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Pojetí prostoru v současné britské próze (Graham Swift)

Postmodern Space in Contemporary British Fiction (Graham Swift)

Vypracovala: Bc. Kristýna Mykytyn
Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.

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Poděkování

Mé poděkování patří PhDr. Alici Sukdolové, Ph.D. za odborné vedení a cenné rady, které mi poskytla při psaní této diplomové práce. Dále bych paní doktorce ráda poděkovala za její trpělivost, ochotu, rychlou komunikaci a čas, který mé práci věnovala.

Anotace

Práce se pokusí definovat prostor ve vybraných románech současného britského autora Grahama Swifta. Teoretická část práce nejprve nastíní společenskou, politickou a literární situaci 20. století a představí literární prostředky používané v moderní, postmoderní a současné britské literatuře. Dále se práce zabývá změnou vnímání prostoru, teorií postmoderního chronotopu a vedle Grahama Swifta jsou představeni i další nejvýznamnější autoři současné britské literatury. Jádrem práce je literárněvědná analýza prostoru a krajiny románů *Země vod* (1983) a *Mimo tento svět* (1988). Cílem práce je porovnání použití postmoderních prvků a analýza vlivu historie a krajiny na osud hrdinů vybraných románů.

Klíčová slova: postmodernismus, současná britská próza, Graham Swift, Země vod, Mimo tento svět, prostor, britská fikce, chronotop

Abstract

The thesis aims to reflect on space in selected novels by contemporary British writer Graham Swift. The theoretical part of the thesis will first outline the social, political and literary situation of the 20th century and introduce the literary tools used in modern, postmodern and Contemporary British literature. Furthermore, the thesis deals with the change in the perception of space, the theory of postmodern chronotope, and besides Graham Swift, other most important writers of Contemporary British literature are introduced. The core of the thesis is a literary analysis of the space and landscape of the novels *Waterland* (1983) and *Out of This World* (1988). The aim is to compare the usage of postmodern elements and analyse the influence of history and landscape on the fate of the heroes of selected novels.

Keywords: postmodernism, Contemporary British fiction, Graham Swift, Waterland, Out of This World, space, British fiction, chronotope

Contents

Introduction

The topic of my diploma thesis is space in Contemporary British fiction. Particular attention is paid to Graham Swift and his two novels *Waterland* and *Out of This World*. I chose this topic because it is related to Social sciences which is my second major. I am also interested in the history of the 20th century and the depiction of historical events in fiction; therefore, the literature of the 20th century is optimal for the analysis. In my bachelor thesis, I focused on the novels by Ian McEwan, so I decided to follow up on the topic and explore the work of his contemporary, Graham Swift. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the postmodern elements in his most famous novel *Waterland* and his less celebrated novel *Out of This World*.

The diploma thesis is divided into two main parts – theoretical and practical. The first chapter of the theoretical part focuses on the transition from modernism to postmodernism. The second chapter focuses closely on the features of postmodern literature. The third chapter concentrates on Contemporary British fiction in general. In the next chapter, particular attention is paid to space in literature and changes in space perception which was influenced by many thinkers of the 20th century. Influential thoughts of Mikhail Bakhtin, Henri Lefebvre and Michael Foucault are presented. The fifth chapter of the theoretical part presents five most significant British writers nowadays. Apart from their biographies, the chapter presents short descriptions of their most influential works which at the same time influenced the development of their writing style.

The practical part contains two chapters, one dedicated to the novel *Waterland* and the second to *Out of This World*. Even though Graham Swift is a Contemporary British author, many postmodern elements can be found in his novels. Therefore, the aim of the practical part is to analyse the postmodern features and compare how they are used in both novels.

1   Modernism vs Postmodernism

The twentieth century can be divided into two distinct periods. One is characterised by the modernist movement and the other by the postmodernist. In general, literature cannot be separated from changes in society. It reflects its social, political, and philosophical aspects. The sexual revolution in the 1960s and the transformation of the role of the family shaped the prose of Ian McEwan (1948-), John Fowles (1926-2005) and Martin Amis (1949-). Without the change of perception in sexual and family relationships, their prose would look different.[1]

Modernism was a period in literary history which started around the early 1900s and continued until the early 1940s but was most prominent in the 1920s. In a way, modernism can be described as a reaction to the Enlightenment of the 18th century. At that time people started to value science, logic, knowledge, and the power of humanity. They believed in the unlimited power of science, which was to serve only beneficial purposes. It was supposed to improve the living conditions of people for the better. However, changes during the 19th century showed humankind that this was not completely true and the events of the 20th century shaped society further towards modernism.[2]

Influenced by industrialisation and the First World War, modernism allowed writers to express themselves in a more experimental way. The changes in perception of life and death, the invention of bombs, disorganised daily life – all these changes shifted society away from traditional styles. In general, modernists wrote fragmented stories which reflected the fragmented society during and after WWI, in comparison to clear-cut storytelling and formulaic verse from the 19th century. Common techniques include experimentation, stream of consciousness, interior monologue and writing from multiple points of view. This reflected the need for greater psychological realism,

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[1] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 17.
[2] DUGAN, Brenna. *What is Modernism?* Utoleto.edu, 2019,
https://www.utoledo.edu/library/canaday/guidepages/Modernism2.html

especially during WWI. Modernist literature focuses on the individual rather than society.[3]

Postmodernism, as well as modernism, is a broad and vague term; therefore, it is difficult to define. Nonetheless, certain authors can be clearly defined as modernists or postmodernists. Writers such as James Joyce (1882-1941), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Thomas Mann (1875-1955) belong to the modernists. Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), John Fowles (1926-2005), Iris Murdoch (1919-1999), Italo Calvino (1923-1985) and Milan Kundera (1929-) are listed as postmodernists.[4]

In the 1950s, a new generation of young novelists started their careers. Between 1953 and 1957 authors such as John Wain (1925-1994), Kingsley Amis (1922-1995), John Braine (1922-1986) and William Golding (1911-1993) were publishing their first works. Post-war literature was no longer the domain of the upper-middle class, but the whole culture was democratised. The other characteristic feature is the weakening and agitation of the estates' privileges characteristic of British literature in the interwar period. The new generation introduced to literature a new character – a disillusioned, young, and individualistic intellectual dissatisfied with the situation in post-war British society and the role that this society assigned to a character. The main characteristic of the literary character in the 1950s is social ambivalence. Jim Dixon in Amis's novel *Lucky Jim* (1954), Charles Lumley in *Wain's Hurry on Down* (1953) and Joe Lampton in Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957) provide examples of this social ambivalence because they come from the lower-middle class, however, through the end of the novel they are moving up on the social scale thanks to a marriage with a young and sexually attractive girl from the upper-middle class.[5]

It is necessary to look at the social, cultural, and intellectual background from which this new literary character came from. In the 1950s, the mood was quite optimistic,

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[3] MasterClass staff. *Modernist Literature Guide: Understanding Literary Modernism*. MasterClass, 2022, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/modernist-literature-guide#5-characteristics-of-modernist-literature
[4] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 19.
[5] Ibid. p. 7.

partially due to the rhetoric of prime minister Harold Macmillan (1894-1986). After the Second World War, the post-war consensus was accepted and shared by the major political parties in Britain – Labour and Conservative Party. The policy was abandoned in the 1970s by the leader of the Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013). Butskellism was the term coined by Labour's Hugh Gaitskell (1906-1963) and Conservative Rab Butler (1902-1982) which expressed the principles of the post-war consensuses based *"on 'mixed economy', a strong welfare state, and Keynesian demand management designed to ensure full employment."*[6]

It seemed that mass unemployment, poverty, and social conflicts were over. Fridges, cars, and TVs became the symbols of the new era – consumerism. The middle class was better off under the new policy than before WWII but the literary rhetoric did not share the same optimism as the rest of society. Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957), an English writer and painter, criticised the materialistic tendencies of the new society as well as T. S. Eliot. In the year 1943, Eliot was publishing articles in *New England Weekly* viewed as a criticism of the democratisation of the whole post-war British educational system. In 1948, these articles were published in the book *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*.[7]

Eliot writes: *"There is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture – of that part of it which is transmissible by education – are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans."*[8]

He condemned The Educational Law of 1944 which provided free secondary education for all children. *"The plans for post-war secondary education in Britain aimed*

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[6] McLEAN, I.&McMILLAN, A*. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 56.
[7] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 19.
[8] ELIOT, T. S. *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948, p. 108.

to remove the inequalities which remained in the system."[9] Thanks to this law, emerging writers such as Kingsley Amis, John Wain and John Braine gained new opportunities and after a few years, they became famous writers and faces of the British literary establishment.[10]

The year 1956 was important for the new group of novelists and playwrights called 'the angry young men'. Two particular events influenced this new group – the Suez Crisis and the repressed Hungarian Revolution. Among the group's leading figures were John Osborne (1929-1994) and Kingsley Amis, although they did not like to refer to themselves as 'the angry young men'. With their style of writing, they are close to the writers who belonged to *The Movement* and sometimes it is hard to tell them apart. At that time writers also reacted to the threat of nuclear bombs.[11]

The next important period is the mid-sixties. In 1964 a new Prime Minister was elected from the Labour Party. As Harold Macmillan, Harold Wilson (1916-1995) also used quite optimistic rhetoric and promised a new era. Joining The European Community was at the centre of the new policy discussion. Writers such as Kingsley Amis or John Osborne were against British integration into Europe. On the other hand, a Scottish writer Muriel Spark (1918-2006) perceived integration as an opportunity to destroy borders between social strata, nationalities, and ethnic groups. At the same time, the British Commonwealth almost fell apart, which caused one of the greatest social and political changes in post-war Britain. Consequently, people had to look for their new national and individual identities. Added to this, in 1968, the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland burst on the scene.[12]

The typical features of British literature at the end of the 1960s were decentralisation and liberalisation. The plot setting moved from London to large cities

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[9] UK Parliament. *The Education Act of 1944*. UK Parliament, 2019, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/educationact1944/
[10] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, pp. 8-9.
[11] Ibid. pp. 10-11.
[12] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, pp. 13-14.

in Northern Ireland and northern parts of England. The best political novels at that time related to the topic of Northern Ireland, South Africa, or The Eastern Bloc.[13]

Taboo topics were also depicted in the 1960s. Sex and sexuality became a part of open public debate. The transition of the role of the family became one of the most debated topics not only in literature but also in sociology. For centuries the family had been considered a base of stability and safety. In the post-war period, the perception of the family changed, and some psychologists described the family as a source of mental disorders and emphasised the damaging influence of family. The debate about this topic was somewhat controversial; even these days the role and changes of the family remain among the main topics in sociology.[14]

2 Features of postmodern literature

In the previous chapter, the most important events of post-war Britain were mentioned. The 20th century was changing in all its social and political aspects; therefore, to coin a precise definition of postmodernism is extremely difficult. Postmodernism is commonly described as a reaction to modernism but defining modernism is as hard as defining postmodernism.

Postmodernist literature is a product of the cultural radicalism of the 1960s and was criticised by various writers mentioned above. In the mid-sixties, the shape of the traditional novel changed. The traditional realistic novel began to split into non-fiction novels based on the processing of documentary material and metafiction and different kinds of metafiction. In contrast, the traditional 19th-century novel was based on a complete interpretation of the world and used an omniscient narrator. Modernists continued using the total interpretation of the world, but they interpreted it from a different point of view and replaced the external reality with the internal. Postmodernists, however, refused the total interpretation of the world. While the

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[13] Ibid. p. 14.
[14] Ibid. p. 15.

traditional realistic novel related to liberal and industrial society, postmodern prose reflected post-industrial society. It is little wonder these changes occurred most rapidly and markedly in the United States. To understand postmodern features, two issues should be discussed.[15]

First, the reality of that time was much more fascinating than anything the human brain could invent. The reality on its own comes up with the most fascinating ideas for the novel. For example, the Watergate scandal incorporated many features of the most tremendous spy novels and contained the features of fiction.[16]

Second, the impact of media on reality was so prominent that it was hard to tell where the boundary between reality and fiction lay. Instead of one total interpretation of the world, the reality was much more complicated, chaotic, ambiguous, and non-transparent. It seems like a paradox that the more information a contemporary person possesses about this world, the less he/she can understand it. At the same time, people create their own history and therefore to a certain point history is the product of human fiction.[17] This idea influenced writers such as John Fowles (1926-2005), James Gordon Farrell (1935-1979) and Malcolm Bradbury (1932-2000).[18]

In addition, the ideas of the American sociologist Erving Goffman (1922-1972) influenced the development of postmodern literature. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) Goffman came up with the idea that life is like a never-ending play in which people are actors. When people are born, they are thrown on the stage, and they have to learn their assigned roles from others through socialisation. In this case, the stage is everyday life and whatever people do, they are playing out some role.[19] The author was no longer the omniscient director of the novel and people were understood as the actors playing many roles. Different roles were seen as different fictions of the person who did not have recognisable nature and his/her identity was shattered,

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[15] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 20.
[16] Ibid. p. 21.
[17] Based on the theory of two sociologists - Peter L. Berger (1929-2017) and Thomas Luckmann (1927-2016).
[18] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 21.
[19] GOFFMAN, E. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1959, p. 17.

ambiguous and exceedingly variable. Not only sociologists but also the ideas of psychologists such as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) or R. D. Laing (1927-1989) influenced the further development of postmodern literature.[20]

To summarise the main features of postmodern literature is complicated; nonetheless, they can be recognised by certain features, usually through stylistic techniques, which will be further elaborated. The characteristic features of postmodern literature are melding reality and fiction; the refusal of totalising interpretation of the world; combining high and popular culture and literature; reference to myths and fairy tales; intertextuality, language playfulness, and experimentations with style.[21]

Postmodern literature rejects the idea of absolute meaning. Instead, the narrator is often unreliable. To confuse the reader even more, the novel usually contains extreme subjectivity and prevents the readers from finding meaning while reading the story. While modernists were focusing on internal fragmentation and mourned the loss of order, postmodernists revel in it and focus on external fragmentation. They often use tools such as black humour, wordplay, and irony in order to muddle the story and confuse the readers. Postmodern authors use more likely temporal distortion and jump between characters and places.[22]

The purpose of metafiction in postmodern fiction is to highlight the dichotomy between the real world and the fictional world of a novel. Usually, a writer diminishes the boundary between him/her and a reader. A writer often directly addresses the reader and openly questions the narration of the novel. This tool helps the authors to draw the reader's attention away from the story and allows them to question the content of the text itself. Authors use self-reflexivity and self-consciousness to reflect on their own artistic processes. The final feature of metafiction is fusing a number of different techniques together to create an unconventional narrative. Metafiction can

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[20] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, pp. 20-22.
[21] Ibid. p. 23.
[22] MasterClass staff. *Postmodern Literature Guide: 10 Notable Postmodern Authors*. MasterClass, 2022, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/postmodern-literature-guide#10-notable-postmodern-authors

also experiment with the role of the narrator and their relationship to the fictional characters in the story.[23]

Another postmodern tool, prominent in the novels of Graham Swift, is intertextuality. Some intertextual references are exact lines of dialogues or actions, and some might be more vaguely referenced. The definition of intertextuality includes forms of parody, pastiche, retellings, homage, and allegory. Pastiche is a technique used to imitate another literary work written by another writer. In comparison to parody, the purpose of the pastiche is not to mock the literary work but honour it. [24]

As mentioned, postmodern authors usually portray boundaries which are not clear. To do so, writers use faction. Stories based on faction are usually based on historical figures or events that are connected with fictitious elements. Actual historical events and fictional events are mixed together without a clear distinction of what is real and what is fiction.[25]

Writers often mingle between minimalism and maximalism. If a writer chooses minimalism, the novel tends to include few details, common characters and settings and modest descriptions. On the other hand, maximalism focuses on details and rich descriptions; as such the novels tend to be lengthy and highly detailed. Both approaches are important for the representation and perception of space. The last feature that should be mentioned is magical realism. Rather than a genre, it is described as a literary fiction style which focuses on a realistic view of the contemporary world while also adding magical elements and blurring the lines between fantasy and reality. The term was first used in 1925 by a German historian and art critic Franz Roh (1890-1965) to emphasise the magical and strange appearance of normal objects in the real world when

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[23] MasterClass staff. *Metafiction Guide: Understanding Metafiction in Literature*. MasterClass, 2022, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/metafiction-guide#6-examples-of-metafiction-in-literature

[24] MasterClass staff. *What Is Intertextuality?* MasterClass, 2021, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-apply-literary-inspiration-to-your-writing#what-is-intertextuality

[25] BLAKELEY, S. *Postmodernism in Literature: Definition & Examples*. Study.com, 2021, https://study.com/academy/lesson/postmodernism-in-literature-definition-lesson-quiz.html

people stop and look closely at them.[26] All these postmodern techniques helped writers to create a unique narrative and space in their novels.

