

Book publishers usually consider short stories to be the work of the beginner, MFA finger exercises they reluctantly agree to publish only if they can guarantee on the flyleaf that the writer is “currently working on a novel.” This commercial capitulation to the fact that most readers prefer novels to short stories, along with the assumption that a single large work of fiction is more important than a collection of small ones, is so powerful and pervasive that few writers are able to resist it. That Alice Munro, who has been able to resist it for twelve collections of short stories, has become one of the most highly praised writers of the twenty-first century should therefore go a long way toward redeeming the neglected short form. Decades ago, when her only novel, *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), was called “only a collection of short stories” by one reviewer, Munro was not bothered, saying she did not feel that a novel was any step up from a short story. To her credit, she has never wavered in that judgment.

In a story entitled “Fiction” in her collection *Too Much Happiness* (2009), Munro cannot resist a wily jab at all those critics who have trivialized the short story as a genre and chided her for not writing something more serious, namely a novel. The central character in “Fiction” buys a book written by a woman she has met briefly at a party. When she opens it, she is disappointed to find out it is a collection of short stories, not a novel: “It seems to diminish the book’s authority, making the author seem like somebody who is just hanging on to the gates of Literature, rather than safely settled inside” (52). Having punctuated a distinguished career of numerous awards by winning the Man Booker International Prize for Lifetime Achievement in 2009, Munro must have had a sly smile on her face when she wrote those words.

Munro once said that she originally planned to write a few short stories in order to get some practice and then to start writing novels, but “I got used to writing stories, so I saw my material that way” (Rothstein).

She knows that the short story's way of seeing "reality" is different from the novel's way and seems to agree with Frank O'Connor's famous suggestion that the short story deals not, as the novel does, with problems of the moment, but rather with the profound and common interests of life. Her best work is always about something more enigmatic, unspeakable, and universal than a social or surface story generated by characters and plot.

The two most compelling constraints on the short story that differentiate its characteristic method of defining reality from that of the novel are its genetic heritage in myth and its generic quality of shortness. As anthropologist Mircea Eliade has suggested, myth narrates "all the primordial events in consequence of which man became what he is today. . . . Myth teaches him the primordial stories that have constituted him existentially" (11–12). Because the short story has always remained close to its origins in myth and folklore, at its most characteristic, it focuses more on universal existential reality than on the particularized social reality that the novel has always made its own. Moreover, the short story's historical tendency to structure itself along thematic lines rather than on the mimetic replication of everyday social experience is inherently related to the form's shortness. The focus on what constitutes human life existentially, instead of what delimits human experience in a physical and social context, forces the short-story form to cohere around an aesthetic patterned unity rather than a temporal plot. As Alice Munro well knows, the short story's complexity is due not to how extensively it explores human reality but to how intensively. A Munro story is deceptive; it may at first reading seem novelistic, but it lulls the reader into a false sense of security in which time appears to stretch out comfortably like everyday reality, only to suddenly turn and tighten so intensely that the reader is left breathless.

Between the 2009 publication of *Too Much Happiness* and the summer of 2011, Alice Munro published four new stories in the *New Yorker* and *Harper's*. As is characteristic of the short story in general and Alice Munro's work in particular, these stories thematically develop

universal human complexities rather than particular realistic characters and events. They belie the common critical judgment that Alice Munro's stories are brilliant because they are "novelistic," revealing that, on the contrary, they are complex precisely because they embody the short story's unique way of exploring universal reality.

### "Corrie"

The fact that Munro's story "Corrie" covers a time period of over twenty years caters to the critical assumption that the development of characters over time is a novelistic notion. However, despite this temporal span, it is a classic short story, with all the virtues of that form subtly displayed. In "Corrie," there is no development over time, which is exactly the universal theme that this short story about adultery and deception explores.

At the beginning of the story, the two main characters—Corrie, twenty-six, who always seems to be laughing or "on the verge of laughing," and Howard Ritchie, religious and "already equipped with a wife and a young family"—begin an affair (Munro, "Corrie" 95). The third major character, although seldom seen, is Sadie Wolfe, the wolf in sheep's clothing or the sheep in wolf's clothing, depending on how you read her catalyst role in the story. When Ritchie tells Corrie that he has received a blackmail letter from Sadie threatening to expose the affair to his wife, she agrees to pay the blackmail. She will give the money to Ritchie twice yearly, and he in turn will place it in a post-office box in Sadie's name.

