Graham Swift is one of the most influential contemporary novelists of England who has joined the ranks of Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, Martin Amis, Julian Barnes and Kazuo Ishiguro. He is well known for his eight marvelous and impressive novels and a short-story book. This chapter examines the literary portrayals of seductions and betrayals and the consequent cultural transformations in Swift’s eight novels namely _The Sweet Shop Owner_ (1980), _Shuttlecock_ (1981), _Waterland_ (1983), _Ever After_ (1992), _Last Orders_ (1996), _Out of This World_ (1998), _The Light of Day_ (2003), and _Tomorrow_ (2007).

Swift’s novels display the presence of numerous seducing elements like sex, beauty, name, fame, money, frustration and obsession along with instances of betrayals that lead to cultural transformations. It would be interesting to see how the themes of seduction and betrayal as a homogenous and inevitable element stand for the moral and socio-cultural transformations of the twentieth century England – as a solitary, isolated island and as a small, but an important country in the European Continent.

What Swift portrays in _The Sweet Shop Owner_ (1980) is apparently present in almost all his novels. As long as his common man, disturbed by the family troubles and circumstances surrounding him is present in his novels, there is no dearth of seducing agents, seduction sagas and colorful betrayals. Though every incident is looked at through Willy Chapman’s perspective, it becomes a wonderful story written in third person. The novel describes the last day in the life of Chapman. An athlete during his school days, he belonged to a middle-class family. A straight forward and innocent to a larger degree, he is synonymous with God’s best angel.
Around the end of the thirties, 1937- to be precise, he meets one beautiful young woman, Irene Harrison, and obeys her romantic order to play like a child, which eventually ends in their marriage. Irene’s beauty suffered from guilt and betrayal. She was raped by one real estate agent, Hancock, and had been admitted to a hospital for some days to cure her mental illness. To her great disappointment, her parents never took her seriously, nor did they punish Hancock for his heinous deed. Though her father later on repents his decision, he keeps quiet and saves his family status throughout his life. Mentally wounded, Irene then decides to marry this simpleton, Willy Chapman. Gradually, Chapman and Irene come closer and Dorothy is born.

The novel talks about a ‘bargain’ between them. Chapman agrees to it and works forever happily in his ‘Sweet Shop’ on the Briar Street, assisted by Mrs. Cooper and Ms. Sandra. He takes part in the Second World War and works in a store of helmets and uniforms. This type of work suits his limp body. After the war, Chapman, Irene and Dorothy live together happily for some years. However, slowly Irene’s health - a self-created migraine and Asthma - starts deteriorating. Simultaneously, Dory starts keeping distance from them. She does not like her mother’s cold and calculated approach (a type of betrayal on the part of a wife) towards her father. Therefore, she leaves home, stays with one young history researcher, Michael at Bristol, and adds one more to the previously existing betrayals in the family.

Eventually, the Sweet Shop flourishes but unfortunately, Irene deteriorates and dies. Dorothy is away and Chapman feels lonely and isolated. Irene has left behind a considerable stuff, which now belongs to Chapman. After his death, it will go naturally to Dorothy. However, she is not ready to wait until Chapman’s death. Finally, he sends her fifteen thousand pounds and dejected, waits for her; waits for the heart attack and waits for his early death. The novel begins with the description of Dorothy’s letter to her father.
Chapman reads the letter at least for fifty times, but is unable to find in it a trace of love for him:

He sat up, in the double bed, holding the letter before him, looking at it fixedly as if it were really a code in need of breaking. It had come four days ago. He’d read it perhaps fifty times, so that he could remember the words without needing to see them... And there was not even, before that final signature, a farewell, a ‘take care’ a ‘with love’, your daughter. (9)

However, Dorothy does not visit Chapman; he is left alone to die, with his Angina Pectoris, and an old family photograph. Thus, the beginning of the novel itself exhibits a great betrayal on the part of Dorothy, which ultimately was due to the accumulation of despair and frustration.

It was June 1949 when Dorothy- the war baby -was born. This wayward daughter, when born, was ‘a little thing, wrapped like a gift in a shawl’ (10). As soon as Dory is born, Irene declares that she has kept her promise- her side of the bargain. With this declaration, Irene damages the whole scene of a birth ceremony and Chapman’s outstretched arms remain vacant throughout the rest of his life. Nobody knows about the bargain with authenticity, except some hints given by the novelist. Nevertheless, it was perhaps the greatest act of betrayal on Irene’s part to deny Chapman his right to love his wife and his slender and delicate daughter. Chapman had to face these scenes of embarrassment because he was seduced by the greatness of her ‘benevolent’ love. Irene, on the contrary, was seduced by the painful memory of her pre-marriage rape followed by her parents’ complete negligence for the fear of damaging their reputation and pseudo-elite standard.

Though Swift moves from the end to the beginning and vice-versa, the birth of Dorothy itself marks the beginning of seductions and betrayals. Swift observes chronological precision in the novel but the story does not move in a linear motion. Swift seems to be seduced by the idea of contextualizing the ordinary lives by the twentieth century’s major wars:
As we move forward, we come to know that the rest of the novel is an explanation of this particular day. Irene’s first person silent soliloquy throws light on her past life and in a way helps in making her free from the charges of betrayal. When she was just fourteen, her beautiful image in the mirror would tell her that, ‘you’re special. You must cherish your gift’ (49). It happened around 1927, when the society was busy in worshipping the ‘purity of women’, her purity was violated by Hancock.

It is true that Chapman never complained but he always felt sorry for his compromise, the bargain and the after effects of the bargain-trauma. Irene bought him a sweet shop and shut his doubting mouth forever. Though Chapman loves Irene profoundly, he is never allowed to express it. Because of Irene’s neutrality, both of them miss the love of Dorothy. Chapman’s life thereafter becomes only a dull performance of a devastated performer.

Irene’s father, Harrison also had to go through the same painful guilt for betraying his beautiful daughter. She denies posing for the family photograph, thus denying her identity and relationship with the root. Adrian Poole has a definite answer to this ‘mourning’ of the characters:

All these men mourn an idea of their own manhood as sons and husbands and fathers and want to be forgiven for failing it, or failing to find something better. (Poole 153)

Chapman mourns the precious element in his relationship with Irene and Dorothy and mourns his own complacent and compromising attitude. In a world of business transaction and commodity fascination, Chapman reaches to the running track and praises the eternal athlete in him. Knowing the hollowness of his boasting, he consoles Dory: ‘If the word love is never
spoken, does it mean there isn’t any love? If she never kissed me in front of you…” (116).

