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**FAMILY HISTORIES AND HIDDEN STORIES:
METAFICTIONAL NOVELS OF GRAHAM SWIFT**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the twentieth century, the world experienced two great wars and their long lasting effects in the following years. These two great wars occurred successively; thousands of people died in the first one and those who escaped death were caught by the reality of another war. Their devastating effect on people would be obvious in the following years. As great number of people could not cope with crude reality in the post-war period, they would become traumatized which would be diagnosed in time. Since some war memories lost their significance in time, people could not distinguish between public and private histories truly. People who were curious about history and the past had only “representations of the past from which to construct [their] narratives or explanations” (Waugh 239). Accordingly, living in an age of turmoil showed itself in the narrative of post-war writers who grew up with the memories of war. These postmodern writers felt it compulsory to reconsider the past events.

Postmodernism emerged as a new literary movement in literary world and influenced writers in the post-war period. This literary movement disregarded the prevalent inclination to produce realist literary works. Accordingly, it did not adhere to an omniscient narrator, a linear plot structure,

and a definite ending which were elements of realist tradition. Meanwhile, it advocated fragmentation which was previously unfavourable for modernist writers. Intertextual elements such as allusion, irony, parody and pastiche were intentionally deployed and reference to other literary works was enabled. What is more, it promoted metafictional narrative techniques which tackled with nature of writing process which was equitably deployed by postmodern writers.

Graham Swift, who was born on May 4th, 1949, is one of these post-modern writers who has written nine novels so far. His first novel is *The Sweet-Shop Owner* which he introduced to the literary world in 1980. Two years later, he wrote *Shuttlecock* which became the winner of the 1983 Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. In the same year, he published *Learning to Swim*. In 1983, he published *Waterland* which won the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. In the following years he brought out five more novels: *Out of This World* (1988); *Ever After* (1992); *Last Orders* (1996) - which is the winner of the 1996 Booker Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize - *The Light of Day* (2003); and *Tomorrow* (2007). In the following years, he experimented on short story writing and completed writing his first short story *Chemistry* in 2008, and in the subsequent year *Making an Elephant: Writing from Within* was published. Finally, he published his last novel, *Wish You Were Here* in 2011.

Problematic issues concerning human beings predominate Swift's narrative. Notably, the presence of war in his characters' lives is undeniable in most of his novels. While some of these characters have participated in the war, the others are affected indirectly. In her article "Dismembering/Remembering Mimesis: Martin Amis, Graham Swift", Catherine Bernard notes that characters of Swiftian narrative are "confronted with the brute power of darkness" (129). What Swift unequivocally proclaims in his narrative is that the haunting experiences of war time persist to affect their psychologies badly.

Swift is studied by critics such as Stef Craps, Catherine Bernard, Pamela Cooper and Daniel Lea. His novels are examples of a tradition, as Harriet Blodgett states:

By observing how Swift depicts family tensions and their fluctuations, one realizes that his novels are continuators of a fictional tradition, for his books remain intensely mimetic despite their involved time schemes, casual plots, and sometimes multiple narrators. (312)

These critics have remarked some crucial patterns of Swiftian narrative. One of them is the setting of his novels. Swift's novels mostly take place in South London where he was born and brought up. In his article "History and the Here and Now: The Novels of Graham Swift", Del Ivan Janik maintains the importance of this particular setting: "the South London of Swift's novels has the same kind of physical presence and the same potential for mythical status as

the Nottinghamshire of Lawrence or the Dublin of Joyce” (74). Another particular pattern of Swiftian narrative is his choice of characters. His characters are virtually members of working class. They live in South London and they are not sophisticated. On the contrary, they are common people who try to make sense of the world. What is more, Del Ivan Janik states that “Swift’s characters are ordinary – on the surface they might seem hopelessly dull - but their experiences and their responses to experience cut to some of the central issues in life” (74). In addition to setting and characters, Swift is critical in his use of recurring motifs and elements. Tamas Bényei highlights Swift’s inclination in writing:

. . . the experience of the Second World War, the oppressive presence of a heroic soldier figure, usually the father, the ubiquity of mental hospitals, prosthetic limbs, certain types of family conflicts, the psychological and anthropological concern with storytelling and with images, the ethical quandary involved in the contrast between the desire to know and the pain that this knowledge might bring. (42)

Even though the motifs vary, the truth lying in the center of the narrative never changes. What Swift attempts to underline is “the simple truth that we behave as the heart and mind ever will us to do” (Blodgett 301). In other words he endorses the notion that characters dwell upon their feelings rather than their rationality in each of his novels. Furthermore, he believes in the power of

familial love which can be restored even when it seems to fade away. It particularly provides victims of the Second World War with the strength and affection they need to cope with their troubles.

Thus, Swift often tells the stories of people living in the twentieth century in which two world wars damaged their psychology and their perception of reality as well. Swift's novels may only seem as contemporary novels, however:

His novels most often and at their best are psychological studies directed to interactions, not just storehouses of contemporary ideas about the impossibility of universals, historical knowledge, or Truth, as they are usually figured to be. (Blodgett 311)

Catherine Bernard comments on the general portrayal of main characters in Swiftian narrative: "protagonists are gradually invaded by an excruciating feeling of private and historical inadequacy" (217). While Swift seems to be dealing with humble stories of ordinary people in his novels, as a matter of fact, practically the protagonists face certain hardships in private and public life and feel urged to set off on a long journey into the memories of the past.

Swift does not employ a linear plot structure. Characters' disturbed psychology does not allow them to tell their stories chronologically. Peter Childs, in *Contemporary Novelists, British Fiction since 1970*, notes this feature:

Swift's novels almost variably allow the central characters to tell their own story, but use disturbed chronology, reminiscence, and flashback to juxtapose individuals and

situations across time, casting the borrowed light of the past on family relationships in the present. (217)

Moreover, in his metafictional novels, the centre of attention is on the constructed lives of the characters. Vanessa Guignery points out this common feature: "Swift enjoys lifting up the roots of his fictitious houses . . . in order to weave for us the prefabric of their invented lives" (97). In all of his novels, his characters are first portrayed as happy individuals contented with their lives. Hard as the characters try, they cannot keep away from the burden of both private and public histories. David Malcolm in *Understanding Graham Swift* writes:

Swift is manifestly a writer who, in almost all his fiction, is deeply interested in procedures, claims and difficulties of giving both fictional and nonfictional accounts of the world. Different aspects of his art-intertextuality, intermittently baroque vocabulary and syntax, nonchronological narratives, explicit discussion of problem of telling events and of knowing the truth-all show this clearly. (22)

However, Swiftian characters attain the power to fictionalize their lives so as to hide their secrets. Swift generally uses flashback technique; thus, every event becomes meaningful through the end of his novels. Additionally, Swift tends to underline the possibility that there can be different perception of reality and prefers telling the stories from the point of view of multiple narrators. Since he deploys multiple narrators, there happens to be certain repetitions in the plot. Yet, the plot structure allows unexpected revelations to occur as well. The

reason for certain repetitions in some patterns is that Swift attempts to draw attention to:

A pervasive feeling of the artificiality of families alongside repeated images of individuals attracted to constructed ties that are sought to compensate for the disappointments of blood relations. Families appear to be composed of fragments in search of whole. (Childs 226)

Thus, children of the families are inevitably affected by 'parental influence', 'ancestry' and destiny even if they try hard to avoid it. (Childs 227)

Married couples prevail Swiftian novels. He mostly narrates the stories of secrets and separations from the point of view of male characters. Actually, what he tries to prove is that female characters have a better judgement and they are strong enough to live on their own. Hence, widows are more usual than widowers in his narrative. Daniel Lea mentions men's inability to implement the tasks they undertake: "men are seen as the transmitters of knowledge, values, and standards in Swift's texts, but they are universally incapable of fulfilling the roles they take upon themselves" ("Feigning Reason" 161). Male characters account for the need to tell their stories. Their incentive behind this act is that if they do not narrate their stories from their perspectives they cannot exist, as Lewis Macleod points out: "the preoccupation with making, handling, and reading texts is of primary significance for Swift's male characters because they recognize that self is story, that the unnarrated is the nonexistent" (386). They

awkwardly deal with the troubles they have with their daughters and sons now that “being a member of a family entails responsibilities and obligations, the routine acts that acknowledge the past and fall somewhere between duty and love” (Childs 225) and occasionally their deaths seem to be the only condition resolving their anguish. Daniel Lea underlines how men function in the novels: “the impossibility of passing on a consciousness of maleness is represented by unbreakable silences and secrecies between generations, often exacerbated by things left unsaid at the deaths of protagonists” (161). Additionally, Harriet Blodgett marks the noncommunication between two generations: fathers-sons, fathers-daughters:

Although, in postmodernist fashion, [Swift] often questions the truth of history and many truths of Western civilization, he always takes a narrower, sustained interest in domestic relations, usually unhappily marital or conflicted between parent and child, especially for sons unwilling to follow in the parental footsteps. (298)

Blodgett further maintains that Swift mostly deals with father-daughter relationship instead of father-son relationship in his novels, and he does this deliberately:

Though Swift’s characters certainly inhabit a universe without universals, given the quiet but firm emphasis Swift has maintained on father-daughter relations, he may just as well, without allegorizing, be increasingly showing up the flaws in patriarchy. (299)

Due to the impact of the World Wars, Swift stresses the impossibility of an access to any objective reality. Therefore, his choice of writing metafictional novels is not coincidental. Metafiction as a technique makes use of self-conscious narrators or parodying a literary work. Likewise, Bill, the protagonist of *Ever After* parodies Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. In *Out of This World*, two different versions of reality of war are told by two different narrators. Apart from these, in all of the five novels studied in this thesis deploy multiple narrators which means different commentaries on the events.

The major aim of this thesis is to foreground common features of Swiftian narrative in his five novels. As the title of the thesis suggests, the essential part of the novels are based on family histories affected by public history. The main reason for implementing this study on Graham Swift and his five novels is to show Swift's desire to understand human psychology and his never ending curiosity to scrutinize everything that makes them human. Though the novels seem to cover similar issues, they differ from each other in their narrative style. This thesis is comprised of two main chapters. Keeping all of these assumptions in mind, the first part will examine major traits of postmodernism. In addition, elements and forms it employs in literature will be scrutinized. The first part of the first chapter will dwell upon postmodernism as a term and its implementation in literature. Metafiction, then, will be scrutinized with regard to its introduction of a new role for readers and writers. Afterwards, the function of

deploying irony and parody will be discussed. In the last part, not only significance but also hardship of storytelling and history writing will be examined.

The second chapter of this thesis covers the study of five novels of Graham Swift: *Out of This World* (1989), *Ever After* (1992), *Last Orders* (1996), *The Light of Day* (2004), *Tomorrow* (2007). In terms of content, these novels pursue common features: For example, they are about families who are in search of their family histories. The narrators have the privilege to fictionalize their lives in their narratives, in their attempt to understand their family histories. Moreover, the families have difficulties of separating the public and private histories. On the other hand, all characters experience either the Second World War or the after effects of it. Besides, all of the novels cover certain family conflicts, which are between fathers-daughters or between mothers-sons. The first part of the second chapter referring to *Out of This World*, which is narrated by two close witnesses of war, concentrates on "Trauma" and how the First and Second World War shape the lives of three members of The Beech family. The novel tells the inevitable effect of Second World War on the family, which results in lack of communication during and after the war. Distinction in perceptions of war never permits members of the family to make a compromise. Furthermore, it provides parallel narratives of a father and a daughter in the scope of twentieth century.

The second part centres on the “Intertextual” relationship between the novel *Ever After* and the play, *Hamlet*. After an unsuccessful suicide attempt and loss of his wife, mother and step-father Bill Unwin seeks a guidance back in his family past and discovers Matthew Pearce manuscripts. From then on, he not only attempts to sympathize with Matthew but also resolves problematical sides of his life, which is full of hidden stories. Meanwhile, metafictional writing technique introduces the freedom to fictionalize his story. The third part of Chapter II is concerned with *Last Orders* and it is studied in relation to the term, “Chronotope”, coined by M. M. Bakhtin. The novel narrates the long journey of four men setting off for the south coast to fulfil the duty of scattering ashes of Jack Dodds. Interconnected lives of these men result in revelation of some secrets that should never be known for the sake of the continuation of family lives and marriages. The fourth part of the thesis discusses *The Light of Day* with regards to binary opposition between rationality and irrationality. It is an account of a day of the narrator, George Webb, who makes an inner journey back into his insecure childhood. Additionally, on this particular date, while George accounts for his regrets about his life, he also narrates how his story and his client Sarah’s, accused of murdering her husband, overlap. The last part is about *Tomorrow*, which is the recount of a mother directing her story to her sleeping twins. It is centred around the difficulty of accounting for past events in the present which means not holding back any secrets: an objective

account of a lifetime. What is more, it depicts stories of two parents who participated in the Second World War disparately. *Tomorrow* is mostly discussed in terms of story telling.

Postmodernism: A Movement that Resists Limitation and Definition

Defining postmodernism is disputed, since the word 'postmodern' itself "paradoxically refers to what is after ('post') and the contemporary ('modern')" (Bennet 231). As Charles Bressler asserts in his book, *Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, it means "after modernity" or "just after now" from its Latin root meaning "just now" (99). Although it is related to the present, it does not break its bonds with the past. Additionally, Andrew Bennet and Nicholas Royle point out in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, "the postmodern should not be thought of as a term of periodization: the postmodern challenges our thinking about time, challenges us to see the present in the past, the future in the present, the present in a kind of no-time" (Bennet 231). As a result, postmodernism is a term that is difficult to define. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, in "An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory", mention that: "It resists the totalizing gesture of a metalanguage, the attempt to describe it as a set of coherent explanatory theories" (231). Therefore, it would not be incorrect to say that postmodernism resists limitation and definition. In Linda Hutcheon's explanation, postmodernism is a "contradictory phenomenon that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (*A Postmodern* 243). By working in this way, postmodernism tries to turn everything upside down in order to show the double sided structure of

everything. As Ihab Hassan asserts in his article, "The Question of Postmodernism", its paradoxical structure makes it "suffer from a certain semantic instability" (32).

Although postmodernism is a movement that emerged in the 1960s, it is prevalent not only in literature but also in other artistic fields in the 1980s. As Linda Hutcheon maintains in *The Politics of Postmodernism*:

Postmodernism manifests itself in many fields of cultural endeavour-architecture, literature, photography, film, painting, video, dance, music, and elsewhere. In general terms it takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement. It is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said. (1)

Its presence in every field is due to the fact that it deals with culture which is a human construct. Hutcheon, in *A Postmodern Reader*, asserts that postmodernism does not introduce resolutions for the problems that modernism was not able to deal with, on the contrary it strives:

To show that all repairs are human constructs, but that from that very fact they derive their value as well as their limitations. All repairs are both comforting and illusory. Postmodernist interrogations of humanist certainties live within this kind of contradiction. (248)

Through culture, postmodernism tries to show that in life the things that are believed to be natural are in fact constructed, "made by us, not given to us"

(*The Politics* 2). This attempt leads to de-naturalize, concepts that are accepted to be natural. At that point, representation becomes vital. The problematical border between life and art blurs. As Bennett and Royle maintain, “since the postmodern challenges the distinction between mimesis or art on the one hand and the real on the other, it contests the modes of its own representation, of representation itself” (238-9).

