and a grand tradition of knowledge and enlightenment that affluent Americans subscribing to a glossy literary magazine, its pages filled with contemporary fiction and advertisements for new cars, might prefer to imagine. Gallant's Europe is tattered and worn, the beaches littered with cigarette butts, and the cities choked with tourists. Families have been forced apart, and the dispossessed cling to scraps of lost identities in their search for somewhere to call home. While the immediate effects of World War II had receded by 1951 when Gallant's

first story, “Madeline’s Birthday” was published in *The New Yorker*, lasting traces of deprivation and loss could still be felt across the continent as late as 1963, like the “fragments of shell dug up in Riviera gardens” in “An Unmarried Man’s Summer,” (*CS* 321). Global conflict had not ended with V-E Day. Political instability accelerated social and economic instability around the globe, and the Korean War once again pitted world powers against each other. Gallant may even have hastened her plans to leave Canada for Europe when hostilities broke out and threatened travel worldwide (Grant 3). The division of Korea in 1953 into two militarized countries, North and South, with almost two million refugees forced to leave home, reminded the world of war’s devastating capacity once again to disrupt the lives of ordinary citizens.

Nevertheless, Gallant’s “travelers”—the émigrés, refugees, and survivors who populate her fiction—have little choice but to remain in motion. The title of Gallant’s short story, “Travelers Must Be Content,” suggests that travel results in a change to one’s interior emotional state. The story, published in *The New Yorker* in the summer of 1959 as the second in a series of four linked narratives is also the third chapter of the novel *Green Water, Green Sky,* and the title is derived from Act II, Scene 4 of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Gallant uses this title and preceding lines as the epigraph to the novel, further linking these three works. Touchstone’s weary speech is about the unsettling effects of travel, making clear that he regrets fleeing the court where he had secure employment as court fool:

> Ay, now am I in Arden; the more
> Fool I; when I was at home, I
> Was in a better place: but
> Travellers must be content. (2.4.15-17)

However, following Rosalind and Celia into the forest after their banishment, a more "foolish" act, brings with it the allure of the unexpected and perhaps the future promise of love. Touchstone may not be happy with giving up the "better place" of home for the uncertainties of the forest, but as court jester, he is a professional, brought along to provide entertainment, and his contentment makes the best of an unsettled situation. Wishart, the "court fool" of *Green Water*, *Green Sky*, makes a similar compromise when banished from Cannes by a foolish social gaffe, slinking off to become a houseguest to yet another wealthy matron summering in Provence: "Could this be Wishart, clinging, whining, crying, 'Stay with me'? But Wishart was awake and not to be trapped. He took good care not to dream" (360). Wishart's self-possession is a kind of contentment that masks the tenuousness of what Jhumpa Lahiri, in her introduction to Gallant's collection, *The Cost of Living* (*COL*), calls his "parasitic dependency" on the women he attaches himself to, crossing the boundaries of social expectations and reinventing himself as entertainment for each willing hostess (xiii). He, too, has learned how to be content with his lot. By traveling into the promise of another new social situation, he is guaranteed never be revealed as a mere "fool."

"Travelers must be content" is both a description and a command: traveling presumably leads to contentment, and thus all travelers must be satisfied by the act of traveling. However, taken as a command, travelers must accept the emotional consequences of being disconnected from the familiar in order to seek a new and better life. The modal verb "must" can be read not only as a reflection of one's expectations about traveling, but also as the obligation, when traveling, to enjoy oneself. There is also the slight degree of difference between the meaning of "content" and "happy" in both

English and French (“content” as opposed to “heureux”), a nuance familiar to Gallant. As a separate register of the same emotion, “contentment” rather than “happiness” suggests that a choice has been made to be satisfied, even in an unsatisfactory situation. For Gallant as well as the cosmopolitan traveler, contentment is a human response to the disruption of being away from one’s homeland, an acceptance of the state of dislocation, yet also a compromise one must make in order to survive in a world in which conflict, authoritarianism, and economic inequality have shaped contemporary life.

There would be little progress toward Kant’s cosmopolitan vision of “perpetual peace” during the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the years of Gallant’s writing. Kant believed that natural laws governed moral behavior, and that these laws, faithfully adhered to, would lead humanity toward the cessation of all conflict and thus, into the state of perpetual peace (72). These eighteenth century “laws,” based on Enlightenment thinking, but also on Western moral and political values, did little to quell the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Inequities caused by Western colonialism, but also by refusing the right of residence to the displaced and the ensuing refugee crises across the world, have heightened the desperation and precarity of crossing borders. Travel, then, is not simply the imaginary or actual pastime of the wealthy cosmopolitan, but more often, as deportation and exile, the end effect of authoritarian regimes for which the stability of people’s lives has no meaning. Being in transit far from home is, for Gallant, where history, politics, and fiction intersect.

In many of Gallant’s stories, however, there is little difference between the authoritarian regime of the state and the dictatorship of the family. Just as Bonnie in *Green Water, Green Sky* refuses to give her troubled daughter Flor “that psychological

and physical home ground her enforced peregrinations have denied her" (*RMG* 142), so did East Germany's construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 impose a similar psychic toll on the city's inhabitants by interdicting the free flow of citizens across the border. "The Pegnitz Junction" is Gallant's response not only to the division of Berlin, but also to the social forces of familial expectations that divide and control. "Contentment" is only a temporary measure, ironic in the context of oppression. The physical dislocation of enforced migration and the personal costs to the individual unmoored from home becomes, for Gallant, "one of the most disabling conditions" of contemporary life (15).

For Gallant's travelers, border crossings are complex experiences that involve disruption, alienation, and psychological change. Borders are problematic thresholds that invite or repel, a crossing that Derrida, in *Of Hospitality*, calls "a transgressive step" (75). It is the question of hospitality that turns the act of crossing into a moral and ethical dilemma, even if the border is not an actual line bifurcating one territory from another.

Refuge is a similarly problematic concept for many of Gallant's characters, like the Romanian expatriates Amalia and Dino in "Questions and Answers," unsettled by the appearance of their old friend Marie from Bucharest on the doorstep of their barely habitable Paris apartment. Her sudden arrival reminds them that they too are desperate, forcing them into the position of having to share meager resources. Marie's "transgressive step" into their fragile household makes their undocumented status visible and thus even more precarious (*CS* 293). Similarly, repatriation, or the return home, is a "transgression" into the past and carries with it the dangers of vulnerability. In the first of the Linnet Muir stories, "In Youth is Pleasure," from Gallant's 1981 collection, *Home Truths* (*HT*), Linnet arrives back home in Montreal after five years away in New York

and is molested by a stranger in the train station: "What distressed me was my helplessness—I who had sworn only a few hours earlier that I'd not be vulnerable again" (256). Travel is displacement, making the body visible in new, unstable situations, and uncovers the potential for harm.

Derrida's "transgressive step" in Gallant's fiction is not limited to the spatial geography of crossing a physical border. "Night and Day," collected in *The Cost of Living* (*COL*), about a man confined to a hospital bed after a serious car accident, examines the psychic border between the state of awareness and the subliminal. This brief story hovers "in the interstices of consciousness" (Lahiri xiii) in which the past has no meaning and the present cannot be understood. The "transgressive step" the immobilized, unnamed man takes is to cross the threshold of estrangement: without the ability to discern his body in his anesthetized state, or even to care about the future, he has nothing to tether himself to existence. He thinks, "'this is what it means to be free'" (*COL* 240), but it is a freedom that comes at the cost of indifference. He does not care if he dies. Accepting the total loss of agency, he has become a "foreigner" to himself.

This sense of "being adrift, the absence of terra firma," as Jhumpa Lahiri points out in her introduction to *The Cost of Living*, "is existential," a crossing over into the alienation of self from body (xii). Thus, estrangement and defamiliarization are consequences of the kind of travel that removes the traveler from a previous state of contentment. Here, the "hospitality" the man encounters in the form of care from the nurses and doctors in the hospital intent on his recuperation, assumes what Derrida calls the "'radical separation' as experience of the alterity of the other, as relation to the other" ("From Adieu" 46). As a patient in a drugged state of semi-consciousness, the man has

met a separate self. In order to recover, he must become the side of oneself that is hidden, dependent on the care he receives in the hospital. It is this act of literal hospitality, Judith Sill reminds us in *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice,* that "precisely brings alterity into proximity" (95). Travel, then, is a disruption of the self.

This alterity of the traveler, changed by crossing into a territory or a state of being he or she might not have chosen to inhabit, becomes the domain of instability in Gallant's stories. Once the man's treatment has ended, he thinks he has returned to "memory and reason [and] all the reasonable problems of the future," and yet there are still "crevices now and again: he forgot the names of close friends, and once the number of his own telephone" (*COL* 244). More than simply suffering from the aftereffects of a brain injury, he falls into the "crevices" of transient amnesia in which the instability of memory marks how irrevocably he has been changed. Thus, among Gallant's cosmopolitan travelers, the existential condition of alterity becomes a transition between self and other.

Cosmopolitanism as a political practice, however, depends on hospitality that acknowledges the traveler as "irreducibly other" (Saint-Amour 97) whose absolute right to entry must be guaranteed by what Derrida calls "the law of unconditional hospitality" (79). In actual practice, the act of crossing a border reveals both antipathy and welcome. For Chengzhou He in "Derrida, Hospitality and Cosmopolitanism," the traveler entering a foreign country can be regarded as another face of the host, and borders are arbitrary lines that impose an artificial dynamic of power (83). Most importantly, this does not mean that the traveler and the host are "interchangable," Paul Saint-Amour points out, or "that, by extension, the other and the same are equivalent: that the other is just another myself" (97). Cosmopolitanism requires not a code of sameness or a totalizing equality

that flattens out individuality, but instead, a “radical hospitality” that insists on the irreducible differences between traveler and host (95).

Thus, the act of travel becomes a generative force, bringing into focus the conflict or concord between self and other. Travel, however, is a marker of privilege. Gallant’s perception as a cosmopolitan “*New Yorker*” writer, engaged with writing about a particular class within Western society of the potentially mobile, rather than the non-Western, marginalized, and subaltern class, presumably to reflect back to an affluent group of North American readers and consumers only what Gallant herself knows, would seem to elevate these more privileged crossings as the domain of only one class of travelers. This distorted image suggests that there are not any “others” worth writing about: true precarity exists in the world, but rarely finds its way into the glossy pages of *The New Yorker*. Moreover, because cosmopolitanism as a political practice is subject to what Bruce Robbins calls “a slide toward elitism” (326) that associates “citizen of the world” with “independent means, high-tech tastes, and globe-trotting mobility,” it could be argued that Gallant’s travelers are too elite for the kind of universal hospitality that presupposes the transgressive nature of cosmopolitanism (312). What sets Gallant’s “globe-trotting” characters apart from the clichéd perception of cosmopolitan Western privilege, however, is that they too, like postwar Europe, are tattered and worn, well past their historic prime and sliding toward obscurity. Many of them are mired in uncertain situations. Moving from place to place, an enforced migration in a Europe destabilized by changing social and economic values, Gallant’s cosmopolitan figures spiral into economic and psychological downward mobility.

Characters like Sandor Speck in "Speck's Idea," are barely hanging onto a tenuous existence, circumscribed by oppressive social policy that values the commodification of urban spaces and the cultural economics of a changing world. Speck, a failing art dealer, has had to move his gallery three times, first when his block is razed for a five story parking garage, and second, when Basque separatists blow up his new location, mistaking it for a travel agency exploiting the picturesque Basque coast. His third location, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain has "four excellent rooms" that come "at terrifying cost" (*CS* 514). He is divorced, and his ex-wife's angry antagonism—she calls him a "fascist"— makes him appear sympathetic and lonely. Speck seems to embody the kind of downwardly mobile character forced by postwar gentrification, marital troubles, and political unrest into a marginal existence.

However, Speck's dispossession is not simply because he cannot gain any foothold at all in the late twentieth century global economy. Failing at cultural relevance, Speck would like to promote art on a grand, nineteenth-century scale, when Paris had been the center of the art world, but he trades only in the kind of representational painting that appeals in its blandness: "Too canny to try to compete with international heavyweights, unwilling to burden himself with insurance, he had developed as his specialty the flattest, palest, farthest ripples of the late-middle-transitional Parisian school" (*CS* 527). Instead of valuing stylistic innovation, Speck is a "cultural middleman" who seeks a narrative of the past that conveniently skips over the disorder of political conflict (Besner 143). Reassured by the restrictive zoning regulations in his new neighborhood that enforce an outward image of France frozen in time, Speck thinks appearances bestow a certain privilege on his shabby new home. While "not a stone

could be removed without the approval of the toughest cultural authorities of the nation," the insides of the building that houses his gallery are crumbling and decrepit:

> The building had long before been cut up into dirty, decaying apartments, whose spiteful quarrelsome, and avaricious tenants were forgiven every failing by Speck for the sake of being the Count of this and the Prince of that. Like the flaking shutters, the rotting windowsills, the slops and oil stains in the ruined court, they bore a Proustian seal of distinction, like a warranty, making up for his insanely expensive lease. (*CS* 514)

Here, Gallant's biting satire of Speck's deference to his fading aristocratic neighbors, centuries out of date in 1970's France, and the crumbling building they inhabit, suggests the interior rot of political and cultural structures. Speck's "idea" is leveraging still-lingering nationalistic sentiments for an image of France free from foreign influences. Compelled by the allure of brokering an exclusive deal, Speck believes that he can transform the minor work of Hubert Cruche, a pro-fascist French painter, into the one artist who will speak for all of contemporary France. However, the "art" that Speck deals in is conceptual, a "habit of mind" that Andy Lamey calls a "credulity toward historical narratives that perpetuate false and exclusionary national identities" (191). Fascism is the rot in the system, supported even in a liberal democracy.

Speck, like his name, is inconsequential, a "speck" of an ordinary man, and yet he is perfectly comfortable with fascist ideas. It is Speck's ordinariness that for Gallant is just as dangerous as the bombs the Basque separatists hurl against the travel agency's colonialist exploitation of the Basque countryside. That fascism is still prevalent in France is because ordinary people in the present—not just the Hitlers and Mussolinis of the past—support its ideology of far-right authoritarianism with nationalistic fervor, even in the guise of art. Speck's "idea" is that historical truth is malleable, subject to a reactionary political discourse that advocates for the unity of nationalism. He will

transform Cruche into a symbol of his own aspirational will, inventing an artist whose meteoric rise will be established by Speck's own control of the narrative: "If Cruche had to travel, then let it be with Speck's authority as his passport" (*CS* 552). It is Gallant's use of the metaphorical language of travel as triumph that communicates a sense of instability and political menace. The final image of Speck in a taxi plotting his triumphant re-entry not just back into the art world, but also into his own exponentially expanding sphere of influence as if he were Hannibal crossing the Alps, reveals the coming onslaught as the danger of political alliances that promise stability but deliver only the iron fist of authoritarianism.

Even from his position on the margins of Parisian society, Speck inhabits a specific kind of urban cosmopolitanism that thrives on instability. He is a traveler who crosses the "border" of good faith and honesty to achieve his aims. Here, Gallant asks her readers to come face-to-face with an aspect of Western culture that values the commodification of objects and the commerce of the image, perhaps not that far from the advertising pages of *The New Yorker*. This is a cosmopolitanism that, like Speck, is objectionable, and an instability that is a reflection of the dangers inherent in globalization.

Gallant's travelers are not the "have nots," but those who have less. Their situations are unstable because of political and economic forces that keep them suspended in states of uncertainty. If the social consciousness of post-colonialism elevates only the oppression of non-Western societies, then the heterogeneity of migration for all classes and nationalities and the justification for movement across all borders under cosmopolitanism would be effectively suppressed. Jacob von Baeyer reminds us that

cosmopolitanism should not be regarded as another method of comparatist competition "based on a perceived authenticity and non-corruptibility of the subaltern experience versus that of the non-subaltern" (196). The traveler in Gallant's stories exists not to "redress the imbalances of the colonial era" (195), but instead, to express the inherent instability of all travel: migration and exile, the uncertainty of identity and belonging, and the meaning of motion and time in lives that move only forward, while history and conflict continue to exert their irrevocable pull.

Gallant's travelers are lost between home and an unknown foreign territory, exiled from language and cultural legibility. Home is security; away is the unknown. And yet home is also a mythic place that exists as an entity beyond the real. For Thomas, the returning prisoner of war in "The Latehomecomer," "home," or the act of returning to a place that is unrecognizable, is only a disturbing memory that elicits his questions of existence: "Why am I in this place? Who sent me here? Is it a form of justice or injustice?" (*CS* 186). Linnet Muir dreams of "a house, whose beauty had brought tears to my sleep," but in returning to her childhood home in Montreal, finds it "inhabited by ugly strangers…a narrow stone thing with a shop on the ground floor and offices above" (*HT* 271). Home as a nostalgic structure is only a "thing," no longer a refuge, but dull and unremarkable, a place where the impersonality of business, not living, is transacted. Home is simultaneously a return and an abandonment, a space of instability in which memory is not only a response to loss, but a reenactment of that loss.

Language is also a "home" that confronts the cosmopolitan traveler with semantic instability. Gallant's French, German, or Italian characters live on the page in a translated state, mediated by Gallant's insistence on what Agnès Whitfield calls "writing in

opposition to the postmodern interest in hybridity (or *métissage*), the liminal, the obscure or manifest passages between languages… this work of translation, this unacknowledged passage from one language to another" (52). In a journal entry from February 1954, Gallant commits herself to writing only in English; for her, English is a "tough, fibrous language" that does not need to import vocabularies, idioms, syntax, and essential meaning from one language into another ("Don't Describe It, Remember It" 4). This causes an imbalance that the English-speaking narrator returning to French-Canadian-speaking Québec in "The Doctor" comments on: "It did not enter the mind of any English speaker that the French were at a constant disadvantage, like a team obliged to play all their matches away from home" (*HT* 348). The linguistic "play" of languages becomes serious especially when it is a marker of difference. In "The Burgundy Weekend," English is a point of contention between the Parisians Lucie and Jérôme, as they listen to their inconsiderate friend Gilles relate a story: "All this was in English, of which Lucie understood a fair amount…She did not mind English, but Jérôme did" (*COL* 304). For Derrida, language is the only "homeland" that recalls one's origins, a "second skin you wear on yourself, a mobile home" (*Of Hospitality* 89). Displacement cannot negate the impossibility of translation, Derrida asserts, since "language resists all mobilities because it moves about with me. It is the least immovable thing, the most mobile of personal bodies" (91). It is in this space of instability between languages that Gallant's travelers are doubly displaced, as they cross the "border" from French to English so that they are legible to the reader only in a language that is not their own. For Agnès Whitfield, this is "a final Derridean irony, one of the very attractions of this otherwise uncertain space for

language in-between identities…that, like the transience of tourists or communicators passing through…allows for *in*difference" (62).

Cosmopolitanism in Gallant's stories is the ability to travel between geographies, languages, and states of estrangement, a Western privilege that marks the traveler as an outsider who nevertheless belongs to an established group of the fortunate. Some critics, like Anatole Broyard in his *New York Times* review of Gallant's collection, *From the Fifteenth District*, object to the sense of voyeuristic detachment these outsiders bring to her fiction: "The stories are like an almost unimaginably sophisticated foreign tour in which one is taken to see only the digressions and parentheses of each culture" (9). However, the discomfort with Gallant's relentlessly European and North American characters may result from a fundamental misunderstanding of cosmopolitanism itself. Jacob von Baeyer suggests that "these criticisms appear to manifest from a postcolonial discourse which…seems intent on debating literary poetics within a postcolonial geography which prioritises political and economic *have nots* over perceived homogenous *haves*, in an attempt to redress the imbalances of the colonial era" (195). This manner of thinking presents an inaccurate picture of history which has been defined by both haves and have nots.

While it is true that Gallant's characters are the privileged Westerners who do not suffer from the disparities of colonization, it may not be entirely the work of literature or even literary criticism to "redress the imbalances of the colonial era." Equitable allocation of crucial resources that support health, economic security, and well-being must be the first step toward redressing the wrongs of colonialism, and this begins with bipartisan governmental action. Cosmopolitanism in its truest sense does not privilege the

"perceived homogenous haves" over "the political and economic have nots" because there is no border between them. All people are citizens of a planetary belonging in which differences are not categories of comparison, but rather modes of inclusion. This is a polis of the cosmos that is defined by alterity, not by some of the more normative classifications of postcolonial discourse. Simplifying postcolonial geography into binary distinctions of haves and have nots does not take into account the fluidity of relationships within cosmopolitanism, which subtly resets the dynamics of power by eradicating all boundaries. Thus, travel becomes the method by which individuals themselves transgress against the political, economic, and psychic borders that have been imposed by postcolonial discourse.

For Gallant's cosmopolitan figure, the act of traveling is to inhabit a transitory state that reveals the essential instability of one's identity. To be a traveler is to dwell in the liminal space of becoming someone else. The cosmopolitan world citizen, in passing through checkpoints and borders, has access to a potential new self, made possible through the act of hospitality. However, there can be no such hospitality for many of Gallant's travelers, like Bonnie and Flor in *Green Water, Green Sky*, and even Speck, who are suspended in "an intolerantly impoverished reality" (*RMG* 50) in which access to a fixed identity is denied. A cosmopolitan world effectively eliminates the notion of a unipolar self. In Chapter III, I will discuss the implications of psychological displacement caused by the instability of travel and the "intolerantly impoverished reality" that results from the eradication of the unipolar self. For Gallant's travelers, the passage between states of being is endless. They travel by train, bus, on foot, in rattletrap cars and taxis, or simply in the confines of a hospital bed. Once set in motion, Gallant's travelers become

indeterminate figures peering out from the pages of *The New Yorker*. They must be content to dwell within the “spatial patterns of displacement” (Schaub 92) that keep them perpetually in transit.

Chapter III.

"A narrowing shore, a moving sea"

Green Water, Green Sky, Mavis Gallant's 1959 novel, depicts the psychological disintegration of Flor McCarthy, a young American woman dragged around Europe by her overbearing, divorced mother. Flor's only means of separating from her mother's domination is to succumb to the private narrative of her personal madness. If plot implies a progression toward a discernible conclusion, then *Green Water, Green Sky* follows Flor's regression and her erasure as the work's protagonist. Flor is the "absent centre of the novel" around which the elements of story and plot circulate in a non-linear, oneiric, and fragmented whole (Besner 56). Images of water, Gallant's reworking of the modernist trope for female madness, evoke the fluidity of time and Flor's eventual inundation in the delirium of psychosis. My contention is that the fluid structure of plot in *Green Water, Green Sky* mirrors not only the fragmentation of Flor's mental collapse, but also the broader cultural questions Gallant asks about the instability of the post-Holocaust cosmopolitan world: how is it possible to live under the conditions of human collapse?

For the Gallant scholar Denis Sampson, this shifting, circular structure suggests that the novel itself is, in conventional narrative terms, "incoherent" and "incomplete" held together only by Gallant's propulsive narrative voice (110). However, even a plot that moves within the dream-like states of memory and association implies completion and coherence. This, for Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot*, means that all plots are "a structuring operation elicited by, and made necessary by, those meanings that develop through succession and time" (12). While the story of Flor's descent into madness and its larger socio-cultural questions hold the novel together, other narrative elements—form,

point of view, sequence, and narratorial intrusion—function as destabilizing tools that Gallant uses to evoke Flor's disintegrating mind. In the global cosmopolitanism of *Green Water, Green Sky*, in which geographic, familial, and psychological borders no longer matter, instability becomes the norm.

Gallant's novel is also concerned with the meaning of displacement, and how cosmopolitanism facilitates a sense of estrangement from home. The rootless cosmopolitan, seeking the pleasure of travel and the allure of foreign life, gives up the stability of home, and with it a secure psychological grounding and identity. This results in isolation and the sense that estrangement must be a condition of living in the cosmopolitan world. Home, however, is also an "emotional country" requiring some kind of connection to nationality and kinship groups, even if the sentimental notion of home contradicts with the freedoms of cosmopolitanism (*GWGS* 348). Without a sense of home, or the ability to find home in new places, the defamiliarization of travel threatens the inviolability of the self. Uprooted from the familiar, Gallant's cosmopolitans in *Green Water, Green Sky*, have lost the ability to adapt, and thus displacement becomes an unmooring from the stability of the self.