The family feud that was fought mutely by the father-mother-daughter trio is carried forward in the form of a love-hate relationship between an obedient son and a war-hero father in Swift’s second novel Shuttlecock (1981). It is concerned with a police archivist, Prentis, whose work uncovers conflicting information about his father’s mental illness (catatonia) and his involvement, as a British spy, in World War II. Winner of the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, Shuttlecock narrates the story of a journey of a confused son towards maturity and advocates a return to nature. The quietly desperate fatalism of The Sweet Shop Owner is followed by an equally bleak interrogation of the power dynamics at work in family life. The cultural changes can easily be discerned here. Lea rightly points out:

[Shuttlecock] explores the claustrophobic interdependencies of the familial drama and the problematic negotiations of trans-generational communication… The characters retain the emotional frigidity of Willy, Irene and Dorothy and are trapped by their hopeless isolation, incapable of reaching out and connecting with each other in any meaningful way. (Lea 41)

The ‘one’ day in the life of Chapman is extended to one year that begins with an ordinary Monday morning in April 1977. Prentis is the single, first person narrator and the protagonist of this well-crafted double story of the same title. Prentis is telling us a story of his own struggle in finding out the cause of his father’s (Sr. Prentis) mental breakdown and language coma. He reads and re-reads his father’s war memoir Shuttlecock: The story of a Secret Agent and what he comes across forms the very basis of the ensuing seduction and betrayal enactment in the novel.

The name Prentis means ‘apprentice’, which suggests the continuity of the ongoing activity of both Prentis the son and Prentis the father. Their first name is nowhere mentioned – may be to mark the blurred line of demarcation
between the two, their past, their dispositions and the way they react to the sudden onslaught of trauma. A man in his thirties, Prentis represents the modern youth of England, dreaming of the glorious past stained with bomb blasts, ruined settlements, handicapped soldiers and their war stories. The bleak atmosphere of the past decades and the socio-cultural and scientific revolution of the modern times are at clash, giving sudden outbursts of hysteria, wild sexual battles and the hippies’ rave parties.

What Prentis does as a confused son of a fake warrior afterwards proves to be cathartic to his mental suffocation as a person. He prefers living happily, deciding to gather enough strength and courage to resist countless seductions and betrayals. Prentis’ journey towards maturity is a never-ending process. It is flooded with so many seducing agents and visible seductions and betrayals – most of them taking place on mental level. As Prentis goes on observing and commenting upon his own life from outside as an acute observer of humanity, dilemmas are gradually resolved and he finds solace in the typical postmodern, indeterminate meaning of the outpourings of his boss in the office, Quinn and his father’s war memoir. Like Irene in The Sweet Shop Owner, Prentis is also a war baby born in 1945. The thought of his birth brings with it the memories of the World War II, his father’s imprisonment in the Chateau Martin, his heroic escape and his mother’s premature death.

Prentis is not a police officer but he has an eye for details and a searching mind of a researcher. He is an ordinary person, working in an ordinary office as a senior archivist and nourishing the ambition of being promoted, thereby replacing the adamant, surrogate father figure and Orwellian ‘big brother’ Mr. Quinn. His department is full of files and records that are memorials of century-old murders, arsons, thefts and frauds. Quinn looks after all the files, and nobody, except Prentis, is allowed to talk to him directly about the records, missing files, inconsistencies, and gaps in the investigations. Prentis introduces Quinn as a man with a broken leg and haughty nature. His
behavior is like a real army boss, which keeps him at a considerable distance from his sub-ordinate staff.

Prentis, Quinn and Prentis (sr.) are all seduced by the thoughts of keeping and sealing secrets. Prentis does not reveal to his family the news of his expected promotion, his visit to dad’s hospital, and Quinn’s house, his reasons for the multiple readings of his father’s war memoir, and even the news of erasing the written record of the charges against his father. Quinn, too, hides his own past, his army life, his broken leg and the guilt that he suffers from. Prentis (Sr.) seems comparatively more ‘normal’ than others when he covers his treason under the adopted language-coma. However, the fact is that only Quinn can, being powerful than the other two, punish them or prove them innocent.

Quinn is much more senior to Prentis, who has just completed eight years in this office. The past life of Prentis, before his marriage, before his joining this office or before his father’s breakdown was far happier than it is at present. He is seduced by the thought of deconstructing and reconstructing the image of his ‘broken’ and ‘silent’ father. He is so intensely running behind everything for he thinks it would tell him something about the secret of his father’s silence. He wants to break the seal of secrecy because not knowing things is tormenting him. Consolation comes to him when Quinn declares that sometimes ‘not knowing’ is satisfactory and peace giving: ‘Wouldn’t we sometimes be happier, not knowing them? (118).

The love and hate relationship with two patriarchal figures, Prentis (sr.) and Quinn seduce Prentis. He finds ‘impenetrable mysteries’ (Higdon 174) clustering around them. He takes the copy of his father’s book, signed by him in 1957 and tries to fill in the gaps – gaps of missing escapades and historical truths. In his search for the truth of his father’s silence, the history of the World War II itself becomes a text and proves its absolute influence on the socio-cultural events that followed.
In the process of glorifying the beauty of Marian, Prentis calls her a ‘text’, (exemplifying the everlasting memory of the World War) full of multiple meanings. He feels insecure every time, every moment- at home, in the office and in the hospital, too. In short, he is seduced by the element of fear and insecurity. He reveals that he is a thoroughly unpleasant man – especially as a husband and a father. This is actually due to his excessive worrying about his father and a deeply insecure feeling of living in his father’s shadow (Widdowson 15).

As a result, Prentis becomes a sacrificial victim of depression and frustration. However, his ambitious waiting for being promoted and replaced with Quinn can be compared with his promotion in the family as an able husband and a loving father. He not only wants to replace Quinn by removing his tyrant like figure from that upper stage cabin but also to establish himself as Marian’s powerful husband. He wishes to command love from his two sons and their mother. However, because of his rude behavior, he is gradually alienated from the family and feels alienated from nature, as well.

Prentis betrays his wife and his two sons by ignoring their demands of a more happy life. He despises the ‘Bionic Man’ and the television and treats Marian like a whore in his bed. His non-communication and constant dissatisfaction leads him to perform the sexual act with full vigor and control the whole situation making Marian simply a commodity. Her wish and her mood have no place in his sexual battles- always to be conquered by him. In this way, he tries to achieve the state of respect and reputation of Quinn and his father. His abusive behavior towards his family can be explained as a ‘pathetic attempt to compensate for his powerlessness in the office and his nagging sense of unworthiness and weakness vis-à-vis his father’s apparent heroism and strength’ (Craps, Research-Flanders).

Prentis’ dominant nature is revealed in the beginning of the novel when he mercilessly tortures the hamster. The hierarchy begins to emerge and Prentis
expects everybody to behave, as he wants them to behave. At the end of each
day when he goes home, he assumes the role of boss and becomes just as
arbitrary and cruel in his treatment to Marian as any boss would do. Quinn
demands the respect of his workers and Prentis demands the respect of his
children, Martin and Peter. He wants to remove the TV set and the Bionic Man
from the hall. It signifies the urgency of respect and the establishment of
power:

I know they don’t look up to me. That is the nub of the
matter. My sons don’t look up to their father. They look
up to the Bionic Man. The Bionic Man performs
impossible feats, solves impossible riddles and bears no
relation to anything natural. But they look up to him,
not their father. (10)

After this Prentis turns to his wife Marian who, he says, is sexually
passive, does never make a show of her emotions, and simply reduces the
intensity of his involvement. Though he feels betrayed by his family members
and circumstances around, he feels sorry for he has no testing ground on which
his bravery can be tested. Since he cannot recreate his father’s life as a spy, he
seeks adventures in sex. He considers his sexual relationship with Marian as an
adventure:

Sexual adventure is the only form of adventure left to
us in our age. It compensates for all the excitement
and initiative we’ve lost in other ways. The only true
revolution now is sexual relations, and that is why
everything is becoming increasingly, visibly oriented
to sex. (74)

In his quest for fulfillment of the elusive thing, he subjects his wife to
trouble-some bedroom gymnastics, certain toys from sex shops and tries to
conceive enlightenment as a redemptive return to the state of nature:
“Systematically and cold bloodedly, like a torturer bent on breaking his victim, I am turning my wife into a whore” (75).