After these arrangements are made and the affair continues, the story shifts to focus on Corrie. Her father dies, and his shoe factory is taken over by a large firm that promises to keep it running. When the company closes the factory, Corrie decides to turn it into a museum that exhibits shoemaking tools; after the company razes the building, she takes over an old library in town. If "Corrie" were a novel, these two ventures might seem mere plot elements. However, Corrie's remark to Ritchie, "You'd think my place were a shrine the way you carry on"

(98), announces the story's central theme of preserving time, which is reaffirmed by the seemingly random detail that the most prominent business in the town is a furniture store "where the same tables and sofas sat forever in the windows, and the doors seemed never to be open" (97).

Time seems similarly stopped and dust laden for Corrie, while off-screen, Ritchie engages in everyday activities with his family. When Sadie Wolfe dies and Corrie goes to the reception following the funeral, she meets the woman for whom Sadie worked, who tells Corrie how much Sadie's children, and later grandchildren, loved her and how she kept her illness to herself. It is at this point that Munro, in classic short-story fashion, begins to tighten the tension. Corrie begins to compose a letter to Ritchie, telling him that the days of the blackmail are over, wondering if he will hear about Sadie's death before he gets it. However, she then asks herself whether Ritchie has looked in the post-office box to see if the August blackmail payment has been picked up, for she knows that Sadie would have been too ill to retrieve it.

When she awakes the next morning, Corrie realizes that there was never a post-office box, and that Ritchie kept the money for family trips and everyday expenses. Corrie now tries to get used to this "current reality" and is surprised to discover that she is capable of shaping another reality. If Ritchie does not know that Sadie is dead, he will "just expect things to go on as usual." Corrie thinks she could say something that would destroy them, but she knows that "what they had—what they have—demands payment" and that she is the one who can "afford to pay." The last sentence of the story—"When she goes down to the kitchen again she goes gingerly, making everything fit into its proper place" (101)—is a meaningful, self-reflexive ending to a story in which, indeed, as is appropriate for the short-story form, everything does fit in its proper place.

If "Corrie" were a novel about a real-life situation, the reader might ask, Why does Corrie tolerate Ritchie all these years? What kind of experience do they have together? Why does Corrie not find herself

a good man? Why does she not leave him when she discovers his deception? But the story is not about such issues. Corrie is not a “real” person in a realistic novel; she is a paradigm of a woman having an affair. Ritchie is not a cad in a domestic melodrama; he is a paradigmatic married man having an affair. Munro’s story is about the affair as a universal, classic phenomenon that survives on secrecy and time, played out in two different modes: one in which life is statically preserved unchanged, the other moving on offscreen in a routine, temporal fashion.

The complexity of Munro’s short story is nothing like the complexity of a novel. In a novel, we are interested in particular people in a particular situation at a particular time and place. We make judgments on those people as if they were real people. But “Corrie” does not lead us to make those kinds of judgments; instead, it asks us to contemplate not a particular affair but the quintessential meaning of *affair*. And an affair, Munro suggests, is about secrecy, sacrifice, selfishness, retribution, and stasis. This story does not embody a novelistic complexity about the evolution of experience over time; rather, it features a short-story complexity about the revelation of a secret that has sustained a situation enacted in two radically different frameworks of time. We only have to stand back a bit and watch this static universal drama embody its dusty secrets.

### “Axis”

Read as a realistic or novelistic story, “Axis” seems simple and straightforward, recounting the experiences of two particular young women at a given place and time. Thematically, however, the story is about a universal reality that constitutes human beings existentially: not merely the experience of what has happened, but the primordial experience of what might have been. The story begins by locating two young farm girls, Grace and Avie, fifty years in the past, waiting for a bus to take them home from college for summer vacation. Grace is fair and voluptuous; Avie is lively and challenging. While Avie wants to have sex with her boyfriend, Hugo, because she thinks it will make him manlier,

Grace keeps her virginity intact in order to keep her boyfriend, Royce, interested in her.