Gallant's novel of fluidity and motion begins, paradoxically enough, with an image of stasis: seven-year-old George Fairlie has been left for the day in Venice with his aunt, Bonnie McCarthy, and fourteen-year old cousin, Flor. Motionless gondolas moored to a dock in "the hardly moving layer of morning muck, the orange halves, the pulpy melons, the rotting bits of lettuce, black underwater, green above" evoke George's abandonment (277). Like the berthed gondolas, all freedom of movement for George has been arrested. Discarded like the "morning muck," he is enraged that his parents have

tricked him into staying with relatives he barely knows, sneaking off without saying good-bye. His anger seethes within him, “the hollowness of having been left, the fury at having been made a fool” (284). Embedded below the surface of the text is Gallant’s own experience as a four-year old child, abandoned in a Catholic boarding school by her mother, who never returned.

George, like the young Gallant, has been coerced into compliance. George’s Fairlie relatives are American expatriates who are adrift in a culture not their own, yet aspiring to a social status just beyond their reach. His Aunt Bonnie fled New York in shame after her husband discovered that she was having an affair and divorced her. George’s troubled adolescent cousin Flor is his aunt’s baggage, towed across the continent “like a handbag on a too-long strap” (*RMG* 142). Mother and daughter are wandering cosmopolitan travelers, enmeshed in the traditional system of marriage and divorce that holds women accountable when they upend familial stability. Coercion and disequilibrium mark the opening pages of the novel.

While George has been abandoned only for the day, Flor has been abandoned for life. She is the victim in her parents’ bitter divorce, pulled away from home and country at the age of twelve, a time of rapid transformation for young girls. Disowned by her father, she has no choice but to submit to her mother’s rootless, peripatetic lifestyle. Bonnie and Flor live in hotels and rented apartments, moving every season to another European city. These are gendered spaces, as Marie Noëlle Ng suggests, that are transitory, indexed by relationship to a man, and reflect “the variables in a woman’s condition in the modern world” (109). The deliberate dislocation of travel, Bonnie believes, will be Flor’s education. Unlike George’s parents, returning at the end of the

day to their distraught son and thinking better of their decision to leave him behind, Bonnie has no such insight into Flor's emotions. Flor erupts in a display of volatility and anger when she breaks a glass bead necklace as she pulls it over her head:

> The necklace breaking, the hotly blowing wind, excited Flor. She unstrung the beads still in her hands and flung them after the others, making a wild upward movement with her palms. 'Oh stop it,' her mother cried, for people were looking, and Flor did appear rather mad, with her hair flying and her dress blowing so that anybody could see the starched petticoat underneath, and the sunburned thighs. (*GWGS* 279)

George, fascinated by his much older cousin's unusual behavior, keeps a bead from the broken necklace as a memento of that day. The bead is a reminder of his secret enthrallment with Flor, complicated by his fear of her unpredictability. Even in his outrage at being abandoned, he is attracted to his cousin and her russet hair that "smelled coppery and warm, like its color. He wouldn't have called it unpleasant" (277). Flor is familiar because she is family, but also exotic, like a fox, not subject to the rules of human behavior. Rushing to collect the scattered beads from the broken necklace, George would like to fix things in order to appease Flor. The single bead becomes his wish for re-attachment, as if he could repair the necklace and, what he senses but is too young to articulate, Flor's brokenness. This is the beginning of an unrequited desire for his much older cousin whom he will never be able to marry.

Flor's willingness to cross boundaries of social and familial propriety seems thrilling, but also dangerous to George. What he will remember most vividly of that day is that Flor threatened to push him into the canal. Other memories he has are unreliable: he remembers once before falling into a pond at his grandmother's house, confusing the experience of near-drowning with a pleasant sensation of floating, but there is no confusion about his memory of Flor's aggression. She will not be his protector or his

complacent older cousin pretending to tolerate his seven-year-old childishness. Flor is mercurial, always changing. George is mesmerized, recognizing the intensity of her eyes that are "green as water, bright with dislike," and that the bead he holds in his hand is "a powerful charm, a piece of a day; a reminder that someone had once wished him dead" (280).

What George also learns that day is the effects of evasion, and how language cannot express his growing awareness of falsehood. George stammers, finding it difficult to speak. The trauma of his abandonment makes it impossible for him to express himself except when he is crying. Rebecca Walkowitz, writing about Septimus Smith in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, whose descent into madness is the precursor to Flor's, notes that

> stammering is a well-known symptom of shell shock: on the one hand, it is the result of imposed censorship, a displacement of the protest or distress that is otherwise prohibited; on the other hand, it is the result of self-censorship, an unconscious refusal to say, or to say easily and with conviction, what is socially required. (97)

Like Septimus, George is in shock. He cannot effectively protest the trauma of his parents' absence, since nothing he says will bring them back. Bonnie and Flor dismiss his crying as childish behavior, "censored" by social propriety that emphasizes composure, especially in boys. Similarly, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Dr. Holmes dismisses Septimus's trauma, conveying the societal message that soldiers must not admit to fear. Stammering, however, allows Septimus to avoid admitting to the psychological devastation of war and giving into the silencing effects of military discipline. Enacting the process of withholding truth, stammering is a repetition of syllables that only painfully slowly cohere into words, and a linguistic unutterability that is itself its own language.

For George, the riddles he stammers through at lunch with his aunt and cousin evade the truth of the situation: his fear that his parents will never come back. Here,

Gallant raises the possibility that childhood trauma could be just as devastating as shell shock. Thus, stammering is the way that George and Septimus fragment language as self-censorship in order to avoid making the truth real by speaking it. Each is caught between the desire to communicate and the inability to articulate with fluency and coherence.

Coherence, however, does not have to be the only method of discourse. Stammering can be thought of as a private language that communicates on a different time scale, a reaction against the implicit demands of linearity and comprehension. Walkowitz contends that Woolf's novel "stammers in its own way, resisting the language of continuous, confident narration" (97). *Green Water, Green Sky* "stammers" structurally, with the fluency of the forward moving story—George's abandonment, Bonnie's self-serving complacency, Flor's aggression and later breakdown—interrupted by the non-linear intrusions of separate narrative strands and temporal digressions that do not cohere so much as create the discord of instability and disconnection.

Flor and George meet again ten years later in New York when George is seventeen- and twenty-four-year-old Flor has married Bob Harris, a wine importer and expatriate American living in Paris, whose working life contrasts with the moneyed wealth of the Fairlie clan. Bonnie is disconcerted that Bob is Jewish. At a party celebrating the wedding, Bonnie reveals that "there was something wrong with Florence: she could never have children: she wasn't well" (*GWGS* 286). Here, Bonnie inserts herself into the relationship between Bob and Flor by attempting to destroy Flor's potential as a mother and as a figure of desire: Flor's youth and beauty are a clear threat to Bonnie. By proclaiming that Flor will never have children, she is reassuring the anti-Semitic contingent of her family that Bob's Judaism will not spread, but she is also

offering herself and her own fertility as the only true figure of motherhood, desirable even in middle age. Here, Gallant critiques the social divisions and cultural prejudices still apparent in the post-Holocaust cosmopolitan world, perpetuated especially among Americans living abroad. By blaming Flor for choosing the "wrong man" and yet, competing for his attention, Bonnie absolves herself from giving her daughter away in marriage. Flor will always remain a child, subject to her mother's disinformation campaign, and thus, never Bonnie's competitor as a mother of children.

Flor is equally as enmeshed with Bonnie, believing that she alone can save her from loneliness. Flor's avowal to George that she will always take care of Bonnie is "a solemn promise, a cry of despair, love, and resentment so woven together that even Flor couldn't tell them apart" (283). Bonnie and Flor are indissolubly joined, seeking each other for mutual support, but it is not an even exchange of empowerment. Bonnie is intent on destroying Flor's marriage, and her domination of her daughter is intended to keep her power as mother. It cannot be accidental that Bonnie's last name is McCarthy, an echo of the 1950's American demagogue, Senator Joe McCarthy, notorious for making wild claims while waving blank paper as purported evidence of his investigations targeting his enemies. Bonnie will, in fact, target Bob's romantic attention after Flor's breakdown in Part 2, further eroding the unstable boundaries between them.

George has kept the bead from Venice and offers it to Flor as a talisman of good luck, but she refuses to remember his version of what happened: "'I'm not a person who breaks things,' Flor said. I don't remember that'" (288). George cannot "repair" the necklace or Flor herself, because they have drifted too far apart. Each remembers the breaking of the necklace differently. For George, the bead represents the violence of

Flor's "breaking something because she wanted something broken," but also proof that she was there, in Venice with him, experiencing the same thing (288). He needs to place her in his memory to understand that what happened was real—his desire, Flor's anger, the canal, his abandonment. To be "somewhere" is to exist, but to be nowhere is to be taken out of the structure of life.

For Flor, the bead represents only her displacement. Committed not to her husband, but to her mother, she has no "structure" to inhabit. Flor is not the protagonist of a conventional bildungsroman, which regards maturity as leaving the home, as Gallant's fictional alter ego Linnet Muir will do, in order to integrate into society through marriage and career. Flor is unmoored from stability, caught within an anti-progressive structure that erases her past in the dislocation of a tenuous present. Her dismissive words to George end Part 1, "We weren't ever in the same place. We don't need luck in the same way. We don't remember the same things" (289). Memory, like Flor's fragile psyche, proves unreliable and uncertain, and luck is useless when the direction her life will take cannot be changed.

Part 2, originally called "August" when it was published in *The New Yorker* as the second of the three linked stories, jumps forward to the summer in Paris of Flor's breakdown. George is not present. He returns only in Part 4, framing the novel as the character through whose eyes the reader perceives Flor at the beginning of her crisis and the aftermath. Bonnie and Flor are living in Bob Harris's apartment, where the pressures of submitting to both mother and husband drive Flor toward a psychotic break. Here, Gallant explores the unhinging of Flor's psyche not as an organic disease, but as the result of what Elaine Showalter in *The Female Malady* calls "a social process" that is

“comprehensible as a response to family ‘transactions’ and ‘interactions’” (221). Showalter explores how schizophrenia, both as a disease category and a theoretical system of analysis, as formulated by Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing, Michel Foucault, and others in the “anti-psychiatry” movement of the late 1950’s, was regarded as the product of “repression and oppression within the family,” and thus, madness “became intelligible as a strategy, a form of communication…and a form of protest against the female role” (222). Anti-psychiatry located the pathology of mental illness not in the repressed individual tormented by the confusion of unconscious sexual drives, as did Freud, but rather in the social and familial forces of conformity, shaped by masculine assumptions of power. For Gallant, Flor’s madness functions in the same manner as George’s stammering: a retreat into fragmentation and a private language of inarticulacy.

Similar to what Barbara Hill Rigney writes in *Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel*, also about *Mrs. Dalloway*, that madness is a refuge for the self instead of its loss, Flor’s madness might be regarded as an example of R.D. Laing’s notion that society itself is schizophrenic (52). Only by retreating into the sustaining comfort of psychosis can Flor escape from the hysterical demands of a mother whose deranged needs and desires have been shaped by a destructive society. According to Laing, Rigney argues, an individual’s schizophrenia “is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation” (79). Just as cosmopolitanism has made porous the geographic boundaries between countries, so too does Flor’s condition dissolve the boundaries between sanity and madness. The difference is, however, that Flor may not have freely chosen a condition of psychic cosmopolitanism if she had not been forced by the conditions of a repressive social structure into psychosis. The only “home” she will

be welcomed into will be the asylum, where she will find refuge from the demands of an unstable family system. This means that the family has become the microcosm for a mentally ill society, and that the self is continuously subjected to objectification and disempowerment in the psychosis of an unstable world.

By focusing on a psychoanalytic reading of *Mrs. Dalloway,* Rigney demonstrates that both Laing and Foucault locate the origins of madness in abusive social systems. According to Laing, Rigney argues, the artificial and arbitrary polarities of sanity and insanity have been constructed by a largely misogynistic society that depends on the designation of insanity in order to maintain and consolidate control of abusive power (63). For Foucault, Rigney contends, madness is not simply an objective medical experience or an existential condition, but rather a historical construction of meaning. Each era or society constructs its own definition of madness, and thus, cultural, economic, and intellectual structures, not personal history or genetics, determine how the individual experiences madness. In his own work, *History of Madness*, Foucault argues that the Cartesian principle of the Enlightenment that links consciousness with existence determined that reason would be defined by its opposite--unreason, or madness--a bifurcation that has carried over into modernity (xxviii). This conceptual separation means that "there is no common language: or rather it no longer exists" to define madness, only a "silence" by which "the language of psychiatry, which is a monologue by reason *about* madness," and thus Foucault asserts that his project in *History of Madness* is to "draw up the archeology of that silence" (xxviii). This, I propose, is a "cosmopolitan psychiatry" that erases the once-limiting borders between sanity and madness. Psychosis, then, as Gallant suggests in *Green Water, Green Sky*, is the only

escape from the social forces of family and restrictive gender roles that subvert an individual's free expression of selfhood, but that also silence the individual. Similarly, Gallant's relativizing of madness can be regarded in the political context of the Cold War and the silencing not only of dissidents, but also of the artist's voice, expressed in the first line of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked" (7.1). Thus, the role of writing and literature must be to speak into the silence of madness.

While Flor's illness is the focus of Part 2, nowhere in the text of the entire novel does Gallant use the words "schizophrenia," "madness," or "mental illness." Instead, water and travel, especially by boat become metaphors for Flor's instability, like Foucault's "Stultifera Navis," or the ritual significance of the metaphorical ship of fools:

> Locked in the ship from which he could not escape, the madman was handed over to the thousand armed river, to the sea where all paths cross, and the great uncertainty that surrounds all things. A prisoner in the midst of the ultimate freedom, on the most open road of all, chained solidly to the infinite crossroads… But one thing is certain: the link between water and madness is deeply rooted in the dream of the Western man. (Foucault 11)

It is the condition of cosmopolitan rootlessness that makes Flor especially susceptible to psychic instability, and the dream-like fluidity of her perceptions signals her loss of connection to reality. Flor's instability becomes a journey toward oblivion, and "her desire for sleep and dreams took the shape of a boat. Every day it pulled away from the shore but was forced to return" (*GWGS* 324), "a longer and longer journey away from shore" (329). The personal freedom of cosmopolitanism—the ability to travel, the erasure of borders, and the hospitality that should have made Flor feel comfortable abroad are, in reality, the dissolution of structures that once kept her sane. Legibility also

is at stake in the narrative of Flor's dissolution: the self as presented to the world in conflict with the interior landscape of self-justification and desire.

Gallant begins Part 2 with Bonnie at her dressing table gazing at herself in a triple mirror, which both distorts and amplifies her conception of herself: "The frown, the pout, the obstinate gestures were those of a child. It was a deliberate performance, and new; after years of struggling to remain adult in a grown-up world, she had found it unrewarding, and in her private moments, allowed herself the blissful luxury of being someone else" (290). Bonnie no longer considers herself an American. Clothes from the U.S.—a hat her sister-in-law sends her from New York—don't seem "normal," because "they no longer came from a known place" (290). The condition of ceasing to "know" the place of her origin is, for Bonnie, a chosen act. She repudiates her former home, because the stability it once offered reminds her of the indiscretion she committed—her affair—that ended her marriage. This had been, for Bonnie, an imprisoning stability, locked into the structure of a vapid suburban lifestyle. However, without her identity as a wife, she has no past she can rely on. Bonnie constructs a new narrative of self-identity that releases her from the responsibilities of adulthood. She can play "dress up" in the safety of her three-way mirror, rather than admit complicity in the breakup of the marriage.

Similarly, illegibility protects Bonnie from speaking the truth. A scrawled letter she writes to George's parents, her brother and sister-in-law, ostensibly thanking them for the hat, is, in fact, an admission of her helplessness: "she joined the last letter of each word on to the start of the next. All the vowels, as well as the letters n, m, and w, resembled u's. There were strings of letters that might as well have been nununu" (293). It is only when she wants to dissuade George's parents from sending him to Paris in

August, when Bonnie would no longer be able to hide the fact of Flor's deterioration, that her handwriting "became elegant and clear, like the voice of someone trying on a new accent" (293). She confides her true fears to her sister-in-law on a scrap of paper folded into the letter, a "minutely scrawled message which was what she really wanted to say, and why she was bothering to write a letter at all (293). Written in tiny letters are the words Bonnie cannot bear to say out loud, "'Polly, Flor is getting so queer. I don't know her anymore'" (293).

The fact of Flor's illness means that Bonnie fears she has failed as a mother. Marriage to Bob Harris has not "cured" Flor of her psychological debility, and Bonnie does not want to admit that her own lack of a stable home, or the stifling role she has played in her daughter's marriage, may have been the cause of Flor's "queerness." Bonnie, moreover, cannot even name the disease and instead describes it as an otherness. That Flor is "queer" is to label her with alterity, and thus what Bonnie sees as her failure to socialize her daughter into the conformity of the Fairlie clan, or into the "clan" of normality. This, for Bonnie, is the true problem: Flor is "legible" only when she conforms to Bonnie's biased notions of social acceptability and thus, can be manipulated into a form of Bonnie's own choosing.

Flor begins to hallucinate four pages into the second chapter. Walking along the Boulevard des Capucines, she senses the sidewalk rising up to engulf her: "It was like an earthquake, except that she knew there were no earthquakes here…No one noticed the disturbance, or the fact that she had abruptly come to a halt. It was possible that she had become invisible" (293-94). Knowledge has ceased to align with experience; Flor has lost the ability to comprehend the world. Catching glimpses of herself in shop windows is the

only way she is sure she still exists. Sitting at the Café de la Paix, surrounded by American tourists, she loses the ability to comprehend English: it seems as if "an invasion of strangers speaking Siamese had entered the city. But they were not Siamese: they were her own people, and spoke the language she knew best" (294). Here, Gallant challenges the ease and agency of cosmopolitanism exhibited by the American tour group by associating cosmopolitanism with the loss of mental control and stability: Flor, the expatriate, is excluded from belonging to the Americans because her displacement is not a temporary condition of travel, as is theirs, but rather a permanent state of being.

Language for Flor has also been severed from meaning, yet she recalls a time when she understood the process of naming objects and desires, an understanding of the linguistic flow of meaning from utterance to its comprehension. A line from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, "…upon the beached verge of the salt flood…" comes to her as if it were an echo from her past when she was still able to read. This much darker quote, with its image of insubstantiality and transience—Timon's "mansion" or his final resting place that will be swept away by the advancing sea--contrasts with the invocation of contented journeying in the epigraph, "Travellers must be content," from *As You Like It* that begins the novel:

> Timon has made his everlasting mansion
> Upon the beached verge of the salt flood
> Who once a day with his embossed froth
> The turbulent surge shall cover. (V.1. 247-50)

Like the "salt flood," language recedes from Flor. Here, Gallant's imagery of the ocean and the watery containment of words convey the instability Flor experiences now that she can no longer remember what reading meant to her: "A vision, clear as a mirror, of a narrowing shore, an encroaching sea, was all that was left. It was all that remained of

her reading, the great warehouse of stored phrases, the plugged casks filled with liquid words—a narrowing shore, a moving sea" (*GWGS* 294). Through these images of water, Gallant is also invoking modernist tropes of female madness, reconfigured here as the loss of language. To lose reading, for Flor, is to lose the legibility of the world.

Bonnie's own formless life wandering around Italy and France, and the uprooting of her daughter—"one majestically wrong decision among a hundred indecisions"— are here the proximate causes of Flor's instability (295). Like Kate Zambreno's exploration of the life of Baroness Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven in *Heroines*, who earlier in the century also lived in a period adrift, "uprooted in Europe…taking up with different lovers—a career, from the French for *carrière*, that which takes you from place to place…or being carried away," Bonnie has been "carried away" by the force of her desire to be someone else, rather than commit to the structure of stability and home (128). This means that Flor will always be an outsider, never able to "read" the local culture, and now, unable to comprehend reality. She imagines telling Bonnie, "'It was always your fault. I might have been a person, but you made me a foreigner. It was always the same, even back home. I was the only Catholic girl at Miss Dowland's. That was being foreign'" (*GWGS* 295). Flor's "career" is not the access into artistic circles that the Baroness or, to a lesser extent, Bonnie seeks through travel, but rather the only other, more destabilizing career "for bright intellectual girls at that time, such as being an invalid" (Zambreno 128). This will be Flor's "work." Bonnie has succeeded in turning her daughter into an invalid.

At the café, Flor begins to write a letter to her female psychiatrist, Dr. Linnetti, breaking off her treatment even before the doctor's August vacation. Flor has just enough

lucidity left to know that what she wants most of all is “sleep and the dreams experienced in the gray terrain between oblivion and life” (*GWGS* 296). In her “private language” of interior delusions, she thinks of her instability—the vertigo she experienced on the sidewalk—as “the triumph of the little fox” that began tormenting her when she was twelve; now, the only solution is “the little animal going to sleep” (295). The fox is Flor herself, whose red hair reveals that her self-identification is bound up tightly with her psychosis.

Flor also exemplifies the figure of Ophelia, with her “long hair free and…sandals on her feet… wild, yet urban, falsely contrived, like a gypsy in a musical play” (309), emphasizing what Elaine Showalter calls “the feminine nature of Ophelia’s insanity contrasted with Hamlet’s universalized metaphysical distress” (10-11). It is the image of Flor’s loose hair on a pillow as she later remains immobilized in bed that reminds Bob Harris of what he has lost: “He had prized her beauty. It had made her an object as cherished as anything he might buy” (*GWGS* 300). Here, Gallant shows how the objectification of feminine beauty becomes the mechanism for its stranglehold on masculine value. Thus, Gallant suggests that it is impossible to escape from the roles imposed on women as bearers of that beauty, except through psychosis. Similarly, the fox is Flor’s physical diminishment, her reversion to animalistic and instinctive behavior, and her “possession” not by her husband, but by an “invader” whose conquest means that she will be liberated from the expectations of grace and stability (296).

As illegible and evasive as Bonnie’s letter is to her sister-in-law, Flor’s letter to Dr. Linnetti, is bold, provocative, and insulting. She fills pages with her complaints, accusing Dr. Linnetti of complicity with the misogynistic practice of male-dominated

psychiatry. She is incensed that the psychiatrist has not "pardoned" Flor because they are both women: "but then she remembered that this cheat was from a known tribe…practicing the same essential deceits. And here was this impostor presuming to help!" (297). Flor challenges Dr. Linnetti's practice of psychiatry, charging her with the failure to keep her safe from the terrors of psychosis, asking, "'Can you convince me that the sidewalk is a safe place to be?'" (297). The letter is a provocation, but also a plea for help. Calling Dr. Linnetti "charming as a hippopotamus, elegant as the wife of a Soviet civil servant, emotional as a snail," Flor is desperate for attention (297). Dr. Linnetti has become, for Flor, intertwined with Bonnie, two maternal figures who do not provide maternal care. By directing her rage at her doctor, Flor displaces her subliminal fury at her mother onto the psychiatrist who has prescribed sleeping pills for her, a dangerous therapy for a suicidal schizophrenic. Flor wants both to be helped, but also to reject all help.

Psychoanalysis, moreover, with its emphasis on the slow process of exploring the unconscious, may be ineffective in the treatment of schizophrenia, or as a remedy for the modern existential condition of defamiliarization and estrangement. Flor's loss of language means that she does not know what words signify or if she even exists. As Adam Philips asks in *On Balance*, "The question in psychoanalysis, as in the wider culture, became: who, if anyone, is in charge of the modern individual? (65). Psychoanalysis has failed to be in charge of Flor.

Similarly, the hierarchical power structure of psychiatry and the imbalance between doctor and patient work against humanitarian care. That the only descriptions of Flor's therapy sessions are in the text of her letter suggest the emptiness of

psychoanalysis and its inadequacy as an intervention. Flor's letter, like the "lethal" pen she uses to write it, becomes "the instrument of separation" that insures she separate herself from Dr. Linnetti as well as her mother and carry out her plan of self-harm (*GWGS* 297). Liberating herself from psychoanalysis is Flor's act of agency, her bid for independence, and her only means of response to the contradictory demands imposed on her by the social structure of a still imperfectly organized cosmopolitan world. Flor wanders the streets, "the home of the homeless" until she summons a taxi and is "taken away"—a foreshadowing of her retreat into near-death and the fantasy of her father's arms (297).