His father’s breakdown hides his attributes and professional skills as a consultant engineer, who, even after his wife’s death, worked energetically until he came across an unavoidable threat to his reputation. When the narrator reads repeatedly the same paragraphs of war descriptions from his father’s war memoir, he tries to fill the gaps of history left out by his father. In France, he had fought against the Germans and though he was captured, he had escaped bravely like a hero with the help of the American seventh Army.

Prentis’ father was working with the French Resistance when he was held captive in the dungeons of Chateau Martine, the Gestapo headquarters near the village of Combe-les-Dames. He seemed to be hiding the mysterious truth – the truth of his betraying several resistance units and ensuring the exposure of the three fellow British agents. It is the main cause of Prentis’ concern for considering the act of writing a memoir as an act of betraying the self, the family, the country and humanity in general.

One may even consider Prentis’ re-reading of the war memoir as an act of betrayal – betraying a war hero father. What really might have happened at Combe-les-Dame finally remains a secret when Prentis and Quinn burn those secret files at Quinn’s house. It gives an indescribable pleasure to Prentis – ‘then suddenly I knew I wanted to be uncertain, I wanted to be in the dark’ (199). On his way home, Prentis feels as though he has emerged out of some confinement.

At the end of the novel, just before his retirement, Quinn is seduced by the thought of putting his mind at rest by removing the files that contained the needless painful knowledge and by betraying the U.K. government. Finally, Prentis decides to give up erasing the file E and finding solutions to the unanswerable questions in his mind. He chooses ‘to give up the oedipal showdown and live in uncertainty, neither to slay his father nor to be slain by
him’ (Poole 155). After the funeral rites of the file E, Prentis finds himself freed from the thought of his father’s deeds. Happily afterwards, without thinking much about the TV set, the Bionic Man, the copulation of the sparrows and Chateau Martine, he comes back to his wife as a thoroughly changed and transformed young boss of the sub-department of ‘dead crimes’.

Swift then moves from office premises to the story of fenland of England as told in Waterland (1983). Like Dickens’ Great Expectations, it is a ‘bildungsroman’ about a young boy named Tom Crick from the fens of East Anglia. With the publication of this novel, Swift achieved prominence and a much needed lifetime recognition. It is an extraordinary and sophisticated work of fiction that explores family and local history amid the fens in the flat marshlands of East Anglia (Smith, Interview). The evocative setting of the East Anglian fens inspired Swift to write this fabulous book –‘at once a history of England, a Fenland documentary and a fictional autobiography’ (O’ Mahony, Guardian, 2003).

Although Swift believes that the imagination can take a writer to places he has never been to, location is of primary importance in this work. The novel opens with stars and sluice and meditates upon the end of the history – history as a factual record of real events and history as a bruise upon a bruise, De La revolution, coronation ale, the eels, maddening wars and ‘savage’ abortions: Waterland may be seen, as Swift’s historical book [for it] constitutes the subject of history through an opening up of what can be considered historical. (Bedgood 207)

History contextualized in some way or the other implies mutations and transformations, which impinge upon not only the social behavior of the individuals but govern their psychic tendencies also. Consequently, their attitudes toward morality and culturally honoured moral code of conduct are noticeably altered. As a fictional chronologist, Swift seems to be preoccupied with the thought of creating something unusual, grand and sublime and is continually betraying ‘history’ in the struggle to define it. Contrary to its
historical identity, the novel functions as a self-centered piece of detective work, which while validating the worth of history digs into numerous secretcies, seductions and betrayals. The novel has a negative tone, and the pessimistic philosophy of Tom Crick’s self-erosion brings to the surface the post-modern element of self-reflexivity and develops the novel into a kind of grand narrative.

The novel after its publication was almost instantly and enthusiastically canonized as a major example of what Linda Hutcheon called ‘histriographic metafication’ (Banyei 40). Interpretations like these read the novel as ‘a postmodern text that dutifully interrogates and subverts many of the traditional conceptual patterns and dichotomies we take for granted…self reflexively and self consciously exposing the ideological, narrative and rhetorical assumptions’ (Banyei 40). The novel can also be read as ‘…a sedimental family history, official and unofficial classroom narrative, a series of wartime experiences and memories, a confessional passage, and an expression of the current exigencies of Thatcherism’ (Tew 143), and it is in this context that this text appears to be closer to the central thrust of the present thesis.

It is a complex tale set in eastern low lying submerged area, a mixture of silt and phlegm called as fens, fenland or waterland. The title is a coinage of two opposite words-water and land. When water and land come together, it automatically brings together the mammals and fish giving birth to a new species of amphibians. All the descriptions are imaginative constructions of Tom Crick, a history teacher for last thirty-two years. Despite upheavals in Henry’s life such as losing wife at an early age and lack of any strong moral support, he tried his level best to bring up his elder son Dick and the younger Tom. When the story telling of Tom begins, we come to know that he is facing a betrayal. He is about to be laid off from his school job and his wife Mary has been admitted to a mental hospital.
A group of rebellious students headed by Price forms one ‘holocaust club’ indicating the need to practically remain in present and to think of the damage to be caused by future nuclear war. Tom loves the curious nature of his pupils but sometimes feels like losing confidence in the history curriculum and tells the whole class interesting and wonderful stories of fens which suggest ‘the fluidity of the interaction between past and present’ (Beacham, Encyc.Brit.).

In order to understand the history or the story of Tom’s life full of seductions and betrayals, we will have to go back to the year 1820, where we meet Cricks and Atkinsons. Cricks and Atkinsons are involved in draining-managing and farming the reclaimed fen land. Cricks worked like amphibians, on both land and water whereas Atkinsons were involved in the production of ale in breweries. Tom’s ancestor Jacob Crick ran a windmill and his father, a World War I veteran was a lock keeper.

Atkinsons are intelligent people who earn a noticeable profit in ale manufacturing. Ernest, their legal hair, planned to burn the brewery and claimed fire insurance. Unfortunately, a father in him turned to be a lover and established incestuous relationship with his daughter, Helen. While working as a nurse, she falls in love with Henry Crick, the wounded soldier returned from the First World War. Though Helen marries Henry and gives birth to Dick and Tom, the paternity of Dick remains uncertain until the end.Dick never recovers from this betrayal trauma and ends his life in dejection.