3   Contemporary British fiction

Until quite recently, Contemporary British fiction was considered a synonym for the fiction of the entire post-war period. However, in the mid-1980s, influential writers such as the British historian Eric Hobsbawn (1917-2012), the British geographer David Harvey (1935-), the Italian economist Giovanni Arrighi (1937-2009), the British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1938-), and the American literary critic Frederic Jameson (1934-) referred to the 1970s as the fulcrum point of a crucial historical shift. It affected various spheres, for example, economics (re-agglomeration of wealth, spread of neoliberalism); ideology (the rise of multiculturalism, relativism, anti-foundationalism); society (new identities, ethnicities); and culture (the emergence of global telecommunication).[27]

In a literary study with respect to British fiction, *"a rough division imposed itself on the curriculum, with post-war tending to mean the Movement, the Angry Young Men, the first generation of feminist novels, and the period of great acclaim for individual authors such as Graham Greene, Anthony Burgess, William Golding, and Iris Murdoch."*[28] Contemporary referred to *"a quite distinct literary scene: the immigrant and postcolonial writers…the Scottish and Welsh New Waves, the brash new celebrity authors who won Booker prizes and appeared in Granta magazine's Best of the Young British Novelists (in 1983 and 1993)."*[29]

In the 1980s Contemporary literature had affirmed its position and gained recognition of and within worldwide literary geography. British literary magazine and

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[26] MasterClass staff. *What is Magical Realism?* MasterClass, 2021, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-magical-realism#what-are-the-characteristics-of-magical-realism
[27] ENGLISH, J.F. *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 1.
[28] Ibid. p. 2.
[29] Ibid. p. 2.

publisher, *Granta*, helped to promote this notion in 1979 announcing *"that we were witnessing nothing less than "the end of the English novel [and] the beginning of British fiction."*[30] The new situation of British fiction was shaped since the 1970s, and especially 1978-9, around the time Margaret Thatcher was elected. The rapid changes caused that people started looking for their own identity and therefore the distinction between English and British literature[31], British and Commonwealth literature, Commonwealth and postcolonial literature became increasingly urgent.[32]

With a wider literary community and recurrent social changes, English literature was forced to widen its perspectives. Authors born after 1945 who started publishing in the second half of the 20th century such as Ian McEwan, Graham Swift and Martin Amis are referred to as Contemporary British authors. One of the most interesting features of this generation is the ethnical heterogeneity of the authors. Authors such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Timothy Mo and Salman Rushdie enriched British literature with new themes and subjects. In this sense, British prose is closer to North American literature. These authors brought to literature not only new subject matter but also new literary techniques.[33]

English author and critic, David Lodge (1935-) described the period of British literary history in which Graham Swift produces his novels as a "crossroad". It is a problematic historical period because authors such as Swift and others had to deal not only with the complexities and contradictions of postmodernism but with their relationship to the British tradition of literary realism. In 1966, Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg published *The Nature of Narrative* in which authors suggested that there are two main and opposite ways of narrative. The first is *empirical,* which focuses on the real, whereby language is used to depict truth and experience and the second is *fictional* which focuses

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[30] Ibid. p. 3.
[31] Terminology became quite important in this period. English literature in the 1960s loosely referred to works written on the British Isles, even though a term was not popular in the Republic of Ireland. Gradually, the distinction between English and British literature became more important. The term 'English' tends to be ambiguous because it can refer to literature written in English or literature written by English authors. Nowadays, term 'English literature' refers to language. British literature, on the other hand, refers to works written in the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland).
[32] Ibid. p. 4.
[33] HILSKÝ, M. *Současný britský román*. [Jinočany]: H & H, 1992, p. 139.

on the ideal, and in which form, entertainment and fantasy prevail. There is a dilemma as to whether to continue on the path of realism or to be oriented to something experimental. When reading *Waterland* or *Out of This World* by Graham Swift it is noticeable that he positioned himself into the experimental narrative but at the same time, he incorporates techniques and themes compatible with the realist tradition.[34]

4   Space in literature

All novels must have a kind of setting. The locality of the fictional worlds influences the mood of the novels, and the decisions – and consequences thereof – of the characters are usually intensified by the demands and opportunities given by the particular space. The writers are aware of the importance of space and therefore the setting is rarely a coincidence. One of the novelists aware of this significance is Graham Swift, who points out that *"our immersion in the verbal craft of landscape description puts us imaginatively in touch not only with environmental sounds, colour and scale, but also with a place's intimate rhythms and modes of inhabitation."*[35]

The examination of space became one of the most discussed literary disciplines whereas earlier literary disciplines perceived space as something rather taken for granted. Nonetheless, space has increasingly become a metaphor in contemporary cultural and critical theorising which is apparent from the geographers' attraction to the spatial models of, for example, Michael Foucault (1926-1984) and the literary theoretical discourses of bell hooks (1952-2021). The perception of space changed as the emergence of common interest was detected – the making of space as a social product. Foucault believed that space could no longer be treated as the dead, fixed, undialectical or immobile. Instead, *"it is to be understood as intricately operative in the constructions of social power and knowledge."*[36]

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[34] LODGE, D. *The Novelists at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1971, p. 3-26.
[35] JAMES, D. *Contemporary British Fiction and the Artistry of Space: Style, Landscape, Perception*. London: Continuum, 2011, p. 1.
[36] BALSHAW, M., KENNEDY, L. *Urban Space and Representation.* London: Pluto Press, 2000, p. 2.

4.1 The Spatial turn

The Spatial turn can be defined as an intellectual movement which, due to the emergence of postmodernity, shifts its attention from time and history to space and geography. In 1967 Michael Foucault wrote a short essay called *Des espaces autres* which was not published until 1984. In it, he stated that the 19ᵗʰ century had been dominated by a historical outlook and complained that space had been ignored whereas his current era might instead be the era of space. Partly due to the globalisation of the modern world, Foucault's prophecy has been fulfilled. In the second half of the 20ᵗʰ century, the Spatial turn occurred in the humanities. Until this period, space had been neglected in favour of time as a parameter of literary analysis. The spatial turn is the shift in attention from time to space which is no longer perceived just as a background for action but became a highly discussed topic in literary studies. However, according to Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) time and space are inseparably bound to each other. The way time is used influences the presentation of space and vice versa.[37]

The work of Michael Foucault (1926-1984), Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) and Edward Soja (1940-2015) influenced the Spatial turn. They pointed out *"the critical potentials of spatiality as a positive response to the decline of historicism (the waning sense of history and grand narratives) in the postmodern era."*[38] To approach space as a social product, it is necessary to consider *"the instrumentality of space as a register not only of built forms but also of embedded ideologies. This entails demystifying of space as natural and transparent so that it is understood as a social entity with particular, localised meanings."*[39]

Lefebvre described space not simply as a *"parameter or stage of social relations and actions"* but rather as an operative tool in *"the 'assembly' of these."* He also argued that *"the traditional dualities of physical space and mental space are bridged by the processes of the production of space."*[40] In contrast to Foucault, Lefebvre perceived the

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[37] THAKKAR, S. *Chronotope*. Narrative&Memory, 2013,
https://narrativeandmemory.wordpress.com/2013/10/20/chronotope/
[38] BALSHAW, M., KENNEDY, L. *Urban Space and Representation*. London: Pluto Press, 2000, p. 2.
[39] Ibid. p. 2.
[40] Ibid. p. 2.

relation between perception and production of space as dynamic. In his social space theory, he states that space becomes *"rich and dialectic because we learn to 'read' space, not in its separate compartments of natural space, absolute space, and imagined space, but as a space that links all of these and contains within it the inscriptions of human activity as social structures and processes."*[41]

4.1.1 Urban space

In general, the city is inseparable from its representations, but it is important to point out that it is not identical with or reducible to them. Perception is unstable as it moves back and forth between the object and subject of attention. Literature, movies, photographs or even tourist guides provide selective representations of a city and shape metaphors, narratives, and syntax.

William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock stated that *"like a literary text, the city has as many interpretations as it has readers."*[42] Unlike in drama or movies, space in books must be presented verbally, and thus exists only in the reader's imagination. To employ the reader's imagination the description of space tends to be more detailed, and the readers create their own notions of fictional space from their own experiences in the real world. So, accurate and convincing descriptions of the spatial dimension in the narrative serve to increase the narrative's authenticity. In particular, *Waterland* by Graham Swift is an excellent example of an accurate and detailed description of the spatial dimension. The representation of the city cannot be reduced to textuality, but it also involves material, visual and psychic forms and practises. A common tendency of modernism and postmodernism is to search for 'the city's truth', the truth hidden behind the glittered substance of the city referred to as the city's history. The city's truth can be found in the city centre, on its margins or in someone's room.[43]

The discussion dealing with the connection of subjectivity and urban space is usually triggered by the notion of place being filled with various affective connotations.

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[41] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, p. 51.
[42] Ibid. p. 4.
[43] BALSHAW, M., KENNEDY, L. *Urban Space and Representation*. London: Pluto Press, 2000, p. 5.

Meaningful cultural and historical bearings are often provided by the localised stories, images and memories associated with a particular place.[44]

As new visual technologies developed in the 20th century, many authors reflected on them in their works. The visual representation frames the recognition of urban forms through architecture or street signage. Maps, plans or images offer legibility through the reproduction of what is seen. The aesthetic and spatial apprehension of the urban scene is united through visual representation. The city is like a big stage where people look at others or are seen. For this thesis, the fusion of the eye and the camera lens is one of the most important themes and one which features prominently in Swift's novel *Out of This World*. The role of photography will be further elaborated.[45]

The city also portrays the struggles for power and identity. The key features of modern and postmodern urbanism are sexual identities, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. The perception of the city as a space of difference resonated in the 20th-century idealisations of urbanity as the substance of city life. Not only individual's identity was challenged but also national identity. Globalisation became a broad term for *"diverse restructurings characterised by acceleration of global flows of people, capital and information."[46]* Some critics argued that due to global flows the significance of the place has diminished. However, Balshaw and Kennedy (2000) state that place is still important, but the meanings of places are instead changing; thus the analysis should respect the complex connected transformations in both local and global systems.[47]

Smethurst (2000) argues that place is never neutral in human affairs. He asks the readers to imagine a wall and explains that for a slave in the city the wall presents something which keeps him from freedom, whereas for the ruling class, the wall provides protection from the space beyond the wall. In this sense, geographical, historical, or other quantitative analyses of place cannot provide the whole story of place because it is partially subjective. Literature, personal memories, myths, and local

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[44] Ibid. p. 6.
[45] Ibid. p. 7.
[46] BALSHAW, M., KENNEDY, L. *Urban Space and Representation*. London: Pluto Press, 2000, p. 15.
[47] Ibid. p. 15.

histories are those that *"give the place its true character by bringing out the richness of its multiple meanings/readings."[48]*

4.2 Chronotope

Chronotope is a term coined by Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). The word comes from the Greek words *khrónos* – time – and *tópos* – space. It points to the intrinsic fusion of two dimensions of reality which is time and space. When thinking about people's behaviour, the development and evolvement in a chronotope must be taken into consideration. Whatever characters do, they do it in a very specific type of constellation of time and space. In other words, whatever characters do, they do it in very concrete circumstances. The contexts in which people act like human beings are always highly specific and the characters are allowed or even forced to act within the particular constellation.[49]

4.2.1 The postmodern chronotope

Smethurst (2000) states that *"postmodernism has changed the way past is re-presented, the contemporary apprehended and the future envisioned, and it has changed fundamentally perceptions of space and place."[50]* Postmodernism is mostly described as a continuation of modernism which took other directions. It does not mark the end of modernity but a phase of modernity that, according to Lyotard, rewrites some of the features of modernity.

The quickly changing world in modernism influenced the perception of time and space, whether in the design of modern cities, abstract form in modern art and literature, the sense of the shrinking globe, the rise and fall of imperialist geographies or the emphasis on science and technology. Time is predominantly future-oriented, and space is mostly abstract, homogeneous, and expansive. Modernism takes form from the real world, thinking and artistic representation reflect material changes in the real

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[48] SMETHURST, P. The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, p. 58.
[49] Ibid. pp. 6-10.
[50] Ibid. p. 1.

world. Postmodernism, on the other hand, emphasises self-consciousness and the representations of the world likely form the world(s). The first important shift from modernism is that postmodernism *"signals a radical loss of differentiation between the real world as historical and geographical referent, and representations of the real world."*[51] Secondly, this shift occurs in the age of information in which so much is not visible whereas modernism appeared in the age of machines, which is likely visible.[52]

The complexity of the postmodern novels often prevents readers from being able to rely on space and place. Postmodernism shifted from a predominantly temporal and historical imagination that had informed and partially created modernity, to a more geographical and spatial imagination which shaped many aspects of postmodernity, and this shift might be 'mapped'. In postmodern chronotopes, space is not only in the service of time, but it has its own poetics revealed through a geographical or topological imagination rather than a historical one.[53]

Graham Swift's *Waterland*, at one level, is a continuation of the realist tradition in the English regional novel, creates a self-enclosed world clearly connected with real geography and history and explores the social lives of families and communities rooted there. In this respect, Swift uses a chronotope familiar to English novels and used by a long tradition of writers, including Jane Austen, Anthony Trollope, and Thomas Hardy. Like earlier regional novels, *Waterland* explores the relationship between a society and its history, but a crucial difference is in how each conceptualises an idea of historical progress, and how they reconcile the life and history of family and community with the great historical events on the world stage.[54]

History in Swifts' novels is problematised through various postmodern narrative techniques and direct appeals to the reader as they became the children in Tom Crick's history class. A postmodern chronotope is constructed in Swift's work out of the metaphorical possibilities of the local history of the novel's setting and landscape. In

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[51] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, pp. 2-3.
[52] Ibid. p. 3.
[53] Ibid. pp. 10-13.
[54] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, p. 17.

Waterland, the space is neither entirely solid nor liquid. Space is constantly shifting, being reformed, and reclaimed.

> *"Swift uses metaphors drawn from nature, and in particular the idea of reclamation, as a metaphor for the constant process of man/nature interaction out of which a postmodern idea of progress emerges. He also privileges a vaguely romantic notion of natural history as opposed to the artificial history characterised by modern obsessions with progressive development based on the domination of nature."*[55]

Waterland and *Out of This World* both deal with a theme of placelessness. *Out of This World* portrays the lives of characters who are placeless or seeking some kind of grounding. Characters are not placed in a traditional sense: they are not rooted in a town, city or region that is somehow associated with their identity or being. *"This sense of 'placeless' existence in a geographical sense is linked then to placeless existence in the sense of lives that cannot be put in order, given value, or tied to some purpose."*[56] Placelessness in the novel stands for dysfunctional postmodern lives, however, Swifts' characters have not lost their sense of history and tradition. It also may be seen as one effect of the postmodernisation of space. Places such as cities or towns are more uniform and less easily differentiated from each other and their surroundings because of the same shops, buildings or sights that can be found there. The rise of 'pseudo places' such as gas stations, international restaurant chains and shopping malls also influences our perception of place and space. Large cities such as Los Angeles lack the centre where different groups of people might gather and develop a common identity. Even though globalisation broke certain boundaries of space, it revealed social space boundaries. Cities are often fragmented and divided by boundaries of class, race, ethnicity or gender. The gap between homogenised space and the experience of social space is a common concern of postmodern authors. The organisation of multiple, seemingly disconnected

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[55] Ibid. p. 17.
[56] Ibid. p. 20.

worlds in postmodern literature might be read as a reaction to globalisation.[57] Smethurst (2000) argues that in postmodern literature space and time are combined. Space is neither just a background where various events take place, nor it is entirely shaped by events.[58]

5   Contemporary British authors

In 1983, *Waterland* won the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Winifred Holtby memorial prize. Alongside Salman Rushdie, Martin Amis and Kazuo Ishiguro, Graham Swift was in the same year selected as one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists. These writers are referred to as Contemporary British authors.[59] They are usually concerned with four main features of this new literary fiction and are typically interested in history and historical events, foreign settings, genre mixture and metafiction.[60]

5.1   Ian McEwan

Ian Russell McEwan is a British novelist born in 1948 in Aldershot. His mother was Rose Lilian Violet Moore whose first husband, Ernest Wort, died in The Normandy landings. After Ernest's death, she married David McEwan, a Scottish sergeant major in the British army. Because of David's profession, Ian spent most of his childhood abroad, mainly in Singapore and Libya. As a child, he experienced feelings of rootlessness and placelessness which influenced his writing. Despite having siblings, he has always felt like an only child because of considerable age differences. When Ian was eight years old, the family was living in Libya when the Suez Crisis erupted in 1956. Anti-British feelings were omnipresent and the family was therefore placed into an armed camp for their protection. Observing his father always armed, he realised that political issues were real

[57] BALSHAW, M., KENNEDY, L. *Urban Space and Representation*. London: Pluto Press, 2000, p. 18.
[58] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, p. 39.
[59] HARRISON, S. *Interview: Graham Swift*. The Guardian, 2007, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/apr/14/fiction.grahamswift
[60] Malcolm, D., *Understanding Ian McEwan*, Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2003, p. 6.

and affected numerous lives. This early experience influenced his later novel *The Ploughman's Lunch* (1983) in which the Suez Crisis and the Falklands campaign were depicted.[61]

In 1959, Ian returned to Britain for education. He attended Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk. In 1971, he graduated from the University of East Anglia and received his MA. During his final year at the University of East Anglia, Ian was educated by an English novelist, Sir Angus Wilson (1913-1991), and another English author, Sir Malcolm Bradbury (1932-2000). Both authors tried to develop the personalities of students such as Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro.[62] McEwan's first book *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) is a collection of eight stories originally written as his dissertation. In 1976, the collection won the Somerset Maugham Award and attracted public attention. The surreal narrative style, eroticised evil and unconventional behaviour of the characters were disturbing but at the same time appealing to readers. The book was compared to *The Rachel Papers* by Martin Amis with whom Ian McEwan is befriended.[63]

In 1978, a collection of stories, *In Between the Sheets,* was published alongside McEwan's first novel, *The Cement Garden*. The novel is about children hiding the dead body of their mother and deals with shocking and taboo topics such as incest, perversion, brutality, murder, and gender confusion. Without any doubt, the writer's aim is to shock and discomfort the readers. His first novels were unpolitical, but McEwan gradually incorporated political issues, focusing mainly on the late industrial society. Themes such as inequality between men and women or the effects of the rule of the Conservative Party were further elaborated on. Besides novels and short stories, he wrote television plays, movie scripts and children's literature.[64]

The most thoughtful television play written by McEwan is *The Imitation Game*, produced in 1980. The main character is a nineteen-year-old girl, Cathy Raine, who joins ATS, a women's section of the British Army, during WWII. However, she is frustrated by

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[61] Head, D., *Contemporary British Novelists*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 3.
[62] Head, D., *Contemporary British Novelists*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 4.
[63] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 208.
[64] Ibid. p. 209.

her father's rigidity and masculine restrictions in the ATS. Cathy is imprisoned metaphorically but at the end of the novel also literally. The novel is inspired by The Women's Movement which provided McEwan with a unique perspective.[65] In comparison to Swift, McEwan's female characters have a stronger voice and are more frequently used as narrators.