Just as powerless as psychoanalysis is in treating psychosis in *Green Water, Green Sky,* so too are the human qualities of love and desire powerless to reach Flor. Bob Harris has no ability to help Flor "turn back on her journey out"—her psychological voyage toward madness (319). He remembers the time in Cannes when he and Flor had just met, a time of brilliant sun and limitless future, but now, confronted with Flor's desire to sleep in the darkness of their shuttered room, he is "shut out" from the wife he thought he knew. Her body is no longer available to him, and he cannot bear to touch her. He tries to remind himself that "she was a sick girl" (317), but her debility means that the present Flor is invisible to him and torments him with memories of desire: "Her hair, loose on the pillow, was a parody of Cannes. So were the shuttered windows" (318). The image of Flor as a mad Ophelia, hair disheveled, marks the irreconcilability of the past with the present.

Bob thinks of Flor as "damaged goods"—wine gone bad—and that he has lost something he once prized. Although "he had loved her: her tried to reconstruct their past,

not sentimentally, but as a living structure of hair, skin, breath," the effort required is, to him, "repugnant" and "unhealthy" (320). Bob no longer can love Flor in her present state, and recreating what she was to him as a "living structure" physically sickens him. He had once regarded Flor and her beauty as his possession, as alluring to him as the paintings in museums of "the luminous women of the Impressionists" (300). Without her, he still has money and charm, and yet he, too, experiences the dissolution of his identity as a husband: "these elements—the importance of business, his own attractive powers—pulled away like the sea and left him stranded and without his wife" (320). Love, for him, may have been a transaction of beauty, desire, and wholeness, but its loss means that he too suffers, along with Flor. Gallant's commentary on the rigidity of marriage as an oppressive structure for women as well as for men points to the failure of traditional marital roles shaped solely by the economics of transactional love, and the pressing need for different models of companionship in a more equitable and cosmopolitan society.

Before Flor is left alone in Paris for August, she meets Doris Fisher, an American living in their building who is waiting for the return of her husband, a film cameraman on location. Just as Bob cannot acknowledge Flor's emotional withdrawal, Doris refuses to admit that her husband has left her. In this mirroring of roles—Doris, like Bob, waits for a spouse who will never return—Doris is left adrift, and she latches onto Flor in the belief that they can help each other. As her last name implies, Doris "fishes" for the absent body of a companion. She does not fit into the community of American expatriates in Paris, with her rumpled clothing and poor grasp of French. Her raw, uncultured Americanness is conveyed through her broad mannerisms, and Bonnie's disdain for her is territorial, believing that "she did not belong in their lives or in the Paris summer. She belonged to

an unknown cindery city full of used car lots" (312). To Flor, Doris represents American optimism and action, a "hard, sunny reality; the opposite of dreams," qualities that clash with the seductive, incapacitating gloom of her depression (321).

Only Doris, however, like the reader, understands the depth of Flor's disturbance and the danger she is in with a bottle of sleeping pills at her bedside, but Doris's understanding is limited by her unquestioning investment in the ideology of self-reliance and hard work. She believes that Flor's condition is not a "concrete problem," and that she can cure herself by getting out of bed and, with her birthright as an American grounded in can-do positivity, taking control of her situation (323). Hiding Flor's pills, Doris intends to force Flor back into life.

In the third epistolary section of the chapter, Doris writes Flor an apologetic letter that she pushes under the closed apartment door in a final attempt to reconnect. Doris is, in fact, offering Flor a problematic female friendship, one based on her American obliviousness, in which her desperate gesture toward apology will in the end subvert Flor's tenuous grasp on sanity. Flor's feminine passivity reminds Doris too much of her own dependence. She reveals that she had hidden the sleeping pills in a recipe box, where Flor, whose condition has made it impossible to cook—a performance of the traditional role of female nurturing and domesticity—would never have thought to look. Similarly, the recipe box suggests the oppressive expectations of the kitchen in causing her condition. It is also as if Doris believes that Flor could follow a "recipe" to produce a better yield of mental health by getting up out of bed and accomplishing something useful. Admitting her petty jealousy, Doris believes that Flor can be trusted: "'I know I was silly because you're young and pretty and have everything to live for and you

wouldn't do what I was afraid you would do'" (330). Giving Flor back the pills is intended to restore their friendship, but in fact gives Flor permission to follow through with her plan for self-harm.

For Doris, decision-making is the only strategy for survival. By returning the sleeping pills, Doris allows Flor to make the only possible decision for her own survival, which is death. What Doris does not understand is that their conditions are radically divergent, and their choices have been shaped by their geographic and emotional access to or exile from home. Doris has decided to return to America: "'I realized that there was a solution for me and the solution was a decision and so now I am going home. I am not going *away* but going *home*'" (330). Doris still has a home to go to, but it is her father's money that has rescued her. Flor, by contrast, is psychologically homeless, without the means of true emotional support. Since home for Doris is bound up with her identity, she does not consider "going home" as going away. However, for Flor, the only possible meaning of home is, in fact, "going away," toward the oblivion of sleep and the death of her consciousness, an "away" that makes a clear distinction between life and annihilation. Their decisions move them in different directions and yet toward the same place: home, real or imaginary for the displaced cosmopolitan woman, is a reclamation of selfhood and the act of reimagining coherence, even if, for Flor, this means incoherence and madness.

Doris ends her letter to Flor with some advice: "'Everyone makes someone else pay for something…All children eventually make their parents pay, and pay, and pay'" (330). The repetition of "pay" not only intensifies the infinite emotional punishment meted out by children against their parents for all the perceived and imagined wrongs of their upbringing, but also monetizes these relationships and suggests that the value of

love between parents and children must necessarily be regarded in economic, and not altruistic, terms. It is when an economy of resentment within a family becomes the only exchange of value that distortions of reality occur.

If schizophrenia is the basis for the analysis of cultural systems that have been distorted by capitalism and psychoanalysis in the production and control of desire, as Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari propose in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, then the placing of value onto the shifting space of parent-child relationships, and its entanglement with Oedipal desire, may be instrumental in the development of forms of madness that are protests against hierarchical structures of control (24). The family is thus the archetypal model of instability and dysfunction.. Deleuze and Guattari further argue that psychoanalysis "cloaks insanity in the mantle of a 'parental complex,' thereby developing "a moralized, familial discourse of mental pathology" (50). This means that the nineteenth-century bourgeois family, Freud's therapeutic milieu, also becomes the "measuring rod" of guilt and responsibility (50). Thus, for Guattari and Deleuze, psychoanalysis takes part "in the work of bourgeois repression at its most far-reaching level, that is to say, keeping European humanity harnessed to the yoke of daddy-mommy and making no effort to do away with the problem once and for all" (50). For Gallant, in the psychodynamic territory of *Green Water, Green Sky*, this "bourgeois repression" distorts and commodifies relationships that should otherwise, in an idealized world, promote values of altruism, love, and support. It is an imperfect cosmopolitanism embodied within family systems that displaces the traveler by exacting a psychic toll on the most vulnerable.

Similarly, the cosmopolitan world of *Green Water, Green Sky* has not yet reorganized the hierarchy of patriarchal structures. Flor, like Doris, depends on the fantasy of her father to achieve her return "home." After taking an overdose of the sleeping pills that Doris has made accessible to her, Flor slips into unconsciousness while imagining herself in a comforting dream world of accomplishment, homecoming, and forgiveness: "She was perfect. Everyone smiled now. Everyone was pleased. She emerged in triumph from the little wood and came off Chief, her pony, and into her father's arms" (*GWGS* 331). Flor's "triumph," however, is situated in the make-believe of a privileged, princess-daughterhood of manor estates and horseback riding, hinting obliquely at a more incestuous "triumph" of desire and salvation. Both Flor and Doris, cosmopolitan women set adrift from the familiarity of location and belonging, return to the patriarchal home, but at the cost of their continued dependency and submission to an infantile fantasy of rescue.

Each of the four parts of *Green Water, Green Sky*, operates within the fluidity of a separate temporal structure, mirroring the discursive, non-linear perception of time and memory. Part 3, originally the short story, "Travelers Must Be Content," is a chapter-length flashback to the summer two years before Flor's breakdown in Paris. This chapter is the account of Wishart's visit to Bonnie in Cannes and the beginning of Flor's relationship with Bob Harris. Dreams, not sequential episodes, link the end of Part 2 with the beginning of Part 3: Flor's oneiric, florid fantasy gives way to Wishart's "dreams of chaos" so indispensable and self-fulfilling that they become his "meat" (332). This imaginary "chaos" of natural disasters and invented calamities are Wishart's daydreams of heroic action, which nourish him as he too invents his own means of sustenance, being

a perpetual guest. Claiming to be a well-bred, cultured English gentleman, not a "hired companion—carrier of coats, fetcher of aspirin, walker of dachshunds," he sees himself as "the chosen minstrel, the symbolic male who would never cause 'trouble'" (335). In fact, he is a fraudulent poseur, a "scrambler and scraper" whose self-invented name describes his artful "wishing" to be the opposite of a parasitic hanger-on dependent on the hospitality of lonely women (333). Even his aging body does not negate his self-aggrandizing vision of himself: "He observed with detachment his drooping bathing trunks, his skinny legs, his white freckled hands, his brushed-out fringe of graying hair" (322). Like Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Wishart exists as entertainment for wealthy women longing to engage in playful badinage and wordplay. He is a creation of his own making, a "fool" whose act of deception is intended to charm and divert.

Wishart arrives just as Bonnie begins to lose hope for marrying Flor off to a man she finds suitable, one with family money and not a Jewish businessman like Bob Harris. In a desperate act of egocentrism and impropriety, Bonnie hints to Wishart that he should offer to marry Flor himself: "'Someone like you, Wishart, would be good for Flor. I mean someone older, a person I can trust. You know what I mean, an Englishman who's been in America, who's had the best of both worlds'" (319). Wishart's cosmopolitanism is a chameleon-like disguise that has deceived Bonnie with its seeming plausibility. He has mastered the art of appearances and is legible to all beholders because he is the projection of all desires, but his suitability as a husband for Flor is Bonnie's grotesque miscalculation. She has violated the terms of their relationship, one that had been built not on the formal structure of marriage and family, but on the pleasures of pretending.

As Bonnie and Wishart cross the territorialized beach, each with its own "social stamp, as distinct as the strings of greasy flags," a skywriting airplane appears that "violates" the horizon with the name of a drink (339). Unlike the much-analyzed skywriting scene in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, with its intimations of wonder mixed with what Paul Saint-Amour, in *Tense Future: Modernism, War, Encyclopedic Form*, calls "fearful ambiguity" and "illegible alterity," this airplane unambiguously advertises a commodity that is legible in its violation both of the airspace and of free choice (115). By offering her daughter to Wishart, Bonnie does everything she can to deny Flor her freely chosen husband. For Saint-Amour, Woolf's skywriting "attracts a collectivized attention without succeeding in totalizing or dominating this collective through a coherent, authoritative message," while Gallant's skywriting is itself an "authoritative message" meant specifically to instill the all-too-legible desire for consuming and, ultimately, discarding (115). This is a message, like Bonnie's attempt at marrying off her daughter to an imposter, which is intended to repel in its violation of sensibility. Woolf's "gossamer social web" here devolves into the authoritarianism of a single voice that destroys any hope of Flor's individuation (116). Bonnie drives Wishart away and refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of Flor's love for Bob. What is violated also, by Bonnie and the commodified airspace, is the legibility of human intimacy.

The room in which Bob and Flor's relationship begins locates them in a "country" that only they can inhabit. The room's shutters open to the afternoon light, suggesting their life ahead, but the Mistral winds also blow in sand, like Bonnie's intrusiveness: "It seemed to Flor that here the grit of sand and salt came into their lives, and their existence as a couple began" (*GWGS* 346). This "grit" is Bonnie's presence: it is at the end of their

existence as a couple, when Flor lies in darkness, that Bonnie rushes in, throwing open the shutters "with an exclamation of annoyance, and past love, that delicate goblet, was shattered on the spot" (320). What also intrudes is the reader's memory from the previous chapter that Flor has already lost her mind, and that Bob will lose Flor, which makes the substantiality of their love in this chapter more tragic. Here, emotions are given a material form that situates the lovers in their moments of intimacy. The passage of light across the white walls of the room is, for Flor, "a concrete sensation of happiness, as if happiness could be felt, lifted, carried around" (348). For Bob, the room evokes his memory of their "unclouded moments…and he would remember Flor's silent, mirrored room, and believe it was their room at Cannes, and that he lived in it too" (348).

Bob and Flor's "country" is the reification of their love, a borderless state of desire in which they will be only temporary citizens. Their union becomes a condition of absolute hospitality that allows them to live in the continuous present. Love is Flor's respite from rootlessness, and Bob is her homecoming:

> Lacking an emotional country, it might be possible to consider another person one's home. She pressed her face against his unmoving arm, accepting everything imperfect, as one accepts a faulty but beloved country, or the language in which one's thoughts are formed. It was the most dangerous of ideas, this 'only you can save me,' but her need to think it was so overwhelming that she wondered if this was what men, in the past, had been trying to say when they had talked about love. (348-49)

This crucial passage conveys the idea that love is both imperfect and fundamental to a sense of self that can be realized only in relation to another, a "beloved country" of mutuality and belonging. Here, Gallant's use of the conditional—"it might be possible"—suggests that the lack of an "emotional country"—not being grounded in a place of origin, or having access to a stable sense of self—is so overwhelming that even the connection to another might not become adequate reparation. National homelessness

makes one vulnerable to overdependence. The greatest risk, moreover, is that love can also become dependence, the way that Bonnie once depended on her husband for her identity as a wife, or Flor's desperate attempt to keep from falling apart by falling in love. This is the "fault" of love—the fact that the individual is erased in the creation of a couple.

Most important, though, is the imperfection of language in reliably forming—or, in Flor's case, deforming—rational thought, for it is the changeable narrative of the self and the past that becomes either a new and authentic "home country" of self-acceptance and affiliation, or the disintegration of identity and understanding. Ideas can be dangerous, and here Gallant warns against the allure of unconditional surrender and the insidiousness of blind obedience to another. Just as Flor submits to loving Bob, she has also given herself to Bonnie. The language of love, with its emphasis on the merging of the self into the consciousness of another, is not that dissimilar from the language of totalitarianism. The danger is the irrational thought that giving oneself to another becomes salvation. The individual self, merged with the idea of salvation, loses the idea of love. It is only through language that one's consciousness of love is formed, and to lose language, as Flor does, is to lose all access to the inviolability of the self.

In the world outside the lovers' room, what is lacking, in addition to an "emotional country," is the social intelligence that would make it possible not only to understand the intentions of others, but also to decode the variable meanings and markers of identity. This social "legibility" has been obscured in the amalgam of cultures and customs brought about by a global cosmopolitanism that levels the distinctiveness of nationalities and diverse modes of being. Loyalty, even to family, is compromised.

Bonnie, dismissive of her own daughter, complains to Wishart, “It’s tragic for me to see that girl. I’m fifty and I’m still a woman, and she’s twenty-four and a piece of ice” (350). This, for Wishart, is an appalling moment when he realizes that “the world of women”—even relationships between mothers and daughters—can devolve into competitiveness, envy, and complaining, “an area dimly lighted and faintly disgusting, like a kitchen in a slum… a world of migraines, miscarriage, disorder, and tears” (350). He cannot keep himself from blurting out what is really wrong with Flor, a deep insult to Bonnie, while also the truth she cannot accept: “He heard the words, ‘she has a crack across the brain,’ but was never certain if he had said them aloud” (355). What is most disturbing to Wishart is not the social gaffe of saying out loud what he had been thinking, but rather the crack in his own façade, a revelation of his real, combative, and unfettered self that he had momentarily lost the ability to control. He has shown himself to be not the “exact miniature” of his invented persona reflected in Bonnie’s sunglasses (355), but instead, “bitter, withdrawn…pulling about himself the rags of imaginary Wishart” (356). His precipitous departure at dawn for his next summer hostess keeps him in transit, a rupture that allows him to continue pretending he is someone else. Like Flor’s “departure” into psychosis at the end of Part 2, Wishart’s exit at the end of Part 3 is a continuous leave-taking from the self, a cosmopolitan rootlessness that keeps them both in perpetual motion.

The fourth and final chapter of the novel leaps forward two years to the aftermath of Flor’s institutionalization, connecting thematically only with Part 2. This temporal displacement disturbs the sequential movement of plot and disorients the reader, fracturing the novel into spiraling units of disruption rather than an orderly succession of

events. For Janice Kulyk Keefer, this “fluid plenum” of *Green Water, Green Sky* is a “structural correlative to Flor’s madness” (*RMG* 80), while Neil Besner regards the structure of the novel as a “framework” for Gallant’s “major purpose,” a study of madness that, in its displacement of time and disassociation of meaning, continually escapes from the structural boundaries of that framework (50). This is why, Besner contends, that *Green Water, Green Sky* is “less successful” as a novel, because its origin as four short stories means that its structure has been determined by the narrative compression of Gallant’s short story form and thus loses intensity and clarity of focus in the longer work (49-50). Nevertheless, Besner argues that it is through Gallant’s grafting the short story form onto the novel that gives *Green Water, Green Sky* its patterns of disruption and disorienting shifts in chronological time. For Denis Sampson, *Green Water, Green Sky* is the first of Gallant’s “difficult experimental narratives” in which incoherence reflects the “dissolving reality of historical contexts” (26).

While all three critics interpret the novel’s fluidity as the reflection of a mind unmoored from reality, what is more important is the way Flor’s disintegration reflects broader questions Gallant is asking not only about epistemic instability in the post-Holocaust world, but also about the failure of individual relationships to repair and restore human dignity. Flor’s madness is the paradigm for the only response to the dilemma of how to live in an unlivable world, in which an imperfect cosmopolitanism divides those it was intended to unite in borderless planetary citizenship.

Flor’s silence in Part 4 is the silencing of her alterity. This is also the dilemma of the artist and the role of cosmopolitan art that seeks to resist global commodification and irrelevance in a consumerist society. Gallant suggests that an authoritarian culture

capable of erasure exists even after the defeat of Nazism, translated into the smaller sphere of the contemporary family and its cultivation of materialism and control. Knowledge of the other and the ethics of compassion and responsibility are no longer fixed points in the organization of social consciousness. This is what Theodor Adorno regards as the end of the ideology of authenticity, leaving only "advertisements for the world through its duplication and the provocative lie which does not seek belief but commands silence" (34). Similarly, Flor's silence in the last part of *Green Water, Green Sky* and her metaphoric rendering as a mute Ophelia might be regarded as Gallant's interpretation of Adorno's pronouncement, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34). Flor is the figure of the poet, unable to use language. This suppression of the artist's voice by the barbarity of madness also recalls Gallant's own silencing when her captions for the first photographs published in *The Montreal Standard* of the liberation of the Nazi death camps were rejected. Here, however, it is the barbarism of Flor's displacement and her exclusion from the structure of family—the refusal of absolute hospitality— that achieve the silencing. Flor is relegated to the status of a stranger.

George is the nominal subject of Part 4 and the consciousness through which the novel concludes, but Flor's absence haunts the final chapter. It is not immediately clear if she had succeeded in her suicide attempt at the end of Part 2, and the interruption of Wishart's interlude in Part 3 extends the uncertainty around her fate. Only through George's confusion about his cousin's whereabouts does Gallant underscore the true meaning of the "rest home" Flor has been taken to, but this, for George also means that he wonders "where she was *really,*" suspecting "she was in no special place. She was not anywhere" (*GWGS* 370). Being somewhere implies existence. Thus, madness transforms

Flor into a specter of insubstantiality, a ghost who might as well have been a suicide, since thinking about her incapacitated mental status disturbs George with existential incomprehensibility. If he cannot think of where she is, then, in a corruption of Descartes, she must not exist. It is easier to relegate her to a "nowhere" of erasure than to consider where she "really" is, immured in the psychotic delirium that means she is no longer allowed to inhabit the world outside the asylum. This is the world of "normality" which, according to Foucault, creates the category of madness in order to support its grasp on power (77).

However, the effects of Flor's illness have caused specific disturbances in those around her. Neither Bob nor Bonnie knows how to appear to each other: "They seemed bewildered. Each was the witness of the other's suffering and that must have been terrible to bear" (*GWGS* 365). To be the witness of another's anguish is to intensify the experience of loss, yet the ambiguous tone of the narrative voice here calls into question the sincerity of their responses by making it unclear whether it is actually Flor's absence that makes them suffer or, more likely, the discomfort caused by seeing their suffering mirrored in the other.

Similarly called into question is the depth of Bonnie's distress. At dinner with Bob and George, she enjoys a five-course meal "in spite of her grief" and complains about the quality of the wine (363). It is George who interprets Bob and Bonnie's reactions, even if the shock of Flor's disintegration slows his reflexes and makes his stammering return. His childhood infatuation with Flor allows him to sympathize with Bob, even though he is "not the kind of American George had been brought up to know well" (362). Here, George sees himself as the diviner of truth, and "the falsehood, the

outrage, the impertinence of his aunt made him stammer in his mind. As if he could have complained; as if, to these stricken people dressed in mock mourning, he could have complained" (364). George is acutely aware of the hypocrisy of adults, and Bob and Bonnie's "mock mourning" questions their sincerity. However, George is also a Fairlie, imprinted with the family characteristics of insularity and disdain. He cannot be impartial, for he too is haunted by Flor's absence.

Motherhood is not a protective, nurturing antidote to the effects of displacement, but rather a damaging dynamic that recapitulates the imbalance of power between parent and child. Bonnie has become a grotesque figure of maternal domination. She is "mournful, poor Aunt Bonnie with her only girl gone to waste" and yet, she encourages George and Bob to have a night on the town (364). She tells them, "Florence would want you to be having fun" (365). Bonnie's last acts of motherhood are not simply to speak for her daughter, but also to assume she knows what Flor wants. "Old and tactless," dressed "like the Mad Woman of Chaillot," she has succeeded in creating a version of Flor that both perverts the motherhood Bonnie has forbidden her to have and celebrates it (365). Bonnie proudly relates to George how Flor cares for Bob as if he were a baby bird when he visits her in the asylum: "She didn't know his name or anything but she stroked his face and she made him eat little pieces of bread from her tray" (364). Flor's sterile motherhood is Bonnie's crowning achievement and will never threaten her own identity as the only true mother in their family.

Like Flor, Bob's own reaction is tempered by his displacement. George thinks of him as "a man who had come into a known station only to find all the trains going to the wrong places or leaving at impossible times: endlessly patient, he was waiting for the

schedules to be rearranged" (365). The schedule he waits for is the continuation of his life after the rupture with Flor. Here, Bob's passivity is the inverted counterpart to Flor's madness: he has appropriated the role of a perfect child, "soft and patient, neutral and blind" (373), the "grand gosse" or "big kid" who is "the last person in the world to pose a problem" (299). He is unperturbed by the chaos around him, waiting patiently for the correct train—knowledge and stability restored—to take him to his destination. With the naïve expectations of a child, he waits for someone else to take charge. This is also his opportunity to abandon Flor, since she has become the "wrong place," or the destination he wants to avoid.

The final chapter of the novel maps the meandering route George, Bob, and Bonnie take through the Parisian streets after dinner, as they distance themselves from their memories of Flor. The urban landscape of the city is in constant motion:

> Then they reached the Pont de la Concorde and the silence came to an end. A river of cars faster than the Seine ran past them and he saw at the other end of the bridge the lights of the Place de la Concorde strung unevenly, haunting and moving as the memory of lights across a lake, and the obelisk like a great lighted mast. (369)

Even the built environment of bridges and monuments has no stability, dissolving into George's memory of a lake upon which an imaginary ship takes sail. Here is Flor, on her ship of fools, subsumed into the memorialized landscape of the city. All three are haunted by Flor as she once was, as the embodiment of the lights repeated in the passage above, first perceived, then remembered, and the ship of her illness that bears her away.