Postmodernism is not nostalgic but it emphasizes that reconsidering the past is compulsory. As Hutcheon asserts postmodernism “suggests no search for transcendent, timeless meaning but rather a re-evaluation of, and a dialogue with the past in the light of the present” (*A Poetics* 261). The past is important, as postmodernism seeks for hints to reach alternative pasts; however, Hutcheon states in *A Postmodern Reader*, “it is always a critical reworking, never a nostalgic return” (245). Thus, as Bressler mentions it relies on “no objective reality, but many subjective interpretations” (101). Moreover, it has a kind of “a scepticism or rejection of grand metanarratives to explain reality” (Bressler 101).

In literature, postmodernism makes experimentation and innovation possible. Hutcheon maintains that the distinction between literary genres blur, therefore there is no certain border separating the novel and the short-story collection and the novel and history, the novel and biography, or the novel and the long poem, the novel and autobiography (*A Postmodern Reader* 250).

Thus, the border between genres no longer remains. The boundaries are not only between the genres but also between fact and fiction. However, the disappearance of the boundaries is not a simple task, on the contrary “the conventions of the two genres are played off against each other; there is no simple, unproblematic merging” (Hutcheon 250). During the evaluation of literary genres, parody becomes an important postmodernist form. As Hutcheon states, it not only “incorporates and challenges that which it parodies” but also “forces a reconsideration of the idea of origin or originality” (*A Postmodern* 251).

Postmodernism makes more than one interpretation of a text possible, since there is not a correct meaning. Bressler explains this as: “all definitions and depictions of truth are subjective, simply creations of human minds. Truth itself is relative depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences in one’s life” (99). Truth and meaning are prone to change, they can be subjective and so the self. The postmodernist notion of truth “as subjective and perspectival, dependent on cultural, social, and personal influences” allows multiple narrators or absence of a narrator. Hutcheon maintains the changing role of the narrator/self:

The perceiving subject is no longer assumed to be a coherent, meaning-generating entity. Narrators in fiction become either disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate or resolutely provisional and limited – often undermining their own seeming omniscience. (*A Postmodern* 252)

As the narrators undergo an important change, the issues of the novels are apt to change as well. Hutcheon writes that “the center no longer completely holds; from the decentered perspective, the ‘marginal’ and the ex-centric take on new significance” (*A Postmodern* 252). Similarly, Ihab Hassan draws the same parallelism, the structure of postmodernism “by invoking two divinities at once, demands a double view” (“The Question” 32).

In literature, postmodernism introduces discontinuity followed by fragmentation, dislocation, decentering, selflessness and depthlessness. Peter Barry maintains that “for the postmodernist, fragmentation is an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobic embrace of fixed systems of belief” (84). In addition to fragmentation, postmodernism also deploys parody and irony. Both parody and irony work to de-naturalize “by both using and ironically abusing general conventions and specific forms of representation” (Hutcheon 8). Ihab Hassan maintains, in his article “Pluralism in Postmodern Perspective”, that “irony, perspectivism, reflexivity: these express the ineluctable recreations of mind in search of a truth that continually eludes it, leaving it with only an ironic access or excess of self-consciousness” (506).

Postmodernism strives to bring to surface what is hidden and separate the real from the replica. Paradoxically, “the distinction between what is real and what is simulated collapses: *everything* is a model or an image, all is surface

without depth” (Barry 89). This corresponds with postmodernism’s acceptance of multiple correct meaning and interpretation. As well as culture, postmodernism views history as human construct. Hutcheon maintains that “history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and ‘gleefully’ deny that the *past* existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality” (*A Postmodern* 256). Postmodernism acknowledges documents, evidences and eye-witness accounts as documents of the past which recount past events and establish a connection between the past and the present.

In postmodern literature, just as the self and the narrator gain new roles, the writer also has a new identity. As Jean François Lyotard asserts:

A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text and to the work.
(124)

When the writing process commences, the characters become alive. The writer introduces new rules, as Lyotard maintains:

The artist and the writer are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*. Hence the fact that the work and text have the characters of an *event*, hence also, they always come too late for their

author, or, what amounts to the same thing, their being put into work, their realization always begin too soon. (124).

The writer's task becomes an art of making up new meanings. As Patricia Waugh maintains in her book, *Postmodernism: A Reader*, the writer's "business is not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented" (125). The writer should be able to represent what is unrepresentable.

In conclusion, postmodernism is undoubtedly a tentative term to define. Its dynamic and innovative structure provides it with distinctive properties. Namely, it suggests subjectivity of any knowledge and introduces a new comment on past events. Additionally, it employs fragmentation, applies multiple narrators and also makes use of parody and irony in the construction of literary works with regards to literature. Moreover, it offers new realms of imagination not only for writers but also for readers.

Metafiction: Revealing the Boundary between Fact and Fiction

The literary world of the twentieth century confronted some problems that include “the problem of analyzing the relationship between man and his metaphors, between objective and subjective views of the world” as Larry McCaffery maintains in his article “Fiction Making and The Metafictional Muse” (11). Another problem McCaffery puts is “the notion of man-as-fiction-maker . . . along with the rejection of the concept of dogmatic, absolute truth” (11). In literature, writers challenged the notion of objective reality when they experienced new writing techniques. In relation to this, metafiction as a technique became popular once more in 1960s. This new writing technique was witnessed in the novels that “defied many of the accepted premises regarding what we had come to expect from fiction” (McCaffery 3). In her book, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as “a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (2).

Metafiction, as a self-conscious writing process, is well aware of the fictional structure of the literary works and constructedness of the world outside the fictional world. Paradoxically, the fictional structure of a literary work reveals the fictionality of the real world. McCaffery foregrounds the impossibility for

fiction to reflect reality, since “fiction cannot hope to mirror reality or tell the truth because ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ are themselves fictional abstractions” (5). The main concern of metafiction is pointed out by Patricia Waugh as “the implications of the shift from the context of ‘reality’ to that of ‘fiction’ and the complicated interpenetration of the two” (*Metafiction* 36). Metafiction by laying bare literary conventions makes the interwoven frame between reality and fiction unequivocal. How metafiction fulfils this task is stated by Waugh as follows: “play is facilitated by rules and roles, and metafiction operates by exploring fictional rules to discover the role of fictions in life. It aims to discover how we each ‘play’ our own realities” (*Metafiction* 35). This does not mean that metafiction breaks away from real world, on the contrary, it aims to “re-examine the conventions of realism in order to discover – through its own self-reflection– a fictional form that is culturally relevant and comprehensible to contemporary readers” (Waugh 18).

The problem for the writers of metafiction is the reality itself. That’s why; the writers of metafiction acknowledge the reality of their writing process only. The writing process for them becomes the topic of their writing, so they have no concern for the conventions of realistic novel. As Patricia Waugh maintains, realistic novel conventions include:

the well-made plot, chronological sequence, the authoritative omniscient author, the rational connection between what characters ‘do’ and what they ‘are’, the

casual connection between 'surface' details and the 'deep', 'scientific laws' of existence. (*Metafiction* 7)

What the writers of metafiction attempt to depict is their own idea of reality. In McCaffery's words, they "turn inward, to focus not on reality but on the imagination's response to reality – a response which became recognized as the *only* aspect of reality which could ever be known" (13). When metafictional writers allow the reader to participate in the writing process, they contemplate to show the reader that making fiction and creating reality is more or less the same. To show how literary conventions function, they make use of "parody and "inversion" as "frame-breaks" (Waugh 31).

The metafictional works, as Larry McCaffery maintains, "share a sense of playfulness and self-consciousness and are further unified by their wilful artificiality and by their central preoccupation with metafictional concerns" (4). In addition to this, Catherine Bernard, in her article "Dismembering/Remembering Mimesis: Martin Amis, Graham Swift", mentions an important function of metafictional novels: "[they] question and foreground the way we make sense of the world; they also . . . reaffirm the necessity for fiction to shoulder reality" (122). In terms of characters, metafictional novels are: "literary signs on a page before they are anything else" (Waugh 56) and these characters are totally aware of their constructedness. It is maintained by Patricia Waugh that "not only do the characters in this novel play roles, 'fictionalize' in terms of the *content* of

the plot; they too are 'fictionalized', created, through the *formal construction* of the plot" (18). These characters, who are a product of the novelist's imagination, remind the readers the fictionality of their existence as well. In "The Literature of Exhaustion", John Barth maintains the existential dilemma of the readers: "when the characters in a work of fiction become readers or authors of the fiction they're in, we're reminded of the fictitious aspect of our own existence" (169).

As for the importance of the writer, writers of metafiction do not possess the privileges as realistic writers since existence of an omniscient author is not entailed in metafictional works. Rather, author is regarded as an extension of constructed reality. Barth emphasizes the new condition of the metafictional novelist who "becomes a kind of critic by writing a novel about the 'used-upness' of novelistic forms, or a novel which imitates a novel rather than the world" (161). Patricia Waugh mentions this new condition of the writers:

Metafictional novels . . . reject the traditional figure of the author as a transcendental imagination fabricating, through an ultimately monologic discourse, structures of order which will replace the forgotten material text of the world. (16)

Morton Levitt in his book *The Rhetoric of Modernist Fiction: From A New Point of View*, comments on the influence of metafictional narrative technique: "metafiction is often charming, sometimes provocative, too often derivative and

bland-for novelists to make their own critical statements about their enterprise” (159).

The problem of conveying reality through the medium of language is an issue for metafiction writer. Metafiction as a self-conscious narrative breaks away from literary conventions and tackles with the fictional structure of literary world and the real world, which is essentially interested in the language. Metafiction proposes that “language is an independent, self-contained system which generates its own “meanings” (Waugh 3) which shows the power and structure of language. The question of how reality can be represented via language is one of the main concerns of the metafictional writers. The starting point for the metafictional writer is “the assumption that we are forever locked within a world shaped by language” as Larry McCaffery asserts in his article “Fiction Making and The Metafictional Muse” (6). McCaffery further maintains that “within the act of creation, of fiction making, we can find the key to unlocking the complexities of self-definition and the manner in which we project this definition through language” (6). The metafictional writer “*builds* his worlds out of words, concepts, and rules of transformation and inference. The fiction-maker does not ‘describe’ because there is literally nothing ‘out there’ to which his words may be said properly to refer” (McCaffery 153-4). However, metafictional writers do not rely on language’s ability to convey meaning:

In the face of a growing lack of faith in the ability of language to reproduce reality, linguistically and

diegetically self-conscious fiction asserts both the autonomy and validity of these creations of language, and the important “vital” function of that creative action itself – for author and reader. (*Narcissistic* 140)

The reader’s attention is aroused since metafiction as Linda Hutcheon asserts, breaks “the traditional realistic illusion, constantly jolts the reader back to his own orientation, [reminds] him that he is reading a novel or short-story” (148). Moreover, metafictional writing in her words, is a “narcissistic narrative”, she explains why it is called narcissistic: “Such fiction is narcissistic in that it encourages an active personal response to itself *and* creates a space for that response within itself” (*Narcissistic* 141). In metafictional works, the reader functions as an entity that shares the writing process of the novelists. Throughout the novel, the reader and the author work in harmony. The changed role of the reader, as Linda Hutcheon wrote in her book *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, is “a function implicit in the text, an element of the narrative situation” (139). This fact makes the reader implement a self-conscious reading process. The act of reading is disrupted by non-linear plot structure and the reader has to keep alert. Moreover, the reader cannot undergo identification with the characters of the novel. Hutcheon mentions the new task of the reader:

By reminding the reader of the book’s identity as an artifice, the text parodies his expectations, his desire for

verisimilitude, and forces him to an awareness of his own role in creating the universe of fiction. (*Narcissistic* 139)

Unequivocally, the reader plays a part in the creation of the text. S/he has to create a world of his/her own from the words of the author. Hutcheon asserts the significance of the reader: "the text's reality is established by [the reader's] response and reconstituted by his active participation" (141).

What is more, the reader turns out to be the one who interprets the text rather than the one who receives the message. In Hutcheon's words:

The reader must work to decipher the text as hard as the writer did to cipher it, with the result that the stress of the work is displaced from the communicating of a message to the inciting to produce meaning, as well as order. (*Narcissistic* 144)

Consequently, the reader turns to be an active and creative entity by participating in the interpretation of the literary work. It is as if the reader is no longer a "spectator" but s/he is a "participant" in the writing process (Hutcheon 147). The reader should forget about the previous reading and s/he must be an active participant of the reading process.

To sum up, the writer, the reader and language take up new tasks in metafiction writing process. The writers of metafiction, whose attempt is to question reality, break away from conventions while creating a literary work. They no longer apply the conventions such as the need to create a well-

constructed plot and they do not let the reader identify themselves with the characters. In contrast, the reader creates the literary work with the writer. Thus, both the reader and the writer gain a new role. In addition to these, in the creation process of a fictional work, the possible meanings conveyed through language are attributed more and more importance. The new condition of the writer and the reader, new realms of meaning are challenging aspects of metafiction writing process.

Irony & Parody: Revisiting the Tradition of the Past

Postmodern fiction is open to experimentation in terms of fictional writing. In his article, "Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable", Umberto Eco defines postmodernism as "a way of operating" (226). Its critical approach to writing conventions makes it a commentary on narrative styles. Thus, postmodern fiction and the literary devices it makes use of are constantly critical. In this sense, irony and parody are literary devices postmodern fiction employs. Jack C. Gray defines irony as "a trope in which an intended meaning is opposite to, or nearly opposite to an apparent meaning as in deliberate understatement and in some kinds of sarcasm" ("Irony" 220). Apparently, irony brings out discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. Parody not only creates the same effect, but also gives way for the critique of itself, or it makes new versions of the text possible. William Van O'Connor in his article, "Parody as Criticism" draws attention to the relation between parody and irony: "parody is a form of irony, of simulation, saying one thing and partly intending another" (248). Parody functions in two layers simultaneously; while it is concerned with the original text, it also comments on the same text. Consequently, it makes use of irony to implement this task.