McEwan's next novels, *Or Shall We Die?* (1983) and *The Ploughman's Lunch* (1985), are openly concerned with politics. *The Ploughman's Lunch* is, like *Out of This World*, concerned with the Falklands. One of his most significant novels is *The Child in Time* (1987) which is an unusual piece of writing for McEwan. Surprisingly, the novel presents a normal relationship between a child and loving parents and a concern with politics. His next novel, *The Innocent* (1990) was also quite surprising because McEwan explored an espionage genre in which authors such as John LeCarré (1931-2020) had stood out.[66]

As Graham Swift, Ian McEwan mixes genres, and for example, *The Innocent* includes espionage, historical, psychological genre, and gothic elements. *The Innocent* is also a great example of the postmodern fascination with 20th century events which were much more fascinating than anything that the human brain could come up with. Reality itself inspired the plot of the novel in which an ordinary man named Leonard experiences extraordinary events. In this case, Operation Goldeneye served as an inspiration for the story. *The Child in Time*, *The Innocent* and *Black Dogs* (1992) portray the connection between an individual history with public and political dimensions. Like Graham Swift, Ian McEwan often explores a personal history on the background of world history.[67] *Waterland* portrays the story of Mary Metcalf, who stole a child from a supermarket, whereas *The Child in Time* depicts a family affected by the kidnapping of their daughter, Kate also from a supermarket. *The Child in Time* deals with Britain's political environment of the 1980s and a denunciation of the changes that the Conservative Party have brought. The personal story of Stephen Lewis, an author of

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[65] Ibid. p. 212.
[66] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, pp. 212-213.
[67] Ibid. p. 213.

children's book, takes place on a world's historical background. After the kidnapping of hir daughter, Stephen is not able to move forward and is only capable of marking the time since Kate's disappearance. Stephen's story serves as an analogy of postmodern Britain because both are lost in time. The premiership of Margaret Thatcher and the redefinition of childhood are major themes of the novel.

> *"But, within society portrayed here, regenerative time – the true time of childhood – is turned into a fantasy world, separate from the 'real' world, and contained within children's story books."[68]*

The merging of reality, fiction, history, and myths is not only a common feature of Swift's novels but also a common tendency of contemporary British fiction.[69]

Ian McEwan is one of those rare authors whose works have received both popular and critical acclaim. He also became one of the most esteemed novelists of his generation and publishes new novels to this day. Among his latest novels are *Machines Like Me* (2019), *The Cockroach* (2019) and *Lessons*, which is expected to be published in September 2022.[70]

5.2   Kazuo Ishiguro

Kazuo Ishiguro is a British novelist born in 1954 in Nagasaki to family of Japanese oceanographer Shizuo Ishiguro and his wife Shizuko. In April 1960 the family moved to the United Kingdom because Shizuo had been invited to work temporarily at the National Institute of Oceanography. In the end, they settled permanently in Guildford and Kazuo first returned to visit Japan in 1989. Kazuo graduated at the Woking County Grammar School for Boys in Surrey and then became a student at the University of Kent. In 1978 he received his degree in English and Philosophy. In 1980, he also received his

[68] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, p. 209.
[69] SMETHURST, P. *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, pp. 208-209.
[70] *Books Written by Ian McEwan*. Ian McEwan Website, www.ianmcewan.com, http://www.ianmcewan.com/books/index.html

MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia. After his studies, he worked as a social worker, a writer of television scripts and book reviews. Like Salman Rushdie, he challenges the meaning of 'British' or 'English' literature. Alongside all awards listed below, Ishiguro received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017.[71][72]

Kazuo Ishiguro belongs to the group of modest writers who do not publish books often. However, when he does, they usually receive great critical acclaim. His literary reputation was established by his first three novels. First, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), which won the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize. The story is narrated by a Japanese woman, Etsuko who marries a British man and moves to Britain with him. Kazuo perceives writing fiction as a way of preserving memories of Japan; therefore Etsuko recalls her life in Nagasaki.[73] Close attention is paid to the relationship between mother and daughter, which is, like in the case of *Out of This World*, dysfunctional.

His second novel *An Artist of the Floating World* won the 1986 Whitbread Book of the Year Award. The story is set in post-war Japan and is narrated by a painter called Masuji Ono who reflects on his life. The third novel, *The Remains of the Day,* received the Booker Prize in 1989. The main character is an English butler, Stevens, who receives a letter from a former colleague, Mrs Kenton, from Darlington Hall and takes a six-day road trip to visit her. During his trip he reflects on his unconditional loyalty to Lord Darlington, a Nazi sympathiser. Stevens struggles to accept that he faithfully served Lord Darlington and regrets it. Regret, guilt, and shame are common themes in Ishiguro's novels. Each novel has its unique style; however, there are prominent features in common such as the author's interest in narrative unreliability, the complexity of the characters and the manipulation of readers.[74]

After publishing *The Remains of the Day*, it took Ishiguro six years to publish his surrealistic novel *The Unconsoled* (1995) narrated by Mr Ryder, a famous pianist, who visits an unnamed European city. The main themes of the novel are the role of memory

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[71] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, pp. 145-146.
[72] *The Nobel Prize in Literature 2017*. NobelPrize.org, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2017/ishiguro/biographical/
[73] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, pp. 146-147.
[74] Ibid. pp. 148-150.

and isolation in the community. Among his other novels are *When We Were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005), *The Buried Giant* (2015) and his latest novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021).[75][76]

5.3 Salman Rushdie

Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British writer, born in 1947 in Bombay to wealthy and well-educated Muslim parents Anis Ahmed Rushdie and Negin Rushdie. The year 1947 is special in Indian history because in that year British India was divided into India and Pakistan. Salman's father was a lawyer educated at Cambridge and his mother was a teacher. In 1962 they came to Britain but in 1964, they returned to Pakistan and founded a family business. Salman was first educated in Bombay but at the age of thirteen, he was sent to England to Rugby School. However, he struggled to make friends there. The sense of not fitting in and identity crises influenced his later novels. In 1968, he graduated from the University of Cambridge in History. After graduation, he returned to Pakistan where he started working in television production and publishing. After a while, he returned to Britain and during the 1970s worked as an advertising copywriter in London where he collaborated with the British advertising company Ogilvy & Mather on writing television commercials. This job position influenced one of his characters in the novel *The Satanic Verses*.[77]

In 1975, Salman's first novel *Grimus* was published. The novel is a science-fiction parody that mixes Nordic and Asian mythologies. However, *Grimus* is not his first written novel. In 1971, Salman wrote *The Book of the Pir* which was rejected by publishers. Parts of this first novel would reappear in his later novel *The Satanic Verses*. Salman learnt his lesson from his first two novels and discovered what he was truly interested in. He focused on the experimental and playful use of language and South Asian settings which were fully developed in his later novels. In 1981 *Midnight's Children* was published,

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[75] Ibid. pp. 152.
[76] *The Nobel Prize in Literature 2017*. NobelPrize.org, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2017/ishiguro/biographical/
[77] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 250.

which was acclaimed in both India and the United Kingdom. Many postmodern features are used in the novel. As in the books of Graham Swift, world history serves as a background but unlike Swift, Rushdie chose an Asian setting. Magical realism is much more prominent in *Midnight's Children* than in Swifts' novels.[78]

The main character is Saleem Sinai, born at midnight on the same day India became an independent country who at the age of nine discovers his telepathic powers. Saleem also possesses a sense of smell which enables him to even sniff out truth. The boy might be compared to Sarah Atkinson in Waterland, who was believed to possess a power of vision. Saleem and thousands of other children born that midnight are the symbol of India's transformation. Saleem is a blue-eyed boy who is the son of an Englishman but at the same time he is a citizen of new India. In contrast to Graham Swift, Salman Rushdie uses his personal experience and incorporates it into his novels. Being born just eight weeks before Indian independence, Rushdie himself is almost a 'midnight's child'. The term 'midnight's children' was used in Indian media for the generation born in 1947 and Rushdie uses the term when referring to his contemporaries. Like most postmodern narrators, Saleem is a highly unreliable narrator because of a fallible memory. The narrative portrays the unsure distinction between reality and fiction and the struggle of remembering what the truth is.[79] Rushdie also uses fragmentation which reflects Saleem's narrative. Like Graham Swift, Rushdie uses stream of consciousness and thoughts are usually placed in brackets. Aposiopesis is used similarly to Swift's works but in comparison to *Waterland* and *Out of This World*, in *Midnight's Children* ellipses are frequently placed at the beginning of sentences or paragraphs. Despite international success, Salman Rushdie was forced to revise *Midnight's Children*. In the novel, he portrayed the authoritarian rule of *Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi* (1917-1984). However, she did not like her depiction in the novel and won a libel case against Salman Rushdie.[80]

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[78] Ibid. p. 252.
[79] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 251-253.
[80] Ibid. p. 252.

In 1983 Salman published the novel *Shame,* which further elaborates on the investigation of postcolonial consciousness set up in *Midnight's Children*. The novel criticises the small ruling class in Pakistan and as a result, the novel was banned in Pakistan.[81] The turning point in Rushdie's career occurred in 1988 when his notorious reputation was established. In 1988 *The Satanic Verses* was published, and Rushdie's life was about to change. Shortly after publishing, the book was banned in India and many Islamic groups protested against the publication of the book. The book was also banned in Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, and Egypt. The publication resulted in death threats to the author and translators of the novel were attacked. In 1991, the Japanese and Italian translator were stabbed; only the Italian translator survived. The novel was partially inspired by the life of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad but from the novel's perspective, Muhammad was deceived by the devil into thinking that some verses in Quran came from God. The name of the novel itself became controversial and Rushdie was accused of blasphemy. In 1989, the first Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-1989), issued a fatwa and a death warrant against Rushdie. As a result, Rushdie was in hiding for several years until 1998 when the new government cancelled the fatwa. He wrote about his experience in a memoir called *Joseph Anton* (2012) written in the third person. The novel's title refers to Rushdie's name which he used when hiding.[82]

Despite death threats, Rushdie continued to publish. In 1990 he published a children's book, originally written for his sons, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* in 1990. Among his other works are a collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), a collection of short stories *East, West* (1994), the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001) and many more.[83]

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[81] Ibid. p. 254.
[82] Ibid. pp. 256-257.
[83] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, pp. 259-260.

5.4 Martin Amis

Martin Louis Amis is a British novelist born in 1949 in Oxford to a famous writer Kingsley Amis and his wife Hilary Amis. During his childhood, Martin frequently moved with his parents and attended thirteen different schools. For most of his adolescence, Martin was interested in comic books but Kingsley's second wife Elizabeth, who was also a novelist, got him interested in reading and an academic career. She persuaded him to read Jane Austin and Martin admits that Austin became his early influence. Later, he graduated from Exeter College, Oxford in English and became a book reviewer for the British newspaper *The Observer* published on Sundays. He also worked as an editorial assistant for the *Times Literary Supplement* and for *The New Statesman* as an editor.[84]

In 1973, Martin Amis published his first novel *The Rachel Papers;* however, his father did not like his son wasting his time on writing. The most fascinating aspect of Amis's style is his narrative technique and this novel is no exception. The main character is Charles Highway and the story is narrated on his twentieth birthday. The narrative is designed as a clock counting down the hours to Charles's birthday. The novel has twelve chapters and each recounts Charles's last year which is an amusing insight into the mind of the nineteen-year-old boy. *The Rachel Papers* is reminiscent of *Lucky Jim*, written by his father, but Martin goes further beyond literary boundaries than his father and gives detailed descriptions of masturbation and sex acts. It did not take him long to publish his second novel *Dead Babies* the following year. The novel is highly influenced by the Sexual Revolution and portrays experiments with drugs, alcohol, and sex.[85]

His third novel, *Success*, was published in 1978. The story is set in London and narrated by Terry Service and his foster brother Gregory Riding. The narrative somewhat reminds one of the style of Swift's *Out of This World*. Each chapter consists of two sections – Terry's and Gregory's narrative. Both give a different point of view on the particular events. Terry is presented as an orphan child who is not successful whereas his brother seems to live a luxurious life. However, the reader finds out that Gregory's

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84 Ibid. p. 8.
85 Ibid. pp. 8-9.

success is built on lies and is a result of his exaggerations and snobbish narrative style.[86] So, some postmodern features might be spotted in the novel such as fragmented narrative style, unreliable narrator and unclear distinction between reality and fantasy.

In 1981, *Other People: A Mystery Story* was published. The story is about a woman who deals with amnesia and tries to discover her lost identity. Despite a brilliant narrative style and amusement brought forth his first novels, Amis was described as someone who 'clearly read a lot of Nabokov'. The novel which established his own reputation among the critics was *Money: A Suicide Note*, published in 1984. The plot is exhausting due to its length and content. The main character John Self just cannot stop doing things: he cannot stop drinking, smoking, saying things that he later regrets, and moving from one place to another. Martin Amis is known for his satirical depictions of contemporary society and this novel is no exception. A decade of greed and consumerism is portrayed in the novel and Amis focuses on materialism.[87]

Besides novels, Amis also published a collection of short stories, *Einstein's Monsters*. Amis's concern for the environment and the threat of nuclear war is highly noticeable in the novel. The themes reappear in Amis's most ambitious and complex novel, *London Fields*, published in 1989. The story is set in 1999 and deals with millennial issues and apocalyptic omens. Among his other works belong *The Nature of the Offense* (1991), *The Information* (1995) or his latest autobiographical novel *Inside Story* (2020).[88]

5.5 Graham Swift

"People die when curiosity goes."[89]

Graham Colin Swift was born in Catford, South London, on 4th May 1949. He belongs to the most successful and highly talented contemporary novelists such as Martin Amis,

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[86] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 10.
[87] Ibid. pp. 11-12.
[88] Ibid. pp. 14-15.
[89] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 283.