Knowledge is a destination, like a country they reach individually, but also alone. Bob is revived by the nightlife and the "shops, nightclubs, well-dressed girls," what George observes to be "his country" (373), yet he holds secret his memories of Flor and their time together, which is another, closed-off country: "Bob, encased in silence and

false calm, knew even more, but it was better not to explore that country" (374). As they walk, Bob emerges from his role as the outsider, unwelcomed husband Bonnie had thrust on him. Paris offers him a new identity shaped by the geography of pleasure. George, struggling to integrate his feelings for Flor with his own desire, knows that his memories of Flor are true—his cousin, who had been " a wild girl breaking a necklace, the circle of life closing in at fourteen" (368)—while his aunt's fantasies of a perfect daughter inexplicably stricken down, are false. (374). As Bob is coming back to life, Bonnie is "diminishing, going down" (374). She, too, must integrate the loss of her daughter with the knowledge that she will also lose Bob, whose youth and charm are destined for other women.

Flor as she was exists only while the three are in motion. Walking across Paris and crossing bridges over the Seine, they are led farther away from the substantiality of their recollections, which is all that continues to connect them. George knows that "when the three separated that night, Flor would be lost. Their conversation and their thoughts were the last of the old Flor. If she was cured, she would be different" (374). It is the old Flor that George wants, just as the bead he once had was "a hole in time," the way "one goes back to a lake, a room in a city, or the south" (368).

However, because George has been socialized into a family that values conformity, an upbringing that accommodates "the social rather than the human collapse," he cannot, at the crucial moment, acknowledge kinship with Flor (366). He tries to remember her face, but cannot place her in the family: "She had too much McCarthy in her, her eyes were too green" (374). He renounces her, answering Bob's question about visiting Flor in the asylum, "'You two were pretty close, weren't you?'"

with his denial: "'To tell the truth, I hardly knew her. I think in my whole life I only saw my cousin six times" (375). His repudiation of Flor is a stroke of devastating magnitude, distancing him from experiencing true loss. Flor is outside the family structure, someone George barely claims to know.

The truth of Flor is that she is nowhere and everywhere, and that her life, altered and emended to suit the monstrousness of her mother's inattention, is a possession George can now return to Bob: "Handing her back, he renounced all claim to her" (375). Here, the limits of knowledge have been reached. In denying knowing her, George too is complicit in Flor's erasure. No longer an object of possession, Flor will continue to possess him.

In the final paragraph of the novel, all that remains is human collapse, the condition Gallant later explores in "The Pengitz Junction," and I examine in the next chapter. Crossing the bridge back the way they came, George regresses from the humanity of acknowledgement. He has turned his back on the needs of his cousin. Flor becomes a haunting presence trapped within an "authentic hallucination," a composite image of Bonnie, Flor, and a prostitute George has glimpsed on the Parisian streets (375). This indeterminate and menacing figure conjured up by his own unsettled mind transforms his regret and desire into an ambiguous new reality, taunting him with his failure. Gallant's novel ends with the authenticity of the unstable, and the mockery of those for whom the world must be fixed as a known place.

Chapter IV:

“fine silver crystals forming a pattern, dancing, separating, dissolving…”

In Gallant’s novella from 1973, “The Pegnitz Junction,” compiled in *The Collected Stories* (*CS*), voices interrupt the text and come unbidden into twenty-one-year-old Christine’s thoughts as she returns to Germany from a week in Paris with her lover, Herbert and his child, little Bert. These voices speak to Christine about the mundane and bewildering details of postwar German life, an existence divided by geography, violence, and the past. Because an airport strike has forced Christine and Herbert to change plans, they must travel back by train. On their journey, past and present merge in the German landscape that passes slowly beyond the train windows. They are forced to confront the degradation of their country still divided into East and West with its impermeable barbed wire border a reminder of history, individual suffering, and the uncomfortable resilience of authoritarianism. Mysterious stoppages and an increasing level of discomfort on the train when food and water run out disrupt their trip. Merely returning home has become impossible when the travelers are deposited not at their destination, but at Pegnitz Junction, where connecting trains are not guaranteed to arrive. Home proves elusive, becoming the cosmopolitan condition of rootlessness, and the journey may never end.

Christine “receives” information as stories from the people on the train, a highly sensitive and empathic telepathy that allows her to enter into the consciousness of others without understanding what it means. This is a telepathy that looks back to the modernist fascination with theosophy and the paranormal, most significantly with Joyce’s Leopold Bloom and his fixation on metempsychosis, or the concept of reincarnation as the transmission of consciousness from the past to the present. In Christine’s telepathy,

Gallant is also describing a cosmopolitan mind that is not limited by the boundaries between reality and the supernatural.

For Gallant scholar Claire Wilkshire, "'The Pegnitz Junction' is a story made up of stories" (892), a narrative device that does more than allow Gallant to string together a series of vignettes about German citizens experiencing the disconnect between past and present during the prosperity of the 1970s. Most importantly, the novella situates the act of telling stories and of hearing stories being told as a response to the trauma of displacement through the creation of cultural meaning. Just as Virginia Woolf's *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* muses on an imaginary journey by train that allows Woolf to incorporate the "myriads of irrelevant and incongruous ideas [that] crowd one's head on such occasions" in order to herald the arrival of modernism and with it, the exploration of a character's interior thoughts as a new method of narrative, Gallant's "The Pegnitz Junction" proposes that received stories are fundamental to the awareness of others (9). Not only does Christine telepathically receive stories from those around her, but she also makes up her own stories for little Bert. In her attentiveness to a child not her own, Christine embodies what Shameem Black calls "cosmofeminism," a cosmopolitan approach through feminism that bridges the instability of rootlessness to find alliances through communities of care (228). I propose calling Christine's acts of nurturing "maternal cosmofeminism," in which the maternal is not limited to birth mothers. This is in contrast to the predatory and competitive mothering of Bonnie in *Green Water, Green Sky*. I argue that Christine's late-awakening maternal feelings for little Bert lead her to create a new and reparative kinship structure that transcends the instability of never quite reaching home.

For Christine, home is “ a small bombed Baroque German city, where all that was worthwhile keeping had been rebuilt and which now looked as pink and golden as a pretty child and as new as morning” (*CS* 560). Postwar economic recovery has brought prosperity to Germany, which makes trips to Paris possible. Prosperity, however, and access to a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, have also weakened the social bonds that had once kept struggling families intact. Nevertheless, Christine maintains close ties to her family, especially to her grandmother to whom she has promised to use only chamomile to lighten her brown hair, never commercial bleach. This reminder of the Nazi valuation of blonde hair complicates Gallant’s characterization of Christine by suggesting her desire for conformity results from fascist ideology, when in fact Christine is caught between the old ways of social consciousness and the new. She is seemingly devoted to her identity as the bearer of her family’s traditional ways, even as she pushes back against the morality of love and marriage by drifting indecisively between her two lovers, neither of whom she believes are sound prospects. Christine must tell lies both to her theology student fiancé and her family about the Parisian rendezvous with Herbert, a pompous yet hesitant engineer ten years her senior, whose wife has abruptly left him, abandoning their only child. Poised between the old world of her family and the new world of Germany’s return to the global sphere of influence, Christine “was at one of those turnings in a young life when no one can lead, no one can help, but where someone for the sake of love might follow” (560). Christine becomes a figure representing not the inheritor of shame over Germany’s history of genocide, but rather a “junction” where new modes of existence become possible.

The information Christine receives arrives intuitively, as “fine silver crystals forming a pattern, dancing, separating, dissolving in a glistening trail along the window,” while for Herbert, knowledge is concrete, verifiable, and scientific (574). The fluidity of Christine’s telepathy recalls William James’s image of the mind as “islands in the sea,” a “continuum of cosmic consciousness against which our individuality builds up but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir” (374). Christine’s ability to absorb information as she looks out the train window would seem to relegate her to the stereotypical and clichéd role of feminine receptive passivity, but throughout the novella, Christine resists authority as well as the domestic expectations of Herbert, her family, and her fiancé. Similarly, her telepathy is a “mother-sea” that opposes the sentimentality of motherhood while sustaining a “reservoir” of empathy for those around her.

Christine cannot be pinned down: she is in transit between situations and experiences, without a firm foothold on what she wants to do or who she wants to be. Kristjana Gunnars, in her preface to *Transient Questions: New Essays on Mavis Gallant,* suggests that “Sometimes even people’s minds are in transit, moving from one place to another, acting as crossroads for other’s voices” (viii). Here, the literary trope of the crossroad is the liminal space where boundaries between worlds are porous. The “voices” Christine hears, however, are neither signs of mental illness as they are for Flor in *Green Water, Green Sky*, nor of visionary mysticism. Gallant has commented on Christine’s unusual ability:

> She is not inventing or making up stories. Everything the young woman sees when she looks out the train window, she really does see. A kind of magic, if you like. To my mind, a short circuit. She really does know all these stories. She really does know what has happened to everyone.

> Someone wondered if she was schizophrenic. No. There is a German expression, “I can hear him thinking.” I’ve always liked that. I could hear him thinking. Because one does very often. (Hancock 85)

To “hear” someone thinking is to erase the distinction between observer and other. Telepathy allows Christine to travel across the border of realism in order to offer emotional reparation through the act of listening.

While “The Pegnitz Junction” is set in a Germany still struggling with the long aftermath of the Holocaust, within an almost dystopian landscape scarred by war, on an erratic and dangerously overcrowded train Herbert refers to as a “transport,” which unmistakably gestures toward the trains on which Jews were transported to Auschwitz, the novella is not a Holocaust story. Janice Kulyk Keefer writes that

> Gallant does not attempt ‘Holocaust fiction,’ nor does she write novels-of-ideas that speculate on man-in-history. Rather, she takes the situations that most North Americans would conceive of as foreign—war on one’s home ground; the human and material devastation it creates there—and makes them disturbingly familiar, located somewhere between the normal and the surreal. (*RMG* 13)

Even decades after the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, the trauma of “human and material devastation” affects the way that people respond to authority: fascism has not been eradicated, but instead has shrunk down into the everyday interactions between survivors and petty authorities—a train conductor, matrons at a bath house, cultural commentary in newspapers—that shape people’s lives and control they way they think. Christine offers an alternative, that of the transmission of stories, which makes no demands or imposes any order. Instead, it is the disorder of what she receives, information that is unfiltered, raw, surreal, and often troubling, that resists easy categorization into meaning. This overload of information evokes the same bewilderment as the first photographs in *The Montreal Standard* of the survivors of the death camps for

which the young Gallant was unable to write the captions. Thus, it is not only the images themselves that elicit horror, but also the response in the viewer to the senseless of the information received that creates the trauma. Christine, like Gallant, does not tell us what it means, because meaning itself has been disrupted by the meaninglessness of mass murder. What remains is bearing witness through the act of receiving stories.

The multiplicity of voices Christine transmits, shifting like a television randomly scanning through channels, destabilizes the text beyond the surface meaning of the stories themselves. While in *Green Water, Green Sky,* point of view shifts sometimes within a single paragraph, "The Pegnitz Junction" juxtaposes completely different modes of storytelling in a dense collage of shifting narration: the first-person, memoiristic remembrances of Frau Joseph Schneider, a German immigrant in America during and after World War II, written entirely in italics; seemingly unrelated third-person vignettes marked by violence and terror; letters with wide swaths of empty white space written by a character who does not appear in the novella; and a marooned group of cultural tourists en route to the opera. This fluidity disrupts the text by creating multiple entry points into the novella. For Janice Kuluk Keefer, "It is in a piece such as 'The Pegnitz Junction' that Gallant's postmodern affiliations assert themselves most strongly" (*RMG* 160). As a metanarrative—a story about stories—the novella can be classified as postmodernist, but it is more that Gallant has borrowed postmodernist techniques by superimposing a sense of surrealism over the realism of the narrative. This complex polyphony and fragmentation of the text, in addition to its length, may have been why *The New Yorker* rejected it for publication, one of the few Gallant stories they did not take. Now, fifty years after Gallant published the novella in her collection, *The Pegnitz Junction: A*

Novella and Five Stories in 1973, familiarity with postmodern writing has made texts like "The Pegnitz Junction" less daunting, while perhaps still not commercially viable for *The New Yorker*. It is the density of the writing that reiterates Gallant's concern with information, knowledge, and the contemporary sense of alienation from cultural memory.

A romantic get-away trip to Paris for a newly formed couple does not usually include a small, often annoying child with sticky hands and a limited repertoire of food that does not make him vomit. This, however, is not an ordinary trip: "After they had known each other about seven months, they came to Paris for a holiday, all three of them—she, Herbert, and the child, who was called little Bert. Christine had just turned twenty-one and considered this voyage a major part of her emancipation" (*CS* 561). Christine has emancipated herself from obligations to her devoutly religious family and her dull fiancé who has failed his theology exams, and thus has no prospects for leaving their hometown. For Kulyk Keefer, "The 'emancipation' for which [Christine] has been hoping turns into a species of forced march through the bogs of collective memory and rubbishy consciousness," an echo of the forced marches endured by Jews toward Nazi concentration camps (*RMG* 172). "Rubbishy consciousness" may be the parallel Kulyk Keefer draws between the pointless interior chatter of the voices Christine receives and the deceptions Nazis perpetrated in maintaining that the extermination of the Jews would "emancipate" Germany from their presence. Even on a romantic getaway trip to Paris, with its own echoes of the Occupation, there can be no escape from the history of genocide that taints the German people.

However, the ability to travel can transcend the collective memory of German shame. Herbert offers Christine a more cosmopolitan life than a "forced march" might

suggest, even if little Bert is part of the bargain. Moreover, Christine has chosen to run off with Herbert; she has not been forced to "march" through the landmarks of a cosmopolitan city. Their week in Paris is Christine's act of transgression against the parochialism of her family and their expectations that she will settle down and have her own family in the sleepy backwater of her small town. By refusing to submit to the entropy of an insular rural life, Christine resists the postwar isolation imposed upon German citizens by the victorious Allies intent on punishment. Thus, their trip offers a vision of life beyond the familiar borders of Germany's past.

Gender roles have become more fluid in this transitional space of an emerging social structure. Herbert is bringing up the child himself and indulges little Bert with plum tarts and comic books, while Christine chafes at his unimaginative notions of appropriate parenting. Theirs seems to be a practical relationship more than romantic, since Herbert claims to have "no hold on her mind, and no interest in gaining one" (*CS* 560). He is more interested in placating his child by finding a mother substitute than with a romantic alliance. Herbert unconsciously sees himself in his son and believes that coddling him will redeem his own troubled childhood which had been haunted by his mother's internment in a concentration camp and her subsequent mental derangement. He is "Herr-Bert," both grown man and frightened child, only a larger version of little Bert, and his immediate obedience to authority renders him as bewildered as his own son.

Children, however, and especially little Bert, are keen observers, an ability that subverts the dynamic of power between parent and child. Similarly, watching and being watched are important themes in the novella. At the hotel in Paris, the three occupy adjoining rooms with a bathroom in between. Little Bert has learned how to unlock the

door and creep into Herbert and Christine's room when he wakes in the middle of the night, looking for comfort in his confusion about his father's new girlfriend. Christine observes him surveying her: "Through her hair she would watch him taking a long look at her before he moved round the bed and began whimpering to Herbert that he was all alone and afraid of the dark" (561). Little Bert's voyeurism echoes Freud's analysis of the primal scene in his case study of Sergei Pankejeff, or the "Wolf Man," suggesting that Gallant is concerned with the consequences of childhood fear. Just as the history of German atrocities continues to linger in the psyches of the German people, early experiences can imprint themselves on a young child's consciousness. Inquisitiveness may even lead to neurosis. Freud observes, "For the child, just like the adult, can only produce fantasies with material that he has acquired from somewhere" (254). This "somewhere" is the permeable present, subject to recurring traumas of the past. Christine's still enigmatic relationship to little Bert is troubling enough that Herbert immediately draws the sheet over Christine "to protect little Bert from the shock of female nakedness" (*CS* 561).

The morning of their departure, Christine begins to take a bath—a cleansing, perhaps, of the child's prying eyes—but the noise of the running water enrages the hotel's porter. This encounter is the first time she experiences empathic clairvoyance: "At first, of course, she thought the man was drunk; then the knowledge came to her—she did not know how, but never questioned it either—that he suffered from a form of epilepsy" (562). The porter commands them to leave, even before their departure time. Bitterly nationalistic, he calls them "'Dirty Boches, you spoiled my holiday in Bulgaria. Everywhere I looked I saw Germans. The year before in Majorca. The same thing.

Germans, Germans" (563). The repetition of "Germans" intensifies the lingering resentment some of the French still harbored against the West Germans, whose unexpected postwar prosperity allows for leisurely vacations to scenic locales, while this elderly, infirm man must continue to work a physically demanding job. Christine understands that the porter's vitriol has been intensified by his epilepsy, but she still cannot suppress "tears she did not wish the child to observe" (563). Herbert capitulates without question, " as if he were under arrest, or as though the porter's old pajama top masked his badge of office" (562). Authority is conveyed by symbols that have been imbued with menace, made even more potent in Herbert's imagination.

Another symbol, this one of cleanliness, is transformed into an object of play. Before they depart for the train station, little Bert grabs a bath sponge and hugs it to his chest, determined to take it with him despite Herbert's mild objections:

> "The sponge isn't ours," said Herbert, as though it mattered.
> "Yes. It's mine."
> "I've never seen it before."
> "Its name is Bruno," said little Bert. (563)

Bruno is Bert's "security blanket" and alter ego, an Italian name for a strange memento from a trip to Paris made by a small German boy and the adults who care for him with differing degrees of attentiveness. That Bert needs a bath sponge to protect him from the confusion of his situation—abandoned by his mother, dragged around Paris with his father and his much younger new girlfriend, immersed in a language he cannot understand— indicates not just his extreme need for comfort, but also his imaginative refashioning of an object associated with their traumatic departure from the hotel. Bruno the sponge absorbs affection, just as little Bert is desperate to absorb Christine's still uncertain and unformed affection for him. In the taxi, Christine understands with growing

resentment that the entire purpose of the trip to Paris had been for Herbert to see how she would get along with little Bert. Only the child has been unaffected by the scene with the porter at the hotel, and he holds the sponge up to the taxi window as they drive to the airport so Bruno/little Bert can catch a last glimpse of Paris going by. Bruno is the playful intermediary that will make possible the development of an authentic connection between Christine and little Bert. Play and the imagination will thus become crucial to the sense of emotional reparation at the end of the novella.

Of all the passengers Christine encounters on their return journey that does not get them home, little Bert's is the only voice she does not connect with telepathically. It is not so much that little Bert's consciousness is too unformed to transmit stories, but instead, that Christine does not want to know what he is thinking. She is unsure of what she wants her relationship with little Bert to be, or if she even wants to enter into a relationship as a possible stepmother. Impatient with Herbert's solicitousness of little Bert, she thinks:

> Oh, he was so foolish with the child! Like a servant, like a humble tutor with a crown prince. She would never marry Herbert—never. Not unless he placed the child in the strictest of boarding schools, for little Bert's own sake. Was it fair to the child, was it honest, to bring him up without discipline, without religion, without respect, belief, or faith? (567)

Christine still believes in the importance of stability brought about through the shaping influence of proper behavior. It is the disorder of the train journey that unsettles her rigid principles and leads her to recognize that little Bert suffers not from a lack of discipline, but rather a lack of attachment. Their arrival at the Pegnitz Junction is when Christine's own maternal consciousness awakens, a crossroads in her experience that allows her to offer the only true moment of connection in the novella.

The train trip back to Germany devolves from pleasant to intolerable, descending into the chaos of an inexplicably interrupted journey. To travel by train in Europe, even in first class, is to share a compartment with strangers, sitting not in forward-facing rows, as in plane travel, but instead, facing each other directly, with little possibility of escaping the gaze of the other passengers. These others are also subjected to scrutiny, with every action—eating, reading, sleeping—observable and, at times, enervating, entertaining, or provocative. Information about the train's progress and arrival time is tightly controlled by the conductor who "patrols" the train's corridors and has the power to enforce the rules, both those that are petty whims and those that are important to passenger safety. The conductor's uniform resembles a soldier's, with a rigid hat, brass buttons, and the insignia of the railroad company that confers authority over the right to travel. The conductor's domain is over the passengers, who give up their autonomy, regardless of their class, in the act of traveling; they are all captives of the time they share on the train and the conditions in which the train either takes or diverts them from their intended destination.

Not a clichéd characterization of a Nazi-like martinet, however, the "bun-faced conductor" is almost comic, "recalling, perhaps Hitler's histrionics, or Chaplin's imitation of Hitler's histrionics" (91). Here, Gallant skewers expectations of the Holocaust narrative, rendering the conductor as a would-be comedian who nevertheless instills automatic compliance in many of the train's passengers, including Herbert and a cultural tour group stranded in Pegnitz. These are the after-effects of fascism that have turned daily encounters with petty bureaucrats like the conductor into the assertion of dominance, suggesting also that the banality of evil has become commonplace. Christine,

however, sees through the conductor's pretense. Complaining about the train's being rerouted, she realizes the conductor himself is an underling in the larger structure of authority: "but of course she was wasting her breath. He was only a subaltern; he had no real power" (584). She has realized that a conductor's uniform conveys only his tenuous position above the passengers, yet below the power structure of the railroad company.

Train tracks are easily re-routed: this journey places them uncomfortably close to the still blighted and inhospitable terrain of East Germany, "past miles of larches with bedraggled branches, past a landscape baked and blind," land which they would have flown over but are now confronted with in minute detail during the train's interminable slowdowns (572). Christine tells Herbert, "I don't feel as if I were going home" (569). Home has, in fact, become unreachable. Christine and Herbert are caught within the existential dilemma of rootlessness, a condition against which their West German privilege and prosperity cannot protect them.

Still, class-consciousness is deeply etched into their social interactions and reveals their fear they will lose their place in society. At the layover in Strasbourg, Christine washes up in a public bathroom, repelled by the "coarse and institutional" surroundings, the "damp and gritty floor" that she does not dare step on, where "her small dressing case with its modest collection of lotions and soap seemed a wasteful luxury" (568). Listening to the departing trains as she dresses, she thinks they "sounded sad, as though they were used to ferry poor and weary passengers—refugees perhaps" (568). Dismissing the possibility that she and Herbert are themselves refugees, Christine clings to the divisions of class that seem to protect them from the same fate. Outraged by the unfairness of the system in the Paris Métro that divides passengers into first- and second-class cars. On the

German train, Christine is equally as upset by the discomfort of their first-class compartment. Their connecting train to Pegnitz has no food or water—another echo of the transports taking Jews to concentration camps—and it lacks the amenities they had taken for granted on the French express. Seated in a compartment less luxurious than Herbert and Christine had expected, they discuss the décor of their surroundings:

> "What would you call the color of the seats?" she asked him.
> "We've said it: middle-class."
> "That's an impression, not a color. Would you say mustard?"
> "Dried orange peel."
> "Faded bloodstains."
> "Melted raspberry sherbet."
> "Persimmons? No, they're pretty." (570)

Disdain for middle class things intensifies Christine and Herbert's reactions to their fellow passengers. When an old woman enters their compartment, laden with bags and parcels stuffed with food, the privacy of their privileged space is breached. The appearance of the old woman coincides with the beginning of Christine's telepathy, recalling Virginia Woolf's statement in *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, "I believe that all novels begin with an old lady in a corner opposite" (9). This is the moment that Gallant's novella begins its journey into the spectral. The old woman immediately lays out her provisions, pulled from shopping bags imprinted with the logos, "Wines of Germany" and "Your Beautician Has The Answers" and obsessively begins to clean her face and hands with eau de cologne, Gallant's satiric commentary on the cliché of the German obsession with cleanliness. Like Woolf's Mrs. Brown, who also exhibits "extreme tidiness—everything buttoned, fastened, tied together, mended and brushed up," Gallant's old woman becomes the radiating center of interest in the train compartment (6). With her "sparse orange-blonde hair done up in a matted beehive" and her "bundle of postcards," she appears to be an eccentric, possibly an unhoused or uprooted woman who

inflicts her quirks of stuffing caramels into her mouth and eating relentlessly on the polite yet uncomfortable Herbert and Christine (*CS* 570).