As two postmodern devices, irony and parody neither reject nor accept conventions. In the creation process, they take part in the construction of the

bridge between the past and the present. As Linda Hutcheon maintains, in *The Politics of Postmodernism*, “parody becomes a way of ironically revisiting the past-of both art and history” (103-4). By using the power of ironic thinking, parody and irony question both art and history. The quality of parody to question itself and also validation of new interpretations of the parodied text make it a reflexive device. Michele Hannoosh in “The Reflexive Function of the Parody”, states that “reflexivity is inherent in the definition of parody as a comical retelling and transformation of another text” (113). Thus, parody fulfils its function in postmodern discourse. Umberto Eco maintains that postmodern discourse demands “not the negation of the already said, but its ironic rethinking” (227), hence the importance of irony and parody in postmodern discourse become unequivocal.

Representation plays a vital role in postmodern fiction in which the difficulty is grasped with irony and parody. As Hutcheon mentions “postmodern parody is both deconstructively critical and constructively creative, paradoxically making us aware of both the limits and the powers of representation - in any medium” (*The Politics* 98). In this sense, parodying requires the knowledge of the text parodied which causes rethinking of a former text. Umberto Eco maintains that “the postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognising that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently” (227). The ironic

rethinking of the past aims to uncover, and it allows for possible representations.

Parody intends to create different interpretations of a text. As Hutcheon mentions, due to the function of its reflexive nature “parody is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies” (*The Politics* 101). While it creates a new interpretation of a text, it deconstructs the same text simultaneously. As O’Connor maintains, parody “praises while it condemns” (248). In the article, “The Reflexive Function of the Parody”, Michele Hannoosh states that:

A parody must even allow for a critique of itself such as it has performed on the original. This distinguishes parodic renewals from more generally intertextual ones, which are not obliged to make critical demands upon themselves in this way; the comic element present in parody, on the other hand, render such self-criticism virtually compulsory. (113)

The comic part of the parody stems from its mocking structure. Larry McCaffery writes that parody “mocks the realistic claims of artistic significance and truth” (5).

Although parody seems to mock the target text, it contributes to literature since it foregrounds the literary or artistic discrepancies of the text. Hannoosh states that “through its essential self-reflexivity, parody, rather, constantly demonstrates its awareness of contributing to the tradition that it mocks” (120).

What is more, it challenges the literary conventions. As Hutcheon, in *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, mentions “parody develops out of the realization of the literary inadequacies of a certain convention” (50). Therefore, it opens a path to innovation in literary tradition. As Hannoosh points out, parody “acknowledges that its version is not the only one, or the definitive one, or even, ironically, an important one, but merely one among any, past, present, and future” (125). Parody, “through a double process of installing and ironizing, signals how present representations come from past ones” (*The Politics* 93), hence it establishes a connection between the past representations and present ones.

Hutcheon maintains some tasks of postmodernism: “unacknowledged modernist assumptions about closure, distance, artistic autonomy, and the apolitical nature of representation are what postmodernism sets out to uncover and deconstruct” (*The Politics* 99). Postmodern fiction uses irony and parody to attract reader’s attention. Hutcheon states that:

Parody—often called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriation, or intertextuality – is usually considered central to postmodernism. For artists, the postmodern is said to involve a rummaging through the image reserves of the past in such a way as to show the history of the representations their parody calls to our attention. (*The Politics* 93)

Postmodern works accept the fictional structure of literary works and reality; however, it is not anticipated that while reading a literary work the reader also acknowledges the constructed structure of the work (McCaffery 5). Parodied text breaks the identification between the character and the reader. The text mocks reader's expectations and desire for verisimilitude by making him recall the book's identity as artifice, and makes him aware of his own part in constructing the universe of fiction. Therefore, parody also subverts the role of the reader. Eco states that in postmodern discourse there is a possibility "not to understand the game" and therefore "to take it seriously" (227). The reader needs to learn the conventions to understand parody. Parody "demands that the reader learn rules, codes . . . in order to understand the text" (Hutcheon 83). The reader is conscious of the fictive construction of the text throughout the reading process. If the reader is not conscious, s/he experiences "the complicity of postmodern parody . . . that is central to its ability to be understood" (*The Politics* 105) which means the text to be left decoded.

The notion of originality is subverted by mocking and parodying. Hutcheon points out one of the functions of parody: "the notion of original as rare, single, and valuable is called into question" (*The Politics* 93). By questioning the originality, parody acknowledges the past; however it subverts it simultaneously. As William Van O'Connor in his article, "Parody as Criticism", mentions "one of the functions of parody is to make us see, or better, let us

experience, the nature of a style and subject, and their excesses” (241). While working on a text, parody allows not only for new interpretations, but also the parody of itself. Robert Chambers, in *Parody: The Art That Plays with Art*, foregrounds the creative power of parody: “tinkering with unusual or worn out conventions can produce all manner of parodic fermentation, and that can lead to new conventions, however modest or estimable the new material turns out to be” (25). Parody not only contributes in rewriting another work, but also allows the existence of another one within itself, drawing the attention of the reader to the relationship between works of art, and also the possibilities of creation in a limited source. It engages with new conventions instead of dealing with former conventions.

To sum up, it can be summarized that irony and parody as two postmodern devices, create a contradiction between what is said and what is meant. On the one hand, while this feature of irony and parody agrees with the former representation of the text, on the other hand, it challenges it. While putting this feature into practice, parody allows for questioning its own existence and creating new representations. The act of reading becomes meaningless, if the reader does not know the parodied text. While it introduces new possibilities in literary tradition, the reader gains more responsibilities.

Story Telling and Historiography

In an interview Swift claims that “in life generally we’re constantly telling stories, constantly comforting ourselves, entertaining . . . strengthening ourselves and each other through telling narratives of one kind or another; they don’t have to be sophisticated” (Bernard 231). In the same way, Roland McKinney, in his article, “The Greening of Postmodernism: Graham Swift’s *Waterland*” tries to explain humans’ need to tell stories:

The motivation for fiction is twofold: either we are bored with the dullness of reality or we are overwhelmed at its savage capacity to upset all our fictive quest for order, in which case, we invent new “histories” to recover our serenity. These become boring soon enough, and we await the ever recurrent attacks of the “Here and Now” to prompt the creation of fresher “histories” to provide us our needed explanations, which are never ever the complete and the final ones. (826)

In storytelling how something is said is more important than what is said, thus the form of the story draws much more attention. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon mentions that “in the twentieth century there has been an increasing suspicion of narrative plot and its artifice, yet no diminishing of our reliance on plotting, however ironised or parodied” (232). The plot preserves its value since the reader keeps his/her faith in its existence.

Moreover, the need for the plot never changes due to the fact that meaning resides in the story. In *On stories and Histories: Selected Essays*, A. S. Byatt points out the significance of the way a story is told: “primary importance of the tale, or the myth, as told, the story itself not this or that ascribed meaning or interpretation” (129).

Linda Hutcheon maintains the function of storytelling by stating that “narrative is what translates knowing into telling” (121). Mark Currie mentions that “in fiction we get [intimacy] through the narrator, either reliably reported by the narrator or through direct access to the minds of characters” (*A Poetics* 19). Therefore, it may seem necessary to build reader-character identification. However, in postmodern fiction, storytelling becomes a problematic entity, especially in metafiction.

Not only narrative representation but also representation of the past is seen as problematic in postmodernism. Hutcheon states:

They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. (*A Poetics* 105)

Narrative representation and representation of the past differ in some respects. History deals with reality, on the other hand, Hutcheon writes the difference

between history writing and fiction writing as “there are important parallels between the processes of history-writing and fiction-writing and among the most problematic of these are their common assumptions about narrative and about the nature of mimetic representation” (*A Poetics* 239).

Both real events and their interpretations reside in the constitution of history. David Malcolm writes that “the word ‘history’ denoted not only a set of events, but also the narrative account that tells of those events” (22). Likewise, the novelists follow the same pattern. They not only tell accounts of factual events in history but also harmonize them with their own comments of these events. Consequently, they carry out a difficult task by narrating the past in the present time. A. S. Byatt draws attention to the fact that even though the narrators change “each retelling is inside the original and its predecessors” (*On stories* 140). The new versions of the same story share certain parts no matter how they are narrated. Morton Levitt in *The Rhetoric of Modernist Fiction: from a New Point of View*, defines the nature of narrators:

We may be encouraged to speak also of a narrator, whether or not there is an act of telling, whether or not there is an audience, identifiable or implied—even an audience to be explicitly rejected — whether someone in the story is present to relate the events; by speaking of them, by writing them down, by planning to write or speak about them, even perhaps by thinking about them, so long as communication (or its denial) is somehow possible. (47)

The act of narration has the uppermost element, thus the past can be interpreted differently by different narrators. As Hutcheon asserts “teller – of story or history – also constructs those very facts by giving a particular meaning to events. The tellers speak for them [words], making these fragments of the past into a discursive whole” (*A Poetics* 239). Narrators attain a new mission which is to provide a sense of a whole. However, while implementing this task, they cannot hinder their own perceptions or comments about the historical events. In this respect, they shape the discourse according to their own perceptions of the past events. History as a text is a “discursive construct upon which fiction draws as easily as it does upon other texts of literature” (*A Poetics* 142).

Different approaches to the facts as regards of events make multiple interpretations of historical events possible. As Hutcheon writes:

Among the consequences of the postmodern desire to denaturalise history is a new self-consciousness about the distinction between the brute *events* of the past and the historical *facts* we construct out of them. Facts are events to which we have given meaning. Different historical perspectives therefore derive different facts from the same events. (*A Poetics* 238)

Hence, fact and fiction intermingle in history writing. Hutcheon asserts “history as narrative account is unavoidably figurative, allegorical, fictive; it is always already textualized, always already interpreted” (“The Problem” 143).

Postmodernism makes the narration of history a confusing issue. History as a human construct is open to interpretation. Moreover, the questioning quality of postmodernism does not allow a nostalgic look to the past since the critical look of postmodernism is an attempt to understand the past. Del Ivan Janik, in "History and the Here and Now: The Novels of Graham Swift", maintains that "history is a matter of reflection, the attempt to retrieve or find or impose logic and order on what is neither logical nor orderly; it is the creation of public reality" (85). Hence historical knowledge is not an objective recording but it is a subjective interpretation.

To sum up, storytelling is the most significant component in the writing process of a literary work. Consequently, Graham Swift asserts that it is ridiculous to ask a writer the question "So what is the meaning of your novel? – because the meaning is the story" (Bernard 231). For this reason the story maintains the meaning in itself as well. To have an overall idea of a work, it is vital to acquire the story.

World Traumas, Family Wounds: Memory, Telling and Forgetting in

Out of This World

“It’s telling that reconciles memory and forgetting” (*OTW*64).

In *Out of this World* (1989), there is a series of uncovered personal stories of three generations of The Beech Family which mainly consists of three people: these are Robert Beech, his son Harry Beech and Harry’s daughter Sophie Beech. Robert is a manufacturer of armaments; Harry used to be a news photographer for fifteen years, and Sophie does not have a profession as a result, she depends on the money she has inherited from her grandfather. The gap between Robert and Harry, Robert’s blaming Harry for his wife death, Sophie’s rejection to see Harry and the close relationship with her grandfather are among the remaining problems of the family. This particular feature of the narrative does not change and Swift recounts different perceptions of the twentieth century by two narrators. As Harriet Blodgett writes in her article, “Iphigeneia Revalued: Graham Swift’s Fathers and Daughters”, “Swift’s fictional world acknowledges the hatreds and horrors of the twentieth century” (306).

Sophie and Harry tell their own version of the same events, which postmodernism endorses as an innovative feature in the writing process. Nick Rennison states that in Swift’s narrative “there is the same interest in the

interaction of past and present and the inevitable conflicts and failures of understanding between the generations” (159). Throughout the novel, two narrators strive to overcome the effects of the explosion. They narrate their stories by using disturbed chronology and write them to exist. As Catherine Bernard writes: “the whole novel is built around this shattering event which is remembered by the two conflicting and contradictory narratives of Harry and Sophie Beach. The event itself stands at the heart of the novel like an open wound which cannot be healed” (128). Daniel Lea comments on this issue:

The individual Swift seems to imply, cannot absolve her/himself from historical responsibility, cannot and should not strive to get out of this world. Instead self realisation lies in moral agency and the recognition that history is not about witnessing *per se* but witnessing as living, thinking, contradictory and flawed individuals. (116)

Explosions, crashes, war scenes, hardship of communication and impact of violence make up crucial parts of the narrative. Robert Beech experiences two explosions. The first one occurs in the First World War and he loses his right arm, consequently he is awarded by Victoria Cross. He becomes a war hero ironically as he has failed in his suicide attempt in the First World War. Peter Childs comments on this: “the primary image of fragmentation and artificiality is Harry’s father’s prosthetic arm” (226). Sophie mentions her grandfather’s artificial arm:

Like I was never really afraid of his arm. I mean, his artificial arm. It was something different, something special about Granddad. I wasn't afraid to touch it, to hold his cold, hard hand. And because I'd never known him without it, for a long time it never even occurred to me that once he must have had two real arms. (*OTW*50-1)

The second blast makes up a crucial place in Robert and Sophie's lives. The bomb, which was placed in Robert's car by IRA, exploded as Robert was leaving his house, so Sophie and Harry, who were at home, witnessed the blast. Robert's death accounts for the end of Harry's career as a photojournalist and Sophie's estrangement from him. Following it, Sophie goes through harsh times. Sophie recounts it to her analyst:

I was still there, on the terrace at Hyfield, standing, frozen, as if I might never move again, with that strange noise in my ears, the noise of absolute silence. Couldn't even hear Mrs Keane screaming. Apparently she was screaming, her mouth was wide open. Only the voice in my head, like the distant voice down a telephone, which was saying: Something terrible has happened. Is happening. Is happening. (*OTW*103)

Following the blast, instead of helping his father Harry takes a photo of his father's dead body which happens to be a second shock for Sophie: "He hadn't seen me first because he'd been looking elsewhere, and his eyes had been jammed up against a camera" (*OTW* 106). However, Harriet Blodgett mentions Harry's sudden instinct to take the photo of the scene as "a

photojournalist who rebelled against his father's world of armaments, can react with such professional detachment and coolly aim his camera at the scene" (305). Upon this moment, Sophie resents Harry's indifference and has not seen her father for ten years or let Harry see her twins, Tim and Paul. Sophie speaks into empty space: "Goodbye Harry, Father, Dad, Daddy" (*OTW*80).