Kazuo Ishiguro, Peter Ackroyd, Timothy Mo, and his close friend Salman Rushdie. His spellbinding storytelling won him not just critical acclaim and literary prizes but more importantly the hearts of readers all over the United Kingdom and abroad. Despite all the glory, very little is known about him because he values privacy in his personal life.[90]

Swift attended prestigious educational institutions such as Dulwich College in South London that had produced a variety of novelists, for example, Raymond Chandler (1888-1959), C. S. Forester (1899-1966) and P. G. Wodehouse (1881-1975). In 1970 he graduated in English at Queen's College in Cambridge and in 1973 he completed an MA thesis on *The City in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* at York University. However, he did not see himself working as an academic and decided to take teaching jobs, first in Greece and then back in London. His first three novels changed the shape of Swift's life and he decided to become a full-time writer. It was not long before he was nominated in 1983 as one of the twenty best young British novelists.[91]

When writing a book, writers tend to add bits of their own experiences which they know best into their works. In *Waterland* (1983), Graham Swift portrayed the Fenland so well that it forces the readers and critics to believe that the author had an adventurous childhood. Nevertheless, Swift described his childhood as *"a very ordinary suburban existence"*[92] and he had never lived in the Fens. He complains about the interpretations of his works because readers think that he puts some autobiographical elements in disguised form to the novel and they do not acknowledge the role of the author's imagination.[93]

It is important to acknowledge the fact that, unlike other novelists, Swift does not write about his personal life. As the author claims, it is important to acknowledge that all his fiction is driven by the pure invention. Swift's wife Candice states that *"he does not do much research before starting the book. He imagines and surmises and when he is finished he says, 'I better just see if the place really exists or if it is possible to do*

[90] WIDDOWSON, P. *Graham Swift*. Tavistock: Northcote House, 2006, p. 2.
[91] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 262.
[92] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, p. 1.
[93] MANTEL, H. *Tea with Ish and Other Tales*. The Guardian, 2009,
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/mar/28/making-elephant-graham-swift-review

this'." [94] Therefore, making strong connections between Swift and his life is a mistake. Swift does not look for ideas to write a novel in his life and reassures readers in his interviews that none of his characters is himself or people close to him.[95]

Graham Swift is the son of a civil servant, Lionel Allan Stanley Swift and Sheila Irene Bourne Swift. More about his family, friends, and writer's life, in general, can be found in his first non-fictional work, *Making an Elephant (2009)*. The elephant mentioned in the title was a wooden toy which Swift made for his father. Growing up next to his father, a naval fighter pilot in WWII, Swift became sharply aware of his father's wartime experience and even though he did not experience WWII himself, it became an iterative theme in his novels.[96]

His first novel, *The Sweet Shop Owner (1980),* is the story of a widower, Willy Chapman, who runs a candy shop and newsstand in South London. In comparison to his later novels, the story is told in a first-person narrative but in several parts, the text steps away from Willy and assumes the voice of his dead wife. This same technique is used in Swift's novel *Last Orders (1996)*, where the dead character Jack Dodds joins the narration.[97]

Swift's first novel shaped the later style of his writing. The main characteristic of Swift is the narrative moving between past and present. The plot is set on a single day, on Friday in June 1974, which is a regular working day for Willy Chapman. As a reader continues, he/she begins to realise that this is no ordinary day but also the last day of Willy's life. During his daily routine, he reflects on the key moments of his life, such as his marriage to a wealthy woman, Irene, who bought him his shop, or his angry daughter, Dorothy, who may have been traumatized by a sexual assault. The marriage is not a loving one and neither Irene nor Willy has a good relationship with Dorothy. Relationships also play a pivotal role in Swift's novels, especially parent-child

[94] O'MAHONY, J. *Triumph of the Common Man*. The Guardian, 2003,
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/mar/01/fiction.grahamswift
[95] MANTEL, H. *Tea with Ish and Other Tales*. The Guardian, 2009,
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/mar/28/making-elephant-graham-swift-review
[96] WIDDOWSON, P. *Graham Swift*. Tavistock: Northcote House, 2006, p. 2.
[97] MOSELEY, M. British novelists since 1960. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, pp. 262-263.

relationships. Usually, a child rejects the parents as Dorothy does in *The Sweet Shop Owner* or Sophie in *Out of This World (1988)*. Every generation should find its own path in life, independently of the previous generation, but at the same time, the past cannot be ignored because it comes back to haunt the characters.[98]

The tone of the novel is melancholic, a tone which pervades Swift's fiction, and the reader focuses on the meaning of Willy's life. The relationship between individual life history in the light of the world history is one of the other topics in Swifts' novels. To be included in the world's history is in a sense unavoidable but it is still possible to live in its margins. On the grounds of Willy's leg injury, he was suspended from active service in the Second World War. So, another important theme is the changing world around us. The world is changing even though we choose not to notice it, as does Willy. The events of WWII have entered his life only through the headlines of the newspapers he sells but does not read. Despite ignoring the events, he notices his daughter's troubled awareness of politics, the changing styles of clothes and the behaviour of his customers. From a world historical point of view, Willy's life is trifling but as the story makes clear, his life has its triumphs and disasters.[99][100]

Swift's second novel, *Shuttlecock (1981)*, is a psychological thriller and a combination of the Swiftian novel described above and a detective story. The narrative is told in the first person by Prentis, whose first name is never revealed. Although he works in a department in London attached to the police, he is not a detective but a researcher in 'dead crimes' and rarely knows the details of the cases he works on. Prentis is under the complete control of his boss Quinn and therefore he takes out his powerlessness on his entire family, becoming cold to his wife and mean towards his children. In this novel power is an important theme. The main character is obsessed with his father, a spy in Nazi-occupied France, who wrote his autobiography called *Shuttlecock: The Story of a Secret Agent*. The obsession harms his relationships until he

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[98] MOSELEY, M. British novelists since 1960. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 263.

[99] Ibid. p. 263.

[100] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, pp. 2-10.

finds out that his father might have broken under torture by the Gestapo and given away the information that led to the deaths of British agents. Quinn offers to investigate the files for him or destroy them without reading them.[101] Prentis chooses the second option.

Another important theme is knowledge which is often connected to power and the main question explored in the novel is:

"Is it better to know things or not to know them? Wouldn't we sometimes be happier not knowing them?" [102]

By making the father a hero or perhaps a traitor, Swift creates a much more direct link between the individual and the world's history than in *The Sweet Shop Owner*. To sum up, the novel is the study of power, the power of knowledge and forms of guilt.

Nevertheless, his third novel, *Waterland (1983)*, remains Swift's most accomplished work. It was awarded the Guardian Fiction Prize, Winifred Holtby Award, Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize[103] in 1983 but it was lost out to the novel *Life and Times* of Michael K (1983) written by J. M. Coetzee (1940-). Swift received the Booker Prize thirteen years later for the novel *Last Orders (1996)*.[104]

Some of his novels were adapted into films; for example, *Shuttlecock* (1991), *Last Orders* (2002) and *Waterland* (1992), starring Jeremy Irons. Apart from novels and short stories, Swift also published *The Magic Wheel: An Anthology of Fishing in Literature (1986)*, which he edited with an English novelist, *David Profumo (1955-)*. Many of his fellow novelists have produced essays, screenplays, or reviews but Graham Swift remains dedicated to writing novels. Among his other novels are *Out of This World*

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[101] MOSELEY, M. British novelists since 1960. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 263-266.
[102] SWIFT, G. *Shuttlecock*. Oxford: Picador, 1997, p. 118.
[103] The most prestigious award for fiction in Britain.
[104] WIDDOWSON, P. *Graham Swift*. Tavistock: Northcote House, 2006, p. 9-10.

(1988), Ever After (1992), The Light of Day (2003), Tomorrow (2007), Wish You Were Here (2011), Mothering Sunday (2016) and *Here We Are (2020)*.[105]

5.6   Criticism of Swift's novels

Another aspect that should be mentioned when discussing Graham Swift is the strong criticism that emerged after 1983. Despite highly favourable reviews of Swifts' first two novels, the great success of his work has not received the degree or quality of critical attention one might have expected. Generally, Swift's work was accepted by scholars and critics more often, but academic criticism is patchy, largely on *Waterland* and *Last Orders*. The criticism focuses mainly on four qualities of Swifts' novels which will be further elaborated on in this chapter.[106]

There is a particular reason why the criticism emerges after 1983. Swift's most successful novel *Waterland* was published at that time. The success of Waterland was achieved at a relatively early stage of Swift's career as a novelist and it brought a problem for Swift. He was afraid that *Waterland* would set a high standard by which his future work would be measured and to a certain extent he was right. It took him five years before he published his next novel *Out of This World (1988)* to mixed reviews.[107]

The first criticised quality of Swifts' novels is *"a deployment of what are seen as one-dimensional, ultimately uninteresting and unconvincing characters."*[108] Derwent May, a columnist at *The Times*, complains in his review the readers are not provided with enough details about the main characters. Michael Gorra, an American professor of English and literature, states in *The Nation* that *"Waterland lacks passion, or rather its passion is all for history itself and not for people affected by it."*[109]

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[105] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, pp. 2-3.
[106] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, pp. 3-4.
[107] Ibid. pp. 3-4.
[108] Ibid. p. 3.
[109] Ibid. p. 4.

The second criticised quality is that Swifts' novels are overly schematic, too intellectually organised and overburdened with ideas. These ideas are often seen *"as too abstracted"* and *"not adequately embodied in the text"*.[110] Hermione Lee, a British biographer, literary critic and academic, stated in her review of *Out of This World* that *"it is a book to respect, but not to fall in love with."*[111] Harriet Gilbert, an English writer and academic, on one hand, welcomes its status as *"a novel of contemporary ideas"* but on the other hand describes it more likely as a *"game-plan than a game played out, with symbols sticking up like marker flags and structure of crossword puzzle symmetry."*[112] *Ever After* is also criticised in this matter and Hillary Mantel, a British writer, states that this novel *"may have deeply advanced Swift as a thinker, but sadly it has not advanced him as a novelist."*[113]

When writing *Waterland*, Swift wanted to create something *"ambitious, adventurous and energetic, where if he erred he would err, like Dickens, on the side of too much colour rather than too little."* [114] In fact, he succeeded but was also criticised for his excessive ambition by critics. Many suggest that, for example, *Out of This World* is too ambitious in its attempts to cover the range of various historical events. Swift is often accused of over-schematic intellectualism. In comparison to *Out of This World*, *Waterland* is criticised for being melodramatic, emotionally overheated, and sentimental. The last dimension of criticism focuses on Swift's intellectualism and the use of melodramatic stories that makes excessive demands on the readers' emotions.[115]

Nevertheless, all the critics mentioned above do not just criticise Swift. For example, Michael Gorra compares him with Joyce when writing a review on *The Sweet Shop Owner*. An English professor, *Del Ivan Janik (1945-)* states that Graham Swift *"has*

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[110] Ibid. pp. 4-5.
[111] Ibid. p. 4.
[112] Ibid. p. 4.
[113] Ibid. p. 4.
[114] Moseley, M. *British novelists since 1960*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 265.
[115] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, p. 3.

already established himself as a major novelist and may prove to be the most outstanding English novelist of the final quarter of the twentieth century."[116]

6   Waterland

The first point that should be taken into an account is that the United Kingdom is an island and therefore water runs through British literature as it runs through its places. There is also a difference between land and water and that is that land holds the records. Land keeps records of events thousand years old, whereas water is changing all the time and traces of peoples' passage vanish. Graham Swift was always interested in paradox and ambiguity and the set for his novel *Waterland* embodied the paradox of water and land as the name of the novel suggests. The novel presents a lot of contrasts between water and land, natural and artificial or story and history. The unique style of Swift lies in the brilliant usage of paradox and opposites. These pairs of opposites do not exclude themselves but are held in tension as the flows of the River Ouse.

The novel is set in a real place in England called Fenland which is the region where water and land meet and mingle and sometimes conflict with each other. The real history and geography of the Fens are portrayed in relation to the rest of the world including the natural history of its ecosystem and its history of commercial exploitation. At first sight, the setting is as ordinary as the novel's characters but after a while, the reader realises that it is the character's experience which goes to the core of some central issues of life.

In contrast to, for example, Salman Rushdie, it is important to mention that Graham Swift favours English settings, even though some parts of *Out of This World* take place in Europe. The English setting outweighs the foreign setting and is often provincial or suburban. Location is important in his works and what all his novels share is the intense apprehension of place.

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[116] JANIK, D. I. *History and the "Here and Now": The Novels of Graham Swift*. Twentieth Century Literature, vol. 35, no. 1, 1989, p. 74.

Swift's methodology of writing is also rather interesting. While Ian McEwan carries out extensive research before starting a book, Graham Swift believes in the power of imagination and visits the place after the book is finished. McEwan uses a system of short notes directed to him. If he likes the idea, he starts writing a story based on his notes. On the other hand, Graham Swift *"took the Ordnance Survey map – King's Lynn up there, Ely down there"*, he opened it up and put his *"fictional world in the middle and tried to make it fit*."[117] He chose Fenland *"thinking they were a sort of absence of setting because superficially that's what they are – flat, bland, featureless."*[118] His 'human drama' was placed in the middle of the Fens because he thought it would not interfere. Nonetheless, after a while, Swift found the complete opposite to be true.

The reason he does not conduct detailed research before writing is that his characters cannot do it either. In other words, Swift has the same knowledge as his characters, and this makes his work unique. When writing, he is *"very much on the ground, on the same ground"* his *"characters are treading."*[119]

6.1 Plot summary

About the End of History is the name of the second chapter in *Waterland*. The end of history is a pervasive theme that can be found in other novels such as in *Too Far Afield* (1997) by Günter Grass (1927-2015).[120] The story is about Tom Crick, a teacher from the history department which is going to be removed because of the school budget. The headmaster sees little value in humanities and leads the school towards sciences. Tom has been working as a history teacher for over thirty years, and he is now about to lose his job. Even though Tom refuses to leave his job, he is forced to because his wife has been arrested for kidnapping a baby from a supermarket.

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[117] HARRISON, S. *Interview: Graham Swift*. The Guardian, 2007,
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/apr/14/fiction.grahamswift
[118] Ibid.
[119] HARRISON, S. *Interview: Graham Swift*. The Guardian, 2007,
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/apr/14/fiction.grahamswift
[120] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, p. 10.

During his career, he meets a lot of people who consider history irrelevant. His students are not exceptions, and one student makes a comment at the beginning of the novel on the irrelevance of history in favour of the present. Therefore, the second chapter *About the End of History* is a kind of joke. Tom decides to skip the history syllabus he is meant to teach and starts telling his class stories about the Fens and sharing a story of his life and the life of his family in Fenland. Tom is a man who is enthusiastic about nature and the purpose of history. The story starts in July 1943; Tom is fifteen at that time and lives with his father, a lockkeeper, and his mentally disabled half-brother Dick. Their mother, Helen Atkinson, died when the boys were young.

There are two important levels of the story. The first takes place in the present. Tom discusses the purpose of history with the headmaster who favours science over humanities. Because of this and other reasons Thomas is about to lose his job and changes the way he teaches history. At the same time, he is confronted with the smartest child in his class, Price, who states that history is a fairy-tale and *"The only important thing about history…is that it's got to the point where it's probably about to end."*[121] On this level, Tom also faces the crime of his wife Mary who stole a child from the local supermarket.

The second level is the past. Henry Crick, Tom's father, has fished out the dead body of Freddie Parr near a sluice. Tom goes back to his teenage years when his friends, brother and he were exploring sexuality. Later, Mary found herself pregnant, but she aborted her child. Step by step, Tom finds out that Freddie's death was far from a coincidence and that the murderer responsible for Freddie's death is Tom's half-brother Dick.

The novel also contains many sub-plots. The dead body of Freddie and Mary's kidnapping of the baby are two events that compel Tom to search for explanations in the past in order to explain the present.

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[121] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 9.

6.2   Mixed genres

Swift, like other novelists in the 1980s, uses a large spectrum of genres in order to create a unique narrative style. At the beginning of the novel, the word *fairy-tale* is mentioned three times along with the words like *magical, occult* and *superstitious*. So, at first, the novel is presented like a fairy-tale but that is not all. The first chapter also includes a psychological genre in relation to Tom's childhood and at the end of the chapter, there is a strong indication of a murder mystery. The most fairy-tale-like characters are Martha and Bill Clay. In chapter 42, *About the Witch*, Tom describes Martha as a witch, living in a cottage who *"made potions…and got rid of love-children."*[122] He refers to her in this way because Martha is the one who performed the abortion of Tom's child. In chapter seven, Freddie Parr tells stories about Bill Clay who *"ate water rats, hypnotised animals"* and *"was over a hundred."*[123]

To further portray the novel as a fairy-tale, Tom sometimes uses the phrase *Once upon a time* when narrating stories. In chapter forty-one, Tom refers to the Brothers Grimm and in the next chapter, he describes the abortion of Mary's baby by a witch. A reader might therefore predict that the story will not have a fairy-tale ending. As a matter of fact, there is no 'happily ever after'.

The novel further contains geographical descriptions, gothic elements, mysterious and detective story, national, local, and family history, and historical and natural investigation.

6.3   Spatial historiography

Waterland is a novel in which natural landscapes are central and in which history and historical processes are portrayed and formed in the context of postmodernism. The 19-century model of history is challenged by postmodern historiography. From the

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[122] Ibid. p. 409.
[123] Ibid. p. 75.

postmodern point of view, history is diverse and can be narrated in different ways depending on interpretation.

The novel deals not only with the idea of the end of history but two levels of history can be detected in the novel. Swift presents the idea that history is not only the world history that children are taught in school, but it is also individual history that may have an impact not globally but locally. The important idea is the cycles of life in the family saga and also in the natural history of Fenland. History, though, is not presented just as a series of facts, but Tom Crick tells the legends, stories and mysteries.

It can be said that the main character of the novel is the landscape as well as the characters. The author shows readers that England was not created only by its kings, but the landscape has its own powers to build and destroy and it is ordinary people who influence everyday reality.