In fact, the old woman is a returning German citizen who has lived her entire life in a tiny diasporic German enclave in Elmhurst, Queens and has come back to Germany to tend to her husband's grave. She is neither home nor away, living only in her memories of being a housewife in America, which begin to filter into Christine's consciousness with the intensity of a personal narrative shaped by deep grudges. Here, the text shifts into italics as the woman, who names herself only indirectly as the widow of Josef Schneider, unspools the narrative of her life history, abruptly displacing Christine as the center of the story: "It was from the woman that the silvery crystals took their substance: she was the source. *It started this way*" (574). Frau Schneider transmits her account to Christine as information that flows "swiftly, faster than smoke, more beautiful and less durable than snowflakes" (574). This is information that is not particularly useful to Christine and, as Di Brandt observes, "arrives without knowledge or wisdom or release attached" (31). Knowledge, Gallant suggests, might not lead to understanding. Christine merely listens, offering Frau Schneider what Derrida calls "absolute hospitality" as a listener, which is the act of "giving place" to the "absolute, unknown, anonymous other…that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity…or even their names" (*Of Hospitality* 25). Christine's telepathic "reception" of the old woman's inner monologue as she recounts years of domestic drudgery is a "giving place" in her mind to Frau Schneider's endless, meandering, resentment-filled story, an entry into Christine's consciousness that arrives without explanation or meaning. She knows neither the old woman's own name

nor the context for her life. Her voice speaks, and Christine receives the information without judgment.

There is empathy, however, in Christine's listening, and in her accurate perceptions of the people around her on the train, a hospitable openness that does not question the conditions of people's lives or their opinions. Frau Schneider is from an earlier generation of prewar German womanhood, similarly as privileged as Christine in being able to travel, but completely different in her lack of personal freedom. Frau Schneider has fled the instability of Germany at the brink of upheaval, but her story is a case history of the repressiveness of traditional marriage and the stifling insularity of a small family: "*Two first cousins from Muggendorf married two first cousins from Doos. Emigrated to the U.S.A, all four together. Two cousins, boy and girl, married to two cousins, girl and boy*" (*CS* 574). While the husbands work in a factory that makes kitchen units—the manufacturing of domesticity, converted during the war to making submarine kitchens, just as the domestic terrain the cousins inhabit will later become weaponized—Frau Schneider cooks for all four of them, in the "factory" of her kitchen. She remembers, "*Had every evening meal together for forty-seven years…I cooked around seventeen thousand suppers, all told*" (575). Her resentment is encapsulated in these numbers, suggesting also that she has been keeping track.

The two couples settle in Elmhurst, never venturing out of their neighborhood, and they build a sense of stability in the midst of a rapidly changing political situation that, for Frau Schneider, is entirely dependent on never assimilating into the greater community: they are self-contained, functioning as an enclave of traditional German values. In contrast with Christine, for whom domestic chores are a source of entrapment,

Frau Schneider embraces the daily work of providing not just food, but familiar, typically German food for which she must travel to the outer reaches of Brooklyn every Saturday to find a butcher who makes "real bratwurst" (575). While Christine strains against the expectations of her family and fiancé with her secret Parisian liaison, the childless Frau Schneider is content to stay at home, fulfilling the expectations of her husband and in-laws: "*Never a disagreement. Never an angry word. Nothing but good food and family loyalty*" (575). Being away from Germany for forty-seven years has impelled Frau Schneider to establish a stable yet idealized version of her country in America, built on the daily production of German culture in the kitchen, while Christine, away from Germany for a week-long trip, offers only the book of Bonhoeffer essays she attempts to read and its resistance to Nazi totalitarianism.

For Frau Schneider, the pre-World War II flourishing of cosmopolitanism that has brought bratwurst to Brooklyn has also brought with it the allure of America, with a more homogenized, bountiful, and immediately accessible way of life. Food is the means of preserving her connection to an idealized homeland in which prosperity is gastronomic. The immense array of dishes she cooks—"*fresh chicken soup, pea soup with bacon, my own goulash soup, hot beer soup, soup with dumplings, soup with rice, soup with noodles, prepared my own cabbage in brine, made fresh celery salad, potato salad our way*…"—underscores the importance she places on the continuity of "our way," the habitual and ritualized necessity for food to serve as a stand-in for the customs and culture of Germany (575). By recreating the comfort of the familiar through the dinner table groaning under the weight of traditional dishes, Frau Schneider is engaging in a stereotypically maternal role as nurturer, made even more outsize through the bounty of

American produce available for her to transform into German cuisine. Christine, by contrast, is indifferent to Little Bert's appetite, and leaves to Herbert the parental task of providing food that the child will tolerate.

Most important, however, is how Frau Schneider uses the food she cooks as a weapon against exactly that same American bounty, which begins to erode the cultural hegemony of her bratwurst-filled refrigerator. When her family goes on quintessentially American diets, demanding *"broiled steaks, string beans, Boston lettuce, fat-free yogurts,"* food "*their way*," Frau Schneider starts to lose her grasp on culinary authoritarianism, becoming ever more resentful of her family's changing tastes for the food of assimilation (582). In building a German food culture in diaspora, Frau Schneider attempts to limit the effects of cosmopolitanism that has her family clamoring for the novelty of American food in favor of a stability based entirely on the ephemeral daily meal. Just as her sister-in-law learns only two words in English during her forty-seven years in America—"*Jello again*"—Frau Schneider has constructed her own domestic "factory" for cultural dominance, producing a volume of traditional food that in its excess threatens to imprison her in a fantasized version of home (593). Sealing her off from the cosmopolitan experience of living in a new country, food enforces a culture of conformity.

Here, Gallant suggests that the family meal has become a tool of domestic oppression. Frau Schneider attempts to exert authoritarian control over her relatives through the culinary dictates of her dinner table. Similar to the psychological control Bonnie in *Green Water, Green Sky*, exerts on her daughter, Flor, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, Frau Schneider manipulates her claims of domestic drudgery in

order to maintain cultural control within her own family. By imposing her inflexible repertoire of German cuisine as the only rational choice for her relatives, Frau Schneider has transformed the pleasures of the table into an arena for the oppression of those for whom survival depends on daily sustenance. This perversion of care reveals the authoritarianism lurking in the kitchen, a gendered enclave that Gallant suggests is the only place women can exert power.

What continues to tie Frau Schneider to Germany, after close to five crucial decades of living in America during which she and her family were sheltered from the realities of war, is the death of her husband and her need—mandated by will and tradition—to bury him in their homeland. For Derrida in *Of Hospitality*, death, not birth, is the "determining" factor for the location of home: "the last resting place of family here situates the *ethos*, the key habitation for defining home, the city or country where relatives, father, mother, grandparents are at rest in a rest that is the place of immobility from which to measure all the journeys and all the distancings" (87). Frau Schneider, with her bags of food, her relentless hunger, and her memories of the militantly unassimilated émigré's life, is the returning citizen, tasked with the upkeep of her husband's grave, for whom the idea of home has been cleansed of the atrocities of the past. Now, home holds the promise of her future inheritance, the "ethos" of her worldview. She seeks recompense for the seventeen thousand suppers she has cooked, not a moral reckoning with Germany's past.

This historical amnesia that allows a return to a distorted perception of home is part of the "interference" Christine begins to pick up in Frau Schneider's story, information that appears jumbled and unformed, no longer "fine silver crystals," but

instead, like "dirty cinders" that also characterize Frau Schneider's increasingly racist and anti-Semitic rantings (*CS* 619). Because her sense of home is inextricably bound up with an outdated and archaic nationalism, the disconnect between past and present erupts in Frau Schneider's distorted and possibly paranoid beliefs, as when she explains why she never became an American citizen: "*The President of the USA at that time was a Dutch Jew, his father a diamond cutter from Rotterdam….Within ten years they were running the whole country. Had every important public figure tied up—Walter Winchell, everybody. Their real name was Rozenfeldt"* (586). In the preface to the Canadian edition of *The Collected Stories*, Gallant cautions against just such thinking when she writes, "What I am calling, most clumsily, the national sense of self is quite separate from nationalism, which I distrust and reject absolutely, and even patriotism, so often used as a stick to beat people with" (xv). This is the stick Frau Schneider has used to beat her family with, and the weapon that has distorted the thinking of a generation of people for whom nationalism exists as a deterrent against cosmopolitanism. Pushing back against the open borders of a world community, Frau Schneider's rabidly nationalistic anti-Semitism immures her in her own closed community of historical distortion.

Other vignettes appear in Christine's consciousness as she looks through the window at the passing countryside during the train's erratic journey, episodes that are graphic and disturbing. These episodes also arrive with "interference," like static, that disrupts her concentration yet also draws her in with heightened fascination: a family picnicking near a castle on an afternoon that ends with extreme violence, motorists held up by the train's crossing erupting in fist fights, and a letter from one American soldier to another about smuggling drugs across the border as a pregnant German woman,

abandoned by one of the soldiers, boards the train. These episodes suggest what Di Brandt calls a "spiritual paralysis" in German society that is matched by Christine's "increasing disillusionment with the information she receives…and perhaps also, sadly, her own absorption in it" (34). This growing "interference" is linked to a morality that is lacking in society. Moreover, these messages of cruelty and violence make it difficult for Christine to continue connecting with the Germans around her. Since connection is to find a sense of kinship, and thus a feeling of shared experience, Christine begins to lose her own sense of affiliation with her country. Just as moral paralysis in James Joyce's *Dubliners* isolates Irish citizens in their inability to throw off the colonialist imposition of British identity, spiritual paralysis in the post-Holocaust German identity has loosened the bonds of belonging.

The idea of home as a conceptual point that never arrives leads to an unsettled feeling of instability among the travelers. At Pegnitz, little Bert questions his father about what will happen next:

> "Now, little Bert," said Herbert, trying to clean the child's sticky face with a handkerchief, "we shall be leaving this train in about two minutes from now. Another nice train will then take us to a place called Pegnitz. Pegnitz is a railway junction. This means that from Pegnitz there are any number of trains to take us home."
> Little Bert could not have been listening carefully, for he said, "Are we home now?"
> "No, but it is almost like being home, because we know where we're going."
> "That's not the same as being home," said little Bert. (*CS* 596)

What redirects Christine's attention and begins to cut through the interference is the act of providing care within the indeterminate space of being away from home. This is not the petty and resentful care that Frau Schneider inflicts on her family with her seventeen thousand suppers, similar to Bonnie's resentment in *Green Water, Green Sky*, that links

the oppressive family with totalitarianism, nor the distracted, ineffectual, and, at times, overindulgent care Herbert directs toward little Bert. Rather, Christine's care is a response to the dilemma of hopelessness and a marker of her emotional growth. Awakening to maternal feelings that contrast with the images of problematic mothering throughout the novella, Christine does not need to submit to the invisibility of motherhood in order to care for those around her. In fact, being in a state of flux—unaffiliated to either Herbert or the theology student, and partially independent from the corrosive effects of her family—she can create an unconventional yet fully embodied maternal consciousness that engages with the truth of emotional experience, and, most importantly, the caretaking bond that little Bert so desperately needs.

Crucial to Christine's maternal awakening is her realization that reciprocity must be at the heart of a mutual relationship. As much as she does not want to lose Herbert, she is afraid of making a choice, thereby submitting to a single, fixed identity as his wife and the gendered possessiveness that traditional marriage involves. Christine is also unsure of her role with little Bert, supposing "that it was up to her to behave like a mother," while still leaving parental decisions to Herbert and resisting little Bert's pestering, his sticky hands, and his whining (571). She, as Claire Wilkshire points out, refuses "the easy equation of woman with mother" (900). When Herbert asks if she loves the theology student too, she replies, "'I think that I could live with him…Perhaps there is more to living than what I have with you'" (*CS* 590). Caught in Herbert's reductive and sexist expectations of her, Christine acknowledges that her maternal ambivalence is bound up with her resentment of Herbert's privileged arrogance.

It is only an encounter with a former East German at an unscheduled train stop close to the barbed wire border dividing east from west that initiates the two-way communication that until this moment had been blocked in Christine's telepathic perceptions. This tenuous connection with Sigi, a refugee from Nazi persecution, allows her not just to stand in witness to Sigi's suffering, but also to provide the continuity of solace and human care through the reciprocal knowledge of the other. Reciprocity thus becomes the basis for Christine's reimagining the bond of care that will connect her to little Bert through the creative engagement with language. This will become the one true "home" Gallant offers at the end of the novella.

For Sigi, home is the memory of the escape he and his parents narrowly made as the Nazis took control of their village. Christine "receives" his story as she and little Bert walk along a garbage-strewn path during the layover, a story that is distinctly different from Frau Schneider's in that it arrives with a sense of understanding and without malice: "He seemed to measure everything he gazed on—seemed to estimate, memorize, and add to a sum of previous knowledge" (598). Knowledge, for Sigi, is not just bits of random information, but rather an attempt to make sense of the landscape around him by means of a mathematical equation, as if the desolation around him could only be comprehended objectively as numbers. Sigi and his family, along with thirty-seven others from his village became political refugees, forced to flee from home, and the trauma haunts him with an intensity that renders his memory of that night as vivid as if it had occurred the night before. Sigi returns over and over to this spot near the frontier, reliving the night from his childhood when his parents rushed him out of their house as the persecutors approached. He obsessively remembers where he was badly injured while being pulled

under a barbed wire fence. Forced migration has exacted not just lifelong emotional turmoil on Sigi, but has also claimed a part of his body. His scars are enduring reminders of everything he has lost of the past and the emptiness of his life in the present. It is only his face-to-face encounter with Christine and little Bert, a "meeting point," where he can return her gaze, that transforms the meaning of the knowledge each receives from the other: "She saw that he knew she knew everything; the expression on his face was one of infinite sorrow" (600). For Sigi and Christine, knowledge of the other and the burdens they bear is a "junction" where empathy and human connection can meet to provide a response to the relentlessness of suffering.

Christine offers Sigi recognition that bears witness to his memory. Her attentiveness is not the kind of empathy that immediately identifies with his suffering, thereby minimizing the uniqueness of his experience, nor is it misplaced sympathy based on his disability. Her response might seem brusque when she asks him, "speaking" without words, "What are you doing here? she tried to ask as they nearly met. Why spend a vacation in a dead landscape? Why aren't you with all those others in Majorca and Bulgaria?" but her questions deal with the reality of the present: the policeman watching them through binoculars, the sentries with machine guns, their lack of safety in the blighted landscape (600). The question Christine asks Sigi is, for Di Brandt, "the same question witnesses and those who participated more directly in the war must ask: how to go on from here?" (35). The only answer, Christine tells him, is to go on, an echo of the ending of Samuel Beckett's *The Unnameable*: "…it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on" (134). There can be no knowledge of why things happen, only the

determination to move forward. Christine's silent words articulate the responsibility each person has to make decisions for themselves through establishing their own subjectivity, regardless of the pressures exerted by internal or external forces of control. Christine reminds Sigi that he does not have to submit to the pull of his compulsion to return year after year to the same desolate spot: "'Besides, she said, as they silently passed each other, you know this was not the place. It must have been to the north'" (*CS* 601). The geographical location of suffering is not a physical place, but rather a "home" one carries throughout life.

Some critics regard Sigi's "infinite sorrow" as evidence of Gallant's relentless focus on hopelessness in "The Pegnitz Junction." Neil Besner, in *The Light of Imagination*, argues that "Recent history is a nightmare from which the characters cannot awaken: their lives are paralyzed by time rather than lived in time…The result is a series of stories in which ambivalent attitudes toward history erode the forms through which memory might recover whole selves, a whole culture, or a whole past" (70). Besner's concern with wholeness and recovery, however valid as a restorative social practice, does not take into account the impossibility of returning to a time of so-called innocence before the atrocities of the twentieth century. Similarly interested in the geometry of structural wholeness, Janice Kulyk Keefer asks, "If this fiction cuts a circle into the welter of related things, it is not to create the appearance of harmonious shape and manageable ending, but rather to erase portions of the circumference, so that chaos and order leak into one another" (*RMG* 160). Here, Kulyk Keefer suggests that " chaos and order" will always leak into each other under the conditions of postmodernity, but the work of fiction, and especially "The Pegnitz Junction," might not be simply "to cut a

circle into the welter of related things," but rather to respond to the "erased circumference" by locating the human values that make it possible to live with such displacement. Margaret Toye, focusing on the "interference" that distorts the information Christine receives, argues that "In much of the novella, Gallant paints a pretty bleak picture of a society in which language has deteriorated to such an extent that speech has become detached from action, signs have become unhinged from referents, communication has failed, and relationships between people seem doomed" (177). What Toye does not consider is that "The Pegnitz Junction" is concerned not simply with audible communication, but more importantly, with the inner communication of thoughts and feelings, and the subliminal bonds of connectivity—more instinctive than overt—that exist between people, most especially between caregivers and children. This ability to form attachments through care, as Christine learns to do, provides one measure of solace against the hopelessness these critics identify within the instability of "The Pegnitz Junction," where arrival at home is being continuously deferred.

It may be significant that Besner (1985) and Keefer (1986) are writing before the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 when the restoration of a "whole culture" still seemed inconceivable, and the Cold War remained a potent threat to the West. This sense of political instability and unease may have entered into Besner and Keefer's readings of "The Pegnitz Junction," influencing their critical focus on its pervasive sense of social disintegration. Toye, writing in 2011, witnessed the end of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, but her concern with failed communication suggests that her reading might have been influenced by the sudden unreliability of information in the digital age at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and the cultural and epistemic

realignment made necessary by the overwhelming overload of digital chatter. What all three scholars minimize in their attention to the larger themes of postmodern alienation and disorder in "The Pegnitz Junction" is Gallant's no less important concern with the act of caretaking as fundamental to the creation of cultural meaning.

The train's arrival at Pegnitz signals Christine's transformation into a fully engaged maternal figure, concerned not just with the passive receiving of information, now almost completely obscured by "interference," but most crucially, with protectiveness and concern for little Bert, whose vulnerability puts him at risk. Christine, however, does not submit to the normative role of motherhood as a subservient being in which the needs of the child obscure her own. To her, little Bert still "seemed spoiled and…his voice was often annoying to adults" (*CS* 614). Yet she reaches him through his fantasy of Bruno the bath sponge and intuitively aligns them in their common plight, stranded, hungry, and unwashed, in the waiting room at Pegnitz: "'I suppose we seem like a funny-looking pair,' she said to him. 'Both of us filthy, and you with your bath sponge'" (614). Christine is emphatically not little Bert's mother, but she cares for him in a way that neither his own mother nor Herbert can, creating an unconscious bond of attachment through her concern for his physical and emotional safety. She tells him, "'Whatever happens…we must not become separated. We must never leave each other. You must stop calling me 'the lady' when you speak to your father. Try to learn to say 'Christine'" (615). By urging little Bert to call her "Christine," not "mom" or "the lady," she knows she will never replace his birth mother, nor should she even try, but she can still become a significant figure for him, especially at that moment of uncertainty while they wait for a train that might never arrive.

Here, Gallant suggests an alternative to the traditional nuclear family, with its "fascistic underpinnings [that are] deeply problematic and oppressive to both women and children, and also damaging to men who, still wounded by their childhood experience, are set up as domestic masters with unlimited privilege" (Brandt 46). Non-parental bonds can circumvent the sexist, reductive, and socially enforced roles of mother and father. Similarly, Christine Everingham suggests that

> mothering involves more than the instrumental act of meeting the child's needs. It also involves more than the imposition of normatively held beliefs and values. The uncovering of the interpretive action of the mother exposes the mother as a critical agent, reflecting upon and responding to, the agency of the child in a particular socio-cultural setting, and in the process, actively constructing cultural meanings and forms of subjectivity within that milieu. (8)

Rather than being oppressive, motherhood, Everingham argues, creates cultural meaning through maternal agency, which further creates new forms of subjectivity through the act of care. Thus, caring for little Bert is Christine's turn toward "motherhood as authentic choice," not a submission to forced nurturing as an unwilling stepmother, but rather to the human desire for connection (Levine and Estable 70). By responding to little Bert's needs, she interprets the uncertainty of their situation by giving him the agency to choose as well: he chooses to respond to her and to the emotional safety she has created for him, and her response to him repairs the "short circuit" Gallant identifies as the source of the disconnection in the novella.

That Christine is the one person to provide little Bert with the maternal affection he so desperately craves is not to essentialize her position as a caregiver, but instead to elevate the work of mothering. She does not define herself by her relationship with little Bert, but allows herself the latitude that psychologist D. W. Winnicott calls "good enough mothering." While Winnicott is writing primarily about the infant-caregiver relationship

in *Playing and Reality*, he emphasizes that the "good enough mother" does not have to be a mother, but can be any person who "makes active adaptation to the infant's needs, an active adaptation that gradually lessens" through the devotion of the caregiver to the infant and child's healthy developmental growth (10). Christine is secure enough in her own caregiving to imagine little Bert's eventual independence. Worried at first that he would be swept up in the crowd of passengers rushing to board a train going in the wrong direction, "she relaxed her grip on the child, as if he were someone she loved but was not afraid of losing" (*CS* 620). As a feminist, Christine does not need to form her identity solely on caring for little Bert. For Di Brandt, "This is a position which valorizes the maternal and insists on social support for mothers and mothering while at the same time resisting the essentialist model of the separate spheres" (46). Similarly, Sara Ruddick sees "both the natal and maternal relationships of self and other as prefiguring one ideal of connection that is central to nonviolent relationships" (44). It is Christine's unstable position of being in between identities, neither mother nor wife, that allows her to create an alternative space for mothering little Bert at this one moment, a "nonviolent relationship" of self and other that stands in contrast, through its ephemerality, to the meaninglessness, disorder, and violence of the fragmented world around them.

The story of "The Pegnitz Junction" ends with a story. Christine pretends to read aloud from her volume of Bonhoeffer, making up a tale about Bruno the sponge that delights little Bert: "'Bruno had five brothers, all named Georg. But Georg was pronounced five different ways in the family, so there was no confusion. They were called the Goysh, the Yursh, the Shorsh…" (*CS* 621). Christine's playful engagement with little Bert's rich inner life that has animated a bath sponge and made him into a

playmate makes real the child's imagination through the act of storytelling, suggesting "the rebirth of creativity in this broken landscape" (Brandt 39). Mothering, then, could be regarded as the nurturing of the creative impulse in response to the standardization of a global economy that imposes conformity and sameness. In Christine's story about Bruno, all identically named brothers nevertheless have different pronunciations of their name, just as in the ideal cosmopolitan society, world citizens would share equality without giving up the differences that make each person unique. Cultural meaning is made through the valorization of storytelling and the process of handing down history, even if it is invented to amuse and to comfort, through the intimate connection between caregiver and child.

This is also the bond between Gallant and her readers. Mothering does not have to be limited to parent and child. Similarly, Julia Kristeva sees mothering as the process of creativity and not the reduction of caregiving into an economy of exploitation: "If maternity is to be guilt-free, this journey needs to be undertaken without masochism and without annihilating one's affective, intellectual, and professional personality, either. In this way, maternity becomes a true, *creative act*, something we have not yet been able to imagine" (364). Perhaps it is only fiction that can imagine the ideal of caregiving that is neither reductive nor demeaning. To reach the cosmopolitan ideal of perpetual peace that Kant espoused in 1795, it might be necessary to reconfigure the values society assigns to mothering, as Sara Ruddick attempts to do when she asserts, "To become a mother, whatever one's particular relation to individual acts of birth, is to welcome, shelter, protect, and nourish birth's bodies and thus, to undertake a work of peace" (44). Thus, care is also a work of peace. In "The Pegnitz Junction," Gallant suggests that stories do

not always have to carry with them the weight of sorrow, that bearing witness to suffering is to make a human connection, and that storytelling is itself an act of love.

Chapter V:

"My life was my own revolution"

In the Linnet Muir sequence, a series of six interrelated short stories from Mavis Gallant's 1981 collection *Home Truths (HT),* migration goes in the "wrong" direction, national identity is problematic, and lives are unsettled by the competing forces of worldliness and estrangement. Eighteen-year-old Linnet Muir, in search of her past, returns to her Montreal hometown after living independently in New York. She is on her own, without friends or family, a homecoming to a city where she no longer has a home. Fluent in French from her years in Catholic boarding schools in Quebec, where the nuns teach only Parisian French because Canadian French is looked down upon as provincial and inferior, Linnet is also fluent in English and American emotional exuberance from her last years of schooling in the States. She is an outsider in all cultures, navigating within the restrictive class system and social constrictions of 1940's Montreal, the "mossy little ponds labeled 'French and Catholic' or 'English and Protestant'" that relegate French Canadians to the lowest rung of society, while empowering fading English Canadians like her father who cling to the last remnants of British colonial rule (*HT* 349). Linnet herself, however, alone in her place of origin, is "out of [the] pond…in unmapped territory," a space of instability beyond the fixed categories of identity and social convention (349).