Metcalfe family enters into the Crick-Atkinson circle in the form of Mary Metcalfe. Mary loves romance and is curious to know every mysterious secret of human anatomy and the reproductive organs. Around 1943, Freddie enters in the circle of Dick, Tom and Mary and is mercilessly murdered. Dick attempts suicide when he comes to know about his ‘incestuous’ birth. Ernest commits suicide and ends his shameful life. Mary’s savagely carried out
‘abortion’ makes her sterile throughout. Tom becomes a history teacher, marries Mary and settles in a London suburb and plans to start a new life.

**Waterland** is a story of a search made by Tom who is seduced to find out perfect answers to his questions. Unfortunately, what he gets at the end is nothing but blame and a sense of guilt. He confesses and the novel ends with his job sacked, the stolen baby returned back safely and Mary settled in the mental hospital. These developments are the evident consequences of various seductions and betrayals

The two epigraphs decide the future route of the novel. The first epigraph defines ‘historia’ as an inquiry and learning, and the second epigraph, which glorifies Charles’ Dickens’ setting-‘Ours was marsh country’- suggests that the further stories in Waterland are to be considered as the history of the fens. Swift skillfully uses the epigraphs and vindicates his narrative strategy of moving in a backward direction:

> Crick is absorbed in the past: retrospection, the art of looking backwards and reviewing past events’ has become a fixation for the history teacher. (Bedggood 207)

As the epigraph suggests, Tom’s telling of stories is actually his history telling. His obsession for story telling becomes intense and unstoppable when his private life faces unavoidable critical problems. In this way, his job as a history teacher comes to his rescue: he gets a chance to talk to his pupils, and finds a group of listeners who shows some interest in his personal stories intermixed with historical references.

When Henry was fighting against the Germans, Ernest Atkinson was busy enjoying sex with his own daughter Helen. He was seduced and the reason for this seduction might have been the extinction of his industrial empire, his wife’s early death and the sense of loneliness and defeat. Later on, Helen recovers and finds a suitable groom in Henry. When she enters Crick’s cottage, she is already transformed in the form of her pregnancy. She carries
with her a baby in her womb, and a chest containing bottles of beer as an ancestral gift and her father’s secret message to her ‘to be born’ son. As Tom clarifies later on, the half witted, potato head Dick was the last wish of Helen’s father who was unfortunately Dick’s father, too. A produce of inbreeding and moral guilt is born in the form of a wild, illiterate creature having extra ordinarily large genitals. The culturally unacceptable incest finds its reflection in the deformed body of Dick. He acquires a name that is a symbol of something loathsome and heinous—that is synonymous with an Englishman’s sexual organ. Thus, Ernest not only betrays his own wife, daughter, and son-in-law but also his son (grandson!) Dick. Because of this damaging relationship, the Atkinson Empire collapses to dust. The family palace Kessling Hall, once upon a time a famous business centre, is later on transformed into a social support system i.e. East Cambridgshire Hospital.

The most powerful element that seduces Tom and his emotional and biological needs is the innocence and beauty of Mary Metcalfe. Though Mary is an ordinary looking wife at present, she was a beautiful girlfriend of Dick, Freddie and Tom during the Second World War. Neglecting the constant threat of bombing and destruction, she engaged herself in answering the curious questions of those children, at times revealing her secret lower triangle and most of the times watching their secret organs. While doing so, Tom seduces her attention as a loyal caretaker, Dick as a strongly built barbarian and Freddie as a confused observer.

Tom is also drastically seduced by Mary, her beauty and her hole, ‘for Mary’s hole had folds and protuberances, for it revealed the power of changing its configuration and texture at Tom’s touch, of suggesting a moist labyrinth of inwardly twisting, secret passages’ (150). Once the exploration of her secret passage is complete, she tries to seduce him by speaking about the most sensitive parts that arouse both males and females – hymen and monthly bleedings. Their frequent but secret meetings historically belonged to
prehistoric times when both the seducer and seduced drifted instinctively to their meeting places. Both of them planned their meetings in the absence of Dick and Freddie – ‘how had it arisen that in the space of a year our encounters were now a matter of appointment and calculation?’ (52)

The juvenile exhibition of secret organs initiates the rivalry among the boys. One day Dick kills Freddie but his betrayal remains unrevealed until the end of the novel. Dick, whose paternity is uncertain, once again like Ernest, wants to love and produce a child of his own. However, the beast like size of his penis stops him. When suddenly Mary finds herself pregnant due to those adolescent sexual experiments, nobody knows for sure who the real father is! Forgetting about the social and moral obligations, slowly as the pregnancy advances, Tom and Mary visit Martha, an expert in carrying out abortions secretly. It was a period when they hardly knew anything about the sex pills or other means of contraception. They were unmarried and the cultural inhibitions did not allow them to have a baby before their marriage. While throwing away the unborn foetus into the river, Tom feels betraying humanity, God and even the unborn child.

The case, kept safely in the gatekeeper’s cottage containing beer bottles and certain letters, gives a constant call to Dick. Dick cannot read or write. When Tom tries to teach him, Henry warns him not to make him literate. In short, it is Tom’s act of betrayal in putting the bottle in Dick’s room, revealing his birth secrets and neglecting him as a brother. Dominick Head compares Dick with the eel and considers his suicide as an atonement of a kind:

He is the product of an incestuous relationship between his mother and his unbalanced grandfather, who hailed Dick as ‘Saviour of the World’... He is the product of multitude of sins by blood or association, industrial exploitation, imperialism, sexual jealousy, incest, murder and a lost political vision. (Head 206)

Dick’s death, though resulting from Tom’s interference, is actually the result of a disastrous process of banishing the natural. Though apparently
innocent, Tom still feels guilty for this and repents later on through his historical deliberations. Dick and his self-betraying suicide exemplify the impossibility of salvation. Margret Champion considers the pitiful charisma of Dick as an example of divided consciousness and the most powerful archaic image in the novel:

[Dick] is the novel’s most powerful archaic image, one of those figures that operate like opaque metaphors in poetry, striking phrases that carry a different kind of meaning, mysterious, irrational outside the common bounds of knowledge. (Champion 9)

Bryan Aubrey describes Dick’s death as an action taken to prove his worth and to prove the prophecy made by Ernest. In that moment, ‘Dick attains a kind of apotheosis that eludes every other character in the novel. Perhaps for the moment he is the saviour of the world’ (Aubrey 3). Tom betrays everybody by keeping silence on his married life. The ‘war returned’ prince who marries the ‘aborted’ angel Mary, takes her to his London house, allows her to work in an office but reveals nothing about her happiness. Mary, on the contrary, claims to have enjoyed God’s company betrays Tom by stealing a baby. The news appears as the headline in the newspaper and destroys the neatly constructed image of the sophisticated history teacher.

This betrayal of Mary is more dangerous than Freddie’s murder, Dick’s suicide, and Sarah’s wronged martyrdom. Mary’s urgent need of proving her fertile motherhood, which she had earlier destroyed at the hands of Martha, seduced her to keep secrets of guilt and have illusory dialogues with God. If Scott Lewis represents the unromantic and over-rational modern man, representing Thatcherite withdrawals, Price represents the collective fear of a future nuclear war. Price and his ‘Holocaust club’ is not seduced by ‘here and now’ but the future threat, thereby betraying the history – as an artifact, and as the factual record of imaginative journeys.