Although the setting of *Waterland* is rural, the urban theory of Henri Lefebvre should be mentioned. As already stated, Lefebvre perceived space as an operational tool. In 1974, his influential work *La Production de l'espace* was published. As the name of the book suggests, it focuses on production and space. This work influenced current urban theory, mainly within human geography and the work of for example Edward Soja. The main idea of Lefebvre is that humans create the space in which they make their lives, so it is a social product produced and reproduced through human intentions. He conceptualised space from three points of view – spatial practice, representation of space, and representational space. These three levels are dialectic and inseparable when we think about space. More importantly, he wrote about the circuits of capital. Lefebvre divided capital into primary and secondary. The principle of this theory is that capitalists invest money into men, materials, and machines in order to produce a product to be later sold to the market to make a profit which will be reinvested. The problem lies in the ideas of capitalists because they frequently have an idea of how certain spaces should be developed but often their ideas are contradictory to the ideas of common men. Their ideas usually crush lived spaces of common people; therefore, there is often tension between inhabitants and landowners. Depending on a historic moment, space

plays a crucial role in keeping economies going and making a profit. In other words, capitalists have money and often do the opposite of what the majority would want to do.[124]

6.4   The idea of progress

"There's this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress, it doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away."[125]

Among other topics, the novel *Waterland* also deals with modernity and the idea of progress represented by the Atkinsons. They drain the land and connect the Fens with the world by building waterways and railways.

"The man who builds a malting house at Kessling and has the key of the river will bring wealth to a wasteland."[126]

The landscape of the Fens is unexploited and therefore referred to as a wasteland. The link to the wasteland used by Swift is not a coincidence. It refers to the poem by T. S. Eliot – *The Waste Land* (1922) which is often perceived as a breaking point between modern and postmodern literature. The Atkinsons believe they are bringing the future to the wasteland but their power to control space and time is limited.

"In 1874, Arthur Atkinson is elected Member of Parliament for Gildsey and concludes his maiden speech with the much-applauded phrase, 'For we are not masters of the present, but servants of the future'."[127]

Tom gives a lesson on the rise and fall of Atkinson's enterprise which is played out in the background of the rise and fall of the British Empire. He further elaborates on the idea of progress in connection to history. In fact, progress is not endless, and history does not grant it. Progress does not continue to the future but at a certain point, it

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[124] MOLOTCH, H. (1993). The Space of Lefebvre [Review of *The Production of Space*, by H. Lefebvre & D. Nicholson-Smith]. *Theory and Society*, *22*(6), 887–895.
[125] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, pp. 460-461.
[126] Ibid. p. 93.
[127] Ibid. p. 129.

reaches its zenith and declines. The idea of progress was important to modernism, especially in relation to the development of the British Empire, but it reached its heyday, and as it rose it had to decline. Despite Tom's belief that progress is just an illusion, the characters keep moving towards a better future.

According to Lefebvre's theory, the Atkinsons represent capitalists and their brewery stands for consumerism. In the 1780s, Thomas Atkinson started buying *"little by little and at rock-bottom prices, acres of marsh and peat-bog along the margins of the Leam."*[128] He invested money in men – *"surveyors, drainage and dredging experts…He offered work and a future to a whole region."*[129] At the same time, he invested in machines like pumps powered not by steam but by diesel. However, Crick questions if it is desirable to reclaim the land. *"Not to those who exist by water."*[130] He refers to fishermen, fowlers, reed-cutters and above all to his ancestors who often sabotaged drainage works. As Lefebvre pointed out, there was tension between those seeking profit in the Fens and those who exist by the water. However, the Cricks, who once took part in sabotaging drainage works, *"ceased to be water people and became land people…Or perhaps they did not…Perhaps they became amphibians."*[131] This historical point is important in the novel and this thesis. The word 'amphibians' includes both water and land. It helped Swift to develop the idea of the paradox between water and land and at the same time between time and space.

Swift does not question just modern society but the concept of progress itself. Crick perceives progress as merely an illusion and "*the same old thing will repeat themselves."*[132] *"The great so-called forward movements of civilisation, whether moral or technological, have invariably brought with them an accompanying regression."*[133] The power of science and men is limited, and progress is not endless as Atkinson's brewery which was first damaged by flood and then burnt down.

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[128] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 21.
[129] Ibid. p. 21.
[130] Ibid. p. 21.
[131] Ibid. p. 17.
[132] Ibid. p. 330.
[133] Ibid. p. 187.

6.5 Greenwich

Although the main setting is Fenland, Tom's class is removed from nature. The class is located in an artificial environment in Greenwich described as a *"stale-smelling classroom in which"* students *"are suspended, encaged like animals removed from a natural habitat."*[134] From this point, Tom focuses more and more on the natural landscape.

The school itself is located near a significant historical site in England – the Observatory in which the *"instruments for measuring the universe"* are placed. This setting as the Fens is not a coincidence because it includes both time and space which mingle throughout the novel.

The Observatory is placed at 0° longitude, which is used for astronomical observations. It is a line from north to south which divides the eastern and western hemisphere. Historically, the measurement was based on its distance east or west from the line. It was this place which trapped modernity in the net of geographical coordinates same as the students are now caged in their classroom. Also, *Greenwich Mean Time*, GMT, was accepted as an international standard of civil time in 1884 and was used until 1972.[135]

6.6 Time and space

Swift was vividly influenced by the work of Henri Lefebvre and in order to organise a Lefebvrian 'history of space', he chose a different narrative. First, events are moving back and forth through history all the time and second, space conceived through metaphors drawn from landscapes is no longer just a stage but is active in the process of representation. The storytelling is connected with the flows of history which are linked to the flows of the River Ouse. In Crick's narrative, his flow of memories is

[134] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 82.
[135] Royal Museums Greenwich. *What is Greenwich Mean Time*.
https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/greenwich-mean-time-gmt

metaphorically compared to the twists and turns of the river which flows through the land of the Fens. Time and space are connected in the sense of Bakhtin's chronotope.

The real landscape and history are progressively transformed into a dimension of myths. History in this case is equivalent to time. Land, representing space, and water, representing time are both inseparable. They interact with each other but over time landscape is eroded by water and deposited elsewhere as silt. The sediments then influence the flow of water and change its course. By this analogy, spatiality influences temporality and the other way around. The novel, however, goes beyond this analogy and introduces the power of man. Draining, reclamation and pumping are artificial processes used by man to influence nature. Swift confronts the idea of progress based on man's dominance over nature.

> *"What silt began, man continued. Land reclamation. Drainage. But you do not reclaim a land overnight…without difficulty and without ceaseless effort and vigilance. The Fens are still being reclaimed even to this day. Strictly speaking, they are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed."[136]*

Swift criticises the idea of progress. Even though men use all the resources of the modern era, pumps, dykes, and embankments, nature cannot be reclaimed. Man is obsessed with his dominance over nature, but it can never be reclaimed. He further describes how history moves in cycles as water which sooner or later finds its way back. Artificial processes cannot dominate nature. This fact is known to people 'existing by water' – a Fenman who does not need to be reminded *"of the effects of heavy inland rainfall, or of the combination of a spring tide and a strong nor'easter."[137]* Broadly speaking, man can dominate neither space nor time.

Natural processes of landscapes and the landscape itself are used as a metaphor to question traditional models of historical development. The postmodern criticism of

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[136] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 12.
[137] Ibid. p. 13.

historical materialism and the narrative of progress is presented in the novel but most prominent is Swift's emphasis on the spatial and geographical dimensions.

The novel questions history but on the other hand tells its own histories, some real, some fictional, moving between reality and fiction. Tom Crick narrates a personal story and at the same time, reflects on world history. The reason Tom chose to change the narrative from the ordinary history lesson is mainly because of two events – the closure of the history department and his wife stealing a baby. The second event has a history itself which moves back and forth through the novel. The story of his wife is not explicit but is revealed gradually through unconnected memories, thus creating the complex narrative of the novel.

In the chapter *De la Révolution,* Swift presents the shifting nature of history when asking his students a riddle:

"How does a man move?"

The answer is: "*One step forward, one step back (and sometimes one step to the side)."*[138]

Time and space are mentioned many times in the novel and the connection between them plays a crucial role. In the chapter, *De la Révolution* Tom explains to his students that

"There are no compasses for journeying in time. As far as our sense of direction in this unchartable dimension is concerned, we are like lost travellers in a desert. We believe that we are going forward, towards the oasis of Utopia. But how do we know – only some imaginary figure looking down from the sky (let's call him God) can know – that we are not moving in a great circle?"

This extract explains the logic behind the narrative of the novel, which at first sight might seem chaotic. The narrative is treated more or less chronologically but the whole novel is written in the way Tom characterised history in the extract above. Once

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[138] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 186.

a reader allows himself/herself to 'go with the flow' instead of looking for never-ending order and logic, he/she will start understanding the well-structured chaos of the novel and Swift's brilliant sense of paradox.

Temporality is translated into spatiality. For example, time is presented as the course of the river. Geographical imagination is more prominent than historical, but Swift maintains the value of history, so it cannot be said that he prefers spatial and geographical representations over historical and temporal. Tom Crick claims that history and storytelling are the basis of human beings because people have a sense of curiosity. Curiosity is another prominent topic in *Waterland*.

Many times, Tom goes back to the French Revolution. He explains

> *"that the great so-called forward movements of civilisation, whether moral or technological, have invariably brought with them an accompanying regression…the discovery of the printing press led, likewise, as well as to the spreading of knowledge, to propaganda, mendacity, contention and strife…and as for the splitting of the atom—* "[139]

Tom states in the example of the French Revolution that people move in circles. He questions thinkers like Robespierre or Marat who wanted to create a new world: *"Did they really have in mind a Society of the Future?"*[140] They did not look for the future but a way back to an idealized Rome, to nostalgia or, in other words, to that time in history *"before things went wrong."*[141] Robespierre and Marat wanted to go back before things went wrong just as the generations of Cricks wanted to go back to a time before they had devoted themselves to the reclamation of the land; the last Atkinson brewer wanted to renew the original high-quality Atkinson's ale; Mary Metcalf tried to regain her motherhood by stealing a child in a supermarket.

The cycle of time is compared to the movement of the River Ouse which will return back to its source. In chapter 15, *About the Ouse*, Tom challenges the theories of

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[139] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 186-7.
[140] Ibid. p. 190.
[141] Ibid. p. 187.

Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. His theories were based on the observations of water, and he believed that it is impossible to step twice in the same river. Tom, on the other hand, states that *"we are always stepping into the same river."[142]*

> *"Yet it flows – oozes – on, as every river must, to the sea. And as we all know, the sun and the wind suck up the water from the sea and disperse it on the land, perpetually refeeding the rivers. So that while the Ouse flows to the sea, it flows, in reality, like all rivers, only back to itself, to its own source; and that impression that a river moves only one way is an illusion. And it is also an illusion that what you throw (or push) into a river will be carried away, swallowed for ever, and never return. Because it will return."[143]*

Swift, however, does not simply indicate that time is cyclic because this thought would be revolutionary. Instead, he explains, on the basis of the water-land paradox, that nature is based on processes of making and unmaking. Time is compared to the river which as a time has an urge to repeat itself, leading us constantly to the same place.

As people grow older, they also tend to go back, in other words – being nostalgic. Tom is constantly going back to his childhood in the Fens. However, he does not find a place to hide from the present. The flatness of the Fens, with its wide-open space, is used as a metaphor for Tom's urge to find a psychological shelter but the landscape of the Fens does not provide it. Childhood tends to be innocent, – it is supposed to be that period 'before the things went wrong' – but Tom's childhood is far from innocent. When he goes back, all he finds is guilt and suppressed memories hidden in the space of the past. So, even Tom's childhood is not based on a solid foundation but is watery like the landscape of the Fens. Flatness and water are two important features of geographical imagination used in the novel and contribute to establishing the identity of the region. Both also enable Swift to incorporate postmodern and realist ideas into the novel through paradoxes.

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[142] Ibid. p. 201.
[143] Ibid. p. 201.

6.7 Intertextuality

The reference to Heraclitus was just one example of Swift's usage of intertextuality. As William H. Pritchard notes regarding *Waterland, "Mr Swift has some strong writers behind him as precursors."[144]* His works often echo great writers such as Virginia Woolf, Gunter Grass, and John Fowles but in *Waterland* the voices of William Faulkner and Charles Dickens are the most prominent. Swift often refers to 19th-century British literature and to Victorian writers in particular. The novel is usually compared to the novel *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) by William Faulkner. These two novels are both complex and regional, concerned with history and its influence on individual lives and engage dark secrets and psychological aspects. Benjy, from Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), is mentally disabled and served as a prototype for Tom's half-brother Dick. [145]

The metaphor of water and land represents the contemporary literature condition. Like Pip in Dickens's novel, *Great Expectations* (1861) had to learn how to attain equilibrium between reality and fantasy and Cricks being amphibious, Graham Swift had to find a compromise between realist tradition and postmodernism.

There are also references to the Bible. For example, chapter two starts with *"Children, who will inherit the world."[146]* It refers to one of the most famous sections in Holy Scripture – the Sermon on the Mount which contains nine proclamations by Jesus. One of them is "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*[147] Tom Crick is not presented just as an all-knowing parent and at the same time a questioning child but also almost as a priest.

Readers take on two roles. First, the role of the students in Crick's class and second, the role of members of Tom's parish. This kind of narrative brings comfort

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[144] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, p. 10.
[145] Ibid. pp. 10-12.
[146] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 6.
[147] MILTON, M. A. *How Is it That the Meek Shall Inherit the Earth*? Christianity.com, 2021, https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/how-is-it-that-the-meek-shall-inherit-the-earth.html

because the reader feels guided by an omniscient narrator but throughout the novel, Tom constantly reminds readers that all of this is just an illusion. The extract from the Bible serves Swift well because the phrase itself contains paradoxes. Another reference to the Bible is in chapter 30, *About the Saviour of the World*, which refers to Dick. He is a saviour because he operates the machines like dredgers and keeps water flowing. So, he keeps inhabitants safe so people can live through time.

> *"He knows his place…his station. He keeps the ladder turning, the buckets scooping…He hears no bombers, sees no bombers. And this smell of silt is the smell of sanctuary, is the smell of amnesia. He's here, he's now. Nor there or then. No past, no future. He's the mate of the Rosa II. And he's the saviour of the world…"*[148]

Dick cannot read and is disconnected from history whereas Tom carries the burden of his past. In contrast to Faulkner's protagonist Benjy, Dick does not have his own monologue. Swift once more points out that history is inescapable and the only way how to escape it is through amnesia.

Waterland contains gothic elements; thus, it is not surprising that a reference to Poe is presented in the novel. In chapter 29, *Detective Work*, Tom places a bottle in Dick's room to find out if his brother is really the murderer of Freddie Parr. Tom believes that when Dick sees the bottle, it will make him feel guilty. *"He presses his ear closer to the keyhole of his own door; attempts to repulse the assaults of his heartbeat; to interpret silence. A tell-tale silence? An incriminating silence? A guilt silence?"*[149] The scene reminds Poe's short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843). Tom is in the role of a detective investigating the truth of Freddie's death. He hopes that a bottle which represents the dead body hidden under the floor planks will provoke Dick to admit his guilt. However, Dick quietly hides the bottle, and the chapter leaves the reader in even greater suspense than before.

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[148] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 486.
[149] Ibid. p. 287.

6.8   Fragmentation

To further support Swift's idea of a connection between time and space, he uses fragmentation. None of his novels is narrated purely chronologically. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, postmodernists – unlike modernists – revel in disorder. Fragmentation embodies Swift's vision of the world in which the past has a significant influence on the present. It is usually interwoven not only with the organisation of the narration but also with the formal structure of the novel. For this reason, the formal structure of the novel in relation to fragmentation will be analysed in this chapter.

At first sight, the novel seems well and logically organised. It starts with a dedication to Swift's wife Candice which is followed by an epigraph, an introduction by the author and contents. Yet, after reading a while, the reader will find no more than well-organised chaos. Paradoxes help Swift to organise the well-fragmented postmodern space of the novel. The novel incorporates many ideas that not only support one another but at the same time neglect each other. The epigraph itself is a great example of that.

Each chapter has its own heading, but the chapters do not follow one another in chronological order. Swift uses temporal distortion and jumps between characters and places. The story is designed like the flow of the River Ouse which sooner or later comes back to its source. The first chapter, *About the Stars and the Sluice,* is set in 1943 and the second chapter continues in 1979 or 1980. In the third chapter, a reader starts to suspect that the structure will not be linear. The third chapter, *About the Fens*, first introduces the geology of the Fens and then moves back to the 17th century when the land started being reclaimed. The next chapters move forwards and backwards until the final chapter which might be compared to the source of the River Ouse. The final chapter, *About the Rosa II,* ends up back in 1943.

The next level of fragmentation is prominent when a reader moves from one chapter to another. Sometimes, the ending of one chapter is connected with the heading of the following chapter. For example, chapter two ends with the words *"let me*

tell you"[150] and the heading of the third chapter follows: *"About the Fens."*[151] The same pattern can be found between chapters eight and nine. Chapter eight ends again with the words *"Let me tell you"*[152] and the heading of chapter nine follows: *"About the Rise of the Atkinsons."*[153] This kind of narrative makes the novel self-conscious and breaks the rules of a traditional linear narrative.

To muddle readers' heads even more, Swift often uses aposiopesis to cause a break or disruption in the middle of the sentence. As a result, the sentence is left unfinished. It suggests unwillingness or an inability to continue but usually, the reader is able to complete the narrator's thought. Thus, the reader is much more connected with the narrator and his/her thought processes. For example, Tom Crick is reluctant to give details about his mother or wife. Aposiopesis usually uses two tools – ellipses and em dashes. Both these tools are extensively used in the novel. Like Virginia Woolf, Swift also uses a 'stream of consciousness' which makes the story even more fragmented. Tom's thoughts are usually placed in brackets.