Neither child nor adult, orphaned by her father's death and her mother's abandonment, with no sense of familial or national belonging, Linnet arrives

unwelcomed to a city she once imagined as “a superior civilization…glittering and white” (257). Past and present collide in Linnet’s search for the meaning of her father’s death, leading her away from the familiar and into uncertainty. Estranged from her childhood memories of Montreal, the reality she now perceives in the landmarks she once revered is “narrow and dull” (271). Linnet’s reverse migration returns her to an unsettled status between categories, no longer a daughter or protected by her family name, subject to the oppressive morality of a culture unfriendly to unattached young women. She has also returned to a country colonized by her immigrant father, just as she has been “colonized” by a paternal imperialism that regards her father’s history as more important than hers.

The “unmapped territory” in which Linnet finds herself, however, affords her a cosmopolitan perspective beyond the fixity of borders, a perspective approached from an unexpected direction in her migration away from the urban metropolis back to the smaller enclave of her Canadian past. I argue that it is within this “unmapped territory,” an unstable space of possibility and change, that Linnet claims her voice as a writer. This allows her to elegize the past while also transcending it in a process of self-invention, leading her to a point of awareness beyond the limiting boundaries of her environment. Linnet the artist creates her own identity through the act of writing the present.

Linnet has led a nomadic life in her many border crossings between Canada and America. Arriving at Windsor Station in Montreal, she carries “an Edwardian picnic hamper—a preposterous piece of baggage my father had brought from England some twenty years before” (253) which she fills with poems and journals as well as the political pamphlets and books by Lenin and Zinoviev she knows will not be available in

"clerical Quebec" (254). Politically aware yet also emotionally naïve, Linnet convinces herself that she is en route to a "new, unfettered existence" (254). She is both "hampered" by her father's unwieldy possession, the emotional baggage of which ensures that she will have difficulty achieving a "new, unfettered existence," but she is also made more mobile by its portability: she can carry her writing everywhere after her father's death has turned her life into "a helpless migration" (253). These metafictional texts allow Linnet to fill in the space of her absent father not with the "truth" of his life or the meaning of his death, which are ultimately unknowable, but instead with the narrative of her own life. This is a memoiristic "her/story" (Smythe 76) that stands in contrast to "his story," consoling through circularity and repetition and creating what Gallant has called "a deeper culture…contained in memory" (*HT* 2).

Linnet's longed-for Montreal is as much a part of her personal culture as her family memories, and her return initially impels her to search for traces of herself as a child situated within the comforting fantasy of the past. Also referred to as the "Montreal stories" because the city is both the "space of representation" and the "locus of individual consciousness," the Linnet Muir cycle, however, involves more than the inevitable recognition of the illusions of childhood (Sturgess 183). Linnet seeks answers to the questions surrounding her father's mysterious disappearance and death, while also confronting the gravitational pull of his memory. She wants someone to "hurl the truth" at her about him, but the closed-mouthed culture of her father's friends and colleagues, who continue to treat her as a child, makes that truth impossible (*HT* 263). Linnet is mired in the epistemic instability of the survivor, unable to piece together the fragments of memory that might explain why she feels so traumatized by her father's absence. What

little she knows comes from questioning the subtext of her childhood memories: a "flash of a red mitten" on an outing with her father loses its innocence when the older Linnet contextualizes "these Saturdays [that] have turned into one whitish afternoon, a windless snowfall, a steep street" as the experience of being taken along on her father's visit to a mysterious "other" woman (325). Only the Linnet who has returned to an altered landscape of the "real" Montreal understands that she is due no special knowledge about her father's despair. Seeing the city through mature eyes sweeps away the idealization of the past, and thus, the memory of a child on an innocent outing with her father must recede into the distance: "I will never overtake this pair. Their voices are lost in the snow" (325).

To move forward, Linnet must emerge from the confinement of memory that keeps her closed off in an idealized image of herself and her family. To be immured in childhood is not to recognize what Rosi Braidotti, in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, calls an "awareness of the fractured, intrinsically power-based constitution of the subject and the active quest for the possibilities of resistance to hegemonic formations" (35). This act of liberation from "the prison of childhood" is Linnet's awareness that she has been constituted only as Angus Muir's daughter and not as herself (*HT* 259). And so Linnet's "revolution" is against the colonization of the paternal within female consciousness and the "hegemonic formations" of last name and identity that Western patriarchal culture imposes on daughters. Flor, too, in *Green Water, Green Sky*, has formed her identity around her father's last name and yet she cannot throw off the yoke of paternal possession. Just as Angus Muir has emigrated from Scotland to Canada, as if he were colonizing his new country, so has he established

a history that colonizes Linnet with the forcefulness of its tragic implications. Thus, Linnet must free herself from her father's imprint on Canadian soil as well as from the implications of his life and sudden death. What matters is how Linnet enacts Braidotti's call for the liberation from "the hold of phallocentric dogmatism, returning thought to its freedom, its liveliness, its beauty" (8). By evading the fixity of her father's history, the patriarchal hold of his memory, and the immovable endpoint of his life, she writes her own version of the past.

Linnet's self-liberation allows her to resurrect a story that is generative and consoling. By evading the "prison of childhood," Linnet's act is echoed in Mohsin Hamid's thinking in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* that "we are all refugees from our childhoods. And so we turn, among other things, to stories" (ch.12). Writing allows for the construction of a new self, which also becomes a refuge from the traumas of childhood, and thus, a new "home" for the writer. For Neil Besner, in *The Light of the Imagination: Mavis Gallant's Fiction*, this means that "Linnet returns to the 'home' at the heart of all Gallant's homes, a home which is a process: for a writer, the 'natural,' on-going process of imagining a home and then 'discarding it' is 'home'" (137-38). Stories console the trauma of displacement. Nomadic and unsettled, Linnet creates a multiplicity of "homes" in her writing.

It is important, however, to distinguish between Gallant's fiction and Linnet's stories. While both first-person accounts exude intimacy and what Janice Kulyk Keefer calls "a sense of privileged inclusion, of entering the confidence of a narrator whose unhurried remembrance of time and places past" compels in a highly personal way, the story cycle is not autobiography (*RMG* 78). There are unmistakable similarities between

Gallant and Linnet—both have experienced the early loss of their fathers and are estranged from their mothers, both had been sent away to boarding school at age four, and both are writers. In interviews, Gallant has said that while "the girl [Linnet] is obviously close to me, she isn't myself, but a kind of summary of some of the things I once was…Straight autobiography would be boring. It would bore me. It would bore the reader. The stories are a kind of reality necessarily transformed" (Hancock 28). Here, Gallant anticipates the rise of autofiction, which hybridizes autobiography and fiction by distilling the essence of a life in order to transform it into a novel. This is a form that contemporary Canadian author Sheila Heti embraces in *How Should a Person Be? A Novel from Life* (2010), among many other twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers. "Reality necessarily transformed," or the process of putting life through a sieve and discarding it, as Linnet will do in "Varieties of Exile," allows Gallant and her fictional alter ego, Linnet Muir, to travel along parallel paths without ever intersecting.

Kulyk Keefer's reference to Proust—"unhurried remembrance of time and places past"— further emphasizes the distance between Linnet's memoir and Gallant's fiction. Even if both deal with the process of individuation, the same process Samuel Beckett writes of in *Proust* in which "The individual is the seat of a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multicoloured by the phenomena of its hours," Linnet ultimately will burn her stories, while Gallant's work, like Proust's, is what we hold in our hands (15). Distinguishing between text and meta-text, as well as between narrator and author, Joshua Landy reminds us in *Philosophy as Fiction: Self, Deception, and Knowledge in Proust*, that "it is Proust's novel, and it is Marcel's autobiography, but it is not Marcel's novel" (42-43).

Thus, the "constant process of decantation" for Gallant is necessarily a process of the making of art, while for Linnet it is a process of the making of a self (48). While these two processes are closely intertwined, narrator and author in the Linnet Muir sequence, as in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time,* remain separate.

Similarly, Linnet's Canadian citizenship is not merely reflective of Gallant's own, nor are these simply "Canadian stories" despite the subtitle to *Home Truths* declaring them to be "Canadian Stories." Like many who cross geopolitical borders in search of home, Linnet and Gallant share a "national sense of self" (*HT* 2) that nevertheless is fluid and subject to continuous redefinition:

> In those days there was almost no such thing as a 'Canadian.' You were Canadian-born, and a British subject, too, and you had a third label with no consular label, like the racial tag that on Soviet passports will make a German of someone who has never been to Germany. In Canada you were also whatever your father happened to be…I did not feel a scrap British or English, but I was not an American either. (253)

Here, passports create an identity based on a weakening yet still intact colonial system, a patriarchal bureaucracy of possession in which home is determined by a father's place of origin.

Home, however, is not the same as nationality. In her preface to *Home Truths*, found only in the Canadian edition, Gallant warns that "the accident of birth does not give rise to a national consciousness" (xv), and most importantly, that "no division is allowed between the writer's citizenship, with its salutary and emotional ties, and his wider allegiance as an artist" (xii-xiii). The "truth" of both *Home Truths* and the Linnet Muir cycle, as Karen Smythe argues in "The 'Home Truth' about *Home Truths*: Gallant's Ironic Introduction," is that "there is no consensus as to what constitutes, precisely, a 'Canadian' story (much less a collection of stories). 'Home' may be 'Canada,' but the

only ‘Truths’ are ‘Stories,’ Canadian or otherwise” (203). While fiction may continue to be compartmentalized into separate categories labeled with nationality, the artist owes no allegiance to place of origin or even home. Gallant, however, complicates this cosmopolitan sense of home being everywhere by the specificity of the space she inhabits as an expatriate Canadian in France who still insists on her “national sense of self” even as she has adopted another language and way of life. Although the cosmopolitan artist lives everywhere, the idea of home continues to exert its pull.

Read as a whole, the cycle of six stories, “In Youth Is Pleasure,” “Between Zero and One,” “Varieties of Exile,” “Voices Lost in Snow,” “The Doctor,” and “With a Capital T,” subverts the notion of sequence and chronology, with essay-like digressions on Canadian culture and religion, the postcolonial history of remittance men, and the dynamics of parent-child relationships interspersed within the narrative structure of Linnet’s childhood and young adult life. Neither a novella, nor a single long short story, the cycle consists of individual works that can stand alone while also interlocking like a jigsaw puzzle in a form that Barbara Goddard, in “Stretching the Story: the Canadian Short Story Cycle,” calls “modular fiction” (31). Sequence itself is broken in between and within stories, and Linnet’s fluid movement back and forth in time suggests that the narrative is “a drama of the mind, an internalization that works against narrative” (Smythe 75). This internalization, with its broken chronology and discursive form not only mimics the process of consciousness, but also enacts the process of loss and recovery; each story is another beginning and ending that trace the movement of Linnet’s need to find closure. By repeating the story of loss that runs throughout the sequence, Gallant also confirms the significance of the bond between father and daughter.

Repetition, however, can also console. Karen Smythe, in “To Be (And Not To Be) Continued: Closure and Consolation in Gallant’s Linnet Muir Sequence,” argues that the elegy repeats the story of loss in order to master it: “the need to start over, to repeat in language, is not only an elegiac method of achieving continuity, control, and ceremony; it also suggests an inherent failure in the ability of memory and language to provide aesthetic consolation in the form of a single written historical ‘truth’” (83). Linnet, haunted by her father’s disappearance, constructs an elegy for him in the text-within-a-text, an elegy comprised of multiple stories that circumnavigate any specific truth that might explain the reasons for his death. What is also repeated is the fact of his absence. For Gillian Beer in “Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in *To the Lighthouse,*” elegy is both an act of mourning and a release from its hold: “In elegy there is a repetition of mourning and an allaying of mourning. Elegy lets go of the past, formally transferring it into language, laying ghosts by confining them to a text and giving them its freedom” (35).

The purpose of mourning, then, is to seek release from grief. However, Freud makes a distinction between mourning as the response to the loss of a loved one and melancholia, which is when a loss has occurred but one is not able to see clearly what has been lost: “In mourning it is the world that has become poor and empty; in melancholia, it is the ego itself” (246). Now more commonly diagnosed as depression, melancholia is the process by which the meaning of loss cannot be known and thus grief becomes a pathological repetition of that loss.

Melancholia is also the pathological response to what Paul Gilroy, in “Postcolonialism and Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Worldly Understanding of Fascism and Europe's Colonial Crimes,” regards as the condition of post imperialism and the

belief that the past is a narrative of imperial greatness that cannot be let go of: "Britain's melancholia means being captive to spectral figurations of the colonial or imperial past that are both distorted and comforting" (113). Just as Linnet has been colonized by the paternal narrative of her father's "imperial greatness"—his stature as a colonizer and the tragedy of his unfulfilled promise—so must she find release from the "spectral figurations" his history imposes on her. The elegy functions as an act of mourning that releases Linnet from the melancholia that perpetuated her sense of loss even while her father was still alive.

An elegy, however, can function in multiple ways. Karen Smythe argues that Gallant subverts the traditional form of the elegy by reversing its conventions of pastoral longing and paradisiacal childhood: "The paradigmatic models of modernist fiction-elegies provided by Woolf and Joyce…have been adapted by late-modern writers such as Gallant who aim to rewrite modernity—to 'work through' modernism by confronting and challenging various of its tenets" (206). Linnet longs not for pastoral comfort, but rather for the urban complications of Montreal. Her childhood has not been "paradisiacal," nor does she long for a return to it.

While this reversal in the conventions of elegy, along with Smythe's contention that fragmentation is "the primary characteristic of memory itself" leads her to call the Linnet Muir cycle an "anti-elegy," it is the emotional release from mourning, as Beer suggests, that is the most important purpose of the elegy, because it allows the mourner to gather the fragments of memory in order to relinquish them (78). Although fragmentation, as Smythe sees it, is a self-protective function of memory in the face of traumatic loss, fragmentation nevertheless works against the need for survivors to let go.

By transferring memory to fiction, a writer in mourning does not subvert or minimize loss so much as find an external structure for that mourning. Just as Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* elegizes both Woolf's mother and Mrs. Ramsay, the Linnet Muir cycle elegizes Gallant's father and Angus Muir, thereby putting their ghosts to rest within the structure of their fiction. Also like Lily Briscoe, who draws a line in the center of her blurry painting and can finally complete it, Linnet draws a line between grief and its representation, freeing herself from its hold. What brings Linnet consolation is not a "single written historical truth," but rather her freedom, like Gallant and Woolf, to reinvent the past, an act that simultaneously rewrites and releases memory. In the same way that the writing of *To the Lighthouse* exorcized Woolf's grief over losing her mother, the Linnet Muir stories release Gallant from her own grief after her father's death. Elegy thus is an emotional migration toward self-recovery and reinvention.

Notably, the discursive effect of loss and recuperation in Linnet's elegiac cycle is lost in the order presented in Gallant's *Collected Stories*, which begins with "The Doctor" and ends with "Varieties of Exile," omitting entirely "With a Capital T." Since the work of a collected volume is to show the progression of a writer's career, the five Linnet Muir stories in the *Collected Stories* are arranged in chronological order, more closely detailing the development of Linnet as an artist in the process of writing her own story. However, even if "With a Capital T" seems to be only a postscript to "Between Zero and One" and "Voices Lost in Snow," and even if Gallant herself thought the story was "dated" (letter to Joseph Fox, uncategorized documents), its elimination in the *Collected Stories* diminishes the wandering quality and temporal non-linearity of the complete, non-sequential Linnet Muir cycle in *Home Truths,* which enact the discursive workings of

memory itself. Ending with "Varieties of Exile," as in the *Collected Stories*, shows Linnet burning her manuscripts, abjuring her writing, while "With a Capital T," the final story in *Home Truths* affirms Linnet's truth, that the past is entrapment and that the only truth is in writing.

This discrepancy in the sequential movement of the Linnet Muir cycle complicates a close reading of the work. Many of Gallant's more than one hundred sixteen short stories had to be excluded from the *Collected Stories*, which contains only fifty-two. Not simply an aesthetic decision as to which were presumed to be the strongest work representative of Gallant's entire oeuvre, the decision not to include more than half of her stories was also an economic one. In a 1995 letter to Gallant discussing the scope of the *Collected*, her editor at Random House, Joseph Fox writes:

> But one problem presents itself: length. As I recall, you have published somewhere between 115 and 120 stories in *The New Yorker* alone; in addition there must be an additional dozen or so that did not appear in *The New Yorker*. Bill's book [William Maxwell] consists of 44 stories, is 422 pages long, and costs $25; yours probably would be, I estimate, close to 1,000 pages long and would probably retail at a minimum of $35 and perhaps as much as $40 [note: in 2023, this would be about $80]. All of which is unimportant in the long run, but it is a factor that you should be aware of at the outset. (uncategorized letter from Joseph Fox to Mavis Gallant dated January 13, 1995)

The publication of a volume of collected stories is considered a milestone in an author's career because it demonstrates that the work is important enough to be gathered in a significant whole. Here, however, the economic implications of Gallant's writing, which include both the cost to the publisher for its production and to the reading public for buying it are being put before the aesthetic pleasure of having so many of Gallant's stories to savor between the covers of a book. Fox's somewhat disingenuous words, "all of which is unimportant in the long run, but it is a factor that you should be aware of at

the outset" make clear his allegiance to Random House, the publisher, and not with Gallant, for whom having the greatest number of her stories published is indeed of greatest importance in the long run.

What was ultimately settled on represents only a fraction of Gallant's output, which means that the reader and scholar must hunt through multiple volumes of her short stories, some of which continue to be out of print, in order to survey the totality of her work. While the *Collected Stories* presents an essence of Gallant, distilled to a selective whole, given the disruption to an aesthetic consideration of the cycle as it appears in that volume, I will discuss the Linnet Muir sequence in the order presented in *Home Truths.*

"In Youth is Pleasure" begins the Linnet Muir sequence with death: "My father died, then my grandmother; my mother was left, but we did not get on" (*HT* 251). Just as tragic is the estrangement between Linnet and her mother even in their moment of grief. Mrs. Muir is highly critical of her daughter and attempts to change what she considers objectionable in Linnet's character: "From time to time, [my mother] attempted to alter the form, the outward shape at least, of the creature she thought she was modeling, but at last she came to the conclusion there must be something wrong with the clay" (252). Linnet is similarly alienated from her mother, admitting not to "rejection or anything so violent as dislike but a simple indifference" (252). The last remaining parental bond has been ruptured; Linnet's family dissolves, leaving her completely on her own, without "Papa-Mama footing the bills: I mean that I was solely responsible for my economic survival and that no living person felt any duty toward me" (252). Linnet and her mother leave Montreal for New York, but they live separately, Mrs. Muir with a new husband, and Linnet with a series of family friends. Here, the disruptive force of loss complicated

by the disappearance of maternal care fractures their relationship, but it is the force of the past that will draw Linnet back to Montreal four years later in the middle of the Second World War. Linnet will not be truly liberated until she can extricate herself from her father's history. Linnet's "war" will be with memory and meaning.

Life in New York for Linnet represents a cosmopolitan freedom that is based on how easily she blends into the culture. Already politically aware as a teenager, Linnet refuses to salute the American flag: "My denial of that curiously Fascist-looking celebration, with the right arm stuck straight out…had never been thought outright offensive, only stubborn" (253). Americans, she realizes, are not shocked by this seeming breech of patriotic protocol, but instead, expect "gratitude from foreigners; they quite innocently could not imagine any country fit to live in except their own" (254). For Linnet, New York is a place where people are not constrained by emotional reticence; it is in a New York movie house where for the first time she hears people laughing: "I can still remember the wonder and excitement and amazement I felt. I was just under fourteen and I had never heard people expressing their feelings in a public place in my life" (261). The urban space of a cosmopolitan city allows for the free expression of emotion.

However, this is an ease and abandon she must leave behind, "for there could be no journeying backward": New York was a "gate shut on a part of my life" (255). In order to shed the past, she must return to Canada, to her origins, just as she leaves her tartan skirts with the expatriate "Canadian matrons" at a war relief agency in New York, whose "broaches pinned to cashmere sweaters carried some daft message about the Empire" (255). This confusion of external markers of nationality—the Scottish tartans that appropriate clan kinship, the Canadian matrons' emulation of British style, and even

Linnet's own cultural ambiguity—only complicate the work of shedding inherited identity. Linnet chooses to return to Canada and the uncertainty of her past so that it too can be left behind.

Although Linnet has traveled between America and Canada many times, the crossing she now makes has much greater significance:

> As my own train crossed the border to Canada, I expected to sense at once an air of calm and grit and dedication, but the only changes were from prosperous to shabby, from painted to unpainted, from smiling to dour. I was entering a poorer and curiously empty country, where the faces of the people gave nothing away. The crossing was my sea change. I silently recited the vow I had been preparing for weeks: that I would never be helpless again, and that I would not let anyone make a decision on my behalf. (256)

Linnet's "sea change" is a liminal moment in which she sees herself crossing from the "prison" of childhood to the agency of young adulthood. However, the environment she returns to does not welcome her. Leaving the relative prosperity of America for "a poorer and curiously empty country," Linnet makes a reverse migration away from better social circumstances, toward the "dour" unsmiling faces of the Canadian people who do not laugh in public, partly because they live under the deprivations of war. At Windsor Station, she is molested by a man with "a bitter Celtic face," an encounter that demonstrates the dangers of a misogynistic culture in which men are resentful of the freedom to work and travel women have been granted during wartime (256). By calling attention to the man's Celtic heritage, Linnet displays some of the same nativism that she disavows. For Jacob von Baeyer in "The Displaced Cosmopolitan: Canadian Nationality and World Citizenship in the Fiction of Mavis Gallant," Linnet's border crossing "is not characterized by a bettering, nor does it adhere to the common representation of a comforting or welcoming homecoming" (196). Still, Linnet refuses to

be anxious or despondent, nor will she let the experience at Windsor Station affect her belief in the future. The "sea change" of her return begins to sweep away the hold of the past: "I had a sensation of loud, ruthless power, like an enormous waterfall. The past, the part I would rather not have lived, became small and remote, a dark pinpoint" (*HT* 259). Linnet is learning to redefine herself by minimizing the influence of the past.

While her situation seems dire—homeless, with five dollars in her pocket, a target of leering men—and "cannot be characterized by a bettering," as von Baeyer argues, Linnet's psychic situation begins to change significantly. Her ability to move between countries and cultures allows her to detach from the corrosive effects of social repression in her home culture, giving her the perspective of an outsider with the experience of many different cultures. This kind of portable knowledge is what Rosi Braidotti in *Nomadic Subjects* refers to as the ability to construct a sense of home in any situation: "As an intellectual style, nomadism consists not so much in being homeless, as in being capable of recreating your home everywhere" (16). From this cosmopolitan vantage point, Linnet becomes aware of the emotional regulation among Canadians that she sees "littering" the landscape with "the dead of heart and spirit" (*HT* 262).

This defensive mechanism of reticence and composure, however, responds to crisis by traveling around the unknowable; the posture of adulthood is the understanding that knowledge cannot change what has already happened. Thus, to leave "the prison of childhood" Linnet must abandon her pursuit of absolute knowledge, which is her desire to return to a mythic Montreal and to understand the cause of her father's death. Only the older Linnet realizes that her "own revolution," in which she was "the liberated crowd setting the palace on fire" threatens to drown out her conscience telling her, "You might

compromise" (260). Rather than a deadening of spirit, the emotional regulation of adulthood is a revolution that takes one around the crisis, a "revolving" that allows for a more nuanced perspective on the unknowability of death. To make the "sea change" into adulthood and to cross the border into the primacy of her own life, Linnet must allay the ghost of her father's haunting presence by inhabiting the instability of never knowing.