Waterland, which presents history as the ‘Grand Narrative’, filler of vacuums and the dispeller of fears of the dark, betrays everybody by revealing
their stories and their secrets. The stories deal with the secrets of transmissions and transformations. The two world wars have brought about a great change in the mindset of the British people. War denotes the destruction of the innocence causing the eel of the River Leem transform into the unborn fetus of Mary, halfway aborted and thrown into the river by Tom himself. Breweries are no more in the Fens now but the ale is still intoxicating thousands of people all over the world. Every moment of the present is looking back at its source in the past and is struggling to reclaim the past in the same way as Fenlanders worked to reclaim the land.

Swift attempts to depict a war in the family and a family during the wars, through neatly constructed, alternating and self-justifying monologues in his next metaphysical family saga, Out of this World (1988). It is different from Waterland in its thematic concerns and stylistic pattern. David Profumo in Sunday Times terms it as ‘Swift’s most ambitious and outward looking novel … [attempting to reconstruct] the history of the century’s warfare and [the painful struggle of] individuals to escape the legacy of their past.’ Hilary Mantel in London Magazine describes this novel as, ‘an uncompromising and intense novel, addressing itself to the issue of our time seriously but not bitterly.’ Philip Hower, in The Times considers it as ‘the gradual rediscovery of the terrible past’ whereas David Hughes, in Mail on Sunday considers it as compulsively re-readable, for its clear and deep focus on the western angst and the problem of alienation.

The epigraph -what the eye sees not, the heart rue not- clearly comments upon the conflicts arising due to misunderstandings and non-recognitions. April 1982 is the point of time, when the characters speak simultaneously about their lives – revealing a bit and hiding a lot. Comparatively smaller in size and less attractive in form and content than Waterland, the novel narrates multiple viewpoints of dislocation and displacement, wars and scars, traumas, and the transgenerational fissures,
confessions, reconciliations and emotional disappointments. As Anne Duchene has pointed out, the novel functions as an effort of storytelling of a more confessional kind, between ‘the pain of remembering and the pain of forgetting’ (TLS, 1988). Carr takes this novel from estranged personal relationships to universal dislocation and discord of human beings:

It is about violent international eruption, the violence of personal relationship and lost love. And it advances uneasily in alternating, self justifying monologues – Sixteen by a father, fifteen from his daughter.

(Sebastian, Spectator)

In the narrative present, the chief protagonist Harry Beech, now almost a retired ex-photographer, has a daughter named Sophie -a mother of twins and a travel agents’ wife. Harry’s cottage ‘Little Stover’ is in England, where he meditates upon his father Robert’s heroism, Anna’s Greece, Jenny’s beauty, Sophie’s Brooklyn and the blissful life at Hayfield. According to Parrinder, like Swift’s earlier novels, this one is a family history in which behind the ostensible story lurks a further story, one that haunts the narrative and yet is never entirely dragged to the surface. It once again pursues the theme of hatred between father and daughter and returns obsessively to wartime experiences as a source of bitter and insoluble memories.

Linda Sexton praises Swift for demonstrating both his talent and courage while representing silently and simultaneously the lives of individuals who, transcending the burden of the past, reconnect with others and resurrect their own lost selves. For the outstanding quality of Swift and his lyricism, which visualize Greece as paradise and England as the land of dreams, Sexton praises and elevates him to the level of John Cheever, William Styron, John Updike and Anne Tyler (New York Review). Sexton also praises Swift’s employing of two alternating points of view, Harry and Sophie and Para narratives of Joe and Anna. Though confined to separate chapters, these distinctive voices quickly merge, like the colors and shapes in a Kaleidoscope.

Set against a backdrop of armed conflict, from World War I to the Falklands, Out of this World is nevertheless about seduction and betrayal – the aftermath
of personal struggles and epiphanies, the ravages of love gone awry, the white silence of estrangement and the risk involved in daring to care for someone in a dangerous world. It travels through the cultural past of Europe to the postmodern England of 1982, through Robert’s sincere efforts to save a colleague, the ejaculatory phrases of Sophie, and through storytelling as confession to storytelling through camera tricks and photographic skills. This narrative of numerous seductions and betrayals depicts yet another transformed but dysfunctional family, whose involvements emphasize war as a commodity (arms sales and war journalism) and leave a legacy of fatality and emotional scares (Bedgood 209).

Harry and his estranged daughter, Sophie, narrate the major internal and external disturbances to the story. One chapter each has been devoted to Harry’s first ‘dead’ wife Anna and Sophie’s innocent husband Joe. The carefully arranged interplay of the narrator’s lives and the chapter-by-chapter changing narration lends the book a strange conversational feeling. It shows the father and the daughter seduced by the idea of locking in mental communication across the Atlantic. Harry Beech, in the narrative present of the novel, has been working as a peacetime aerial photographer of prehistoric monuments. His daughter Sophie, a mother of Tim and Paul and wife to Joe, lives in Brooklyn.

In order to understand the present discord between Harry and Sophie, Swift trusts in chronology and adds the touch of authenticity to the historical background of the characters. Harry’s father, Robert Beech, the one arm man who has worked as the manufacturer of arms owned a famous ‘Beech Munitions Company’. Prior to this vocation, Robert had fought as a Sand Hurst Cadet in the First World War. Robert’s marriage with Harry’s mother in 1917 was a matter of a great pleasure for him. Unfortunately, when he was engaged in the world war, the news of her extra-marital affair reaches to Robert. Harry is born in 1918 and his mother dies in childbirth. Just three days after this
mishap, Robert is wounded in the war – his one arm is totally blown off by the explosion of a grenade. Harry narrates this incident with an artist’s precision:

One morning in March … 1918 … near the town of Albert … My father ran to the grenade, picked it up, turned to throw it clear, and as he did so, it exploded and blew off his arm. (195)

God knows whether it was an act of sheer bravery or a suicidal attempt due to his wife’s unfaithful behavior. However, for this courageous act, Robert is awarded Victoria Cross and like Prentis in Shuttlecock, he becomes a hero. Once back from the Warfield, Robert buys Hyfield, the famous family house. He then devotes his full time to Harry’s upbringing and simultaneously to the growth of his armament manufacturing business. Having nine pairs of artificial arms, Robert lives like a common person and after Harry’s betrayal (his denial to join BMC), allows Frank Irving, his surrogate son to join him in the business.

Around 1944, Harry joins RAF as an aerial war photographer and covers the destruction of German cities. In 1946, he is sent to Nuremberg to cover the end of the Nazi War trials. There he meets a Greek girl, Anna and marries her. The coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, which was viewed on television by Joe, was unlucky for Anna. Her trip to Greece to see uncle Spiro ends her life. She dies in an air crash along with a baby in her womb. It was Frank’s gift, a betrayal, that Robert knew about and Harry knows later on. Vietnam mission once again seduces Harry and he sets out on a new voyage.