The change in the perception of reality between World Wars is the leading cause for Harry to shoot photos:

The first rule of photography: that you must catch things unawares. The camera doesn't manufacture. But that night was the first time perhaps I thought: No, times have changed since then. The camera first, then the event. The whole world is waiting just to get turned into film. And not just the world but the goddam moon as well. (*OTW*5-6)

Harry refuses to take over his father's factory as he wishes to convey war reality and not to be a supporter of war: "half my pictures, of course, they buried. You aren't supposed to see, let alone put on visual record, *those* things . . . what I'd say is that someone has to look. Someone has to be a witness" (*OTW* 40). Harry displays his reactions against war and his father's profession when he chooses to be a war photographer. Moreover, he becomes a prosperous photojournalist who has witnessed significant events of the twentieth century. Daniel Lea undermines what it means for Harry to take photos: "his camera is at one and the same time an offensive weapon in his war against war and a protectively inanimate bolster between him and the unbearable suffering of his

subjects” (110). His camera is the only item that gives him the opportunity to reflect his perception of war. Susan Sontag, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, mentions that “photograph was to compose (with living subjects, to pose), and the desire to arrange elements in the picture did not vanish because the subject was immobilized, or immobile” (53). Thus, the war photographs Harry took, “they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed. And photographs are a species of alchemy, for all that they are prized as a transparent account of reality” (Sontag 81). Since Harry tries to show reality directly, he takes the photo of his father’s death body, which is only mentioned negatively in Sophie’s narrative:

And what am I trying to tell you, anyway?. . . Wreckage
'littering the once immaculate lawn'. . . The coffee things
scattered over the paving. . .It wasn't a house any more. .
.Glass. Broken things. I didn't believe it. A hub-cap lying in
the hall. The front door flung at the foot of the stairs. I went
out where the front door wasn't. (*OTW* 104-5)

Daniel Lea writes that: “the photograph may appear little more than a narrativeless abstraction but its immediacy offers for Harry an access to human experience that is unframed and spontaneous” (111). Hard as it seems, Harry prefers to be a part of the important events in the world to read it as a second hand news: “Seeing is believing and certain things must be seen to have been done. Without the camera the world might start to disbelieve” (*OTW* 100). Additionally, he is well aware of the deception carried out on the films and this is

the reason why he comments on the news of moon-landing shown on TV: “How do we know they’re really there? It could all be a happening in some studio mock-up. It could all be a trick to con the Russians. To know, you’d have to go yourself” (*OTW* 168). Indeed, he summarizes the route he has followed throughout his life, that is If you are eager to know the truth, you have to be a witness.

Sophie’s memory is tainted by the long lasting effects of the blast. In the novel, Sophie tries to heal her wounds by the help of talking cure. Her analyst’s guidance makes Sophie remember past events and essentially he encourages her to face the reality. Sophie faced her nightmare in her grandfather house, where the bomb attack occurred. As a witness of a traumatic event, in Crauth’s words she suffers from trauma that is “a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site” (10). Even if she seems to lead a healthy life, as Lea writes: “as much as he and Sophie struggle to place themselves outwith the tentacular each of the past, they are unable to move beyond their unnegotiated memories because they all ultimately relate back to gyre’s focus: Robert Beech” (105). Her responses to the events become traumatic as well. However, the blast is not the only traumatic event Sophie experiences. When she was a child, she is almost drowned. In Chapter 10 she narrates it:

I was supposed to have nearly drowned there once, but I don’t remember. Just Harry rushing suddenly into the water, and shouting at Mum who was swimming, further

out, and grabbing me and carrying me up the beach. He held me so tight . . . and I cried. But I don't remember nearly drowning. (*OTW*43)

In addition to the blasts, another traumatic event happens: in a plane crash, Anna, Harry's wife and Sophie's mother, dies.

The effect of trauma is permanent and it can be cured if the traumatized can tell the event. Stef Craps underlines the importance of talking cure for the traumatized:

The standard therapy for this condition, known as the 'talking cure', consists in having the sufferer confront their painful memory, relive the moment of violation, and integrate it into their life stories. The ultimate goal is to disarticulate the past from the present: the traumatized person must come to understand that the event is over and need not go on causing harm in the present. (55)

In the introduction of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth explains the common impact of trauma on people:

There is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. (4)

What's more, Cathy Caruth in her article "Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival", writes that "the study of trauma in contemporary fields tends to focus on a theory of history and memory derived ultimately from the example of the nightmare" (49), and Stef Craps states in his article, "Wor(l)ds of grief: Traumatic memory and literary witnessing in cross-cultural perspective" that: today the concept of trauma is widely used to describe responses to extreme events across space and time" (53). In Caruth's words: "what causes trauma, then, is an encounter that is not directly perceived as a threat to the life of the organism but that occurs, rather, as a break in the mind's experience of time" (49). At first, trauma causes physical wound and in time this wound becomes a psychic wound. Caruth states that: "the survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the events. . . insistently and against their will" (6).

In the novel, family members make the same mistakes. Robert does not love Harry as his wife died while she was giving birth to him. Therefore, Robert thinks that Harry is the one to be blamed for his wife's death. After Anna's death, Harry often goes away and leaves Sophie with his father and he is not a tender father. However; she longs to have a crucial place in his father's life. Harriet Blodgett mentions her desire of a special place: "Sophie already resents how his world travels separate him from his family. Swift's daughters (at least those who have speaking parts) expect to be prominent in their fathers lives, not secondary to their vocations or their avocations" (305). As Sophie rarely sees

his father, she calls Harry “The Invisible Man” (*OTW* 79). Thus, Sophie grows up with her grandfather. Through the end of the novel, Robert unveils a secret. When Robert and Harry watch moon landing on TV in 1969, Harry tells his father that he knows the love affair between his wife, Anna and one of their employees, Frank.

In the novel, Sophie and Harry lose their sense of belonging. Harry travels a lot and does not stay with Robert. Thus, he does not feel happy when he comes to stay with his father. In one of his visits, he states that: “It wasn’t home any more, he said, it was headquarters. And it was true, he’d barbed wire strung from angled posts all along the boundary wall, new alarms wired up” (*OTW* 3). Since Robert Beech was the owner of Beech Munitions Company, during the Second World War it was compulsory for him to have walls to protect him from possible terrorist attacks. As Sophie witnesses the terror of bomb attack, she cannot feel safe in the world of his grandfather, rather she wishes to be out of this world and she narrates that: “I knew it’s all one territory and everywhere, everywhere can be a target and there aren’t any safe, separate places any more” (*OTW* 106).

Sophie betrays her husband since he deceives her for ten years by writing letters to Harry, his father-in-law. Peter Childs mentions that:

Sophie’s love-hatred relationship with her father leads her to indulge in indiscriminate adulterous couplings. . . [she] feels betrayed by Harry’s absences from home when she

was growing up, and is herself unfaithful to her husband, Joe, while he goes behind her back to write to Harry. (221-4).

Additionally, having experienced the bomb attack, Sophie does not feel attached to any man except her twins: "I think I stopped loving him that time he came and held my hand in the hospital. I think I stopped loving anyone then. Except you" (*OTW* 135). Moreover, Daniel Lea states that Sophie: "more than any of the others, seeks a place of safety that is 'out of this world' of death and destruction, somewhere the recurrent patterns of war and horror have not infiltrated and where space remains uninscribed" (105). On the other hand, Harry forms a new relationship with his assistant, who is forty years younger. It is his first affair after his wife's death, which is followed by the loss of communication between his daughter.

Different narratives of two narrators prove the truth to be fragile. Lea points out that changes in plot and place are deliberate: "Such abrupt shifts in temporal location occur throughout the narrative as a whole, blurring the divisions between individual experience and historical event and in doing so creating the mystifying sense of disorientation amongst specific factual detail" (102). In Chapter 10, Sophie asks her analyst how she can differ reality and memory: "how do you know, when you go back that far, that it's really memory? Not what you were told later or what you've invented. Or just sheer fantasy" (41). Accepting reality means taking responsibilities of public history and private

history for Sophie, so she denies it. While coping with reality is hard for Sophie, Harry is willing to face it. Harry has some troubles of reality and this is clear since he chooses to be a news photographer. By the help of photographs he has taken to witness pure reality, he serves as a public witness:

People want stories. They don't want facts. Even journalists say 'story' when they mean 'event'. Of the news photo they say: Every picture tells a story - worth two columns of words. But supposing it doesn't tell a story? Supposing it shows only unaccommodatable fact? Supposing it shows the point at which the story breaks down. The point in which narrative goes dumb. (*OTW* 84-5)

When he takes war photos, Harry aims to reflect reality: "when you put something on record, when you make a simulacrum of it, you have already partly decided you will lose it" (*OTW* 44). However; Sophie does not share this notion and acts as a personal witness; therefore, she recounts parts from her therapy in her narrative. Harriet Blodgett makes it unequivocal: "she would not acknowledge him, despite knowing he repudiated photography since that fatal day because of how it falsifies and depersonalizes reality, which is her sense of photography too" (305). Moreover, she does not let her twins have a camera as she believes that photographers try to "possess something that doesn't belong to them" (*OTW* 126). Despite the clash of their points of views, Sophie and Harry have so many reciprocal things, Daniel Lea writes: "her quest for a place

outside historical inscription and associative imbrication parallels her father's desire for a space outside language" (118). Harry's uppermost reason to take war photos is his search for the real, which is the primary aim of a photographer, Susan Sontag, in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*, writes that: "the photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb" (22). While the photograph represents life for Harry, for Sophie it symbolizes death.

Sophie searches for her roots and pays a visit to Greece where her mother was born. She cannot find any particular memories; however, she meets her husband, Joe. She lives in Greece over a year and gets pregnant there. She leads a happy life for some time; however, she realizes that she does not love Joe since she betrays him. On the other hand, Harry falls in love with her assistant, who is forty years younger than him. They get married and he feels alive again after a long time.

To conclude, the novel depicts crucial events of the twentieth century such as moon landing, Nuremberg trials, World Wars, Vietnam War, an IRA car bombing and the 1974 military coup in Greece. In addition to public history, Sophie and Harry recount their personal stories. Daniel Lea shows the relation between public and private events: "The Beech family is connected root and branch to the historical development of the century and they experience its fluctuations as a series of fractures in the process of self construction" (105). Thus, the novel shows different ways of coping with reality and several

perceptions of the reality. As they tell their stories they emphasize that: "It's telling that reconciles memory and forgetting" (*OTW*64). In their attempt to face reality of war, love helps them feel human again which is underlined in "Iphigeneia Revalued: Graham Swift's Fathers and Daughters" by Harriet Blodgett; "the ugliness of history does not preclude the possibility of personal restorations. And love, for all the sufferings it may cause, remains a potent inspiration thereto" (Blodgett 306). Every character finds a way to live their life as they wish eventually.

Reflections of the Past in the Present: *Ever After*

Ever After (1992), released after *Out of This World* in 1992, is Graham Swift's fifth novel. The novel covers two time frames: in the twentieth century - it handles the life of the novel's protagonist, Bill Unwin, a melancholic academic and a literary consultant to Elizabethan and Jacobean plays that lost his father, his mother and his wife - and in the nineteenth century, Matthew Pearce's (his great-great-grandfather) manuscripts. For Nick Rennison, in Swift's novels: "there is the same interest in the interaction of past and present and the inevitable conflicts and failures of understanding between the generations" (159). Similarly, Bill tries to understand his role in his own life; he also attempts to establish a connection between the past and the present. This connection not only covers the relationship of one generation but also other generations of the same family.

Bill's love of literature and theatre shapes his decisions in life. He identifies himself with Hamlet who suspects that his uncle murdered his father. This identification constructs a bridge between the novel and the play, *Hamlet*. In the process of reading, the reader traces the relation with another text. Graham Allen, in his book *Intertextuality*, notes the nature of interrelatedness between two different works of art: "the act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is

to trace those relations” (1). At the very beginning of the novel, even before saying his name, Bill declares that:

I will only say, for the time being, that for a large part of my life, ever since my old English master, Tubby Baxter, made us read the play, I have imagined myself - surreptitiously, presumptuously, appropriately, perversely - as Hamlet. (*EA* 4)

When Bill introduces himself as the narrator through the end of the novel, his choice of words underlines his identification with Hamlet: “I am Bill Unwin (there, I declare myself!). I am Hamlet the Dane” (*EA* 173). Bill makes this connection since his father shoots himself and his mother marries Sam soon after his father’s suicide. Just as, in the play Gertrude marries Claudius two months after the murder of the king, in the novel Sylvia marries Sam in two months following her husband’s suicide. In Bill’s version of *Hamlet*, Sam plays the part of Claudius. After his mother’s death, Bill illustrates the state Sam is in: “He is here (Claudius at his prayers) to atone for his part in my father’s death” (*EA* 166). Similar to Claudius in *Hamlet*, who is responsible for the death of Hamlet’s father and marries Hamlet’s mother after the murder, Sam feels guilty of his fault. When Swift writes in this web of relations between his novel and the play, *Hamlet*, he makes use of intertextuality in the narrative; Graham Allen defines the ways of applying it:

relationality can itself be figured in various ways: it can involve the radical plurality of the sign, the relation

between signs and texts and the cultural text, the relation between a text and the literary system, or the transformative relation between one text and another text.

(6)

Bill, who mostly relies on his intuitions, is an unreliable narrator. He states his ideas for Sam, “for forty years of my life I have conducted a theoretical vendetta against Sam, though I do not think real killing was ever on the cards. And the odd thing is I have always liked him. I have never been able to help liking him” (*EA* 6). What he says changes continuously, in Daniel Lea’s words, Unwin is: “a sophisticated, dexterous narrator who consistently interprets the world around him and his intersubjective relationships through imaginary paradigms that dull his underlying sense of alienation, confusion and loneliness” (“Feigning” 157). For Bill, love and hatred, life and death are not separate terms. The love he feels for Sam and his hatred against him are in fact, interwoven. To illustrate; Ruth is the life for Bill as he is the life for Ruth:

This desire on my part to put my arms irremovably around her, as if I were holding her together, to beg for her a special immunity. . . . And it’s strange that I say I wished to hold her together, since it was she, after all, who held things together for me, who held my world together. (*EA* 124)

In the novel, the real and the replica intermingle. Nick Rennison writes that Bill is: “a memorable narrator in search of what matters in life and an

explanation of why it does" (160). Bill adopts his role as the central character Hamlet in the play *Hamlet*; in fact, this shows that he does not want to be a minor character, a negligible individual like he used to be. Lewis Macleod, in his article, "Our Lost, Discredited Souls: Narrating the Masculine Interior in Graham Swift's *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After*", states that when Bill identifies himself with Hamlet he accepts: "the contested relationship between external models of behaviour encoded in narrative terms and private emotional experiences" (377). Like Hamlet, he is the man of thought not man of action. As a failure in academic world, he shows himself as: "a man behind the scenes. A one-time academic who never aimed at professorship, a poetry lover who never aspired to poetry" (75); however, his gradual achievement as Ruth's husband is worth noticing: "It was after her father's death, some fifteen years ago, that I gave up my career (my blooming career as a third-rate academic) to become her manager" (122). Ruth, who is an eminent actress, plays Cleopatra lastly. She commits suicide like Cleopatra when she understands that she cannot cope with cancer. Ending her life just as Cleopatra, clarifies that "everything's an exact replica of the real thing" (*EA* 70).