Fragmentation is indeed a handy tool which enables Swift to create a narration opposite to traditional historical narration focusing on progressive development over time. Thanks to fragmentation and paradox, Swift was able to unite deconstructive postmodernism and reconstructive realism.

6.9   Here and Now

Through Swift's first three novels – *The Sweet Shop Owner, Shuttlecock* and *Waterland* – runs a concern for the meaning of history and present, especially the 'Here and Now'. Usually, history is irrelevant to the everyday experience of the ordinary individual and therefore it can provide an escape. Life, which is both most fulfilling and painful is not expressed in terms of history but spots of time. Personal experience is

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[150] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 10.
[151] Ibid. p. 10.
[152] Ibid. p. 86.
[153] Ibid. p. 86.

concentrated in the moments. In *Waterland*, Swift calls this the Here and Now, which more often brings pain but is the centre of the real meaning.

In *The Sweet Shop Owner*, Willy Chapman finds a resolution in suicide as the immersion in the past and the failure to acknowledge his part in history is equally destructive. However, Prentis in *Shuttlecock* accepts a confrontation with history and finds that acceptance of uncertainty rather than knowledge is humanising. This ambiguity enables him to live in the Here and Now.[154] *Waterland* deals with the same topics but in a more complex manner. The novel starts with an epigraph defining the Latin word *historia*:

> *Historia*, *-ae*, f. **1.** Inquiry, investigation, learning. **2.** A) a narrative of past events, history. b) any kind of narrative: account, tale, story.

Contradictions are introduced at the very beginning of the novel in the epigraph: for example, inquiry and tale. The story narrates the local stories in the background of world history, such as the story of the Atkinsons while the French Revolution took place. Swift uses the epigraph to support Tom's point of view. History is about myths, fairy tales, family legends and natural histories of a place and its people as well as it is about institutionalised history presented in the curriculum. Swift refers to Lefebvre's theory because history is first of all a social product. The relationship between centre and periphery is another concern of postmodernity. The Fens is not disconnected from world history. The events such as the World Wars and the French Revolution are present in the novel but told from a local perspective and also influence the local history.

All three parts of the definition in the epigraph are included in the novel. Thomas Crick himself is an example of the paradox of the historical dimension because he is a history teacher but at the same time, he is a storyteller. However, it does not end here, and Swift develops this paradox even further. In the novel, Tom tells stories of the Atkinsons who create the history of the region whereas the Cricks are traditionally fixed: they do not create history, they just tell stories and fairy tales. Therefore, it is not a

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[154] MOSELEY, M. *British novelists since 1960.* Detroit: Gale Research, 1998, p. 264-265.

coincidence that Tom is both Crick and Atkinson. His personality thus embodies both: reality and fiction and history and myths.

The stories of Thomas Crick are a history lesson, a series of tales and also an inquiry. The narrator comes from a fairy-tale place and family in which storytelling is deeply rooted. He claims that history, storytelling, and inquiry are the foundations of human beings. The Fens landscape is remarkable because it is an ordinary and at the same time mysterious place and therefore Thomas includes lessons dealing with the natural history of its setting.

In the third chapter, *About the Fens*, Tom presents the land and the history of the Fens. The setting of the novel is quite unusual because Fenland is not traditionally associated with the literary imagination. It lacks mountains, woods, hills, or valleys commonly associated with romantic and provincial landscapes in literature. On the contrary, the landscape is described as dull, flat, and monotonous but in comparison to the truly romantic setting, it has one feature which any other romantic setting does not possess – the Fenland is the nearest possible equivalent to water. The presence of water and land in almost the same proportion causes the unique interaction between them and therefore serves well as the background for Swift's novel full of paradoxes.

> *"When you work with water, you have to know and respect it. When you labour to subdue it, you have to understand that one day it may rise up and turn all your labours to nothing. For what is water, which seeks to make all things level, which has no taste or colour of its own, but a liquid form of Nothing? And what are the Fens, which so imitate in their levelness the natural disposition of water, but a landscape which, of all landscapes, most approximates to Nothing?"*[155]

Nothing much happens for real in the landscape of the Fens and therefore stories, myths, and histories are constructed. Tom believes that history helps people to shape their responses to reality. Nevertheless, he is confronted by a rebellious class, particularly the student called Price who constantly doubts the value of history.

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[155] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 18.

Teachers are often challenged by questions from their students such as: *"Why do we have to learn about this? How can we use this or that in real life?"* During the class about the French Revolution, the troublesome student Price interrupts the lesson and says: *"What matters is the here and now."*[156] Swift elaborates further on Price's idea in the tenth chapter *About the Question Why* and throughout the whole novel.

> *"But what is this much adduced Here and Now?...How many times do we enter the Here and Now? How many times does Here and Now pay us visits? It comes so rarely that it is never what we imagine, and it is the Here and Now that turns out to be the fairy tale, not History, whose substance is at least for ever determined and unchangeable. For Here and Now has more than one face. It was the Here and Now which by the banks of the Hockwell Lode with Mary Metcalf unlocked me realms of candour and rapture. But it was the Here and Now also which pinioned me with fear when livid-tinted blood, drawn by a boat-hook, appeared on Freddie Parr's right temple."*[157]

Here and Now is much more complicated than simply a present daily life. Tom explains that life includes a lot of empty space as *"we are one-tenth living tissue, nine-tenths water; life is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenths a history lesson. For most of the time the Here and Now is neither now nor here."*[158] In this chapter Swift's sense of ambiguity and paradox is prominent again. Here and Now comes in *"surprise attacks"* that *"bring both joy and terror"* and *"for a brief and giddy interval, announce that time has taken us prisoner."*[159]

In the summer of 1943, the series of surprise attacks of the Here and Now such as Freddie's murder, Dick's suicide, and Marie's pregnancy and abortion caused Tom to become seriously involved in history. Since childhood, Tom had been fascinated by history, and it was its *"fabulous aura that lured him"* and believed as his students now *"that history was a myth."*

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[156] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 82.
[157] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, pp. 82-83.
[158] Ibid. p. 83.
[159] Ibid. p. 83.

"Until a series of encounters with the Here and Now gave a sudden pointedness to my studies. Until the Here and Now, gripping me by the arm, slapping my face and telling me to take a good look at the mess I was in, informed me that history was no invention but indeed existed – and I had become part of it."[160]

Both levels – history and myths – are inseparable. People can distance themselves from world history as Willy Chapman in *The Sweet Shop Owner* but cannot escape everyday life. One day every person becomes a part of local history. In contrast to Willy Chapman, Tom Crick is a historical, self-conscious character and knows that history is inescapable. According to the extracts above, Tom acknowledges that sooner or later he will become a part of history. People cannot get rid of the burden which history presents and therefore Tom describes people as prisoners of time.

6.10 An empty space

What is the empty space that Tom speaks about? *"What do you do when reality is an empty space? You can make things happen-."[161]* History and Here and Now are not opposites but polarities, two aspects of experience emerging from the empty space of everyday life. It also has the same source – curiosity. Toms' curiosity about his ancestors and need for an explanation leads him to tell stories in the novel.

"Curiosity which, with other things, distinguishes us from the animals, is an ingredient of love. Is a vital force. Curiosity, which bogs us down in arduous meditations and can lead to the writing of history books, will also, on occasion, as on that afternoon by Hockwell Lode, reveal to us that which we seldom glimpse unscathed – for it appears more often (dead bodies, boat-hooks) dressed in terror: the Here and Now."[162]

Once again, Swift's sense of paradox is present because curiosity might be dangerous but at the same time saving. Tom is worried about the lack of curiosity that

[160] Ibid. pp. 84-85.
[161] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 84.
[162] Ibid. p. 70.

Price and the rest of his class show and encourages them never to stop being curious. He warns them as he knows from his own experience that

> *"Nothing is worse…than when curiosity stops. Nothing is more repressive than the repression of curiosity. Curiosity begets love. It weds us to the world. It's part of our perverse, madcap love for this impossible planet we inhabit. People die when curiosity goes. People have to find out, people have to know."[163]*

Curiosity contributes to the preservation of life and its values. Curiosity is connected with the human need to not leave an empty space behind them. Crick states that wherever the man goes *"he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trail signs of stories."[164]* Tom explains to his class that even before death people tell stories to fill up an empty space. Only animals are able to live entirely in the Here and Now but not people because they are 'storytelling animals' with a constant urge to fill an empty space.

The narrative supports Swift's idea of time because it incessantly comes back in the same way as the meandering Ouse. Tom's narrative moves in cycles through the space of his own memories. The haunting childhood memories always come back; there is no escape. Past and present interact with each other in the same way as water and land. The present is connected to the past and the past pervades the present.

6.11 Curiosity

Curiosity is connected with the question of *Why*. The idea of questioning is presented in the tenth chapter, *About the Question Why*, when the class asks Tom *"What is the point of history? Why history? Why the past?"[165]* To answer the question, Swift introduces another paradox *"that your Why?" gives the answer."[166]*

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[163] Ibid. pp. 282-283.
[164] Ibid. p. 85.
[165] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 146.
[166] Ibid. p. 147.

First, Tom answers that questioning itself is the reason for studying history because man is *"the animal which demands an explanation, the animal which asks Why."*[167] Once again Tom states that history is born when things go wrong and therefore another word rises up – the word *If* and it is the word that throws people back. Price confronts Tom throughout the next few chapters and in the chapter *The Explanation of Explanation*, Price challenges Tom's obsession with an explanation. Gradually, Tom becomes less confident about history as an explanation. History and questioning in the sense of inquiry are used to distinguish history from a fairy-tale. Content of history and inquiry is not the matter of criticism in the novel, but it is rather the form of traditional historiography described by Tom as dry or 'artificial history'.

Price is presented as a voice of postmodernism whereas Tom hovers between modernism and postmodernism. In chapter 20, Tom invites Price to his cabinet and asks for an explanation for his troublesome behaviour. First, Price is quiet and does not challenge Tom to the full extent. He just states in a subordinate manner that Tom *"makes things plain in the lesson. It's your show. You're the chief. You do the explaining."* The answer makes Tom even more desperate for an explanation. After Tom pushes for a while, Price cannot restrain himself and gives Tom an unsatisfying answer:

> *"You know what your trouble is, sir? You're hooked on explanation. Explain, Explain. Everything's got to have an explanation…Because I can do without explanations…Because I don't want explanations."*[168]

Here, Price portrays a postmodern tendency to avoid explanation. Postmodernists typically use playfulness and parody to evade looking for meaning in a chaotic world which is typically the aim of modernists. They refuse the total interpretation of the world whereas Tom, like other Swift's characters, is badly wounded by history and desires to retrace the past and reveal the patterns of its destructive nature. Price and the rest of Tom's class are the voice of the nuclear generation. Many times, there is a reference to the Cold War. Children in Tom's class and the rest of the

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[167] Ibid. p. 147.
[168] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 230.

world have to live under the threat of nuclear annihilation. They look for the future and thus do not like Tom's theory of history. In the chapter *De la Révolution*, Price cannot hold himself any longer during the lesson and raises his voice and says: *"But – I want a future…We all do. And you – you can stuff your past!"[169]* Later, Price establishes the Holocaust Club to cope with his fears and nightmares.

In comparison to *The Sweet Shop Owner* and *Shuttlecock*, *Waterland* does not end with a resolution in its fictional present. Instead, it ends with Dick's suicide four decades earlier. Tom, just as Prentis, finds ambiguity but no resting place. The first reason for this might be that Swift takes advice from Tom and wants to keep his readers curious. The second might be that like Tom, readers are looking for an explanation at the end of the novel. Tom states that it is a human instinct to do so, but the readers are put into Price's position and must do without an explanation.

6.12 Family and sexuality

Family, sexuality, and insanity run through Swift's novels as equally as a concern for history. Swift is interested in family, particularly in disrupted ones. His novels are often positioned in relation to Victorian tradition but while in the Victorian era the family was perceived as the fulcrum of stability, in the post-war period the perception of the family has changed. Family issues caused the death of Dick Crick who after finding out he is a product of incest, commits suicide.

Swift, like other contemporary writers, was influenced by the sexual revolution in the 1960s. The subject of discussion at that time was not only sexual identity but also the legalisation of abortion. Abortion is an important topic in *Waterland*, which takes place in 1943. However, it was illegal until 1967 when the Abortion Act was passed by the British parliament.[170] Because of this, Mary went to Martha Clay who is described in the novel as a witch. She performed an abortion and as a result, Mary became infertile.

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[169] Ibid. p. 195.
[170] *Abortion Act 1967*. Legislation.gov.uk, 2019,
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/87/contents

The novel deals with taboo topics such as sexuality and sexual exploration connected with curiosity. In connection to sexuality, chapter 24, *Child's Play*, is the most important. The chapter is about the sexual exploration of children including Thomas Crick, Mary Metcalf, Freddie Parr, Peter Baine, Terry Coe, and Shirley Alford. Dick Crick is also present but is rather an adult even though he does not even understand how babies are created. This scene is the starting point for unfortunate events. The exploration relates to curiosity which is however both a life and death force.

6.13 Insanity

Besides family and sexuality, Swift deals with the topic of insanity. In the novel, three mental institutions are presented. Wetherfield Asylum, built in 1874 by the Atkinsons, represents the Victorian model. The asylum was *"discreetly sealed from the world."*[171] *"The only reason why the Atkinsons built that asylum was to put their mother in it…and lock her up in a cage for cretins."*[172] Wetherfield serves as a place to seal off family problems and shame.

When the Atkinson's brewery burnt down, Ernest Atkinson received insurance money. Later, he invested the money to rebuild the family mansion, called Kessling Home into Kessling Hall Home which served as a home for war victims. *"Far away, across the sea, there'd been a great war and the hospital was full of soldiers, some of them wounded in their bodies but all of the wounded in the mind."*[173] In comparison to Wetherfield, Kessling Hall Home served soldiers like Henry Crick to recover and find their way back in life.

The last institution is London Mental Hospital which represents a modern institution. As Tom walks from the hospital, he points out that from the name of the hospital the word 'asylum' had been erased. He points to the modern preference to use *"plain 'Hospital' or…'Mental Hospital'."*[174] Mary was placed there after stealing a baby

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[171] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 130.
[172] Ibid. p. 131.
[173] SWIFT, G. *Waterland*. London: Scribner, 2019, p. 310.
[174] Ibid. p. 451.

which was considered a violation of social norms. The institution is there to cure Mary who cannot cope with modern society and even with herself. However, there is no cure in Swift's novels. Mary remains shut in her mind and now she is shut in the hospital. When Tom is leaving the hospital, she just stares out of the window like Sarah Atkinson once did.

These three institutions represent the progress of the notion of insanity from the Victorian era to the modern age. In addition, Swift questions the definition of insanity because as with other aspects of the novel, it depends on subjective interpretation. Women in Swift's novels generally acquire a traditional role. The exceptions are Anna and Sophie in the novel *Out of This World*.

7   Out of This World

Out of This World is Swift's fourth novel, published in 1988. It took Swift five years to write it after publishing *Waterland*. The novel deals with various major historical events of the 20th century. In comparison to *Waterland*, *Out of This World* goes beyond English borders and deals with world history on a larger scale. The novel includes WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War, the IRA campaign, the Nuremberg trials, the Congo Crisis, the landing on the moon etc. The story starts in April 1982 when the Falklands War broke out.

The development and quick rise of media and technology shaped the post-war perception of reality and fiction. Boundaries between these too were hard to distinguish. Singular interpretation of the world was impossible because reality became much more complicated, chaotic and ambiguous. Graham Swift is extremely aware of this fact and his novel *Out of This World* deals with progress and changes in the world in the 20th century.

7.1 Plot summary

The story starts in April 1982 and is narrated by Harry Beech and his daughter Sophie. They have not been in touch for ten years, since the death of Harry's father, Robert Beech. Swift traditionally chooses characters influenced by war and in this case Harry and Robert are no exceptions.

Robert Beech lost his arm in WWI and received the most prestigious military award, the Victorian Cross. After the war, he took over a family firm BMC (Beech Munitions Company), founded in 1875 and focused on armament. In 1972 Robert was killed by an IRA bomb placed under his car, a bomb which ironically had been made by BMC. His son Harry refused to follow in his fathers' footsteps and instead became a photojournalist. However, he quit his job after Robert's death and became an aerial photographer capturing English landscapes and its prehistoric monuments in particular. Unlike Robert, Harry experienced the major events of the 20th century through camera lenses capturing all the dreadful images from the world.

Sophie lives in New York with her husband Joe and her twin sons, Paul and Tim. She has been out of touch with Harry since Robert's death because she saw him taking photographs of the crime scene. Sophie's narrative focuses on similar events to Harry's, but she tells the story from her point of view.