Three years after Apollo Mission’s Moon landing, IRA terrorists murder Robert. Harry at this moment, instead of helping Robert, is busy in taking photos, which ultimately infuriates Sophie with rage. She at once leaves her home, settles in Brooklyn with Joe, and tries in vein to forget Harry’s betrayal. Harry feels alienated, gives up war photography and becomes a peacetime aerial photographer. One day, while taking pictures of prehistoric monuments discernible beneath the Wiltshire landscape, he is unexpectedly seduced by the beauty of Jennie and plans to marry her. Sophie, who now seems to be mentally
recovered, decides to rejoin her father. The meeting indicates both of them joyful and transformed: Both Harry and Sophie are on flights – he is in a Cessna and she is with Joe – both of them leaving behind the myth of mud and traveling towards the element of air – a journey in future.

Though the storyline seems to be moving in a linear way, the life story of the Beeches is full of ebbs and tides – of seductions and betrayals. The novel opens with the greatest achievement of humanity i.e. Apollo landing on the moon. The father, Robert and his photographer son, Harry, watch this unique and memorable feat with great surprise and awe. They sit up together all night watching those first moon-men utter with pride. Robert feels proud to be alive on this very day: ‘I have lived to see men land on the moon’ (11). This historically established truth functions as a pleasant antidote for both of them and nullifies the burden of the disastrous trauma caused by the two world wars.

All the four major characters, expressing themselves through narratives and para-narratives want to tell a story to a listener or a group of listeners. The whole world that lived through the twentieth century, along with Sophie listens to Harry’s confessions, mourning, traumas, failed aspirations, fissures and fractures in the family and in a way gives an opportunity to heal his wounds – wounds caused by clicking of the cameras. Sophie is seduced by the idea of confession and pays eighty dollars an hour to her psychoanalyst Dr. Klein, only to be an attentive listener, if not an advisor.

Sophie’s husband Joe confesses his inability to give up the adopted innocence. He chooses Mario, the bartender as a listener. Finally, the only representative of Greek cultural heritage, Anna, who walks ‘forever wounded,’ gives vent to her so far unheard sad songs from behind the grave. She narrates the lyrics of Grecian paradise – her happy family, her affair with Frank, and her short final trip to the hospital to abort everything that was to cause a rift between the two families or more precisely, two surrogate brothers. Anna is seduced by the presence of Frank in contrast with Harry’s absence and so, her
betrayal becomes justifiable. Joe turns to a dumb doll instead of finding any concrete solution to Sophie’s seduction by Dr. K. and her constant search for father replacement. Above all, Harry the photographer and his camera as the seducing agent plays decisive role in the novel.

Perfectly judging Robert’s age and his escapades, Harry starts narrating the moon-mission – the age of air in a perfect way from his aerial vantage point. Harry is able to see his own life and the lives of others, and the entire past of his country with greater clarity. While glorifying the achievement of NASA’s robot-men, Armstrong and Aldrin, Harry constantly reminds himself of the repellent moon land, the astronaughts jumping with joy and the rehearsed message read out by them. It does not remain only a matter of patriotic pride, but a permanent photograph imprinted on his mind. That unforgettable moment, as telecast on TV, becomes a fine piece of photography for Harry.

Harry’s nostalgic narrative throws light on the way he was seduced by the sense of individual identity resulting into the denial to join his ancestral business of manufacturing arms. The courage and finality with which Harry rejects his dad’s offer and betrays him shows his love for photography. Caught between photography and his duty as a son, he does not even understand who is betraying whom. His father disowns him. His conventional attitude of fatherhood betrays Harry. He cannot understand the emotional requirement of Harry whom he himself had encouraged to handle the camera, to fly in the air and to catch the past moments with a click.

Robert proves to be the best supporter and father figure for Anna: ‘I would suddenly become the prodigal son, while to Anna; he would be the model father-in-law’ (141). Robert, in fact, without consenting to Harry’s interests and profession, wanted him very much with him. For that purpose, he even becomes a mute supporter of the extra-marital affair between Anna and Frank. He wanted Harry to feel ‘a touch of persuasive jealousy’ (72) so he
betrays and keeps quiet. The same camera, later on does not remain an emblem of guilt. It transforms Harry’s life and his outlook. In fact, making arms and photographing the destruction caused by these arms was not very different from each other. Both father and the son unknowingly supported the war makers, as if they were seduced by the element of violence that wanted the wars to go on endlessly.

Born in March 1918, during the last days of the First World War, Harry claims to be a war child like Irene in The Sweet Shop Owner, Prentis in Shuttlecock, and Dick and Price in Waterland. His loveless childhood and adolescence and ultimately the love that he was deprived of revolts and as a reaction responds in a negative way. Like Prentice in Shuttlecock, Harry doubts his father’s heroism and his Victoria Cross. Swift leaves Harry’s doubts unanswered but gives a passing hint of Robert’s suicidal thoughts and swapping his real arm for the medal. Harry even feels sorry for such a cross-examination of a father by his son, but inevitably goes to the extent of calling his father’s heroism as fake and planned. Sophie’s reaction to the medal is beyond any doubt. Both Harry and Robert are kind of defective father figures (Duchene, TLS) who haunt almost all the novels of Graham Swift. These defects, though not easily visible are conspicuous results of their seductions and betrayals.

Harry’s love for photography and camera is only second to his breathing. His two books, Aftermaths and Photos of Decade, hint at his photography and its after results. Harry’s seduction by the process of portraying moments on a paper, in a virtually real form is so powerful that he starts looking at the world through the lens only. This one time war photographer and presently the amateur archaeologist is so fascinated by photography that he speaks through pictures and prefers shooting to talking; Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh and Saigon become alive once again and stand undamaged, thanks to his camera.
This transit region is the only place which Harry truly belongs to. It is, in fact, a hobby or a lifetime achievement as felt by Harry:

What is a photograph? It’s an object. It’s something defined, with an edge. You can pick it up, look at it … put it here or there, in an album, on a mantelpiece, in a newspaper, in a book. A long time after the event it is still there, and when you look at it you shut out everything else. It becomes an icon, a totem, a curio. A photo is a piece of reality. (120)

Harry, throughout his narration tries to justify his photography by immortalizing Bill Cochrane, who was killed with his camera in his hand, and urge the readers to leave him unpunished -‘don’t shoot me, don’t blame me. I’m only here for the photograph’ (121). In the ecstatic mood of copying the people he illustrates the first rule of photography, ‘… that you must catch things unawares’ (13). The camera, as an instrument of transformation, represents an ontological nexus between the subjective and objective realms. The click of the camera denotes the threshold between the intangible and the immutable, the past and the present and the said and the unsaid (Lea 108-9).

It was only because of Harry’s love for filming the scenes, he betrayed his dying father. Instead of sprinting downstairs to help Robert when one IRA bomb exploded and killed him just outside his front door, Harry’s first instinct was to grab the camera and move to the window to shoot the scene. This act of Harry snatches away Sophie from him. She feels betrayed and leaves for Brooklyn. Totally disrupted by the death of her grandfather, Sophie finds solace in confessing her mental agonies to Dr. Klein. It was one more addition to the victims who feel betrayed by Harry’s photography. Earlier, Anna’s pregnancy and death, Robert’s helplessness and disintegration of the family were the disastrous effects of Harry’s extraordinary photographic seduction.