The novel contains love affairs and relationships which have some substitutes. Sam, Bill's step father, views Bill as his brother Ed, who dies in the war. Bill mentions that: "Sam saw in me a bizarre substitute for Ed. (And you gotta have substitutes)" (*EA* 64). On the other hand, Sam and Sylvia's marriage

is a substitute for Bill and Ruth's marriage. Since Bill calls happy marriages as "happy-ever-afters", Sam and Sylvia's is not one of the happy-ever-afters. After Sam's death, Bill imagines that: "Sam might have admitted that this marriage to my mother was itself a kind of long term, plausible 'substitoot': Ruth and I were the real thing" (*EA* 160). Lewis Macleod unveils Bill's father's view of marriage: "Unwin's father sees marriage in the more conventional terms of seniority, authority and self esteem and his wife as a pretty endowment to his own advancement" (382). Before his attempt of suicide, Bill refuses to take over Sam's plastic company, "Ellison Plastics". However, following his failed suicide Bill starts his second life and he becomes the owner of the company after Sam's death. Bill narrates his new condition: "You see, I think I found the real stuff, the true, real stuff. Now it seems, in this new life, I am turned to plastic. I am born again in plastic" (*EA* 10). His second life is superior to his former life. Macleod writes about this matter as: "his movement into an alternate, almost completely fictional narrative world or life, a secondary universe he believes to be more stable than the first" (384), in fact the life he leads after the suicide attempt is just a replica of the first part of his life. Both plastic company and his second life are substitutes for the real thing, for real stuff and the first part of his life span.

When some secrets are unveiled in Bill's life, he seems to lead an unproblematic life. Macleod puts that: "Unwin has always felt dwarfed by his

father's achievements" (383). His father's death is the reason why he chooses Hamlet as his substitute. He represents the son who wants to take revenge of his father, so he cannot live a contented life. Bill notes: "A recurring dream – the very emblem of my addled adolescence: Sam with a fresh, damson-coloured hole (and no sticking-plaster) in his forehead" (*EA* 25). In "Feigning Reason: *Hamlet* and the Dynamics of Desire in Graham Swift's *Ever After*", Daniel Lea asserts that Bill:

appropriates and manipulates *Hamlet* as a means of sedimenting his thoughts and actions in a preceding – albeit fictional – reality; he indulges in a form of textual subsumption by pulling on a fictional world to disguise an inner emptiness brought about by the loss of his familial network. (156)

When he creates a fictional personality, he is able to forget about his own problems and hide his weakness. It is only when Sam reveals the secret of his biological father, Bill feels free of his revenge.

The novel is mainly an inquiry of the meaning of life. In his attempt to build a new life for himself, Bill investigates family history. As a result, Bill "mines his memories of the past" to find an answer (Childs 217). Matthew's notebooks, which are handed down from generation to generation, introduce hope for the future: "while truth is paramount, there is still the chance of happiness, in the personal, in love and memory" (Childs 22). When the mystery of his father's suicide is cleared, successively Bill learns that his father used to

be a spy, (a participant in developing atomic weapons). This truth challenges Bill's point of view. Bill imagines his father's life: "I stood in his vacant place. And out of this ghostly identification I began to summon a father I had never really known: noble, virtuous, wronged" (*EA* 68). His father's suicide allows him to have a new perception of family life. Macleod mentions that his story: "is altered in a way that compromises his previous vision of whatever happily after he was living" (383). Finally, he gets away from the burden of his father's successful life.

Reading text within a text is a common motif in Swift's novels. Matthew's notebook functions as the guiding material in Bill's life. In addition, a clock is handed down to him. About Pearce's Manuscripts, Peter Childs mentions that the clock represents: "[the] reminder of the unstoppable passing of time and the truth of not permanence but change" (222). Rennison states that Bill: "finds parallels for his own loss of identity in Pearce's anguished internal debate between his religious and his scientific beliefs" (159). Pearce's story helps him access to his identity as Pearce is an authority figure for him. For Macleod, "the preoccupation with making, handling, and reading texts is of primary significance for Swift's male characters because they recognize that self is story, that the unnarrated is the nonexistent" (386). The ontological importance of the manuscripts conveys a problem for Bill. He constantly questions why Matthew wrote them and to whom they were addressed.

Moreover, the novel refers to some literary works such as *Hamlet*. Catherine Bernard in her article “Dismembering/Remembering Mimesis: Martin Amis, Graham Swift”, writes that: “in [his] search for adequate ways to represent a faceless reality, Swift uses literary canons as metafictional instruments in order to focus on the question of verisimilitude and to redefine mimesis in more flexible terms” (134). There are some parallels between Bill’s story and Hamlet’s; however there happens to be a few differences as well. As Lea states: “whereas Hamlet displays a problematic negotiation of subjectivity in the face of an authoritarian Father of the Law, Unwin’s plight offers an equally problematic coming to selfhood in the absence of a coherent symbolic authority” (Lea168). The stories seem to start in a similar way; however, in Bill’s version of *Hamlet*, the step-father does not kill Hamlet’s real father, the father commits suicide, so the relation breaks down. Moreover, Bill commits suicide and as his surname “Unwin” suggests, he fails in his attempt; whereas Hamlet is against self-slaughter. In one of his soliloquies, Hamlet declares:

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon ‘gainst self-slaughter (Act I, scene ii)

As for the Pearce manuscripts, they have a liberating effect on Bill, since they answer Bill’s problems including ontological ones. He compares his loss of

identity with Matthew's predicament between his religious and scientific ideas. Bill takes care of them, because they are his family's possession and they give Bill a sense of belonging. When he reads the manuscripts, he feels secure and depends on the possibility of knowing the past. As a result, he learns his family history and he also makes some comparisons between Matthew's and his wife, Ruth's love affairs. Both Bill and Matthew search for a purpose in life and Pearce manuscripts provide Bill with the answer that "only through the bonds of love and family, can Bill and Matthew find solace and meaning" (Childs 222). In this way, it provides Bill with what he needed to be an individual. Additionally, the manuscripts assure him that it is impossible to reach an objective truth indeed. He lays stress on his late way of thinking:

You see, it's the personal thing that matters. The personal thing. It is knowing who Matthew Pearce *was*. And why he should matter so much to me. And why things mattered so much to him when (what difference did it make? what difference does it make?) he might have gone on living happily ever after. (EA 53)

To conclude, the unreliable narrator, Bill Unwin, depicts his life story similar to Hamlet who is also a man of ideas, not a man of action. Namely "his storytelling serves . . . as an entry into the past so that he can belatedly tell the story and experience a narrative catharsis" (Russell 120). In his life, in accordance with his new vision of life, the real and the replica are not separated. After his failed suicide attempt, he changes totally. Upon reading

Pearce manuscripts, he finds an important relative to depend on, an authority figure: he has finally made sense of life.

Family Relationships: Chronotopic Structure of *Last Orders*

“It ain’t like your regular sort of day” (*Last Orders* 1)

Last Orders (1996), Graham Swift’s sixth novel, recounts a day of four men of working class living in South East of London. These four men are Ray Johnson, an insurance clerk; Vic Tucker, an undertaker; Lenny Tate, a grocery install owner; and Vince Dodds, a second-hand car dealer. In addition to four male characters, two important female characters in the novel are Amy, Jack’s wife; and Mandy, Vince’s wife. In the very beginning of the novel Jack, who has recently died, leaves a letter and wants his body to be cremated and his ashes to be scattered on Margate Pier in London.

Mikhail Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, defines chronotopes as: “the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel . . . It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showingforth, the representability of events” (250). Also they arrange temporal and spatial relationships of stories. Bakhtin states the dominance of chronotopes in narration: “every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of chronotope” (*The Dialogic* 258). Language is the fundamental medium for chronotopes to accomplish these tasks. Language, through which time and space relationship is represented,

functions “as a treasure-house of images, is fundamentally chronotopic” (*The Dialogic* 251). As *Last Orders* is a complication of stories of four wanderers, time and space relationship is essential. A. S. Byatt writes: “for wanderers space is time, and at this point the experience of reading the highly constructed web of tales seems to connect with the web of tales held together by topography and anecdote” (*On stories* 137).

Last Orders has a chronotopic structure, since it is a novel recounting the journey of four men. The places, where four protagonists usually spend time and drop by during their journey are, in Bakhtin’s words, where: “time and space intersect and fuse. Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation: likewise, a space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history” (*The Dialogic* 84). The pub, “The Coach and Horses”, they usually go for a drink is a chronotope. It represents the good time they shared there and their friendship. The title of the novel, *Last Orders*, represents different things. Firstly, “last orders” refers to final orders of four men as they gather at a pub called “The Coach and Horses” in Bermondsey prior to setting off south coast. Secondly, the title summarizes the last wish of Jack. In addition to his last wish, Jack wants Ray to do him a favour. As Ray is known to be the lucky one, Jack gives Ray a good amount of money and wants him to choose a winning horse. The money Ray wins is going to be given to Amy, whereby Jack is willing to compensate his fault. Thirdly, it symbolizes the orders

four men took when three of them served in the army and one of them in the navy.

Travelling is an important matter in the novel. Four men and Jack did their military service in the Middle East and Egypt, so they went to far away countries. In other words, travelling to far away countries stands for freedom for the men. Vince chooses to be a car dealer and travels a lot, as he does not accept to be a butcher like his step-father, Jack. He declares how cars help people be independent: "Ain't it amazing there's this thing that exists so everyone can jump in and travel where they please?" (LO 71). His wife, Mandy, who runs away from her father and becomes a traveller as well, is adopted by Jack when he travels for his business. On the other hand, Ray buys a van thinking that if he and his wife, Carol, had a van, they would be happy. Ray mentions what a van means to them: "It's a dormobile. A camper-van, deluxe model. A travelling home for two" (LO 60). However, the van does not make any change and Carol leaves Ray for another man. When Ray and Amy visit June together for a short period of time, they sleep in the same van. Moreover, Jack and Amy meet for the first time at a resting place Amy's family, a group of travellers, stop temporarily.

The journey of four men is not only a physical journey but also an inner one. Jack's wish functions as a catalyzer – a sign of their "duty, loyalty and mutual support" (Childs 235) - for the four men. Vic, the undertaker, refers to

ultimate power of death, which has brought these four men together: “In life there are difference, you make distinctions . . . But the dead are the dead, I’ve watched them, they are equal . . . It’s what makes all men equal for ever and always” (LO 143). While Lenny tries to empathize with Vince, in fact he reveals the target of journey unconsciously: “I reckon he’s sorry, that’s what he is. I reckon he’s trying to make amends. We’ve all got a bit of that to do if you look back over the years. Excluding Vic maybe. Clean hands, as always” (LO 203). Three of them except Vic consider correcting their mistakes. As Pamela Cooper writes: “there is a good deal of movement involved in the plot of *Last Orders*, but it describes a physical journey, and one of the main themes explored in the novel is motion itself” (23). Their journey begins in Rochester, where they have lunch and a drink, and then they arrange a visit to a war memorial in Chatham. Before they make for Canterbury, they stop at Wick’s Farm in Kent. Finally the journey ends in Margate Pier. As Richard Pedot states in his article “Dead Lines in Graham Swift’s *Last Orders*”, Jack’s “last orders were defective as a will, such lack did ensure that everybody was eventually ‘concerned’, each in his or her own manner, each with his or her own detours” (65). The need to compensate is obvious in Ray’s words when he observes Vince’s behaviour: “He’s driving like he’s making up for lost time, like he’s late for an appointment” (LO 141).

In the novel, Margate Pier is another chronotope and it stands for a threshold for The Dodd family. It suits to how Bakhtin defines the chronotopic threshold:

the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold) ... the chronotope of the threshold is always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly. (*The Dialogic* 248)

Compared to other families, The Dodds family occupy an important position in the novel; therefore, Margate Pier has the utmost importance in their life. Firstly, it symbolizes good and bad memories of Jack and Amy. Jack and Amy go there for their honeymoon in 1939. Secondly, it is where Jack wants to move and live for the rest of his life. Thirdly, it is the place where Jack informs Amy about June's mental illness. Jack and Amy first quarrel for June and he informs her at this spot that he would never visit June in the hospital in the following years. Thus, Amy decides to look after June alone. Finally, it is the place where Jack wants his ashes to be scattered. As Childs writes, Margate Pier "represents an alternative reality of past and future hopes, as well the inevitability of death" (235) since "It's what Margate's famous for, it's what people come here for, *Dreamland*" (LO 273). Each man in the group apart from Vince longs for a different life that is Jack wanted to be a doctor, Lenny a successful boxer, and Ray a jockey. All the characters lead a life they have never wished for.

Accordingly, it brings hope and death together. Moreover, hope and fear are two of the reasons to tell a story; A. S. Byatt states that: “the reason for the truth of the tales is the human truths they reiterate plainly — the fate of beauty and ugliness, fear and hope, chance and disaster” (129). Pedot states that Margate Pier is where:

Jack symbolically chucked June by dropping into the sea a teddy bear that his marksmanship had won at a shooting stand. Jack’s wish, then, turns out to be his last attempt to make amends, to try to get his life over again, and to obliterate his wrong choices. At the same time, it is the place where, symbolically, Amy chucked Jack, giving up on him. (62)

Amy is the only one who does not feel obliged to go to Margate Pier, which symbolizes regaining her freedom after Jack’s death. This behavior of her proves that she will make her decisions from then on. As she refuses to go there, she is willing to live her own life; “she knows the story’s end beforehand; or rather she knows it to be a dead end — you cannot get your life over again, least of all after your death — and that allows her to go further on the requested itinerary” (Pedot 68), a life without Jack and June. Although the four men know that Amy visits June every Thursday, they arrange the journey to be on that day. Unaware of the significance of the journey for Amy, the men insist that she can spare a day. Lenny’s words make this notion obvious: “You’d think she could spare the one day for Jack” (*LO* 133). On the other hand, Amy mentions

about her journey as: "My own journey to make. Their journey and mine. The living come first, even the living who were as good as dead to him, so it'd be all one now, all the same, in his book" (LO 228). Amy knows why Jack wants his ashes to be scattered to Margate Pier. Pedot explains this as: "Amy's weekly trips might have been one long journey, one long work of mourning—for Jack, long since dead to her as June was to him: to be eventually free of Jack and June's deaths" ("Dead Lines" 68), so the journey does not make a compromise. Jack's death means the end of Amy's duty as wife and mother. Since he did not even mention about June on his deathbed, he is aware of the fact that Amy has never forgiven him, which is apparent in Amy's words: "he doesn't say how he never looked after June, he doesn't say, "And give June my love" (LO 268). Since Jack knows the truth, he does not attribute his last letter to Amy. On the contrary, he utters these words to Ray before he dies: "I've come to terms, but I ain't squared up with Amy" (LO 220).