During the summer, when Royce visits Grace on her parents' farm, he passes through the town where Avie lives and sees her on the street, looking so lively and pretty that he has the urge to get off the bus and not get on again. He knows, however, that doing so will land him in a lot of trouble. Royce is not in love with Grace; he is primarily interested in getting her into bed. One day, she finally seems willing, and they become "far enough advanced" in her bedroom not to hear her parents drive up. Grace's mother is shocked when she discovers them, but Royce tells her to shut up, gets dressed, and leaves. Grace asks him to take her with him, but he acts as if he did not hear her. On the road, Royce sees a tower of ancient-looking rock, which he later learns is the edge of the Niagara Escarpment. Captivated, he decides to forgo philosophy and political science and take up geology. Later, he tells people how the sight of the escarpment turned his life around and only vaguely remembers that he had been there to see a girl. In the fall, when Avie, who is now pregnant, comes to school to pick up some books, she encounters a young classmate who has sent Grace letters but has heard nothing from her. The classmate tells Avie, "Somebody said she had colitis. That's when you get all swollen, isn't it? That would be miserable" (Munro, "Axis" 68).

When the story shifts to the present, fifty years later, Avie, widowed and in her late sixties, is on the train to visit one of her six grown children and runs into Royce, who is now retired and has never married. When he tells her about seeing her on the street that day, looking so "irresistible" he wanted to get off the bus, Avie keeps repeating, "I never knew." If she had known, Royce asks her, would she have agreed to meet him, even with the "complications that would have caused"? "Without hesitation," Avie says yes. When he indifferently responds, "So it's a good thing? That we didn't make contact" (68), Avie does not even try for an answer. In a story about the passage of time, in which

what might have happened seems more important than what did, it is thematically significant that Royce says, “Water under the bridge” (69).

The universal theme of “Axis” turns, as it were, on the implications of the title, the usual dictionary definition of which is a straight line through a body on which the body turns. The axis mundi would, therefore, be the center of the world. The “profound and common interest of life,” the myth that constitutes human beings existentially, in this story might be expressed by the clichéd title of a long-running American television soap opera that began in 1956, *As the World Turns*. Although we usually think of an axis in spatial terms, the main point of an axis is that motion takes place in time. Geology, Royce’s professional passion, is, of course, concerned with spatial layers that reflect temporal events. Several times in Munro’s story, if the world spinning on the axis of time could possibly stop, the lives of the characters would be changed, but of course it cannot. Although “Axis” is a story about two particular young women and the events that happened to them fifty years ago, one primordial aspect of time that interests Munro here is that as we look back on the past, we consider not only what happened but also what might have happened. What if Royce had gotten off the bus that day when he saw Avie on the street? What if Grace’s mother had not come into her room that day? What if Royce had not run away and accidentally discovered the Niagara Escarpment?

As in all great short stories, details in “Axis” are not random verisimilitude but intentional thematic motifs. Grace’s colitis (“when you get all swollen”) suggests that Grace’s mother did not come into the room soon enough, that Grace got pregnant. But we know nothing of what happened to Grace after that event fifty years ago; we only know that she remained haunted by a dream Avie once had about a discarded child, which we may now suspect reflects Grace’s own discarded child. “Axis” is the story of Avie—the life she might have lived, the life she did live, and the eruptions in the spatial axis of time that might have made a difference. Munro’s story suggests that although we are temporally caught up in the turn of time, we are trapped like fossils in the layers of the past.

## “Pride”

Although the male narrator (never named) of “Pride” is not a highly educated man, he is given to intellectual pondering. For example, in the first few paragraphs of the story, he divides people into two types: those who prove themselves to be hearty and jovial regardless of their mistakes, claiming they would not want to live any place but where they live, and those who do not get away from where they live, although others might wish for their own sake that they had. The narrator adds metaphorically, “Whatever hole they started digging for themselves when they were young . . . they kept right on at it, digging away” (Munro, “Pride” 59).

The narrator tells the story of Oneida, the daughter of a wealthy banker, a private-school student whose mother died when she was in her teens. He also tells the backstory of her father’s investment in a scheme for which he extorted funds from the bank. When the schemers skip town with the money, the father is demoted to a small bank in a village six miles away. This introduces the first reference in the story to the title, “Pride”; the narrator says that the father could have refused the demotion, but “pride, as it was thought, chose otherwise. Pride chose that he be driven every morning those six miles to sit behind a partial wall of cheap varnished boards, no proper office at all. There he sat and did nothing until it was time for him to be driven home” (60).

Because the narrator has a harelip, he is exempted from service in World War II and feels cut off from men his own age, although he says that this is nothing new. However, he says, he does not miss “the brief swagger of walking off to war” (62); nor does he miss having a father (who died before he even saw him) or a girlfriend. He contentedly spends time listening to the radio and going to movies with his mother.