Sophie’s fascination with the U.S.A. later on turns to be a hallucination and the one time land of escape and cancelled memories become a land of violence. She marries Joe but cannot give fully whatever emotional support he expects. His confession to Mario, the bartender and Sophie’s to Dr. K. cure
both of them through confessional catharsis. She is so scared by the physical and mental wars, that she does not allow even toy-guns in her house. Her husband Joe, a simpleton, is another victim seduced by the setting. The beauty of England seduces him as U.S.A. seduced Sophie. She leaves him and his loyalty like Anna’s is wasted. Anna, one of the world’s ‘walking wounded’ and who was ‘born in drama and brought up in Paradise’ (173) is the victim of war. If the First World War made Robert armless, the Second World War displaced Anna permanently from Greece to England.

Finally, Harry and Sophie’s alternating narratives which narrate the estranged relationship between the family members succeed in blaming the media for interrupting the private life of a common man, his fears, dreams, secrets, traumas, guilt and publishing (along with photos) the details in a distorted form. The novel ends with a note of reconciliation and the rehabilitation of the Beech family.

The general theme of Swift’s preceding novel is continued in Ever After (1992). It focuses on the human condition, on the past influencing the present and on an interaction between generations. In an interview with Amanda Smith, Swift describes Ever After as a novel about love and death: it is not a morbid book. Though there is a lot of death, it ends with uplift’ (Smith, Pub. Weekly). Ever After, if studied in isolation, it successfully creates its own image as a deeply moving novel which brings belief, non-belief and make-belief together. It moves in the land of love, enjoys sexual bouts, muses on anteriority, laments the early and uncertain deaths, and depicts the unfortunate civilized people of both nineteenth and twentieth century. Though the novel begins with the words of a nearly dead man, it is not essentially a pessimistic story of two different generations. On the contrary, the novel concludes as a reality show of human life depicting ‘birth-life-death’ routine.

It hints at the meaninglessness of the overambitious human mind, lost in struggles, stresses and frustrations. In a way, the author suggests to adopt ‘seize
the day’ lifestyle like that of the rector George Hunt and the glamour-loving historian Michael Potter. Daniel Bedgood considers this novel as an effort on Swift’s part to maintain and extend his fascination with troubled family histories. According to him, the novel narrates the reflections and research of two centuries of a family past by a troubled academic, Bill Unwin, ‘emotionally bereft and concerned with questions of mortality’ (209). Bill, being a university don, adds more to these reflections by way of researching into the Victorian lifestyle, the problems of faith and the scientific inquiry into the art of architecture, geology and the evolution of man.

The title Ever After alludes to a conventional ending for telling stories – they lived happily ever after- and hints ironically at perpetual happiness. It is important to note that it is Swift who is telling a story of generations lived through two centuries, and it is Bill, who is seduced to satisfy his urge for expression, through writing. It is this urge for writing, which seduces him to devote his time and the ‘newly changed- post-suicide’ life to find out the reasons for Matthew’s rational revolt against the set notions of God, Church and the creation of man. Matthew is seduced by an urge for exploration of new land and Bill is seduced by an irresistible urge for analyzing the Victorian mind and finding out the reasons for subsequent betrayals.

Widdowson describes it as a dense and over-complex book-dense for the dark, nocturnal themes and over complex for its Latin tags and the repeated intertextual invocations of Shakespeare’s Hamlet; it attempts to work all his principal concerns simultaneously in one novel (61). The Economist (US) describes this novel as ‘a series of impotent ruminations’ over the past century, clash of faith and the life story of Bill’s ancestors. These important ruminations pour fourth form the first person narrator Bill who is portrayed as a sad, a mediocre, an enfeebled creature and a middle-aged academic in the English department of an ancient university (unmistakably Cambridge where Swift himself studied). Contrary to the dryness of Out of this World, Lorna Sage
finds *Ever After* structured as a palimpsest – the present’s nightmare of bereavement intercut with Pearce’s atheism and ostracism:

-In Ever After we are back on Waterland territory. Not the fens, but a wet (tear-stained) world of stories that flow into each other like meandering tributaries joining their river … It’s a form of family saga, meditating on relations and filiations, past mysteries of birth, and a future without posterity. (TLS 6)-

In the process of the realization of the sense of individual value, both Bill and Pearce revolt but end in abortive struggle of fulfillment. Kirsty Milne in *New Statesman* considers *Ever After* as ‘an ingenious tale, within a tale’ in which Swift’s miserable male narrators feel far more at home in the past than in an uncomfortable present. Harris offers praise to *Ever After* for Swift’s gift of mixing the two stories into one single whole, which looks back towards its anteriority for gaining meaning to the written document (*My Times*, 21). Harris finds in *Ever After* many curious parallels to John Fowles’ novel *The French Lieutenant’s women* – the lower middle-class background and references to the Ichthyosaurs in particular. Pico Iyer appreciates Swift’s inventiveness common to the younger British novelists like Martin Amis, Julian Barnes and Ian McEwan. Due to the properly applied sense of inquiry and mystery, this dense literary text that races ahead with the compulsive fury of a page turner proves to be ‘a supremely intelligent novel about the need to transcend intelligence’ (*Time* 8).

For Daniel Lea, if it is a love story it is about the failure of love and the consequences of acknowledging the fragility of our faith in it. He comments upon the unfortunate scenes of self-slaughter and calls it as a restatement of the narrator’s inadequacy and his romantic illusion (144). This novel seems to have borrowed many ideas from different texts like George Eliot’s *Felix Holt* (1866), John Fowles *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969) and A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* (1990).

The monologist Bill Unwin, brought up by his American stepfather, is seduced by his miserable life: ‘I am who I am. I am Bill Unwin (there, I declare
myself!) I am Hamlet the Dane’ (160). Bill is interested in writing the history of Matthew Pearce’s life. The narrative present is 1982 and Bill goes back to 1817 when one of his ancestors John the Clockmaker marries Susan. The acute observation of Swift is conveyed through Bill’s imagination with a thrilling exactness of description in a lyrical, witty and confessional style. It covers around one hundred and fifty years of love and death, conflict and embarrassment, adaptability and religious faith and most of all, the journey of a family clock from John to Bill Unwin.

In a sense, the novel is a comment on the civilization-‘the illusion of the illusion’- (9) looked at through Bill’s real English gentleman approach and occasionally, through the bitter sense of retaliation. It is a homogeneous mixture of seductions and betrayals. The novel is clearly, what Bill wanted to tell us about – ‘we see what we chose to see, we see what we think we see’ (13). He tells us about the world of ‘goddam generals’ and ‘sad screwed up type guys’ and justifies the ‘Man-the-Impregnator-Protector-Provider’ formula (Gilmore, Critique).