The four men and Amy and Mandy resemble to characters in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. As A. S. Byatt mentions in her book, *On Stories and Histories: Selected Essays*, "the frame of the journey as a shared space for storytelling" (137) is the reason why Swift applies journey motif in the narrative. Peter Childs writes in his article "Graham Swift: Past Present" that the novel depicts "the personal histories and shared pasts of the characters as the quartet's Chaucerian journey" (222). Similarly, every character tells his/her own

story on the journey as they look back on their past; they are in fact all storytellers. The fragmented narration of the novel makes use of monologues. While most of the monologues belong to the four friends, Amy has six monologues; Mandy and Jack each have one monologue. Childs writes that the novel “tunnels into the past to uncover complex histories behind the events of the present” (223). Thus, past events form a basis for the present ones.

Four of the five men have different problems with their daughters or sons in the novel. The only man who is not in trouble with his son is Vic. He leads a happy life and runs the family business, *Tucker and Sons*, with his sons. However, Jack is not as lucky as Vic. His only biological daughter is born mentally ill and he adopts Vince and Mandy, so they are substitutes for June. When Vince finished his military service, Jack wanted him to take over the family business. However, Vince, who has never seen himself as a part of the Dodds, is alienated from Jack and the business: “I’d hate him and hate the meat smell until they were one and the same . . . and I’d think, I ain’t going to be a butcher never, it ain’t what I’m going to be” (LO 63). Additionally, he has waited all his life for the day his father asks for money from him. Thus, Dodds and Son becomes an ironic name. However, Vince serves as a soldier in Middle East similar to Jack, which is an example of certain parallelism in their lives. On the other hand, Jack’s step daughter, Mandy does not have a healthy relationship with her father, so she runs away from him: “I wanted to be wicked like Dad said

I was anyway" (*LO* 155). She mentions the miscommunication she perceives in her new home:

To run away from home and find another home in less than a day, though the new home wasn't a real home, any more than the one I left. The new home was all the opposite of what it seemed: a son whose home it wasn't but it was, a daughter whose home it was but it wasn't because she had to be kept in a Home, a mum and dad who weren't really a mum and dad, except to me. (*LO* 157)

Disconnection between fathers and daughters is a sustained issue throughout the novel. Lenny feels guilty as he is responsible for the escape of Sally. Since Sally has an abortion while she is pregnant with Vince's child, Sally does not forgive Lenny. Moreover, Ray has the same sort of relationship with his daughter, Susie. Susie emigrates to Australia and they have not had a word with each other for twenty five years. Contrary to Lenny, Ray does not have the courage to accept his fault: "I'm sorry I stopped writing. Because it was me who stopped first, I'll admit that, but I had my reasons. I'm a small man but I've got my pride . . . It was because of Carol" (*LO* 281). Ray tries to find an answer for the reason of his wife and his daughter's departure. Amy had an affair with Ray and it ended before Vince came back from the army. In one of their visits to the asylum, Ray states that:

You could tell that just by looking, by looking at Amy. And you could tell just by looking at June that it wasn't ever

going to happen and that it was all wrong. It was as wrong that Amy had been coming here all them years as it was wrong that June had been born like she was in the first place, as wrong as there should be a mother of forty-six who still had her faded looks while her daughter ain't never had any. (LO 173)

All the fathers do not strive for their daughters and sons even if they have certain opportunities. About the family relations which are crucial to Swift, Peter Childs states:

All of these disappointments and estrangements between daughters and parents are metaphorically represented by June, who has been incapable of speaking to her devoted mother and who has never been acknowledged by her father. (226)

Vince decides to run his motor business and goes on doing it despite the possibility of losing his daughter. Lenny loses his daughter when he insists on Sally's abortion. Ray is destined to be alone as he postpones writing a letter to his daughter to say how he really loves and misses her. Hence, the same failure in communication and making up their mistakes function as disruptive cases in the plot.

In the novel, personal stories are intermingled with war stories. The characters join up the army and they face reality of war. Ray remembers the explosion of a bomb:

It's like I don't remember that bomb falling, I can't ever remember that bomb falling. They say so long as you could hear them, you were all right, it was when the sound cut. But I don't even remember not hearing it. So if that bomb had killed me too, I'd never've known I'd been born, I'd never've known I'd died. So I might've been anyone. I look at him like I'm looking down at a view. *Golden days before they end*. And I think, someone's got to tell him, someone's got to. (LO 188-9)

When Jack is at war, Amy feels lonely and hopeless. She imagines that war will end soon. Hence she decides to adopt Vince as she thinks if she has a child, Jack will come back home. Amy narrates:

I thought the war might change things; put everything in its place . . . Bombs whistling down on Bermondsey, whole streets going. I thought he might be killed. Or I might. Or you might. A stray bomb on a home for the hopeless, no one grieve a mercy really. (LO 239)

The novel shows life as an outcome of choices. As Amy utters, life is: "All a gamble, ain't it? (LO 268). Jack's refusal of June, his adoptions of Vince and Mandy and his choice of the place where his ashes are scattered all shape his life. Amy makes her choice when she chooses Jack instead of the gypsy boy. At the end, she both gives up on June and Jack. She utters that: "What I'm trying to say is Goodbye June. Goodbye Jack. They seem like one and the same thing. We've got to make our own lives now without each other; we've got to go our different ways. I've got to think of my own future" (LO 278).

The lives of the four men and two women, who make up their minds for the future, will not be the same again. As Ray narrates: “It’s like we aren’t the same people who left Bermondsey this morning, four blokes on a special delivery. It’s like somewhere along the line we just became travellers” (*LO* 193-4). They have undergone “the shock of old age, the existential horror of a desolate world, the betrayal of love, the failure of fathers, and the bitter grandeur – tattered but resolute of the human soul” (Cooper 16). The journey becomes an unforgettable experience for all the characters. They need to make their choices: they can go on living with their faults and learn from their faults or they can make their own way like Amy, since today is a different day.

Rationality versus Irrationality: Crossing Lines in *The Light of Day*

“All is fair in love and war” (*LD* 1).

In *The Light of Day* (2004), Graham Swift's seventh novel, the narrator George Webb writes a detailed account of a day, November 20th, 1995. George, who is in his early fifties, is separated from his wife, Rachel and has reunited with his daughter, Helen, recently. George used to be an ordinary cop before he is dismissed from the police force. As a narrator he has common traits of other Swift's narrators. He is an ordinary man who is divorced and has some problems with his daughter similar to many of Swiftian male characters. He admits his indifference for his daughter: “I suppose what I felt was the great airy gap of my own ignorance. My blindness. ‘You don't notice things.’ This is your daughter Helen, who you hardly know” (*LD* 127). His divorce and problems with his daughter follow his dismissal. After the dismissal from the Metropolitan Police in 1989, he opens his own detective office. He usually works for female clients who are suspicious of their husbands' loyalty.

The Light of Day opens with the epigraph “All is fair in love and war”. It emphasizes love and death relationship. Love includes unhappy marriages and secret love affairs; on the other hand, war refers to the war continuing in the Balkans, Croatian civil war. The epigraph justifies George's father's hidden love affair and the love affair between Bob and Kristina. Furthermore, it legitimizes

George's love for Sarah, which he defines as "to be ready to lose, it's not to have, to keep" (*LD* 146). On the side of Bob's grave, George confesses that he hides certain details from Sarah: "strange, how here you can confess. But I haven't told Sarah everything. Does anyone tell anyone everything? There are things I can't and won't tell Sarah yet. Perhaps I never will" (*LD* 237). Finally, love between George and his daughter serves to be another dimension which involves no restraints, just respect towards each other's life.

The novel covers only one day: November 20th, 1995. It has been two years since Sarah stabbed Bob in the heart. George has been paying visits to Sarah twice a month since then. Before Sarah's imprisonment, George does not speak much, so his sentences used to be short and ordinary. However, as he takes up writing, his narrative improves. He is usually careful about the words he uses to describe Sarah: "She had eyes that seemed to shift – under a slight frost – from black to brown, to ripple. Tortoiseshell. The hair was the same. Black, you'd say, but when the sunlight from the window caught it you saw it was deep brown" (*LD* 17). He seeks for certain answers in his life: "how does it happen? How do we choose? Someone enters your life, and we can't live without them. But we lived without them before . . ." (*LD* 104). He wishes to make some decisions as regards to his new affair.

The title of the novel represents George and Sarah's hopes for the future. For George it means early release of Sarah since he hopes that Sarah will be

free in eight or nine years. On the other hand, “light” and the biography of Eugenie, Sarah works on presently, make her hopeful. In *Trauma and Ethics in the novels of Graham Swift: no short-cuts to salvation*, Stef Craps writes:

The character of Napoleon III. Louis Bonaparte’s presence in the novel is explained by the fact that he ended up living as an exile in George’s native Chislehurst following the collapse of the Second Empire. Moreover, his wife, Eugenie, who outlived him by nearly fifty years, becomes an inspirational figure for Sarah: she embodies the possibility of starting a new life after the death of one’s husband. (179)

In the novel, there are certain traits of a detective novel in that it is full of dates and detailed place descriptions. In addition, the novel not only concentrates on time, but also on secrets. They include the secrets George keeps from his mother and Sarah, and also the secret of his father who had a secret love affair. Moreover, the fact that George is an ex-cop and he has an assistant Rita, an ex-client of George, is another aspect of detective stories. Additionally, there is also a crime committed in the novel. However, the novel also lacks some features of detective fiction: firstly, it is narrated from one point of view: secondly, suspense does not arise since it is written as an overflow of George’s personal history, not as a series of related events.

The novel shares many characteristics with Swift’s earlier fiction. To begin with, the novel is about common people. George is an ex-cop, and Sarah

is a university lecturer; Bob is a gynaecologist; Rachel is a teacher, they are all ordinary people. Yet, the narrator George resembles other Swiftian narrators. In Daniel Lea's words "Swiftian subject is continually brought up against the limits of self-knowledge but is uncannily aware that self-definitions do not wholly account for a complete sense of being" (199). Similar to other narrators, George also searches for the truth. Apart from the earlier fiction, in this novel there is a limitation in the number of characters and setting, which is South London.

One of the motifs used in the novel is crossing a line. It represents change for the good or the bad. In the first page of the novel, there is a direct reference to the motif: "something happens. We cross a line; we open a door we never knew was there. It might never have happened, we might never have known. Most of life, maybe, is only time served" (*LD* 3). George crosses a line when he blames an innocent man in a legal trial. George crossed the line for bad twice. In the first one, he loses his job and wife following this false charge. In the second one, in the case of his last female client, Sarah, he goes too far and falls in love with her:

I might have lived my life and never known it. A blow to the chest. Though what does it have to do with knowing? I hardly knew her. I'd met her three times. A cup of coffee, a drink. Sarah Nash, a client. I didn't know her enough to know what she could do. (*LD* 290)

However, George seems to get over the negative effects of the turmoils successfully. After the first one, he takes up cooking and makes up with Helen.

Following the second turmoil, he forms the habit of writing as he starts visiting Sarah in prison twice a month. Daniel Lea mentions about George's obsessive love for Sarah: "George's unswerving dedication to his self-imposed enchainment to Sarah functions, on one level, as the pathetic core of the novel, a seemingly romantic act of self-denial born of an irrational and overpowering love" (211). George's devotion to a woman he hardly knows causes some questions to arise. He is jealous of Sarah's husband, Bob: "but it hurts me. I should feel hurt today. The absurdest things: I am jealous of the man she killed. I want him out of her life. And he is. But today he has visiting rights. It's his day, I can't deny it" (*LD* 234). George envies a dead man and this sounds quite unhealthy. In 1995, Sarah Nash in her forties hires George to certify that her husband, Bob, and her Croatian lover, Kristina, separate. George states that the reason why Sarah asks him to follow Bob and Kristina is: "to see if she really goes. To see if they really go to the airport. And, if they do, to see if she really gets the plane – I mean, by herself. If they don't just fly off together, somewhere. Any plane, anywhere" (*LD* 20). He fulfils this task quite professionally.

George is not the only character in the novel that crosses a line. Sarah also knows no bounds when she stabs her husband, Bob, in the heart. Her life is changed forever when she is imprisoned. As Daniel Lea writes the novel is narrated: "through the perspective of a minutiae-driven middle-aged male trying

to rationalise his life in the light of a series of traumatic events” (191). Therefore, George narrates his reflections by making up the crime scene:

She'd heard the sound, the crackle of the the tyres. But she wanted to wait (I know this) for that other clinching sound: the key in the door. That thing returning husbands do. Just a key in the door but no one turns it like them. A key in a door, the key to life. (*LD* 299)

In addition to George and Sarah's case, Bob and his lover Kristina go too far as well. Sarah's husband Bob, who falls in love with a Croatian refugee, is a gynaecologist in his mid-forties. Kristina Lazic, in her twenties, wins a studentship and arrives London before troubles begin in Dubrovnik. Following her departure, the war between Croatia and Serbia breaks out in the Balkans. Her brother and her parents were killed leaving Kristina with more troubles. Kristina was once a student of Sarah and as a lecturer at a university she “took an English class, open to all-comers but aimed especially at foreign students. Brush up your English. And into that class had walked, one Tuesday afternoon, Kristina Lazic from Dubrovnik in Croatia” (*LD* 43-4). However, Kristina's visa expires and Sarah helps her by inviting her to live with them.

Another motif used in the novel is love, which sometimes brings along death. The love that Sarah and Bob once shared was a romantic love. On the other hand, the love George feels for Sarah now is unrequited love which stems from his devotion. Another one is, George's father, Frank's love for his wife and

his short-time lover. Frank's love for his lover seems to be greater than he feels for his wife as he utters the name of his lover on his death bed: "He said (with only hours to go in fact): 'Carol . . .' His eyes were shut and God knows where he thought he was, but he said it clearly and he said it again and again: 'Carol . . . Carol . . .'" (*LD* 162). The love between Bob and Kristina ends with the death of Bob. After Kristina's departure, on his way back home Bob attempts suicide when he does not stop at red light. George narrates the event as the only person who witnesses it:

It's not a busy intersection, a minor road to left and right, but a long, high-sided truck had already started to lumber its way across. He speeded up – I'd swear it – when he saw the possibility. When he was the side of the truck about to straddle the road like a wall. (*LD* 239)

George is not a reliable narrator as he often tells lies and invents scenes. When he follows Bob on his way back home from the airport, he lies to Sarah. He notifies Sarah that: "He's on his way home to you,' I lied" (*LD* 214). He makes up Bob and Kristina's love affair. He first writes about it in Chapter 10 then he continues writing its development in Chapter 15 and mentions its present state in Chapter 27. He also invents the scene when Sarah would come to George's office to thank for his successful mission:

So happy she'd have come in to see me, a last time, to settle the bill, to thank me in person, a few moments in my office instead of years – of this. To sign a cheque and

thank me ('It was nothing – nothing really') and suddenly hug me, maybe, kiss me even, on the cheek . . . She'd have walked out free and happy. Was it possible? I'd have watched her heels, backs of her knees. Departures. I'd have watched her from my window, crossing the Broadway, walking back to her life. And that might have been and should have been gift enough for me. (*LD* 253)

As George brings flowers to Bob's grave to fulfil Sarah's wish on the same day of his regular visit to Sarah, he narrates his reflection of his childhood. Upon witnessing his father's love affair with Pauline Freeman, he lives in its terror. He feels rootless:

I suppose that's what I felt, under my chestnut tree: that I didn't have any shelter, real shelter, any more. I was shelterless. Rain dripped from the leaves. I could slink off home now but I didn't have a real home any more, just a pretend one, and I'd have to work hard – just me and for as long as it took - to stop the pretend-walls and pretend-roof from tumbling down. (*LD* 138)

This infidelity of his father is the initial point of his story as a detective when he attempted to reveal his father's indiscreet affair.