Later, Harry falls in love with a twenty-three-year-old woman whom he intends to marry and invites Sophie to the wedding. In comparison to *The Sweet Shop Owner*, it seems that there will be a reconciliation between daughter and father. However, the novel ends at this point. So, the reader has to make his/her own conclusion. Just like in the case of *Waterland*, *Out of This World* does not end with a resolution in its fictional present.

7.2 Narrative

One of the subjects of criticism is Swift's choice of characters. Women are not frequently the narrators in Swifts' novels. The exceptions are Sophie and her mother Anna in *Out of This World* and Amy and Mandy in *Last Orders*. They are important

characters in the novels although, they are given traditional female roles which are usually negative. In general, women are presented as sexually unreliable and calculating, often causing trouble to their husbands and fathers. Among such characters are, for example, Mary Metcalf and Helen Atkinson from *Waterland*. In the case of *Out of This World,* both Sophie and Anna have a romance with other men despite being married. Nevertheless, men are not portrayed completely as positive. Swift's choice of characters reflects his world's view. Therefore, it is up to the readers if the selectivity of characters undermines Swift's fiction.[175]

In comparison to *Waterland*, there are two narrators – Sophie and Harry, daughter and father. The novel follows Swift's traditional narration style and is narrated in the first person. It is also important to note that this is the first time Swift let a woman have a strong voice. Besides Harry and Sophie, the novel enters the narrative of Anna, Sophie's mum and Joe, Sophie's husband.

Whereas *Waterland* was constructed as a textbook to capture history, *Out of This World* has the form of a journal to capture psychology. The form also reminds readers of letters that the characters would like to write to each other, but never did. Together with a split narrative, a sorrowful atmosphere is created. Thomas Crick narrated the story to his students but narrators in *Out of This World* usually have no listener, except Sophie. Sophie's narrative is a series of sessions with her analyst Dr Klein. Her monologues are directed to him even though she would rather speak to her father. Harry, on the other hand, directs the monologues to himself. Anna, who died in 1953 in a plane crash, enters the narrative posthumously and directs her monologue to Harry. The last narrator, Joe, directs his monologue to a bartender.

The characters do not actually speak to each other, even though they would like to. Dialogue is established by text. For example, in one chapter Harry finds out that his father knew about Anna's affair with another man but has never told him about it. Harry's monologue is followed by another chapter in which Anna is the narrator giving

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[175] MALCOLM, D. *Understanding Graham Swift*. Columbia: University of South Caroline Press, 2003, p. 18-19.

her point of view. Nonetheless, it makes a reader feel pity for the character's inability to speak to each other. So, the narrative establishes the feeling that this family is even more dysfunctional than the family in *Waterland*.

To further support the sorrowful atmosphere of the novel, Swift uses fragmentation. As mentioned, the story is constructed as a journal in which mainly Harry's and Sophie's narratives take turns. The story moves forwards and backwards not only in narrative but also in events. Yet, the structure is less chaotic than in *Waterland*. Just as in the case of *Waterland*, the story ends where it has started. It supports Swift's world view in which our past weighs heavily on the present.

Aposiopesis and stream of consciousness are also presented in the novel. For example, Sophie reveals the reason why she stopped talking to her father for a long time. She leaves many sentences unfinished which indicates her inability to talk about something at a particular moment. This kind of narrative reflects human nature. When people are broken, they need some time to be able to speak about certain things. Therefore, the narrative in the novel reflects real life and the way people deal with their emotions and thoughts. A reader, however, is most of the time able to finish the thoughts which provide a unique connection between readers and characters.

The fragmented structure is also supported by Harry's career as a photographer. As Harry captures moments, the novel captures short moments from someone's life which serves as a documentary.

7.3 Photography

In Swift's interview in 1988 with David Profumo, he said that he is *"interested in people…caught between a traditional world and a sense of a viable, vital future."* His particular interest is 'no man's land'. Swift speculates that it might be a position of most people nowadays. *"We are seeing so many of our visions of the future prove delusory, whilst we cannot really go back to the old, traditional world…but if we do it, we do it in*

a rather crass sense…evoking some sentimental vision of Britain, in the past, which no longer pertains."[176]

This passage from the conversation captures the position of the two main characters of the novel. Harry and Sophie are both placeless and do not have a sense of belonging. Most of the characters in the novel move between two worlds – the old and the new one full of promises. Robert, Harry, and Sophie represent different generations and historical periods.

Robert Beech, a war hero is *"still on the ground…caught in the mud."* He was born in the age of sepia and his *"world was brown."[177]* Sepia colour was preferred until the 1920s but later new photographic techniques were developed, and sepia toning became obsolete.[178] Harry on the other hand *"was being lifted up and away, out of this world, out of the age of mud, out of that brown, obscure age, into the age of air."[179]* He experiences the mid-twentieth century in monochrome before the *"technicolour century came of age."[180]* He refers to the bright technicolour age of the late 20th century experienced by Sophie.

Swift used photography and aerial metaphor to represent three generations of one dysfunctional family in the 20th century. According to the novel, the rise of photography, media, TV, and film became – alongside the World Wars – the major shaping factors of the 20th century. Photography is the key factor in the novel which affects the representation and perception of reality. By the representation of three generations, Swift captured the shift of each generation 'out of this world'. Each generation is more and more distant from reality.

Sophie witnessed her father taking photos after the bomb blast, but Harry did not explain his motivation to do it. Instead, he generally describes the role of photography.

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[176] David Profumo and Graham Swift, in Conversation – ICA Talks – Arts, Literature and Performance. British Library – Sounds. *Sounds.bl.uk*, https://sounds.bl.uk/Arts-literature-and-performance/ICA-talks/024M-C0095X0360XX-0100V0
[177] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 204.
[178] HUTTON, E. *What is Sepia: Exploring Its Past and Present*. PC Blog, 2021, https://imagerestorationcenter.com/what-is-sepia/
[179] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 208.
[180] Ibid. p. 204.

Therefore, the reader must read between the lines. Unlike language and memories, photography is able to capture fleeting moments. On page 51, Sophie talks to her analyst who wants her to talk about her earliest memories. *However, she asks him "how do you know, when you go back that far, that it's really a memory? Not what you were told later, or what you've invented. Or just sheer fantasy."[181]* Later, she is interrogated by the police and mentions 'hallucination under extreme stress'. It means that she is not completely reliable as a witness. She described the whole death scene quickly, but the camera can provide accurate details.

Harry states that when Jenny, his fiancée, goes to visit her mother, he cannot imagine exactly what she looks like. He further explains that

> *"photography should be about what you cannot see…because it is far away and only the eye of the camera will take you there. Or what you cannot see because it happens so suddenly or so cruelly there is no time or even desire to see it, and only the camera can show you what it is like while it is still happening."[182]*

This extract might be the answer to why Harry took a picture at the scene of his father's death. Like Sophie, Harry was exposed to extreme stress. He took the photo because later one might start to disbelieve that something like that had happened. Photography serves as a documentary to remember, to believe. To further prove this point, another book section will be presented. On page 167, Harry finds out that Anna, his wife, is cheating on him. He discovers Anna and her lover Frank having sex and faces a moral decision. Shall he burst into that room and cause drama? Instead, he *"thought: This is happening, before your eyes. Afterwards, you won't believe it. Take the picture."[183]*

Photography was meant to present realism into the world because *"seeing is believing…without the camera the world might start to disbelieve."[184]* Camera and film had to get rid of legends and enable people to see themselves 'the way they are.' Harry

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[181] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 51.
[182] Ibid. p. 55.
[183] Ibid. p. 167.
[184] Ibid. p. 107.

thought that *"the camera was key to this process."* But he finds out that *"the world cannot bear to be only what it is."*[185] Instead of bringing knowledge, photography and film changed people's perception of reality. The potential dangers of visual technologies had already been predicted by George Orwell (1903-1950) in his novel *1984* (1949). The novel deals with citizens being constantly watched by Big Brother. Swift shifts Orwell's predictions and Harry states that these days the problem is *"not to be watched. Isn't that a greater fear than the fear of being watched?"*[186]

When Harry was watching the moon landing, he noticed that cameras had been specifically set up to capture this tremendous event. Also, the first words had been rehearsed in advance, and the astronauts looked like actors whose mission was to make a movie. He points out another change in the new age. The first rule of photography used to be *"catch things unawares."* The moon landing, however, presented a milestone in the history of photography and for the first time, the rule of photography has changed. The rule now is: *"the camera first, then the event."*[187]

When starting his career as a photographer he was driven by the desire to show the world atrocities and open peoples' eyes to them. Camera and photography seemed to be a solution to the novel's epigraph *'what the eye sees not, the heart rues not.'* People believe when they see things, therefore 'seeing is believing' and Harry wanted people to see to affect their consciousness. Instead of getting rid of myths and legends, photography paradoxically created its own world of illusions. The epigraph also applies to Sophie who is not in touch with her father but her memories are still painful. The motifs of memory and forgetting are prominent throughout the whole novel.

7.4   The idea of progress

Robert *"lived to see men land on the moon."* He experienced something which was believed to be impossible. The distinction between reality and fantasy is another

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[185] Ibid. p. 187.
[186] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 189.
[187] Ibid. p. 13.

important theme in the novel. People's perception of reality is highly influenced by technology. In 1945 Robert *"suffered a near-fatal heart attack"* and in 1968 he *"was fitted with a pacemaker."* These events and the loss of his right arm caused Robert to start investing his money into research. BMC invested mainly in *"wheelchairs and other invalid aids…prosthesis and surgical reconstruction."*[188] Harry states that people *"from hospital patients to schoolchildren might have been surprised to learn what was the original source of their succour."*[189] There is also the paradox that IRA chose *"for their target an arms manufacturer. Since terrorists themselves, by definition, require arms, which had to be made by someone."*[190]

Harry presents his father as *"no enemy of the modern."*[191] In 1969, Robert's speech was captured on footage. He joked about his pacemaker and then he *"speaks of the 'courage' (he uses that word) of science in penetrating the 'stronghold of romance.' The Apollo mission, the cardiac transplant. The moon. The heart."*[192] It refers to another important historical event – the first heart transplant, performed in 1967. Just like in the case of the Apollo mission, the heart transplant was perceived as something impossible. However, it was possible for the medical team led by Christiaan Barnard. The heart was for centuries considered a person's soul, but technology changed this perception. The event was one of the most widely recorded events in the world and the surgeon and his team received worldwide fame.[193] Harry expresses bitterness toward his father and is sceptical about the benefits of the rise of technology and the benefits of progress. Like *Waterland,* Swift questions progress itself. Harry understands the limitation of progress and technologies whereas his father is amazed by their power and possibilities.

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[188] Ibid. p. 91.
[189] Ibid. p. 91.
[190] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 90.
[191] Ibid. p. 91.
[192] Ibid. p. 91.
[193] SLIWA, K. & ZILLA, P. *50th Anniversary of the First Human Heart Transplant – How Is It Seen Today?* European Heart Journal, vol. 38, no. 46, 7 Dec. 2017, pp. 3402-3404, https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/article/38/46/3402/4706200

"Have you noticed how the world has changed? It's become this vast display of evidence, this exhibition of recorded data, this continuously running movie."[194]

Through the picture of three generations, Swift represents the evolution of images and perception of reality. Robert in this case represents the late Victorian era in which photography was quite new and therefore did not have much time to make a great impact. He emphasises heroism, duty and honour which is not shared by his son Harry who refuses to take over the family business. Robert has *"got to go through with it, sound off like some demented Victorian Papa."[195]* Harry is a disillusioned character influenced by the damages of the wars and the rise of technology. Sophie represents postmodernism which is portrayed as technicoloured age, *"well-informed and hyper-communicative world"* in which *"the facts of life float freely in the air."[196]*

Even though the world is well-informed and displays evidence, Swift incorporates a paradox. The visual image cannot only record reality but also blur it to such an extent that it cannot be trusted. Robert watches Apollo 11 landing on the moon on TV. Harry questions the event and asks his father *"How do we know they're really there?"* The event might have been faked in a studio to *"con the Russians. To know, you'd have to go yourself."[197]* So, on one hand, photography seems to portray reality but on the other hand, should be questioned.

7.5   Characters

Both Harry and Robert are like other Swifts' characters influenced by war. Robert is presented as a war hero, who 'swapped his arm for a medal.'[198] In 1918 he was in northern Picardy when a grenade landed near him and his commanding officer who was at that time unconscious from a previous explosion. He grabbed the grenade with his bare hands and threw it away but as he did, it blew off his arm. Harry thinks about the

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[194] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 119.
[195] Ibid. p. 72.
[196] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 139.
[197] Ibid. p. 170.
[198] Ibid. p. 62.

motivation behind this heroic act. The army declared it was an act of pure heroism. However, there was no camera present, so the only witness was ironically his unconscious commander. Harry further elaborates on possible interpretations. It also might have been *"an act of unqualified stupidity."*[199] However, *"remember this is 1918 and the world is only just aware of how it has slid into the twentieth century. He sees the grenade fall and wishes it did not pose him its terrible moral choice."*[200] The images of

> *"his brothers' names on the Roll of Honour, the shame appearing cowardly, even some half-remembered image, drawn in his case not from Hollywood but perhaps from some ink-blotched school-book…and he finds himself running like an automaton towards the grenade."*[201]

If he had not lost his arm, he would never have received the Victorian Cross. What did the war give him except the cross?

> *"He came out of the Great War in 1918, minus a wife, minus two brothers and minus an arm. But he had acquired the rank of Major, a Victoria Cross, and a son whom…he had no special wish to see at all. He was in his early twenties but he was already a middle-aged man."*[202]

After the end of the war, Robert inherited the family business because he was the last heir. Later, he wanted Harry to follow in his footsteps and take over from him but he was a kind of a troublesome son. Harry opted for RAF. but not to be a hero as his father. *"My father was a hero. I didn't worship my father. But I had wanted to fly."*[203] Later he focuses on the 'analysis of aerial photos' which enabled him to recognise western Europe based on the geography of cities.

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[199] Ibid. p. 195.
[200] Ibid. p. 195.
[201] Ibid. p. 196.
[202] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 198.
[203] Ibid. p. 46.

"Hamburg…Cologne…Berlin…I learnt to distinguish the marks of destruction – the massive ruptures of 4,000-pounders from the blisters of 1,000-pounders and the mere pock-marks of 250-pound clusters."[204]

Instead of joining his father, he captures the damage caused by his father's weapons. The progress and all the powerful technology contributed to the change of landscape which is *"more other-wordly, more crater-ridden, more lunar."[205]* The landscape seems 'out of this world' but Harry knows that what he sees is real in comparison to the moon landing because to be sure about such a thing people would have to be there – on the moon. Harry saw the war and knows that this land which is reminiscent of the moon's surface is real.

Both Robert and Harry are badly wounded by history as are Thomas and Harold Crick. Like Anna, they are *"one of the world's walking wounded."[206]* The World Wars showed another face of humanity and the true power of progress. Even grieving became absurd because *"how do we solemnize one death and ignore thousand others?"[207]* The novel incorporates many rhetorical questions which makes the whole story deep and the reader truly think about life's dilemmas. Like in the case of Robert Beech, who when grabbing a grenade was put in the moral choice, the readers are put in the same position many times. For example, Harry asks *"how do we decide that one life matters and another doesn't?"[208]*

7.6 Identity

Among postmodern features there is the struggle with identity – in this case embodied by Sophie searching for her mother. The search itself is a symbol for Sophie's search for identity.

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[204] Ibid. p. 47.
[205] Ibid. p. 47.
[206] Ibid. p. 174.
[207] Ibid. p. 22.
[208] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 22.

"While there was rock-and-roll and Elvis and the Beatles, I became this student of the Ancients…I was going back a couple of thousand years more, delving into dead languages, and imagining I might one day become…a curator! A brilliant female archaeologist! And all because of her, my mythical Greek mother." [209]

She decides to go to Greece hoping to find her destiny in this mythical land. However, instead of heroes and Gods, she finds *"miles and miles of flat tobacco fields"* about which *"Homer doesn't tell you."*[210] The notion of flatness reminds of an empty space of the Fens. She escaped with her husband Joe to the new world – the Promised Land to get *'away from it all.'* However, she realises that *"there isn't a point in the world where you can get away from the world, not anymore, is there?"*[211] Sophie, like Tom Crick, is a self-conscious character who realises that history is inescapable.

When Sophie is talking to Dr Klein, she speaks in an informal postmodern manner. In comparison to Harry who uses quite sophisticated language, Sophie swears a lot, refers to sex openly, and uses slang and colloquialisms.

7.7   New York and Nuremberg

After WWII, Europe had to face the question of how to rebuild the destroyed cities. It was a dilemma regarding whether to construct new modern buildings or replicate the cities' past. Nuremberg was no exception. Once the capital city of Franconia, full of churches, towers and merchants *"was laid waste right up until the early months of '45."*[212] In 1946 the city was rebuilt but Harry notices that the place is not real because of its modern reconstruction. Harry states that *"it has been painstakingly done – so I am told – as if to re-conjure a world before certain irreversible historical events had happened."*[213]

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[209] Ibid. p. 124.
[210] Ibid. p. 126.
[211] Ibid. p. 15.
[212] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 103.
[213] Ibid. p. 103.