To be an adult, however, is to navigate between the ethics of compassion and the path of least resistance. Angus Muir had been abandoned by his acquaintances in the moment of his greatest crisis. One of them admits to Linnet, "Of course, Angus was a very sick man….He obviously wasn't long for this world either. He had too many troubles for any one man. I crossed the street because I didn't have the heart to shake hands with him" (264). For Linnet, this is a failure of a culture in which "'like' and 'don't like' were heavy emotional statements…this world where everything was hushed, muffled, disguised" (263). This is also a function of social class: Linnet, the child of a painter, does not belong to the same class as her father's acquaintances. She understands that "being 'Miss Muir' had not made equals of us but lent distance. I thought they had read my true passport, the invisible one we all carry, but I had neither the wealth nor the influence a provincial society requires to make a passport valid" (267). For Gallant, the "invisible passport" is shared humanity and the ethics of consideration that should bind people together in social solidarity, but is more often subject to the external forces of class, wealth, and influence. Linnet is left in a position outside the accepted circle of belonging, where even her name distances her from a sense of being at home.

Alienation is a key conceptual paradigm that haunts Gallant's characters with the memories of their lost homes and nationalities. These are cosmopolitan figures, like

Thomas in “The Latehomecomer” and Speck in “Speck’s Idea,” for whom the freedom of travel results only in estrangement. Linnet too returns to a changed Canada in which she is no longer welcome. Social class is still a clearly perceptible border that Linnet, as well as Christine in “The Pegnitz Junction” and Wishart in *Green Water, Green Sky*, cannot cross, and thus, the sense of being alienated from home and belonging pervades their consciousness. Alienation is also a result of economic conditions and the uneven rise of capitalism across the world, which benefitted the few at the expense of the many. Gallant’s characters are the dispossessed who exemplify Marx’s theory of alienation, formulated in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in which workers have been disconnected from the means of their production. Linnet’s office work is meaningless, and it produces nothing tangible or useful. Even her writing provides little sense of accomplishment except as manuscripts to be burned, an act of destruction that may liberate her from the influence of her father but also serves to alienate her from the past. It is only through the unremunerated act of telling her own story that Linnet will gain a sense of mastery over her life, thereby pushing back against the corrosive effects of her alienated sense of self.

Modernization has similarly exacerbated alienation by dividing rural areas from the urban, with the cosmopolitan allure of the city decimating the social structure of families and small villages. In “Voices Lost in Snow,” Linnet’s mother, isolated in the country, remembers “the heart-stopping cry of the steam train at night, sweeping across a frozen river, clattering on the ties of a wooden bridge” (331). Even the means of escape—by train—represents a division between the social isolation of the countryside, frozen in winter, and the life of the city, where travel and progress make possible the kind

of connectivity that may more readily dispel feelings of estrangement. Social status and the inequities of capitalism continue to exert pressure against Gallant's cosmopolitan figures immured in their solitude, alienated from the nations they once called home.

Linnet's own friendship with Olivia, however, the French-Canadian woman who cared for her as a child, cuts across borders of class and culture, just as the steam train cuts through the frozen landscape. The only person Linnet still knows in Montreal, Olivia gives Linnet access to a different past, one that belongs exclusively to her and is grounded in the language they speak together. Olivia's knowledge comes "out of the clean, swept, orderly poverty that used to be tucked away in the corner of cities. It didn't spill out then, or give anyone a bad conscience" (267). Here, Gallant suggests that impoverishment allows for a greater sense of ethical consideration. In Olivia's presence, speaking French, Linnet reconnects to the care only Olivia was able to give her, care that will allow her to lay aside the traumas of her past: "The honey tin was a ten-pounder decorated with bees the size of hornets. Lifting it for her, I remarked, '*C'est collant*,' a word out of a frozen language that started to thaw when Olivia said, '*Tu vis?*'" (268). French is the catalyst for Linnet's transformation; it is a language of intimacy with the form of the familiar—the "tu" of the tutoyer—that affirms she is still cared for. It is a language her parents barely understood, mangled by her father when he calls a snack, "goutay," or when he warns the young Linnet not to be so loud by saying, "passy fort." These words close off the possibility of connection between Linnet and her father; language becomes the one border that cannot be crossed.

Language, however, gives Linnet permission to construct her own history. She does not need to rely on the "wooly stories" her father's acquaintances have offered her

to explain his death (263). Instead, she imagines one story with many endings: her father dies from a botched operation for tuberculosis of the spine; he shoots himself in a public park; he dies at sea returning to England; or the version that combines everything into the homesickness that she decides finally killed him. The ability to move between languages also allows Linnet to detach herself from being known only as the daughter of an unfortunate man, confined to a single system of communication. She does not need to inherit his monolingualism that enforces English as the only mother tongue, or the suffocating constrictions of his identity as an exile. As Rosi Braidotti argues in *Nomadic Subjects*, "a person who is in transit between languages, neither here nor there, is capable of some healthy skepticism about steady identities and mother tongues" (12). Linnet herself is in transit.

By presenting herself with multiple possibilities for an ending, Linnet has narrativized what she does not know, thereby diminishing the power of a single "truth." This is the work of a writer and of fiction that circumvents closure by demonstrating the importance of multiple systems of communication through separate languages. Gallant suggests that translations are inadequate and what matters is the ability to communicate. She has said, "English is a fabulous language for writing [but] I much prefer French for conversation" (Hancock 86). Languages confer the permission to express consciousness in separate modes of awareness, and thus, the end of "In Youth Is Pleasure" is the beginning of Linnet's authority to become an author.

In "Between Zero and One," Gallant explores the gendered social boundaries men and women are trapped within, including what Janice Kulyk Keefer calls the "prison of femininity" that threatens to enclose Linnet in a working world suffused with misogyny

and the deadening stability of routine (*RMG* 101). Linnet's is the female experience of lived reality that Keefer further describes as "an imaginative correlative and pessimistic correction to [Betty] Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, with its insidious effects of objectification and the sexualization of motherhood that suggest a woman's only fulfillment is in sexual intercourse and pregnancy" (139). As the one woman in an office of men who "were rotting quietly until pension time [and] kept to a slow English-rooted civil servant pace" (*HT* 280), Linnet feels as if she is "a pigeon among the cats," subjected to unwanted marital advice along with pornographic photographs (278). These men are similarly subjected to an existential despair over the immobility of their lives, tethered to the repetitive meaningless of their work and the impossibility of ever moving up in the hierarchy of the office.

Linnet is once again an outsider; her one asset is being able to speak French, "but French was of no professional use to anyone in Canada then—not even to French Canadians; one might as well have been fluent in Pushtu" (279). Language is divisive; the men speak in sexual innuendo and impractical suggestions, while Linnet, whose "unmistakably Montreal accent of a kind now almost extinct," communicates with no one (279). The routine of the office is still so new for her that she studies it as if she were an anthropologist, noting and recording each day as an experiment in which she is also a participant. What her research reveals is the fact that "there are two races, those who tread on people's lives, and the others" (280). To survive within these polarities is to accede to a permanent lack of mobility and to accept stability in cognitive stasis; Linnet is reminded daily that she is not being paid to think. Instead, she is being handed "a folded thought like a shapeless school uniform and told, 'There, wear that'" (296).

Men and women, Linnet observes, are separated by traditional roles of behavior as well as by their access to or denial of power. Lining the walls of the office building are "Victorian, Edwardian, and early Georgian oil portraits of Canadian captains of industry…pink cheeked marauders [that] English-speaking children were led to admire" (281). The economic and political power of masculinity is enclosed within the frames of the portraits, memorializing both the long succession of wealth among nineteenth and twentieth century Canadian capitalists, but also Canada's subordinate position within the colonial empire that throughout history had enforced obedience to Great Britain: "the feast was over…and the surviving pirates were retired, replete and titled, usually to England" (281). That Linnet calls these men "pirates" reveals her fascination with Socialism that, for her, is a source of political critique and intellectual power in a work situation, which deprives her of equality.

Other women relegated to the secretarial pool are similarly disempowered, "parked like third-class immigrants at the far end of the room," and the recently hired Mrs. Ireland who undermines them all by refusing to share the "life raft" of female solidarity (293). Only Linnet's powers of intellectual thought separate her from the other workers in the office and allow her to resist the direction women's lives traditionally flow, toward marriage and "the blackest kind of terror" of being trapped at "zero" (298). Standing at the office window Linnet looks outward, away from the possibility of entrapment. Unlike the men in the office, or the images of men caught within the framed portraits, or especially Mrs. Ireland, subjugated to an abusive marriage in the same way that Ireland was subjugated, as a former colony, to Great Britain, Linnet can imagine the means of escape: a streetcar "grinding up the steep street" shows the distance she must

travel uphill, away from the downward slide of immobility (297). While the uncertainty of inhabiting the unstable space after "one" is terrifying, more terrifying is being trapped between zero and one, within "squares and walls and limits and numbers," in which so many others find themselves mired (298).

"Varieties of Exile" follows Linnet's obsession with the political refugees who have flooded into Montreal during wartime. Linnet romanticizes these refugees, imagining that they come "straight out of the twilight Socialist-literary landscape of my reading and my desires" (299). However, in reality, the refugees suffer from "nationalist pigheadedness, that chronic, wasting, and incurable disease," radically committed only to their home countries to the exclusion of all others (299-300). They do not get along with each other, hoping that the "tidal wave" of victory will wash away their neighbors (300). Nevertheless, the concept of exile remains a source of fascination for Linnet; she spends lunch hours writing stories about displaced people, imagining what Montreal must look like to an arriving refugee. She too has been an arriving refugee, and her own view of her hometown has alienated her from the past.

Linnet has exiled herself from Canadian culture and the expectations for women in a system in which marriage and motherhood are the primary occupations. Writing becomes a method of removing herself from these assumptions and of untangling the "knots" of situations she cannot decipher. For Rosi Braidotti in *Nomadic Subjects*, exile literature has distinctive characteristics: "The mode and tense of exile style are based on an acute sense of foreignness, coupled with the often hostile perception of the host country. Exile literature, for instance, is marked by a sense of loss or separation from the home country, which, often for political reasons, is a lost horizon" (24). Linnet's "exile

literature," which is her own writing, separates her from the reality of the office as she grapples with what she perceives as the dangers of transformation into a married woman; the "lost horizon" she mourns is the access to individuation and equality: "If every woman was a situation, she was somehow always the same situation, and what was expected from the woman—the situation—was so limited it was insulting" (*HT* 300).

Linnet, however, has managed her situation in such a way that allows her to distance herself from these limited cultural expectations. Engaged for the third time in a year to be married, Linnet transforms indecision into freedom: "Being promised to one person after another was turning into a perpetual state of hesitation and refusal" (301). Within this state of indecision Linnet can operate as a single woman, unencumbered by the assumption that she will become like the wives she calls "Red Queens" from *Through the Looking Glass* (301). A "refugee" from marital life, Linnet is free to determine the parameters of her existence.

Another refugee is Frank Cairns, a man she meets on the commuter train into Montreal. Cairns, like Linnet's father, is a "remittance man," sent to Canada by his British family for an unspecified transgression, supported by a monthly "remittance" that is contingent on never returning home to England. For these men, exile is not a choice to flee from parental disapproval, as Linnet had in running away to New York, but rather a death sentence on foreign soil, a submission to the will of an authoritarian father. Another "variety of exile," then, is the permanence of destruction: of home and belonging, and of the possibility of change.

The five- page essay on remittance men that interrupts "Varieties of Exile" positions Linnet as the narrator of both a psychological history and a family documentary

as she traces the conditions of paternal domination that have shaped her life, as well as that of her father's and of Frank Cairn's. A "chemical structure of family pride, class insanity, and imperial holdings" (305), the institution of the remittance man is also a "romance" that constructs the fiction of a wronged son at the mercy of a dictatorial father (305). In this story, the family is an inviolable monarchical power and the exiled son a colonial offender who has brought shame to the family through his immoral behavior. Narrative structure enforces the artificiality of the story, and remittance men, "like all superfluous and marginal persons….were characters in a plot" (305). This plot, however, romanticizes the conflict by establishing an absolute binary in which power resides totally in the father's command. This is the same narrative imposed by Protestant and Catholic theology: the British father is the "Father" with the divine authority to create the world: "the father's Father, never met, never heard….made Heaven and Earth and Eve and Adam. The father in Canada seemed no more than an apostle transmitting a paternal message from the Father in England—the Father of us all" (308). The British son—both Angus Muir and Frank Cairns—is displaced by paternal fiat, forbidden to return home, forsaken as was Christ, and left to die on foreign soil.

Just as the British Empire was once considered to be impervious to dismantlement, but was more vulnerable than anyone could have predicted, so is the myth of the tyrannical father subject to revision or, for Linnet, a "revolution" against the power of her own father's haunting. Gallant's essay on the institution of the remittance man narrated through Linnet topples the monument to paternal and colonial power by divesting it of its fictional story; the truth of the remittance man is "dramatic but boring to tell: a classic struggle for dominance with two protagonists—strong father, pliant son"

(306). While this is a male conflict, and, in this plot there are no “remittance women,” Linnet recasts the gendered position of the “classic struggle” and interpolates within it another “romance”: her infatuation with Frank Cairns.

Linnet is drawn to the parallels between Angus Muir and Cairns, both “reluctant pioneers” shipped out to Canada from England without any sense of adventure or curiosity about their new homeland (305). Cairns is, for Linnet, “a curio cabinet. I took everything out of the cabinet, piece by piece, examined the objects, set them down. Such situations, riddled by ambiguity, I would blunder about with for a long time until I learned to be careful” (315). Their relationship centers on books they share during their commute into Montreal on the train, carefully avoiding any physical entanglement, since both are married, Cairns unhappily and Linnet only provisionally. Cairns is “someone new, unique of his kind, and almost as good as a refugee, for he was a Socialist” (311). Cairns is also Linnet’s unconscious projection of her father, “unique” only because he manifests the qualities of care and concern as well as the political awareness she wishes her father had possessed. They conduct their ambiguous relationship in motion on the train, under the gaze of disapproving observers. Writing allows Linnet to “blunder about” the ambiguity of their relationship in a story based on an amalgam of Cairns and her father, “The Socialist RM,” and she fills her picnic hamper with many versions of the same story together with other pieces “that sounded as if they were translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett” (322). Still “hampered” by the weight of the past, Linnet is poised to transform experience into fiction.

Language, however, also reveals the instability of Linnet’s precarious situation, defined by her desire for connection as it unfolds in real life. This instability is also

artistically generative; Karen Smythe argues that Linnet "replaces the uncertainty by turning the unknowable into fiction which here is a state of artistic uncertainty and openness" (82). What is unknowable, however, may also be unsayable: Linnet's desire will not change the fact that Frank Cairns cannot become her father, nor can he become her lover. Thus, these efforts at "artistic openness," as much as Linnet's unconventional relationship with Frank is characterized by what Rosi Braidotti in *Nomadic Subjects* calls "the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state," are doomed to failure (5). When Frank enlists in the Canadian army and is killed in battle, the parallel between Linnet's father and Cairns, the ambiguous other, is completed by their deaths. Only by burning her manuscripts is Linnet released from her relationships with them and to the force of their memory. While these destroyed works had "shape, density, voice," just as Frank and her father once did, fiction is another "variety of exile" that puts "life through a sieve" and discards it (322). Linnet has achieved what the remittance man cannot: she has revolted against the paternal authority that had privileged the fiction of the inviolability of the father. What matters is, as Janice Kulyk Keefer asserts, "that [Linnet's] discarded experience returns to be rewritten, not analytically but in the spiraling, elliptical idiom of memory" (*RMG* 76). By discarding the story of the past, with its hold on her future, Linnet has freed herself to explore different modes of remembering, thereby offering herself the artistic consolation of memory.

Linnet's act of burning her manuscripts is the decisive rupture that divides the entire sequence of six stories into two halves: present and past, adulthood and childhood, story and memory. By moving backward through time and then forward to Linnet as the present narrator and author of her own life, Gallant traces the work of restructuring

memory through the recovery of self. “Voices Lost in Snow” and “The Doctor” return Linnet to the challenges of her childhood, moving from the often bitter recollections of the authority parents have over children, to the importance of voice and language in establishing the authority of the artist. The final story of the sequence as it appears in *Home Truths*, “With a Capital T,” completes the triad of motion and memory, restoring Linnet to the consciousness of the present, in control of the competing forces that no longer have the power to obscure her own story.

“Voices Lost in Snow” begins with the conceptual representation of the distance between parents and children: the “drift of words descending from adult to child—the fall of personal questions, observations, unnecessary instructions [that]….still claim the ancient right-of-way through a young life” describes both the literal difference in height between parent and child, as well as the gulf of understanding that separates them (323-24). This is also the drift of “a windless snowfall” that blankets Linnet’s memory, not only of her father’s voice, but also of their existence as father and daughter, with the same indistinguishable whiteness as the snow that covers their footsteps (325). For the young Linnet, memory is compressed into the sensation of sameness, the many Saturdays that “have turned into one whitish afternoon,” and to her father’s silence; this story explores the “drift” of unsaid words between Linnet and her dying father (325). What is not compressed is her memory of the afternoon her father takes her to visit a mysterious “other” woman, Georgie, her mother’s rival, whose voice Linnet will remember years later in “With a Capital T.”

Here, in Gallant’s late modernist fiction that builds on the work of the earlier modernists Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the image of falling snow invites

comparison with the last passage in Joyce's "The Dead," and what Paul Saint-Amour, in "Christmas Yet to Come: Hospitality, Futurity, the *Carol*, and 'The Dead,'" calls "the blurring of localities by a universalizing snowfall, the merging of 'all' the living and the dead" (108). For Gallant, snow also muffles and deadens, separating the accessibility of memory from the present, while allowing for a moment of "merging" in the remembered experience of snow. Rather than following Joyce's lyricism, however, Gallant turns toward the discomfort of the ironic, when trudging in boots through snowy sidewalks ends with dripping slushy mess onto Georgie's rug (*HT* 329). Similarly ironic in its distortion of Gabriel Conroy's lyrical perspective as he looks out the window at the falling snow in the last section of "The Dead" is Linnet's mother's imagined conception of Russian winters, a perspective gained through her obsession with Russian literature: "The flat white fields beyond her imaginary windows were like the flat white fields she would have observed if only she had looked out" (327). Gallant's deflation of Joyce's "snow falling faintly and faintly falling through the universe" (278), reminds us of the importance of context and perspective: Joyce's lyrical modernism no longer has the power to summon ghosts in a barren landscape that flattens and distorts.

What both "Voices Lost in Snow" and "The Dead" share are images of place and person—Ireland and Canada, Michael Furey and Angus Muir--that, as Saint-Amour argues, "we must place….in some relation to the prospect of their disappearance in the universal snowfall" (108). Joyce's fierce critique of Irish colonial history in "The Dead" lies underneath the "universal snowfall," blanketing an Ireland that has been thoroughly colonized by the repressive British Empire and suggesting that not even the lyrical beauty of the natural world can counteract the effects of colonialism. Canada too has been a

colonial possession of Britain, and the snow covering Québec blankets a colonized version of Canada still unwilling to accede to the separatist nationalism of the Parti Québécois, a movement radically intent on separating not just from Britain, but from the rest of Canada as well. Similarly, Gallant's critique of the relationship between father and daughter, reflected in Linnet's idealized Montreal of the past in conflict with the Montreal of her present, fiercely protests against the colonization of patriarchal culture in which she is also "blanketed." For Linnet, this means understanding the drift downward from life to death, but also banishing the dreams she has of arriving at Windsor Station too late, that "someone important" had left on the train without her (*HT* 325).

Linnet's memorializing restores her father to a presence on the page, but only in order to destroy his hold on her. She accomplishes this through the anti-elegy, and what Jonathan Culler in "Apostrophe" calls "an irreversible temporal disjunction, the move from life to death, with a dialectical alternation between attitudes of mourning and consolation, evocations of absence and presence" (67). Angus Muir is dying in front of his daughter, "already mined, colonized by an enemy prepared to destroy what it fed on"; he will disappear in death's "universal snowfall," as will Linnet's imaginary Montreal (HT 334). Here, Gallant links the colonization of disease with the colonizing authority of the father, which has been granted by a repressive Western culture that expects all men, even artists like Angus Muir, to conform to its codes of behavior, a process just as destructive to the colonizer as it is to the colonized. What remains is only the memory of his voice lost in the flat expanse of the totalizing snow.

In "The Doctor," loss is mitigated by gifts that echo the occupation of the giver—an engraving of a doctor treating a sick child that Linnet's pediatrician, Dr. Chauchard,

takes down from a wall in his office and gives to her after treating her for tuberculosis; and "the grim red books" of children's stories from nineteenth century France he also presents to her (345). These are not reminders, but "true fragments" of time and place that summon Dr. Chauchard from Linnet's memory by embodying the disjunction between his kindness and his inexplicable sternness when she arrives unannounced at his office after running away from her hated convent school (345). The materiality of these objects contrasts with the lost elegance of a culture of intellectual and aesthetic refinement, and the loss Linnet feels when Dr. Chauchard betrays her.

That Dr. Chauchard is French Canadian emphasizes the separate cultures of language and social belonging, and the surprise Linnet experiences when she discovers at Dr. Chauchard's death that he was also a poet. Trained in Paris, where "leeches were still sold in pharmacies and babies died like flies," Dr. Chauchard is nevertheless thought to be "modern and forward looking" because "he used the most advanced methods imported from the United States or, as one would have said then, 'from Boston'" (343). Dr. Chauchard embodies a lost past that belonged to an "upper-bourgeois" French Canadian presence in Montreal, now vanished not because of migration, but because "they have ceased to exist"; his bilingualism, however, is unusual since he is of a time when French and English Canadians did not recognize each other: the upper-bourgeois French Canadians "were families who did not resent what were inaccurately called 'The English' in Montreal; they had never acknowledged them" (340). In "mixed society" Dr. Chauchard speaks only English, since it is the "social rule," even when he asks young Linnet to recite a poem in French, "If I were a fly, Maman, I would steal a kiss from your lips," that Linnet has been trained by the nuns at her convent school to overemphasize the

buzzing sound of the liaison between words (348). What Linnet learns from this "tactless rhyme," centering on the relationship between mother and child, and thus the jealous feelings elicited when a lover interposes himself between them, is the way that language can obscure desire: her mother is "a bit foolish" about Dr. Chauchard, but it is the unspoken relationship her father has with Georgie that complicates their family dynamic (349).

Dr. Chauchard, however, transcends the "mossy little ponds" of linguistic exclusivity by demonstrating that French is capacious enough to express both the objectivity of medicine and the aesthetic subjectivity of poetic voice, thus transcending the borders of spoken language. While the "dull little sermon" he gives Linnet about the pain she has caused her parents by running away is in French, "the language to which he retreated if one became a nuisance, his back to a wall of white marble syntax" (346), Dr. Chauchard's poetry in French is in "his real voice, the voice that transcends this or that language " (362). Dr. Chauchard exemplifies what Rosi Braidotti in *Nomadic Subjects* calls a "nomadic polyglot" because he "practices an aesthetic style based on compassion for the incongruities, the repetitions, the arbitrariness of the languages s/he deals with" (15). The liaison, for example, serves little purpose except as a rule to follow. For Dr. Chauchard, writing undoes the illusion of stability that English imposes on poetic voice; the real voice of a poet comes through a language that Linnet thought was only for scolding.

For Linnet, the realization that real poetry—not just "tactless rhymes"— can be written in French is "an earthquake, the collapse of the cities we build over the past to cover seams and cracks we cannot account for" (*HT* 359). The "illusory stability"

Braidotti writes about is the attempt to deny the existence and validity of different language systems and patterns of meaning; Linnet's "earthquake" sweeps away the last remainders of a rigidly linguistic approach to the aesthetics of poetic practice: beauty in writing transcends the borders of language. This is also Linnet's realization that she too, will become a writer. Her story, written in English, illuminating the work of a French Canadian doctor and poet writing in French, similarly transcends the fixity of language not through translation but rather by mediating between cultures.