Narrative consists of silences and pretence. George becomes a part of the affair between her father and his lover, Carol Freeman. He narrates all the details he knows about the affair: "Monday afternoons, once upon a time, with Carol Freeman, never anything serious. Did that make it better or worse?" (*LD* 161). However, he does not say a word to his mother. Except for her mother,

George has to hide the affair from Carol's daughter, who is a friend of him. At such an early age, George had to learn about keeping secrets, which would one day be a part of his job, as well. He notes the importance of his role in the affair:

Pretend, keep silent. I couldn't even tell Pauline Freeman, who must know already – because she'd given me the brush-off. Tell her that I knew too. Though that might have been a way of getting back together with her. Partners in secrecy. Like her mum and my dad. (*LD* 134)

He continues to describe how he felt:

I thought: Now I'll have to pretend again, a different kind of pretence. I'll have to pretend, for her sake, to be shocked, bewildered, like her . . . And now she'd have to pretend, too. To be the brave grieving widow. To cherish his memory. All those photographs. (*LD* 163)

In the novel, he fictionalizes what his parents were meant to be. Frank's secret love affair has traumatic effects on George: "twenty-one years of the secret lurking and never surfacing and of me becoming a cop, a boy in blue and then a detective, and getting married myself and having a family – Helen – and popping round every so often for Sunday lunch" (*LD* 161). As Richard Russell mentions in his article, "Embod[y]ments of History and Delayed Confessions":

His storytelling serves as both as a way to suppress this trauma through a technique that circles back repeatedly to this bloodiest of personal family history, and finally also as

an entry into the past so that he can belatedly tell the story and experience a narrative catharsis. (120)

The love affair remains a mystery for his mother. Her mother's last wish is to have her husband's name and her name written on a bank and George fulfills the task: "But she never knew I knew. I'm proud of that. And I carried out her wish to the letter, of course. Frank and Jane" (*LD* 165). George does not let her mother know his father's affair not only for her mother's sake but also for his own sake, because he would rather remember his parents as a happy couple: "I even thought, in a small way, he was Mr Magic, coming from nowhere with a camera instead of a wand. Finding my mum" (*LD* 108). The reason why George always keeps secrets from her mother is that he never means to cause trouble for his parents. This fact is clear in that he is happy not to let his parents down, who are long dead now. He writes as if he was murmuring that: "They never knew, they'd never know. Nor about Rachel and me. About Rachel and me not being Rachel and me any more. About my life falling apart" (*LD* 166). He handles the issue diligently.

In conclusion, throughout the novel, there is a web of silences and mysteries. In addition to these, death and love motifs reverberate in most part of the novel. The effect of epigraph never fades away. Even though George seems to narrate personal issues, there are some references to history, as well. Mostly, love plays an important part in characters' choices, and death

sometimes follows love as well; however, love never loses its importance in accordance with the sentence “To love is to serve, what else is it for?” (*LD* 175).

Hiding Secrets: Telling stories in *Tomorrow*

“How weird that we all sit somewhere in the branches of a family tree”

(*Tomorrow* 85).

Tomorrow (2007), Graham Swift's eighth novel covers affairs of three generations which is told by the narrator, Paula Hook, on a midsummer night in 1995. She directs the story to her sleeping twins. The novel mostly covers the parts of Paula, Mike and the twins' life span and also the lives of Paula's and Mike's parents in relation. Paula seems to be an ordinary woman and wife as Del Ivan Janik maintains “although Swiftian characters seem to be common people, their experiences generate fundamental topics” (74). Paula, as a narrator builds suspense through the strategy of withholding and foreshadowing. She always gives hints that she keeps something back and informs the twins that their father has something important to tell:

He will say it in an odd, uncasual way, and you'll think twice answering back. There'll be something in his voice. You'll wonder what the hell is going on. You will think your father's looking rather strange. You will do a quick run-through in your minds of all those stories that friends at school have shared with you: inside stories, little bulletins on a domestic crisis. (73)

The secret Mike (Paula's husband) is going to reveal may acquire great importance for the rest of twins' lives. Since Mike intends to make his speech properly, he rehearses his own part. The event and how it is narrated differ in certain aspects. Mikhail Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, defines the distinction between the story and the narration:

the event that is narrated in the work and the event of narration itself (we ourselves participate in the latter, as listeners or readers); these events take place in different times (which are marked by different durations as well) and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event. (255)

As David Malcolm in *Understanding Graham Swift* writes: "the battlefields from which these narrators bring back their accounts are, above all, those of family life" (17). Paula is nearly fifty and begins working at Walker and Fitch as a senior director soon after her marriage. Mike is also at the age of fifty, who was once a researcher on snails, is now the editor of a science magazine.

The reverberation of the war is obvious in their life. They meet when they were at Sussex University, in 1966. Paula mentions that Mike and Paula are in fact war babies. Támas Bényei points out that one of the recurrent motifs in Swift's fiction is "the experience of the Second World War, the oppressive presence of a heroic soldier figure, usually the father" (42). In *Tomorrow*, it is

Mike's father who fights in the war. Paula asserts that they are not only war babies but also the only child of their families:

We were both 'war babies' —your fearsome parents—me in the sense that I was conceived in the war, Mike in the true and classic sense that he was born in it, and hurriedly produced, like armies of other little war babies, to be what was left of his dad should his dad soon not be there.

(T49)

Paula informs us about Mike's father "when his dad had been twenty-one, he's been a prisoner of war, somewhere in Germany" (T24). On the other hand, Paula describes her father:

My father was forty-five when I was born: he was almost, for a few months as old as the century. And in 1944 he'd married a woman twenty years younger than he was, my mother, Fiona, who's now still only seventy-five. She's also, of course, your Grannie Fiona, whom you've also, for different reasons, never met. (T25)

The war time memories of Paula's and Mike's father show differences. While Mike's father physically participates in the war, Paula's father is far from the battlefield.

My dad had never had to fly off to his highly possible death; he'd had a rather different war. He'd spent it cracking codes in the safe and cosy depths of the English countryside, pleasantly surrounded, so far as I can glean, by lots of young female clerks, typists and telephonists.

(T52)

In the following years, Paula and Mike own a cat, Otis, and they sometimes leave Otis to a pet care centre. The care centre reminds Mike of his father's captivity in the war. Paula reports that "your dad told me—after Otis died—that it had always made him think of his father's wartime captivity" (T 122). Mike's mother, Granny Helen unveils the unknown events during her pregnancy many years later. Paula, as the narrator, mentions Granny Helen's confession:

When she'd first heard that Grandpa Pete had gone missing, she'd worked on the assumption that he was dead. She even told him that she'd been pregnant and his dad was missing, she'd seriously considered finding someone else—to be Mike's daddy. (T 235)

Paula follows the same route in revealing her secret. By telling her hidden story to the twins, Paula attempts to do the same thing Granny Helen did. However, Paula's condition differs from Helen's condition. Paula states that "your dad told me once about a time when Granny Helen told him about the time before he was born. Here I am, doing the same thing for the two of you" (T 231). They are both careful narrators, as Graham Pechey in *The Word in the World*, points out the hardship of narrating that: "to tell a story is to dramatize the spatial difference and temporal deferral thanks to which telling is at once made both necessary and possible" (85).

Throughout the novel, the narration of the past events from Paula's point of view describes not only a whole sleepless night but also Paula's anxiety

about twins' reaction. Paula and Mike decided to tell the twins the hidden truth of their birth on the week after twins' sixteenth birthday which coincides with that of the week before Hook's 25th anniversary. Along with this confession, Paula makes another confession to the "trusty vet" (T 151). Paula writes "what else did I tell our trusty vet? My honest age: thirty-two, nearer thirty-three now. Married for eight years. That I was an only child. That my father had just died. That I hardly saw my mother" (T 151).

Plot structure shifts from past to the present. Moreover, Paula's narration, which is merely an inner dialogue, is not linear. Paula's narrative is like a rehearsal of the speech Mike is going to make tomorrow. Paula does not tell her story chronologically even though there is a linear progression. Paula's narrative shifts from present to past. Mikhail Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, defines the role of the author:

The author-creator moves freely in his own time: he can begin his story at the end, in the middle, or at any moment of the events represented without violating the objective course of time in the event he describes. Here we get a sharp distinction between representing and represented time. (255)

In *Tomorrow*, the reader first needs to know what has happened in the past rather than what will follow it. The past events stand for a bridge for the present events. Paula's parents get divorced at the same time she meets Mike. Along with her mother, Paula's father, Grandpa Dougie also has two wives.

Paula does not have a healthy relationship with her parents. Thus, she wishes to develop a close relationship between her daughter. In *Graham Swift*, Daniel Lea maintains that “the silences and secrets of private history reveal a conviction that the experience of the present as ideologically and ethically fragmented and discontinuous” (6). Paula unravels the mystery of her mother to Kate:

You’ve never met her and, for the record, Mike’s only met her once—at that funeral. You know I don’t see my own mother: these things happen. She’s one of the never fully explained mysteries of your lives, though; believe me, not the only one. (T 53-4)

Paula, whose mother is indifferent and unloving, has emotional distance towards her mother that makes her not to trust her mother. Fiona did not show signs of her love and interest to Paula. When Paula is thirteen she takes part in the play, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Fiona does not attend the play:

The person I couldn’t see (and her hat would have made its mark) was Fiona. Beside my father there was an empty space, an unoccupied brown-canvas and tubular-steel chair. It remained unoccupied, as the twilight gathered, throughout the evening. (T 141)

While Fiona, Paula’s mother, keeps her distance, Grandpa Dougie has a good relation with Paula. The closeness between Paula and her father is evident: the first person she introduces Mike is her father and when her father died she was

emotionally upset. However, she talks about her mother's death just in a sentence that shows no emotion.

The narrator, Paula usually indicates years in which crucial events took place. Some certain years signify important events for the narrator. For instance, the year 1945 is the year she and Mike were born. Another important year is the year 1979 in which Paula bore Nick and Kate. Moreover, 1978 is the year Grandpa Dougie died. Del Ivan Janik underlines the tendency to give meaning to the periods of time that:

History can provide escape exactly because of its irrelevance to the everyday experience of the ordinary individual. That in life which is most real, sometimes most fulfilling but often most painful, is expressed not in terms of history but in the spots of time, the moments, in which personal experience is concentrated. (78)

The years become meaningful in accordance with the experiences. The date, March 19th, 1966 has a particular significance. It is when Paula and Mike have their first lunch together, the first day of rest of their lives.

Paula and Mike grow up in different backgrounds: "Paula is the daughter of a thrice-married High Court Judge, while he is the love child, conceived during World War II, of a middle-class factory owner" (Levitt 26). Mike's father, who was once a war captive, is not as rich as Paula's father. When Mike is twenty-one, Grandpa Pete sends Mike twelve bottles of wines. Paula refers to the event as "it was like receiving an inheritance" (745). The choice of wine

represents the class the families belong to. While Mike's father sends him common wines, Paula's father prefers fine wines. Paula hides the fact that her father has a cellar of wine: "my dad, the very awkwardly mentioned and very nearly coitus-interruptive High Court judge, had a whole cellar in Kensington of magnificent and expensive wines, including, of course, a fine range of champagne" (T 46). These facts foreground that Paula and Mike can "come up with a wide range of ideas and analogies across the two cultures" (Mars-Jones 26).

When Paula and Mike got married on twenty-fourth of June, 1970, Grandpa Dougie bought them a house in Davenport Road. They lived there for twelve years and when the twins were three years old, with their share of Grandpa Dougie's will; they could afford to buy a big house in Rutherford Road, Putney. Before they buy their first house Paula tells the twins:

Your dad and mum once shared a rented basement in Earl's Court. Your dad was 'researching' at Imperial, I was a trainee at Christie's in the Old Brompton Road. Our bed then (compare this barge of a bed we're in right now) was a mattress on the floor. Not so much an economy, though that was needed, as a gesture to sprawling decadence.
(T 55-6)

In the following years, they acquire better living conditions:

Paula and Mike ascend into bourgeois comfort proceeds unimpeded. Educated as an art historian, she goes to

work for a highbrow auction firm, while Mark abandons a career as a scientific researcher to work for a magazine called *The Living World*, which becomes hugely successful. (Levitt 26)

Hook Family keeps certain secrets from their twins. The novel contains big secrets even the families, which have close ties, hide from each other. They feed a cat, which is called Otis, before Paula gets pregnant and they keep this fact away from the twins. Paula states:

There, it's out of the bag. A secret that's never really needed to be a secret—I mean the existence of Otis—but we've kept it so, all the same. You've never heard us; at least till very recently, even mention his name. He died before you arrived. (7112)

Following this, Paula remembers that Paula gets angry when the vet of Otis associates Paula's fondness of Otis with child substitute. Later, she tells the children, who were sleeping, the real family secret which is very shocking: her affair with the vet, Alan Fraser. Paula points to the affair: "hardly at all the situation of Alan Fraser and me: him at forty-one and divorced, and me at thirty-two and married" (7172). Third secret is, Paula pays a visit to the court when she was thirteen and she reports it to nobody but Mike: "there before me—below me— was a man in scarlet robes and a grey wig, who, though I unquestionably knew him, I wouldn't have recognized as my father" (769). Paula is not the only one who is hiding secrets. Granny Helen has also kept a

secret from Mike about his father. She does not tell Mike the truth about her pregnancy until he is twenty-one. Paula informs the readers that:

I think at that funeral, at which she didn't cry, she might have been thinking of how successfully she'd protected your Grandpa Pete. Now it might be her own son she's protecting, if not quite in the same way. It could be that as from today she'll be protecting you too, from the lie that you'll think you'll be keeping from her. (T248)

The most important secret which Paula and Mike have been hiding from the twins is that Mike is not their biological father. Paula and Mike have fictionalized this story for their twins' sake. Paula asserts the hardship of telling the truth:

You both deserve the full story from me, your mother. Mike will give you his story, his version. I mean, it won't be a story, it will be facts, a story is what you've had so far. All the same, it will be a sort of version of something real. One thing we've learnt in these sixteen years is how hard it can be to tell what's true and what's false, what's real and what's pretend. (T6-7)

In the novel, father-son, father-daughter relationships are of great importance. Paula remembers the first Christmas without her father. She writes "I'd had a major consolation, a double consolation: you and Nick were in my womb" (T 51). Mike does the washing-up at Christmas, which is a family tradition and Mike used to carry out this with his father, with his daughter Kate. He chooses Kate as his father's substitute. Even though Grandpa Pete and

Mike seem to lead a healthy relation, in fact there is great emotional gap between the father and the son. Paula addresses to her twins:

Was there always a little gap, a discrepancy, between your dad and his dad? You've noticed it too? Was it just the gap, the edgy stand-off that exists between any son and father, or was it that niggling gap of around five months? His dad had tried to close it, perhaps, with those twelve bottles of champagne. Perhaps for a while he succeeded. I think your dad may have wept a little when he read that message: Have Fun. (T 50)

Similar to Mike, Paula does not have a healthy relationship with her mother. Since Paula's childhood, her mother was not close to her and she grew up as a girl emotionally distanced from her mother. In her father's funeral, seeing her mother, she imagines how they could be if they established a good relationship:

I suppose if my mother had cried I would have only hated her hypocrisy. Though I suppose there was another scenario: that the two of us might have cried together. Hugging and howling in some awful melting moment of reconciliation. In that freezing weather? (T 123)

Paula wants Nick and Kate to be decent people in the future. She addresses to the twins: "Kate Hook, Nick Hook: two neat, quick syllables for each of you. Kate Hook, Nick Hook, well, they're going to be two bright, sharp, good-to-know people, they're not going to be a pair of drips" (T 79). Paula trusts the twins' judgement as they may have inherited their grandpa's ability to judge.