After the reconstruction, Nuremberg became *"one of the chief tourist towns of Germany…people go for these picturesque reconstructions, mixed with genuine remnants of the old, for the fairy-tale spires and gables."*[214] People started coming to Nuremberg not to experience the place which was once the most important Nazi site and the location of the War Trials. In fact, this became of secondary interest. People go there to experience the place 'before things went wrong', before Hitler's regime. The place was not only destroyed by the war but also by modern reconstruction, which is another paradox presented by Swift. So, even Nuremberg is not real. It became an inauthentic place because the modern reconstruction gave preference to pre-war history – yet another paradox. Nuremberg is a product of a modern reconstruction but at the same time, it is not. Modernism looks towards the future but in this case, tourists are brought back to the pre-war fantasy.

The reason for this is to escape the post-war traumatic experience. Like in the case of *Waterland* people tend to be nostalgic and desire to go back before things went wrong. Nuremberg might be seen as parallel to Sophie's urge to escape the past. The Promised Land mentioned in the previous chapter stands for America. After Robert's death, she flew to New York, to *"the land of escape, the land of sanctuary."*[215] New York became a place of escape, however, she is still haunted by memory and trapped at the moment when Robert's car was blown up.

> *"It just keeps happening. So, that afterwards…here in New York, three thousand miles away…I was still there, on the terrace at Hyfield, standing, frozen,…with that strange noise in my ears, the noise of absolute silence…only the voice in my head,…which was saying: Something terrible has happened. Is happening. Is happening. Because you don't believe it."*[216]

Her husband Joe, on the other hand 'sells dreams'. Rather than selling the promise of the New World, he sells *"golden memories of the Old World."*[217] Sophie

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[214] Ibid. p. 103.
[215] Ibid. p. 15.
[216] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 109.
[217] Ibid. p. 15.

realises that there is not *"a point in the world where you can get away from the world, not anymore."*[218] There is no 'new world' anymore because everywhere is just debris from the old world which is reconstructed as in the case of Nuremberg. This notion of inescapability and disillusionment is a characteristic feature of postmodern literature. Sophie also embodies a postmodern notion of placelessness. She lost her home but at the same time, she cannot escape to another world. In New York, she still feels like a stranger and therefore presents a trapped character.

Furthermore, 'the age of air' brings other dangers. Harry refers to 1972 as

> *"ominous times. The flowers of the Sixties faded. The long trough of the new decade yawning. The Irish trouble. And the sense of a new, barbarous world encroaching, a world no longer keeping to its former demarcations…Bombs going off in airports, embassies, shopping centres, homes."*[219]

The age of air is represented by the aeroplane which enables people to cross borders faster than ever. Just like a heart transplant and landing on the moon, a plane presents something that was believed to be impossible. A few centuries ago, it took days to cross the Atlantic Ocean by ship, but by the 1970s days people could get from New York to London by plane in seven hours. On top of that, people are given food and drinks on the board and can watch movies. *"Don't you think that's wonderful? To be moving faster than the sun?"*[220] On one hand, Sophie is impressed by all new technology but in the example of the plane, she explains that the danger is omnipresent. She does not have a home or a sense of belonging. To top it all she loses the feeling of security after her grandfather's death. At that moment she realised that *"it's all one territory and everywhere, everywhere can be a target and there aren't any safe, separate places any more."*[221]

While Sophie became placeless after her grandfather's death, her father seems to be placeless almost all his life. When he was nine or ten, he *"used to make the journey*

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[218] Ibid. p. 15.
[219] Ibid. p. 92.
[220] Ibid. pp. 201-202.
[221] Ibid. p. 111.

several times a year between" his home and his prep school. "*But I could never have said which was worse, going to school or going home, because I dreaded both places."[222]* On the train to school, he feels like he belongs nowhere. *"Or rather: This is the only place you belong – this transit region, this in-between space."[223]* At that moment he realised that *"all you are is your eyes, all there is is in your eyes, your vision is you."[224]* It became his kind of a superpower and the camera became his gun which seems to make photographers *"invisible, invulnerable, incorporeal."[225]* In fact, the resemblance between the gun and the camera is repeatedly presented in the novel. Sophie points out that *"you can shoot with both. You can load and aim with both. With both you can find your target and the rest of the world goes black."[226]* In the section in which she talks about her grandfather's funeral, she compares photographers to snipers hidden *"behind trees, hedges, on the roofs of their cars…waiting in full ambush."[227]* Harry states that *"if you exist in your vision, then nothing can hurt you."[228]* Taking pictures is somehow soothing for Harry, for whom the camera offers a detachment and enables him to live in his own 'shell' or as he says 'the tent of himself.'

Harry reflects on the changing age in which *"people want stories. They don't want facts."* Even journalists use the word *story* instead of *event*. However, he supposes that the columns do not tell stories but only 'unaccommodatable facts'. He was sent to Nuremberg to capture a story about crime and punishment and 'was looking, as his employers were looking, as the whole world was looking, for monsters.' The purpose was to capture the guilt and death of millions in Goering's, Keitel's or von Ribbentrop's eyes. But the fact is that he *"didn't find monsters."[229]* All he found were 'terribly ordinary' people. Therefore, he decided to capture the ordinariness of this evil to *"show*

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[222] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 121.
[223] Ibid. p. 121.
[224] Ibid. p. 121.
[225] Ibid. p. 121.
[226] Ibid. p. 77.
[227] Ibid. pp. 84-85.
[228] Ibid. p. 121.
[229] Ibid. p. 101.

that monsters do not belong to comfortable tales. That the worst things are perpetrated by people no one would pick out from a crowd." [230]

The whole description of evil reminds one of that of *Hannah Arendt* (1906-1975), known for reporting on the trial of Adolf Eichmann. In 1963 she published the book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Arendt is best known for phrase 'the banality of evil', which was an inspiration for Harry's character, who during the trial seems to experience the same dilemmas as Arendt. She believed that evil is not something distant but quite the opposite. Her main question was: *How does it happen that ordinary people participate in totalitarian regimes and in crimes against humanity? How can we prevent it in the future?* The term itself is a paradox because there is something ordinary in evil, for example, the legislation processes, transport organisation, building infrastructures etc. People often think about evil as about something almost unnatural usually caused by bad will. However, in totalitarian 'evil', according to Arendt, evil lost the features by which people can recognise it. In fact, evil is organised and lawful, so it does not look like evil in a traditional sense. The novel refers to the shift from the traditional notion to the modern understanding of evil. For centuries, for example, genocide was commonly associated with weapons and violence. However, in the modern world genocide looks like an ordinary job. Eichmann himself stated that he did not kill anyone because he was acting in accordance with the law, simply doing his job. So, as Harry states in the modern world *"killing is as casual as being killed."* [231][232]

Although Nuremberg represents mainly the chronicle of human atrocities, it has one more meaning in the novel. Despite death and destruction, Harry and Anna manage to find something valuable in the ruins of Nuremberg. They find happiness and fall in love with each other as do Leonard and Maria in Berlin in the novel by Ian McEwan *The Innocent*. Two weeks after the Tribunal passed the sentence, they were married by an

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[230] Ibid. p. 102.
[231] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 102.
[232] *Hannah Arendt* [film]. Directed by Margarethe von Trotta.

army chaplain. To find happiness in Nuremberg seems as unreal as landing on the moon. It helps Harry to detach himself for a moment from the heavy burden of Nuremberg.

> *"To be happy in Nuremberg! To fall in love in Nuremberg! In that city of guilt and grief and retribution, to think of only one face, one pair of eyes, one body."[233]*

Throughout the novel, Sophie struggles to accept her father's placelessness and often blames him for 'not being there.' Swift in this case incorporates the motif of insanity which is less prominent than in *Waterland*. Sophie speaks to her analyst Dr Klein, a character inspired by Freud and his psychoanalysis. Dr Klein emphasises the role of telling which helps to deal with stress, trauma, and human fears.

> *"To remember – that can be bad, Sophie. And to forget – that can be bad too. Isn't that the problem? Either way, you're in a mess. But the answer to the problem is to learn how to tell."[234]*

Like in *Waterland* telling plays an important role, but in *Out of This World* the function of it is slightly different. In both cases, telling serves to deal with the human past. Joe, on the other hand, uses a bartender Mario as a person he can talk to. Step by step, Sophie moves towards her healing. Harry also seems to find his cure which is presented by a young woman Jenny, whom he intends to marry. Jenny makes him *"feel that the world is never black with memories, so grey with age, that it cannot be recoloured with the magic paint-box of the heart."[235]* When he is with her, he feels 'out of this world' and thus, paradoxically, finds himself in a fairy-tale. Harry invites Sophie to the wedding and she seems keen on going, even though the reader might have expected the opposite. In other words, she wanted her dream to come true and her father 'be finally there.' Despite all the disgust towards her father, it is human nature to seek our parent's love. Influenced by watching films and observing all the happy endings, we tend to look for our own happy endings. Swift indicates that it might be possible for

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[233] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 133.
[234] SWIFT, G. *Out of This World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 74.
[235] Ibid. p. 141.

people to recover just as lizards can grow their tales back. This analogy is presented in the novel.

The reconciliation of daughter and father seems unusual in Swift's novels. However, it is important to mention that readers are not provided with the full ending. The story ends somewhere in the middle because both characters are on the plane. Sophie is flying to England and her father recalls his childhood memories when he stepped on board a plane for the first time. Nothing in the novel is guaranteed and the novel ends right in the middle of the story. *How do we know that Sophie's plane will not crash like her mother's?* Readers know that in Swift's novels history tends to repeat itself. *So, how do we know that her plane will not crush?* Well, we simply do not know. As we know from *Waterland*, there is no need for an explanation of everything. Swift seems to enjoy leaving his readers curious. In other words, he simply does not want his readers to die. Because 'people die when curiosity goes.'

Conclusion

This diploma thesis was divided into seven chapters in order to analyse the space of two novels written by Graham Swift. Even though *Out of This World* is less complex and less admired by the readers and critics than *Waterland*, it is equally rich in content. Swift's novels deal with similar themes and use similar postmodern techniques. The focus is on the role of history; however, Swift does not concentrate just on world history that children are taught at school, but he pays attention rather to individual history that may have an impact not globally but locally. Both novels present diverse characters and the narrators are self-questioning and self-aware.

In contrast to novels by, for example, Salman Rushdie, Swift's novels usually use English settings, even though some parts of *Out of This World* take place in Europe. The English setting outweighs the foreign setting and is commonly provincial or suburban. Location is important in his works and what all his novels share is the intense apprehension of place. The source of metaphors and paradoxes in *Waterland* is nature, whereas in *Out of This World* it is the camera lens. Both novels challenge the linear time usually associated with modernism. In *Waterland*, time is compared to the flow of the River Ouse, therefore the narrative of the novel twists and turns like the river. The story starts in 1943, meanders through the novel just like the River Ouse through the Fens and ends back in 1943. The main idea is that history tends to repeat itself, it goes back just like the River Ouse to its former source.

The narrative of *Out of This World* is structured as a documentary depicting moments of the lives of the main characters. The story is influenced by the camera lens; thus the novel focuses on progress, the rise of technologies and the atrocities of the 20th century. These topics are more prominent in *Out of This World* than in *Waterland*. Despite slightly different narrative styles, the main narrators in both novels challenge the reader's perception of reality and fiction.

Swift was vividly influenced by the work of Henri Lefebvre and Mikhail Bakhtin. Events are moving back and forth through history all the time and space is conceived through metaphors drawn from landscapes. Influenced by the Spatial turn, space is no longer just a stage but is active in the process of representation. Time and space are equally important in Swift's novels and influence one another as water and land. For this reason, it might be said that they are connected in the sense of Bakhtin's chronotope.

Both novels are deeply intertextual, metafictional, fragmented, and include various genres. All the main characters are influenced by some kind of violence. The characters in *Out of This World* are influenced by the events of the World Wars and the IRA bomb placed under the car of Robert Beech, whereas the characters in *Waterland* are influenced rather by crime and capitalists destroying their natural landscape. In other words, the dehumanising nature of the 20th century is one of the most prominent topics in Swift's novels.

The analysis showed that reading Graham Swift is a challenging task. He refers to many Victorian authors, challenges the modern notion of literature and history, incorporates postmodern features and belongs among Contemporary British authors. Therefore, he is an extraordinary author whose primary focus is on history in which the borders between reality and fiction melt.

Next time, I would expand my research to include a comparative analysis with the works of Ian McEwan who deals with similar topics as Graham Swift. They both deal with dysfunctional families, and it could be interesting to compare the narrative style and their depiction of the 20th-century events.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce byla rozdělena do sedmi kapitol. V pěti prvních kapitolách jsem se zabývala teoretickými východisky pro analýzu dvou románů od Grahama Swifta. Přestože je román *Vodní svět* vnímán kritiky a čtenáři jako zatím Swiftovo nejúspěšnější a nejkomplexnější dílo, román *Out of This World* je neméně zajímavý a stejně obsahově bohatý. Obecně lze říci, že Swift využívá podobná témata a postmoderní prvky ve všech svých románech. *Vodní svět* a *Mimo tento svět* nejsou výjimkou, a proto se vedle primární analýzy zaměřuji i na porovnání těchto dvou románů s ostatními díly Grahama Swifta. Oba romány obsahují velké množství postmoderních prvků a každý z nich staví do popředí jiné prvky.

Těžištěm Swiftova románů je role historie. Swift se nezaměřuje pouze na světovou historii, která je součástí školních kurikul, ale spíše na individuální historii, která nemá globální dopad, ale lokální. Oba romány obsahují rozmanité postavy a vypravěči jsou si vědomi sami sebe. Jedinečný vypravěčský styl umožňuje bližší vztah čtenáře a postav románů.

V porovnání s díly jiných současných britských autorů, jako je například Salman Rushdie, využívá Graham Swift spíše anglické prostředí a obyčejné postavy. Nicméně, román *Mimo tento svět* jde za hranice Británie a část příběhu se odehrává v Evropě. Toto je však jedna z mála výjimek a ve většině případů převládá regionální a příměstské prostředí nad zahraničním. Zdrojem metafor a paradoxů je v případě románu *Vodní svět* příroda, kdežto v *Mimo tento svět* je zdrojem čočka kamery. Oba romány konfrontují lineární způsob uspořádání času, který je charakteristický pro modernismus. Čas ve *Vodním světě* je přirovnán k toku řeky Ouse, který odráží pohyb řeky ve vypravování. Příběh začíná roku 1943, klikatí se skrz stránky stejně jako řeka Ouse skrz Fenland a končí opět v roce 1943. Hlavní myšlenkou je, že historie má tendenci opakovat se stejně jako řeka Ouse, která se dříve či později vrátí ke svému zdroji. Cyklické pojetí času je důležitým tématem i v románu *Mimo tento svět*. Nicméně, je důležité podotknout, že cyklický čas v tomto případě není totožný s myšlenkou reinkarnace, ale s myšlenkou, že historie má tendenci se opakovat.

Vypravěčský styl v románu *Mimo tento* svět je ovlivněn perspektivou čočky kamery a strukturován jako dokument, který zachycuje momentky ze života hlavních postav stejně jako fotografie. Román se stejně jako *Vodní svět* zaměřuje na myšlenku pokroku, vzestup technologií a zvěrstva, která se odehrála ve 20. století. Tyto myšlenky jsou však výraznější v románu *Mimo tento svět*. Ačkoliv jsou oba vypravěčské styly ovlivněny jinými prvky, oba romány konfrontují čtenáře a jeho vnímání reality a fikce.

Při psaní výše zmíněných románů, byl Swift ovlivněn prací Henriho Lefebvre a Mikhaila Bakhtina. Z tohoto důvodu, prostor v jeho románech není jen pouhým jevištěm nebo pozadím, ale aktivním prvkem. Čas i prostor jsou ve Swiftově dílech stejně důležitá, protože se ovlivňují stejně jako voda a země, a proto lze říci, že čas i prostor jsou v těchto dílech spojena v souladu s teorií Mikhaila Bakhtina.

Mezi nejvýraznější postmoderní prvky použité v románech je intertextualita, metafikce, fragmentace a žánrový mix. Všechny postavy jsou ovlivněny určitou formou násilí. Postavy v románu *Mimo tento svět* jsou ovlivněny zejména světovými válkami a IRA bombou, která byla umístěna pod vozem Roberta Beeche, zatímco postavy v románu *Vodní svět* jsou ovlivněny spíše zločinem, vraždou a kapitalisty, kteří zničili přirozené prostředí předků Toma Cricka. Jinými slovy, dehumanizující podstata 20. století patří mezi nejvýraznější prvky Swiftových románů.

Analýza ukázala, že čtení Grahama Swifta je vskutku výzva. Ve svých dílech často navazuje na Viktoriánskou tradici, konfrontuje pojetí literatury a historie v období modernismu, zahrnuje množství postmoderních prvků, ale patří mezi současné britské autory. Z tohoto důvodu lze Grahama Swifta považovat za jednoho z nejzajímavějších autorů současné britské literární scény. Ve svých dílech se primárně věnuje historii, ve které se hranice mezi realitou a fikcí stírají.

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