"With a Capital T" brings the Linnet Muir sequence to a close, functioning as a coda that reiterates themes from the previous five stories while also recapitulating the ascendance of Linnet's determination to rebuild the past on her own terms. This final story in the collection leaps forward in time, beginning where "Between Zero and One" leaves off, with eighteen-year-old Linnet struggling against the limited personal and professional options imposed by restrictive cultural norms: "I had longed for emancipation and independence, but I was learning that women's autonomy is like a small inheritance paid out a penny at a time" (364). Linnet is a journalist, tasked, like Gallant herself, with writing the captions for photographs that run in the newspaper. Unlike Gallant, who confronted the trauma of the Holocaust in photographs for which she was unable to write the captions her editors demanded, preferring the deference of silence in the face of atrocity, Linnet deals with the comically absurd conditions journalism places on the trivial, with its need for both compression and veracity. Another responsibility is conducting interviews, and Linnet is assigned to write about Georgie, the president of a committee of wealthy women who send care packages to prisoners of war.

Georgie is also the “other” woman her father had taken her to visit in “Voices Lost in Snow.”

These echoes from previous stories within the text of “With a Capital T” enact the same work of memory that Linnet experiences as she searches for recognition and closure. Janice Kulyk Keefer argues that in this final story,” “Time, place, character, event overlap and blur, one into the other—the reader experiences the same dreamlike superposition of past and present as does Linnet herself” (*RMG* 78). This is what makes “With a Capital T” effective as a coda to the Linnet Muir sequence and renders the decision to exclude it in the *Collected Stories* a questionable one, based only on the economics of the publishing industry and not on literary cohesion. It is Gallant’s “dreamlike supposition of past and present” throughout the entire Linnet Muir cycle that enacts the process of the self-searching through layers of memory for a route toward the shifting modes of identity.

Rather than the memory of her father’s indiscretion and Georgie’s complicity in it, what draws Linnet back to the past is the sound of Georgie’s voice: “Her voice, and her particular Montreal accent, were like the unexpected signatures that underwrite the past: If this much is true, you will tell yourself, then so is all the rest I have remembered” (*HT* 372). Linnet, too, has a Montreal accent, a “signature” that places her in a specific time and place, but what differs is that Georgie’s accent makes Linnet homesick for a version of Montreal that no longer exists. In relation to the ancient Georgie, who embodies a privileged life from a past time, now shabby and worn, yet entombed in the rigidity of custom, Linnet embodies an unfixed life of movement and change. Georgie is also the last link to Linnet’s father and a reminder of the choices his sudden death did not

allow him to make. The choice Georgie can make, an act of frustration that attempts to undo her tenuous position as the "other" woman, is to remind Linnet of the friction her presence caused years ago on the afternoon of the visit—her lover's daughter on her sofa, just as the older Linnet is now—and that she never liked girls. Georgie's voice is itself a reminder of a history that no one can change, the "everlasting grudges" she still holds onto, and of her bitterness that she wields like a knife (377).

Linnet's choice is to critique the sentimentalism that Georgie holds onto, a nostalgia that nevertheless has allowed Linnet to return to the memories of her past. Linnet embodies what Lisa Mendelman, in *Modern Sentimentalism,* calls the "double bind" that estranges women "from both earlier and emergent definitions of femininity, even as we might also recognize their fragmented, alienated self-consciousness as typically modern" (3). Linnet resists Georgie's definition of femininity, with her ambiguous nickname that, through its masculine connotations, blurs her gender, while also diminishing her stature in its reductiveness. As her father's mistress, Georgie is neither wife nor mother, and yet she represents both male and female, a modernist "New Woman" whose sentimentality, Mendelman argues, is "incompatible with these ideals of modern selfhood" (1). Georgie is also Linnet's godmother, and thus, through her, Linnet invokes the presence of her parents, from whom she has been alienated, yet still feels she must abandon.

"Truth" with a capital-T is the corrective work of the present taking charge of the past. Writing allows Linnet to redefine her relationship with history. By publishing an article for the newspaper criticizing Georgie's committee of bored, wealthy women and the pointlessness of sending care packages to prisoners of war, Linnet ends her uneasy

relationship with her godmother and severs her connection to her father's past. Linnet's act is a "mercy killing," just as Georgie's senile Yorkshire terrier is euthanized, a dog who has outlived her mistress and "who persisted so unreasonably in her right to outlive the rest of us that she had to be put down without mercy" (*HT* 378). Linnet similarly euthanizes a version of history that threatens to entrap her in Georgie's bitterness and nostalgia. The last two words of the story, of the six-story sequence, and of *Home Truths*, "without mercy," emphasize Linnet's decisiveness to act without sentimentality. What allows her to act is understanding that she does not have to define herself by a fixed point of origin or by the memory of her father; she is "the final product, the last living specimen of a strain of people whose imprudence, lack of foresight, and refusal to take anything seriously, had left one generation after another unprepared and stranded, obliged to build life from the ground up, fashioning new materials every time" (373). Her singularity means that she defines what for Rosi Braidotti in *Nomadic Subjects* calls "the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity," a cosmopolitan nomad whose ability to self-create is also the ability to live within the instability of an ever-changing present (22). Linnet has returned to a home that is not a physical location, but rather a process. For Linnet the writer, the process of writing and discarding and writing again is an unfixed place in the imagination that allows her to rewrite the past with "new materials," a home that she builds "from the ground up" wherever she is. For Linnet the daughter of Angus, home is a revolution, the "tyrants deposed," and a new constitution of the cosmopolitan self that ensures only instability and change (*HT* 259).

Chapter VI. Conclusion

"The collective hallucination was that life can change, quite suddenly, and for the better." --Mavis Gallant, "The Events in May"

On May 3, 1968, administrators at the Sorbonne allowed French police to invade the building in order to quell a demonstration protesting the attempted expulsion of Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German-Jewish undergraduate with extreme leftist views. Cohn-Bendit was the leader of a group called "les enragés," or the angry people, committed to radical action. The students went on strike, and the Sorbonne retaliated by closing down for the first time in its seven-hundred-year history (Kurlansky 223). With the police breaching the seemingly inviolate intellectual space of the university, bolstered by support for the students from the French trade unions, seven weeks of civil unrest in Paris began. Soon, most of France went on strike.

Mavis Gallant's account, "The Events in May" from *A Paris Notebook (PN)*, and published later that year in *The New Yorker*, chronicles the instability of day-by-day life in a city that had ceased to function: "it was impossible to buy a newspaper, go to school, mail a letter, send a telegram, cash a cheque, ride in a bus, take the Métro…no garbage was collected; no trains left the city. Teachers stopped teaching, actors stopped acting" (2). The cosmopolitan capital of France was reduced to a besieged locality in which instability and mayhem became daily occurrences. Even the government of De Gaulle abdicated its responsibility to calm the country—De Gaulle actually fled France for West Germany—and citizens, as Gallant observed, were left to fend for themselves, bartering for sugar and coffee as if the Occupation had never ended. The magazine that had

published Gallant's stories of displaced cosmopolitans now made legible the real-world implications of the authoritarian power in Paris held by the university officials who attempted to silence student protest.

In 1968, cosmopolitanism facilitated global unrest, and the protests, which Gallant called "the frontier of the nineteen-sixties, youth vs. authority," became a worldwide expression of rage (2). Television allowed for a shared perspective, with the new technology of communication satellites connecting the globe, by transmitting same-day coverage of the demonstrations that were often marked by the brutality of police interventions. These disturbing images meant that television quickly became an on-screen tool of protest, with media coverage making widely visible the disruptions and allowing for the conflagration of dissent spread throughout the world.

While the unrest in Paris was the most prolonged of the global protests, 1968 also marked the height of the Cultural Revolution in China, the beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Prague Spring, and the civil rights and environmental movements in the United States, all fueled by the unwillingness to accept the status quo of state repression, even if in China this also meant purging those not considered "ideologically pure" (Kurlansky 171). Similarly, protests against the war in Vietnam laid bare not just the senseless carnage, in which "at the height of 1968 fighting, the U.S. military was killing every week the same number of people or more as died in the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attack," but also the colonialism still operating in Indochina, a Western imperialist oppression first imposed by France and then inherited by the United States (xviii).

Although there were differences in the forms of the unrest and its effects in different countries, what was constant was a sense of global instability. Gallant notes the difference between the rebellion at Columbia and the rebellion at the Sorbonne "was that life in Manhattan went on as before, while in Paris every section of society was set on fire, in the space of a few days" (*PN* 2). Through her writing about the implications of cosmopolitan estrangement, Gallant became the chronicler of instability, both in fiction and real life.

The similarities between the instability of global unrest of the 1960's and that of Gallant's fiction are multiple. For Gallant's cosmopolitan travelers, instability means motion. The gravitational pull of home and nationality has weakened in a borderless global society, loosening bonds of identity and belonging that had previously been held together by shared cultural values. Migration, by one's volition or enforced by political power, creates a new cosmopolis of the displaced. To remain in motion, however, is also to resist the commodification of interdependence—that is to say, the monetization of social connection through the Internet—and to protest against the leveling effects of globalization, which regards cosmopolitanism as a means of exploitation. Just as the Paris protests against the unjustness of the police action at the Sorbonne upended the power of the state, so does the motion of the cosmopolitan traveler push back against the limiting borders of a globalized economy. At its best, displacement allows the individual to develop a new and freely chosen conception of home and belonging.

The reality, however, is that worldliness can also bring with it a sense of alienation from the familiar. Detaching from kinship groups, language, and local heritage can result in feelings of estrangement from the past. In unfamiliar territory, the

cosmopolitan traveler has no mirror by which to gauge a sense of self. Flor, stumbling down the Boulevard des Capuchins in *Green Water, Green Sky*, distrusts her reflection in shop windows as she descends into psychosis. The "hysterical gothic women" Doris Wolf calls Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures are those for whom the consequences of dislocation are the most acute, and yet some of them, like Linnet Muir in "With a Capital T," and Christine in "The Pegnitz Junction," have access to a tenuous hold on a new consciousness in which disorder is commonplace and dislocation is a survival strategy.

Gallant's cosmopolitan world is itself in motion, evolving from the regressive 1950's era of *Green Water, Green Sky*, in which social stability is determined solely by a woman's acceptance of the traditional roles of marriage and motherhood, to "The Pegnitz Junction" and Christine's choosing to care for little Bert as an empathetic response to the instability around her, and finally, to Linnet Muir's detachment from the sentimentality of her nostalgia for the family in the forward motion of her freely-chosen life. The "adverse realities" of cosmopolitanism for these women are the bonds of connection that determine how available these choices are for them, and how they respond to the entanglements that destabilize their lives.

Bonnie and Flor, the first of Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures examined in this thesis, are mired in the demands and expectations of a restrictive culture. Wishart's arrogant dismissal of the domain of women as a "kitchen in a slum…a world of migraines, miscarriages, disorder, and tears" is the inversion of the cosmopolitan world, and yet traces of these social and emotional constrictions continue in Gallant's conception of cosmopolitanism (*GWGS* 350). For Bonnie, marriage and motherhood are the portable markers of identity that she carries with her as she and Flor wander through

Europe, as cumbersome as Linnet Muir's wicker hamper that once belonged to her father. It is the weight of patriarchal possession that Bonnie and Flor must also carry, and the notion that their existence is valid only when they are attached to a man. Here, Gallant suggests that marriage is a country with closed borders, insular and repressive, from which emigration is impossible. Although Bonnie's constant traveling is a reenactment of her flight from her husband's expectations of fidelity, she is unable to leave behind the idea of marriage as a woman's crowning achievement. Just as obsessed with Flor's marriage to Bob Harris and how she can disrupt their relationship as she is with managing her own life, Bonnie's own expectations of her daughter's fidelity come at the cost of Flor's sanity.

Motherhood is similarly a closed country, a site of cruelty and disregard. Bonnie's sense of self is fully bound up with being Flor's mother, and yet her maternal instincts are primed only for her own survival: allowing Flor to detach from her would threaten her identity. Nor is Flor willing to establish an independent life. She returns to Bonnie over and over, unable to leave her, and their entanglement means that they too have come to inhabit an "emotional country," but one with closed borders. Thus, by inverting the traditional bildungsroman, Gallant traces Flor's descent into psychosis by suggesting that madness can be a retreat from the pressures of a displaced life. This "psychic cosmopolitanism," however, cannot be freely chosen. No one would willingly choose madness. Just as the borders of Flor's mind are loosened in response to despair, instability is a response to the loosening of the retaining walls of the self. Without the self, there is no home to return to, and thus, immured in an asylum, Flor no longer exists.

In *Green Water, Green Sky*, Gallant questions the viability of life after human collapse. Rather than being the rebuilding of a progressive society, the postwar years after the Holocaust were marked with conservatism and repression; notions of postwar prosperity depended on the stability of the family and the authority of the state. As a paradigm of social control, the traditional family throughout the 1950's and beyond continued to enforce women's confinement in Wishart's "kitchen in a slum" (350). While Bonnie and Flor travel freely, they cannot rid themselves of the social constrictions that bind them to psychologically damaging narratives of dominance and submission. Here, Gallant suggests that the romance of cosmopolitan mobility is illusory because of the structural inequalities of gender and class. It is only in the passing moments of true connection that the utopian ideals of cosmopolitanism can be realized: Bob and Flor in Cannes experience a borderless freedom to roam in their mutual love.

Overtaken by images of water and motion, however, a Venetian canal choked with garbage, Flor cannot sustain the effort. The "adverse realities" Rebecca Walkowitz perceives in cosmopolitanism mean that Flor will always be in motion, while Bob will find stability with someone else (23). The loss of love stands for the indifference of a public that regards the first photographs from the Nazi death camps as sensationalism and that will go on, as Bob does, without a backward glance. Even the image of Flor dissolves its boundaries at the end of the novel and becomes a hallucinatory image of three women, Bonnie, Flor, and a Parisian prostitute, women Flor's cousin George considers "now menacing, now dear…eccentric by birth, unaware, or not caring that the others were laughing behind their hands" (*GWGS* 176). The ethical consideration of suffering has been reduced to ridicule. Thus, for Gallant, the gendered experiences of

displacement in a world where even atrocities have not altered the response to authoritarianism signify a world on the verge of collapse.

In the "The Pegnitz Junction," Gallant offers a reparative vision of care. Christine, the second of Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures I have considered in this thesis, embodies a transition between the closed domain of women and the possibilities for change. Christine's telepathy allows her to experience the suffering of others, even those who seem morally disreputable or committed to the worst aspects of nativism and anti-Semitic delusions, as is Frau Schneider. The porousness of Christine's mind travels across the borders of realism to suggest that empathy must begin with the acceptance of experiences that seem to be supernatural but are in fact the acceptance of the radical alterity of the other. Only by honoring the consciousness of another can cosmopolitanism achieve its most utopian goal, that of unconditional hospitality even to those whose views are diametrically opposed to ours. Christine's telepathy invites the voices of Germans who have experienced their own displacements into her consciousness and gives her permission to hold them without blame or judgment. The junction where she waits at Pegnitz with Herbert and little Bert is the liminal crossroads where despair shifts toward possibility and the infinite longing for arrival at home.

Similarly, motherhood becomes not a condition imposed on her by the expectations of her family or a traditionalist society, but rather an "authentic choice" that gives Christine the freedom to care for little Bert without the expectation that motherhood will transform her (Levine and Estable 70). She can construct an alternate kinship structure, one based on the needs of a child rather than on a condition of emotional bondage. Christine's care for little Bert destigmatizes motherhood and returns it to the

realm of unconditional love, not dictated by biology or the approval of state-supported marriage. Thus, Gallant's approach to feminism is not to advocate for the destruction of the family because of its historic oppression of women, but rather for the reorganization of the family, moving relationships from the hierarchical structure of masculine domination to the horizontal, rhizomatically spreading elective connection between caregiver and child. Although Gallant's feminism is still gendered, with carework mostly the province of women, this is not a disempowerment as much as a redistribution of power, a cosmopolitan approach to the "country" of the family that opens the borders of normative expectations and roles. Uprootedness does not destroy the roots of a structure; instead, it allows for transplantation and the lateral movement of love.

The train as metaphor for Gallant becomes the moving consciousness of a society in need of repair. While the wait to return home at the Pegnitz Junction may be infinite, and the sorrow over losing home may be inconsolable, what begins the process of healing is a story. As Christine invents a tale for little Bert, her voice mediates between the despair of the Bonhoeffer essays she holds in her hands and the imaginative, alternate world she creates as she pretends to read from the book, a rendering of a family of children whose names are all the same but are pronounced five different ways. Another version of reality is always possible. This, Gallant suggests, is the cosmopolitan world. The stories in Gallant's collection, *The Pegnitz Junction*, which culminate with the novella, are her attempt to offer a reparative vision, not just for Germany, but also for a global family redefining the meaning of home.

Linnet Muir, the third of Gallant's female cosmopolitan figures I have studied in this thesis, embodies the independence of Braidotti's modern cosmopolitan nomad,

untethered to family and belonging. However, she also exhibits a narrow version of feminism that does not align with the cross-border affinities of Shameem Black's cosmofeminism, which calls for solidarity among women. Gallant's feminism in fact may be impossible to duplicate. The solitary practice of writing is Linnet's "home," an aesthetic intervention into the unknowability of the past. Writing is also the means of her personal liberation: the life she has liberated herself from is that of her father, and the revolution she sets off is against the colonizing presence in women of paternal influence and control. However, nostalgia threatens to mire her in the estrangement of the displaced, like Georgie, and it is only through writing that she is able to re-situate herself as the center of personal control. Stories, Linnet recognizes, are only "another variety of exile," a domain of estrangement, vivid yet circumscribed by the act of writing (*HT* 322).

Linnet has neither family nor a sense of nationality, but she has emerged with a clear sense of self. As an autofictional embodiment of Gallant, Linnet is also the embodiment of a femininity divested from the authoritarianism of a patriarchal culture. Neither Gallant nor Linnet is hampered by father or husband, and both have forged an identity through the practice of writing. Gallant suggests that only by severing the connections to the stabilizing bonds of family and nation can the female cosmopolitan figure emerge from the limiting boundaries of gender disparity. This, however, may not be a sustainable model for those who are unlike Gallant, with her access to a cosmopolitan life as an expatriate writer, poised between language and culture. The "adverse reality" Walkowitz associates with cosmopolitanism (23) is that the life raft of liberation is available only to the few, and other women, like Mrs. Ireland in "Between

Zero and One," and perhaps Gallant herself, are actively stepping on the fingers of women trying to climb aboard (*HT* 293).

Gallant's version of feminism does not advocate for solidarity and instead, offers a vision of competitiveness and cruelty. Linnet's rejection of Georgie benefits only Linnet, and does not take into account the suffering her godmother has endured as the woman outside the structure of marriage and family. Along with sentimentality, Linnet rejects mercy. This is not a comforting vision of humanity. The euthanasia of Georgie's aged Yorkshire terrier, put down "without mercy," is a disturbing echo of Nazi genocide and suggests that Linnet is incapable of compassion for the aged Georgie. Cosmofeminist affinities across the borders of age and culture are effectively denied, and this pushes back against the equalizing tide of cosmopolitanism itself.

However, it is the instability of the in-between life, between nations, languages, and cultures, which allows for perspective. The world after the Holocaust is broken, and it is from the shelter of the liminal state that Gallant observes the estrangement of the displaced and the volatility of a fragmented society. Something, however, must always be left behind, and this is the nostalgia for home and family. For Linnet, instability allows her to escape from the prison of childhood. For Gallant, instability generates art. By suggesting that literature can create new bonds of affinity between writer and reader, Gallant has created her own cosmopolitan world that operates by her rules alone.

For Gallant, the future that has not yet taken place is the human desire for resolution. The civil unrest of May 1968 produced both the radical impulse for change and the knowledge that systems cannot change: the utopian ideals of cosmopolitanism would always be out of step with the realities of globalization. Parisians that Gallant

interviewed at the end of the seven weeks of anarchy asked not what it meant, but "what is this going to cost us?" (*PN* 95). The cost of the disruption would be borne by future generations, indoctrinated into the culture of capitalism for which instability is an economic failure. What Parisians wanted in the moment was the reassurance that enduring such disruption should have resulted in something better, an unsullied and orderly progression toward an ideal cosmopolitan society. This, however, was for Gallant "a collective hallucination," the deluded belief that life could suddenly be transformed into a happy ending (3). She writes, "It still strikes me as a noble desire, and the answer I heard, when I asked one woman what she had expected to emerge out of all the disorder ('Quelque chose de propre'—something clean, decent), still seems to me poignant" (3). This is the resolution that cannot take place, the open ending that promises not a sense of hope, but rather an uneasy acceptance of the inevitable. Discomfiture is the human condition. Gallant suggests that only through kinship with a fractured world can we limp along in this imperfect way. This world, in motion, demands that we live suspended in a state of instability.

Epilogue

I made my first border crossing when I was seven years old. My family was traveling from New York on the overnight passenger train, the Montrealer, just before the line was discontinued in the pre-Amtrak era of budget austerity and dwindling ridership. We were en route to Montreal to visit my new Canadian stepfather's family. My mother had coached me for weeks so I could say, "rien à declarer," or "nothing to declare" in French when the customs agent came through the train at the Canadian border so the walkie-talkies we were bringing for my new Canadian cousins would not be discovered in our luggage. I grew into believing the border was a fearsome place where one had to learn a new language just to cross, and that there would be new rules to follow, rules imposed by an authoritarian figure unimpressed by our generosity.

There would be many more border crossings we made as a family on our long trips to Canada in later years, in our ramshackle VW bus which, as I grew into a teenager, I was sure would draw scrutiny at the border, but never did because of my stepfather's dual American and Canadian citizenship and the ease of entrance his passport assured us. We were travelers under the protection of a magic document that meant we were welcome as guests. Many others were not. We were fortunate and privileged enough to be able to travel abroad, and even if Canada seemed familiar, I had no doubt we were in a different country, where before 1974, stop signs said both "Stop" and "Arrêt," and then after English disappeared, only French remained.

On those countless long trips, watching the city disappear into the countryside through the windows of the loud, rackety VW, from home to Montreal, and other times, to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, I began to think about borders and what it

meant to cross an often arbitrary line separating one place from another. I wanted to know which instant it was that you became someone else, a transformation I imagined would be visible, from American to Canadian, from home to away, from myself to another. I wanted to understand how you would know you had changed when you felt exactly the same.

My stepfather and I had long arguments when I insisted there was an actual moment separating before and after you crossed a border, as if the line itself were like the wardrobe in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. He argued that a border didn't mean much and was probably just a random dividing line drawn by a cartographer or a politician through somebody's back yard. To him, a border crossing was actually a continuum of transformation. You could never know when that change took place.

My stepfather was, of course, both right and wrong, since he was two nationalities at once and felt equally at ease wherever he went. This was when I realized that identities could be mutable, that no one label could be affixed onto belonging, and that we brought home with us wherever we went. Home was the VW bus. Home could be everywhere. But this also meant we inhabited an unstable space where home was what separated us from our Canadian family. We were others. Our travel across the border threatened to become a colonialist imposition of our sloppy Americanisms on our Canadian cousins, until I realized that travel could also become an invitation to share space with those who had grown up in a similar but different culture and language.

I also began to realize that space is what we must share with other humans on this planet. Some find this intolerable and build walls to fortify the border. Others travel endlessly to find out what is going on in new places, what delights the people of different

countries, what their food is like, or how they speak to their children. These things matter even in their differences, and especially in the unstable feelings that might arise within us when we compare our different cultures. Though we might think we are all alike, as cosmopolitans privileged enough to travel, we still are others to each other. Aristotle believed that feelings of recognition and affiliation are what link every human being to another human being, but Mavis Gallant tells us that sometimes things don't work out that way. Instability threatens our existence. Borders can disconnect us. Refugees are not recognized as worthy citizens, and exiles are estranged from affiliation with their home countries. The world teeters on the edge of disaster. Wars rage on. Mothers are cruel to their daughters, and daughters banish the memories of their fathers. Nostalgia entraps us in sentimental delusions of the past. Animals, old women, and entire populations of human beings are put down without mercy.

What remains are stories. Mavis Gallant reminds us that narratives are the unstable space of the imagination, life pressed through a sieve and its residue discarded (*HT* 322). Fiction is the essence of our personal narratives. Gallant's writings about instability are the border crossings I imagined in that ramshackle VW bus, a transformational experience that turned me into a cosmopolitan, but also meant that I became someone else. Gallant's stories help us live in a world that still transforms the traveler, the refugee, and the migrant not into world citizens, but into others. Gallant invites us to think about what it means to belong, what it means not to belong, what it means to be separated from home, what it means to be at home, and how instability continues to shape our identities as we navigate throughout the cosmopolitan world.

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