She declares that “unless I’m wrong about you. Unless you really do live in that cool and shrugging, impervious world where tomorrow will be just a passing, absorbable jolt to you. And why should I be just as afraid of that?” (*T* 128).

Paula tells the truth at the end. She gets pregnant by artificial insemination. She reveals that:

Your dad isn’t your dad. It wasn’t ever possible that he could be. But what I want you to know is that I wanted him to be. I still wanted him to be even when that decision was taken that, though he wouldn’t be, you would still have a father. I still want him to be now. (*T* 155)

Paula is curious about the father, her “demon lover” (*T* 189). She dwells on the possibilities. She maintains that:

Suppose our paths have crossed, suppose we’ve actually looked, without knowing it, at each other. Suppose we’ve sat on the same train. What would be the chances? Beyond all reckoning? Sometimes, now, I have the strangely arresting thought: suppose he’s no longer alive. (*T* 188).

In conclusion, the novel ends at present time: today not tomorrow. Thus, “while anticipating the future, Paula has given us a vivid account of the past. What *Tomorrow* lacks is a today” (Mars-Jones 26). Though Paula repeats that Mike “will do the talking”, she first unveils the secret. Through the end of the novel she tells the twins that: “We all have more than one creature inside us perhaps. And there are some moments in our lives that make us ripe for

metamorphosis. Tomorrow you'll start a new life" (T 202). Moreover, she appreciates Helen's instinct to protect her husband and child; she attempts to do the same thing for Mike and the twins. As Vannessa Guignery, in *(Re-)mapping London: Visions of the Metropolis in the Contemporary Novel in English*, mentions, Paula "questions the wisdom of bringing children into our mortally threatened living world; nevertheless Swift undoubtedly believes that the world, London included, will find a way to endure and evolve" (97). Hence, Paula trusts to her children's common sense and she is sure that they are going to understand that they are really important for her and Mike. Hence, she ends her story optimistically.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the analysis of five novels has verified that Graham Swift makes use of disturbed chronology, multiple narrator and storytelling techniques in the writing process. In terms of his narrative style, he deploys intertextuality and tropes such as irony and parody. In addition; documents, personal diaries, letters, and poems are included in the plot structure of Swift's novels. In this respect, these novels are concerned about some highly controversial issues such as loss, adoption, generational conflict, secrecy, betrayal, war and regeneration. Families are central to his narrative but patterns and connections cannot be associated with his novels. That is, family members do not carry out a healthy communication. As a result, when the family members attempt to shape their future life, they have to look back on their mistakes.

In *Out of This World*, the bomb attack make two narrators, Harry and Sophie, direct witnesses of war. Each narrator reflects his/her own perception of events. Two controversial narratives are the results of the fact that:

Connections between people, places and events have broken down or become distorted, and crucially the interlinking narratives of subjectivisation have eroded to the point where characters struggle to tell the stories of their lives with any degree of coherence. (Lea *Graham* 118)

The novel is as a trauma narrative: “a double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature its survival” (Russell 118). Like all the traumatic events, Sophie’s physical wounds become psychological wounds as well. In addition to the private stories, events in world history, such as moon landing, Vietnam War, Numereng trials and their reflections are included in the narrative.

Ever After combines personal accounts and letters. The novel is an example of metafictional text which questions and foregrounds the way we make sense of the world and it also displays the necessity for fiction to reflect reality. Moreover, Bill is aware of the facts: his fictionality as a character, his address to the reader directly, the use of letters in the narrative organization and they make the metafictional structure of the novel unequivocal. Bill Unwin, who is a self-conscious narrator, deploys fiction in his search for the truth. The novel parodies *Hamlet* through which Bill Unwin makes use of the relation between his life story and Shakespeare’s famous character. He draws this parallelism deliberately; however, there are times when he is “not so sure if our passions seek out models of behaviour or if models of behaviour are the springs of our passions” (EA 68). His account can be considered as a parody of the play because the play is used as a pretext to establish a new synthesis employing

the elements of the tragic tradition. The narrative holds some examples, one of which is:

The parodic bias cannot be overlooked in certain textual distortions, as when Bill compares Matthew's religious thoughts triggered off by his encounter with the remains of an ichthyosaur with Hamlet's metaphysical meditation in front of a skull, another form of fossil, before concluding: "Alas, poor ichthyosaur. (Gutleben 144)

In his rewriting of his life story, Bill manipulates it since he is conscious of what he has been going through, "the story of his life is altered in a way that compromises his previous vision of whatever happily after he was living" (Macleod 383). Above all, his purpose is to compose "a narrative about the redemptive potential of desire and the self-blinding hope for fulfillment and completion" (Lea "Feigning" 156). In terms of content, it is an account of several generations of a family. In his search for truth, "Matthew Manuscript" turns out to be a guide for Bill. They serve as the "one final metanarrative which Bill resorts to in the hope of recovering the sense of wholeness lost with his father's suicide – and not to be regained by means of either literature or romantic love – is history (Craps *Trauma* 136). The manuscripts are the only resource he can acquire to go on his life comfortably, in other words they connote his last chance for a contented life. Consequently, the core of the novel is to make a difference between fact and fiction, real and replica which are intermingled in Bill's life.

Swift, in *Last Orders* (1996), brings four men together and applies an example of alternative monologue in the narrative organization. Additionally, Swift makes use of journey motif in this novel. He not only refers to the journey itself but also literalizes the idea of searching for by making use of the ancient narrative device of journey. Though the journey of these four men seems to be quite ordinary, it is in fact an inner journey as well. Related to the idea of journey, Ray highlights what counts in life, mobility: 'It aint the Beatles and it aint the Rolling Stones and it aint long hair or short skirts or free milk and baby-stoppes on the National Health. It's mobility, it's being mobile. How did you get to here from Blackburn?' (*LO* 105). On the other hand, the relationships between families are the most important concern in *Last Orders*, and Swift draws the attention to the fear of old age, the existential problems of life, the betrayal of love, the unsuccessful fathers, friendship and difficulty of asking for forgiveness and the last issue is brought into question by Ray:

What you never know won't hurt, but it's different when someone's dying, because it's not like you can say least said soonest mended, because there aint going to be no soonest or latest and you won't ever get the chance again to tell or not tell nothing. (*LO* 98)

In *The Light of Day*, different perspectives of love are intertwined. Feeling of duty between one another in relation with love is central to the novel. Meanwhile, similar to other novels of Swift, this novel relates particular features

of metafiction technique. Through the end of the narrative, Swift establishes a dialogue with the reader by leaving the rest of the question for the reader's completion: "He was – what's the expression? - washing his hands. Though what would you do? If your mother –" (*LD* 271). The convention of reader and character identification is broken or in a way it has taken a different approach.

In *Tomorrow*, Paula Hook mentions not only events crucial in her life but also certain times in public history (the 1960's and '70s). Swift deploys word play as a metafictional technique this time. This pattern is underlined by Levitt:

Appropriately, his storytelling is never less than swift. Nor does he refrain from his signature wordplay with names. "I was hooked," Paula explains, or "I was the lucky girl who hooked a Hook," a digression that recalls the undertaker Vic Tucker's mediation in *Last Orders* "We're Tuckers, we fix up dead people. It's what we do for a living. We tuck 'em up. ("Secrets" 26)

The novel underlines the difficulty that Paula and Mike face to hold their family together since their family is liable to fall apart. Swift largely allows for a big secret in contrast to other secretcies in his narratives.

These five novels discussed in this thesis share some recurrent themes. "Unfaithfulness" is a theme that is shared by the novels. In *Out of This World*, Sophie and his mother, in *Ever After* Bill's mother, Sylvia, Paula in *Tomorrow*, Amy in *Last Orders* and George's father, Frank in *The Light of Day* are all unfaithful. Another device that Swift uses is "Photography", to show different

perceptions of reality. As Daniel Lea claims for the nature of photography: “rather than representing the means by which the world is recorded, the camera actively participates in the constitutive embodiment of a reality, albeit one that emerges at second hand and through editorialising manipulation of the lens” (199). Sophie’s father, Harry and George’s father, Frank are photographers. However; they differ in one respect. While George’s father is assigned to take photos in the war, Sophie’s father volunteered to be a war photographer.

As the title of this thesis remarks, these five novels deploy issues about family histories and secrets which acquire vital importance. In *Out of This World*, the ties which bind individuals and serve to bring them together as a family are negotiated. Additionally, the novel emphasizes the possibility of a reunion of family members who have been estranged from each other for years. The secret Harry hides from his daughter about his wife’s adultery has a great importance. Another family story, in which an individual is tangled up in the network of secrets of a family, is encountered in *Ever After*. The extreme power of secrets on Bill’s life is of utmost importance which ends up with an attempt of suicide. Luckily, following his survival, he is able to find an ancestor to depend on. Furthermore, Swift carries on dealing with not only a family’s history but histories of five families in *Last Orders*. These families are connected to each other through concealment of certain secrets. Some members of the families continue their life without knowing the truth and even some die unaware of

particular secrets. The fact that how the secret love affair of a father dominates the life of his son and it never loses its effect, more than that it turns out to be the unique factor in determining his future occupation, is entreated in *The Light of Day*. Most significantly, another secret, which brings about the death of a person, never comes to light as well. The story of a family, which is desperately in need of keeping a secret, is depicted in *Tomorrow*. The secret serves to make the most desirable wish in lives of Paula and Mike come true.

To sum up, Swift as a writer of postmodern novels applies irony, parody and intertextuality, techniques of story telling in his narrative. The first novel, *Out of This World* is a “trauma narrative” which intermingles private and public histories. The intertextual relationship between *Ever After* and Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, reverberates throughout the novel and the protagonist Bill Unwin parodies his state with Hamlet’s and uses it as the parodied text. In *Last Orders*, Swift makes use of time and space relationship which is defined by M. M. Bakhtin as “chronotopic” relations. *The Light of Day* is an account of an ex cop who tries to handle his problems. The technique of storytelling is significant in *Tomorrow* since it is written as a monologue. The only character who possesses the power to narrate is the narrator, Paula. In all of these novels, human beings are badly wounded by world history and The Second World War has the utmost importance in their lives.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OTW ——— *Out of This World* (1989)

EA ——— *Ever After* (1992)

LD ——— *Last Orders* (1996)

LO ——— *The Light of Day* (2004)

T ——— *Tomorrow* (2007)

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı Graham Swift'in üstkurmaca romanlarını Postmodern Teori ışığında incelemektir. Swift, ortak tarihin kişisel tarih üzerindeki etkisini ele aldığı romanlarında gerçek ile kurgu arasındaki ilişkiye ışık tutmak için üstkurmaca yazım tekniğini kullanır.

İlk bölümde, edebiyatta postmodernizm incelenmiştir. Ayrıca üstkurmaca yazım tekniği çalışılmıştır. Postmodern edebiyat kapsamında “ironi” ve “parodinin”, geçmişi tekrar düşünmek bağlamında kullanımı incelenmiştir. Dahası, postmodern eserlerin yazım sürecinde hikâye anlatımı ve tarih yazımının zorluğu analiz edilmiştir. İkinci bölüm, bu kuramların Graham Swift'in *Out of This World* (1989), *Ever After* (1992), *Last Orders* (1996), *The Light of Day* (2004) ve *Tomorrow* (2007) romanlarında uygulanması olarak devam etmektedir. Bu bölümde, ilk olarak *Out of This World* “travma anlatımı” bağlamında çalışılmıştır. İkinci bölümde, *Ever After* ile *Hamlet* arasındaki “metinlerarası” ilişki incelenmiştir. Diğer bir roman, *Last Orders*, M.M.Bakhtin'in “kronotop” tanımı üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Son iki bölümde ise *The Light of Day* ve *Tomorrow*'da hikaye ve tarih anlatımı konularına değinilerek, aile tarihleri ve ortak tarih konuları irdelenmiştir.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to scrutinize metafictional novels of Graham Swift in the light of Postmodern Theory. Swift deploys metafictional writing technique to shed light on the relationship between fact and fiction in his novels in which he deals with impact of public history on private history.

In the first part, postmodernism in literature was scrutinized. In addition, metafictional writing technique was studied. Within the scope of postmodern literature, “irony” and “parody” were examined in terms of their implementation to rethink about the past. Moreover, the difficulty of story telling and history writing in the creation process of postmodern works was analyzed. The second part proceeds with the implementation of these theories on Graham Swift’s novels: *Out of This World* (1989), *Ever After* (1992), *Last Orders* (1996), *The Light of Day* (2004) and *Tomorrow* (2007). In this part, primarily *Out of This World* was studied with regards to “trauma narrative”. In the second part, “intertextual” relationship between *Ever After* and *Hamlet* was studied. Another novel *Last Orders* was discussed via M.M.Bakhtin’s definition of “chronotope”. As for the last two parts, in *The Light of Day* and *Tomorrow* family histories and public history were scrutinized by referring to story telling and historiography.