When the narrator’s mother and Oneida’s father die, she comes to ask his advice about selling her house. Although he cautions her against it, she sells it anyway but comes to regret her action, eventually moving into the apartment building that is later built on the site of the house. The narrator begins to spend time with Oneida in the 1950s, in-

viting her to watch his new television. Because meeting new people is an ordeal for him, they seldom go out. He says that all his school years were spent getting used to what he is like, and he considers it a triumph of sorts to have managed that feat and to know that he could stay where he is and make a living without having to continually break new people in to the way he looks.

When the narrator becomes ill, Oneida settles into his mother's bedroom to care for him, and he comes to depend on her, "feeling like a small child again." However, he is embarrassed that she cares for his intimate hygiene needs, feeling that she is able to do so because the way he looks makes him a "neuter to her, or an unfortunate child" (64). When Oneida wants to move in with him permanently, suggesting, "We could live together like brother and sister and look after each other like brother and sister," the narrator feels "angry, scared, appalled" (65). To escape this dilemma, he sells his house and finds an apartment in the building where Oneida lives. Realizing that he has lived in the town long enough to become accepted, he thinks, "Just living long enough wipes out the problems. Puts you in a select club. No matter what your disabilities may have been, just living till now wipes them out, to a good measure" (66). When Oneida shows up at his house while he is packing to move, suddenly she laughs and points out the window to a birdbath that seems full of black-and-white birds, splashing in the water. However, they are not birds but a group of young skunks, which the narrator also thinks are beautiful. The story ends with a tableau of the two watching the skunks.

If "Pride" were a novel, we would not expect it to have any universal thematic significance; we would accept it as a realistic slice of life, chronicling the culture of a small Canadian town and how a young man with a harelip and a young woman fared there. However, because it is a short story, especially a short story by Alice Munro, we expect it to explore a universal theme beyond the particular events and unique characters involved. Just as the narrator's opening rumination that "good use can be made of everything, if you are willing" suggests

some general significance, so also does the culminating metaphoric scene in which small skunks are playing in a birdbath. The fact that skunks, usually thought to be repulsive, smelly creatures, here look beautiful and seem “proud” of themselves makes us reflect back on the references to pride throughout the story.

Three people illustrate pride in this story: Oneida’s father, who has so much dignity that even after having been brought low by a scandal, he holds his head up high; Oneida, who, because of her wealthy upbringing and “fair dazzle of skin and hair,” stirs awe and admiration in all those around her; and the narrator, stricken at birth by a cleft lip, who must develop pride in himself by his own efforts and attitude. Of the two types of people the narrator thinks about at the opening of the story, he seems to be an example of the first: someone who has everything against him but who turns out fine, lives out his life in his hometown, and proclaims that he would never want to live anyplace else. Oneida seems to be the latter type; she never gets away from the town, but the narrator, among others, thinks that for her own sake, she should have. She digs a hole for herself and never gets out of it.

If this were a novel, although one might understand why the narrator and Oneida do not get together when they are young, one might wonder why they do not develop a mutually dependent relationship when they are older. The mystery of Munro’s story is not why these two people fail to get together but why people ever get together at all. The universal thematic question the story raises is, if one has pride in oneself, then does one even need another person? With pride, a person can live a satisfactory life no matter what impediment or shortcomings or bad luck he or she might have. The secret of the narrator’s success is that he accepts himself for who he is, does not feel sorry for himself, does not need someone to provide him with a good image of himself.

The final scene of the baby skunks splashing in the water as if they were little birds is a metaphor of the narrator’s life. Although he may have been repulsive to those around him, he has accepted himself with self-pride and acts as if he were not a pariah. This does not suggest ar-

rogance but rather acknowledgment. The narrator describes the little skunks walking across the lawn “as if they were proud of themselves.” Oneida’s face, even though it has grown older, looks “dazzled” when she sees the skunks; she says only, “Have you ever seen such a sight?” And he says, “No. Never.” The narrator is glad that neither says anything more to spoil a moment when the potentially ugly is transformed into the beautiful. Thus, the story ends with the line “We were as glad as we could be” (67). If this were a realistic novel, we might question whether the narrator’s life has really been satisfying, might characterize him as an outcast victim of social prejudice. But if nothing in the story suggests that he is lonely or self-pitying or deprived, either sexually or emotionally, who are we to say he must have been unhappy? Does one have to love someone to be happy? Does one have to experience sex to live a good life? Does one have to have children to be fulfilled? Obviously, in Munro’s story, the answer to all these questions is no.

### “Gravel”

Beginning with the sentence “At that time we were living beside a gravel pit,” Munro immediately locates “Gravel” in the past and accounts for its title in symbolic space (65). The central event in the story takes place when the narrator is about five, after her mother has left her insurance-salesman husband in search of a freer, more bohemian life, taking the narrator and her sister Caro, age nine, with her to live in a trailer with an amateur actor named Neal. When rain fills up the gravel pit near the trailer, Caro instructs the narrator to run back to the trailer to tell Neal and her mother that their dog Blitzee has fallen in the water and that she has jumped in to save her. The narrator runs to the trailer, but sits down outside before going in. When she does go in and the mother tries to get Neal to go to the gravel pit, he refuses; as a result, Caro drowns.

In the final section of the story, when the adult narrator learns that Neal is living near where she teaches at a university, her partner, Ruthann, convinces her that she should go see him in order to help rout her

demons. Neal tells the narrator that he was stoned at the time of the drowning and is not a swimmer and thus would also have drowned if he had tried to save Caro. When she asks him what he thinks Caro had in mind on that day, Neal says that it does not matter, and that she should not waste her time feeling guilty for not hurrying to tell them.

A summary of the plot of “Gravel” seems sufficient to establish that on the surface, it is a story of a tragic childhood event for which the narrator still harbors some sense of responsibility and guilt. However, trying to determine guilt for Caro’s death oversimplifies the mystery of the story. Like most great short-story writers, Alice Munro knows that short stories are not mere realistic accounts, but rather hold together by means of a universal theme.

At the very beginning of the story, the narrator says, “I barely remember that life. That is, I remember some parts of it clearly, but without the links you need to form a proper picture” (65). The universal problem the story raises is that we usually remember the past in isolated moments but have difficulty remembering what relationship one event has to another. One tells a story in order to try to understand the links, the motivation, the causes. This need to know, to be sure of the connection of events in the misty, disconnected past, is buttressed by the theme of solidity and security versus instability and uncertainty, which is repeated throughout “Gravel.” The gravel pit symbolically embodies this split between what is solid and what is uncertain: “The pit was shallow enough to lead you to think that there might have been some other intention for it—foundations for a house, maybe, that never made it any further” (65).

After the mother leaves her husband, she is happy to have exchanged her solidly established house for Neal’s transient trailer. The father is an insurance salesman who sells people security against the future; Neal, on the other hand, with his concern about the atomic bomb, thinks there may be no future. “His philosophy, as he put it later, was to welcome whatever happened. Everything is a gift. We give and we take” (65). Neal accepts uncertainty. Meanwhile, Caro desires sta-

bility. When Neal asks Caro what would happen if they all disappeared and Blitzee had to fend for herself, Caro says that she is not going to disappear; she is always going to look after her dog. The narrator feels caught between stability and instability, between things that exist solidly in the world and things that are so unstable they simply disappear. Indeed, after Caro drowns, Neal does in fact disappear.

This stability/instability theme is reinforced throughout the story by the theme of “acting like an actor.” The mother dresses like an actress and leaves her husband for an actor because she wants to “really” live; this reflects the ambiguity between what is “real” life and what is play or pretend life. Neal acts like an actor, drifting, floating, subsuming himself rather than asserting himself as an individual: “He had performed as part of the chorus in ‘Oedipus Rex.’ He had liked that—the giving yourself over, blending with others” (65). The relationship between the solidity/instability theme and the acting/actor theme is also reflected when Neal is asked to play Banquo in *Macbeth*: “Sometimes they make Banquo’s ghost visible, sometimes not. This time they wanted a visible version and Neal was the right size. An excellent size. A solid ghost” (65). After Caro’s death, Neal writes a letter saying “that since he did not intend to act as a father it would be better for him to bow out at the start” (69).

When the narrator recalls sitting down outside the trailer rather than immediately knocking on the door, she says, “I know this because it’s a fact. I don’t know, however, what my plan was or what I was thinking. I was waiting, maybe, for the next act in Caro’s drama” (68). And indeed, her helplessness, her failure to act quickly, is a result of her not knowing what her “role” is in a drama that is not of her own making. From the time Caro instructs the narrator to go to the trailer and tell Neal and her mother, the narrator has no secure memory that the events happened, were about to happen, might have happened, or are what she imagined happened:

In my mind I can see her picking up Blitzee and tossing her, though Blitzee was trying to hang on to her coat. Then backing up, Caro backing up to take a run at the water. Running, jumping, all of a sudden hurling herself at the water. But I can't recall the sound of the splashes as they, one after the other, hit the water. Not a little splash or a big one. Perhaps I had turned toward the trailer by then—I must have done so. (68)

When the adult narrator meets Neal at the end of the story, he is still the voice of one who accepts life as it comes and refuses to feel responsibility about the past. His view about why Caro did what she did is that it does not matter: “‘The thing is to be happy,’ he says. ‘No matter what. Just try that. You can. It gets to be easier and easier. It’s nothing to do with circumstances. You wouldn’t believe how good it is. Accept everything and then tragedy disappears. Or tragedy lightens, anyway, and you’re just there, going along easy in the world.’” Although the narrator understands Neal’s advice, she cannot follow it: “I see what he meant. It really is the right thing to do. But, in my mind, Caro keeps running at the water and throwing herself, as if in triumph, and I’m still caught, waiting for her to explain to me, waiting for the splash” (70).

It is obviously true that if one accepts everything that happens, tragedy disappears. For example, if Oedipus had been able to accept the fact that he accidentally killed his own father and married his mother unawares, there would be no tragedy. If Ahab had been able to accept his first mate Starbuck’s advice that the whale was just a dumb brute, there would be no epic *Moby-Dick*. If Hamlet had been able to just go back to school and forget his doubts about his father’s death, the rottenness in Denmark would not have mattered. If Gatsby could just forget about Daisy, the word *great* would have no meaning in that book. If Kurtz would just get out of the jungle, there would be no *Heart of Darkness*. Indeed, if these characters could be less than heroically human, there would be no great literature. To be a human being in the world is to live in doubt and fear and trembling, not knowing why others do what they do, not knowing what really happened in the past, not

always being able to get on with one's life. And thus, like the narrator of "Gravel," human beings are caught waiting for an explanation, always waiting for the concrete confirmation of the splash.

One of the main reasons reviewers and other critics have tried to justify the complexity of Alice Munro's stories by arguing that they are "novelistic" is the assumption that because the short story tells a story, it must therefore be read by following the rules of reading temporal narrative—that is, by focusing on plot, character, context, and ideology. However, the short story as practiced by Munro and other great short-story writers does not depend on such conventional elements of the novel; rather, it depends on some unspeakable universal significance explored and communicated by the reiteration of themes through aesthetic patterns. Munro has said that when she reads a story, she does not take it up at the beginning and follow it like a road "with views and neat diversions along the way." Rather, for her, reading a story is like moving through a house, making connections between one enclosed space and another. Consequently, Munro declares, "When I write a story I want to make a certain kind of structure, and I know the feeling I want to get from being inside that structure" ("What Is Real?" 224). When Geoff Hancock asked her if the meaning of a story is more important to her than the event, she replied, "What happens as event doesn't really much matter. When the event becomes the thing that matters, the story isn't working too well" (Munro, "Interview" 81).

Daniel Menaker, editor in chief at Random House, has suggested that although somebody reading Munro might get the feeling that she is trying to "help you get at some true emotional psychological insight," that insight goes beyond the individual and "takes the form of a kind of philosophical surrender to the unknowability of people's motives and characters, a dark existential uncertainty about what makes people tick" (qtd. in Edemariam 20). The secret of Alice Munro's short stories is that she is able to suggest universal, unspoken human desires by describing what seems to be ordinary, everyday reality. Her stories are complex and powerful, not so much because of what happens in

them, but because of what cannot happen except in the mysterious human imagination.

## Works Cited

- Edemariam, Aida. "Profile: Alice Munro." *Guardian* 4 Oct. 2003: 20.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1998.
- Munro, Alice. "Axis." *New Yorker* 31 Jan. 2011: 63–69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Corrie." *New Yorker* 11 Oct. 2010: 95–101.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Gravel." *New Yorker* 27 June 2011: 64–70.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "An Interview with Alice Munro." By Geoff Hancock. *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 43 (1982): 74–114.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pride." *Harper's* Apr. 2011: 59–67.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Too Much Happiness*. New York: Knopf, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Is Real?" *Making It New: Contemporary Canadian Stories*. Ed. John Metcalf. Toronto: Methuen, 1982. 223–26.
- O'Connor, Frank. *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*. Cleveland: World, 1963.
- Rothstein, Mervyn. "Canada's Alice Munro Finds Excitement in Short-Story Form." *New York Times* 10 Nov. 1986: C17.