Bill Unwin is a fifty plus professor of English literature in an unknown university (most probably Cambridge). He announces himself a dead man. In fact, he had attempted suicide by overeating sleeping pills just before three weeks. He however survived and regained confidence and vigor. His mother Sylvia, born in 1911, was a good singer but later on gave up singing. She was married to Colonel Unwin, a World War I veteran in 1935. Col. Unwin, a thorough gentleman, was working as a British Spy in Paris. Suddenly when wife Sylvia’s affair with Sam Ellison is revealed, he commits suicide in 1946.

Bill gets another rich father in the form of Sam who owns a plastic business. Sam had always thought of Bill’s welfare but for Bill, Sam was always the ‘Claudius’ of Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Bill marries Ruth Vaughan in 1959 and the couple remains childless throughout their life. The secret told by Sam to Bill, about his real father shatters his dreamy world of happiness. He
feels rootless when he tries to replace Col. Unwin with the real railway driver father. His life transforms into a mission when he gets from his mother a manuscript written by one Matthew Pearce, as a rational thinker of the Mid-Victorian period.

Born in 1819, Matthew Pearce worked as a surveyor, married Elizabeth and stayed with George Hunt, the country churchman and his father-in-law. When Matthew’s son Felix dies, he starts questioning the very existence of God as the Creator. He starts preaching the philosophy of Brunel, Lyell and Darwin and unexpectedly goes on a voyage in search of the new land. Matthew perishes in the sea in 1869, leaving behind a diary written during 1854-60. The same diary becomes a family property and finally reaches to Bill.

After the tragic deaths of Col. Unwin, Sylvia, and Ruth, Bill plans to devote his life to editing and publishing Matthew’s notes. At this point of the beginning of his serious research, one Mr. Potter intervenes and asks for the same notes for his own research work. Finally, Bill joins the pieces of two centuries together and hands it over to Potter. Though the manuscript is handed over, the sense of exploration and curiosity, remain alive with Bill forever. Bill Unwin, as a middle-aged mature don, cannot be easily understood due to his varied interests and his situational behavior portrayed in the novel. In fact, his story is a story of seduction – material and mental – felt by him on different modes of his life. Daniel Lea considers him as one of the successfully portrayed inadequate persons:

All Swift’s narrators struggle against an awareness of their inadequacies, striving to deny the limitations that have hampered their lives and damaged the lives of others, and each deflects the unbearable moment of self-knowledge through labyrinthine complexes of narrative displacement. (Lea 127)

Bill’s story, is in fact a rumination over his and Matthew’s life dominated by love, loss, death, irresolvable misrecognition and narcissistic identification (Lea 159). Born in Aldermaston, Bill sees himself as a ‘child of
the future’ (197) reincarnated to do something extraordinary in this Berkshire town which eventually is a British atomic research establishment. Slowly this child of the future is transformed into a child of violence, constantly haunted by two ‘mottos’ – the motto of the clock and the motto of his university. He believes in ‘Amor Vincit Omnia’ (Love conquers all) and wants to be the one who makes an in-depth search and gets it and ‘Qui quarerit, invenit’ (He who seeks it, finds it). In short, these mottos make Bill’s life meaningful. He is seduced by love, loss, anteriority, research, isolation, guilt, death, human insensitivity and imaginative presence of historical and textual intercuts.

Bill’s first love is Ruth Vaughan, a theatre girl. After short flings with Mandy and Diana, Bill meets this girl number three at the Blue Moon Club and becomes her protector husband. His love for her is beyond any doubt and more than any graphical representation. Ruth makes his life meaningful after their marriage, thanks to her indefinable, spell-casting quality called ‘presence’. Seduced by Ruth’s beauty, her ability to act and sing and even to disguise impeccably the fact that she could not sing, Bill surrenders and submits to her wishes and interests. Bill, though a man of literature, works as a full time agent cum-manager-cum-secretary to Ruth, ‘a perpetual stagehand waiting for the leading lady’s kiss; a lurker amidst lights and scenery; a shambling devotee of poets and performers, a humble thrall to this business of show business’ (75).

Bill’s memory box has preserved their first ever private meeting – ‘the first time we kissed … like a collision of birds in mid air, the first time she shed her clothes for me; the first time my bare palms pressed her bare breasts…’ (7). Bill compares their meeting with the chance meetings of a hero and a heroine in Romantic books and wonders about her ‘absence’ before her ‘presence’ – ‘I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I did, till we loved?’ (7). His seduction by Ruth’s beauty was so mesmerizing that it made him forget that he was a Hamlet, seduced by the sense of vengeance for his uncle Sam.
He is equally seduced by the love for his mother. It was only Sylvia who encouraged Bill in the hours of stress by saying, ‘buck up, darling, it is not the end of the world’ (31). As a singer, she is an exceptional promise loaded with exquisite charm and purity. However, after her marriage with Colonel Unwin she gives up everything as if seduced to stop singing heavenly intoxicating snatches. Bill loves his father earnestly for his early demise and for his mysterious job with the British Secret Service. It is out of this love for his father that he gets a character clearance certificate for Col. Unwin from the Spy agency, and denies Uncle Sam in his father’s role by denying joining his plastic empire. He shows no trust in what Sam says – that Bill was the son of an engine driver. On the contrary, he tries to go back to Matthew Pearce’s days to establish firmly the powerful chain of anteriority.

Going back to the Mid-Victorian period, we come across Matthews’s love for wife Elizabeth, son Felix, the fossils of ichthyosaurs and the philosophical and theological idea of creation, preservation and extinction of living organisms. Michael Potter, the history professor is seduced by Katherine’s beauty, attitude, and Gabriella’s carnal and academic needs. Death and loss as the seducing agents are inadvertently present in this novel. The novel opens with the words of a dead man, Bill. Three deaths and many casualties, injured and frightened souls, hover over the anxious mind of Bill at one side and the challenge of approving Matthew’s disbelief on another. In 1854, Matthew’s two-year-old son Felix dies and with him ends the happiness of the family. It shakes the faith of Matthew: ‘the moment of my unbelief, the beginning of my make-belief’ (101).

Matthew’s unbelief was supported by the fossils of an ichthyosaurus found on the cliffs of Dorset in the summer of 1844. The remains of ichthyosaurus and Felix’s death make him a doubter. He eventually has long and hot conversations with George Hunt, his father-in-law and the country clergyman about the place of God, the futility of human existence, and Lyell’s
Principles of Geology. The rift between Matthew-Elizabeth and the rector goes on widening until it breaks up with the appearance of Darwin’s Origin of Species. James Neale’s support to Elizabeth and Matthew’s ‘note making’. It comes to an abrupt end with his going on a sea voyage only to perish in 1969.

One of the hopelessly ineffectual male protagonists as portrayed by Swift, Bill is more or less a victim of self-created limbo. Though he has been the first recipient of the Ellison fellowship endowed by Sam, career as a lecturer was always unpromising for him. His self-evaluation as a mediocre academician and his capacity as a loser (his name – Un-win) continuously haunt him. Isolated by the deaths in the family, the guilt direct him to look into the past and consequently ‘he searches for a meaning to his life that can accommodate his failure to live it’ (Lea 129). Obsessed by the sense of guilt for having three pseudo-fathers, he fails to gauge the depth of truth in what people say. Because of this, every dialogue uttered by his relatives turns out to be a piece of acting for him:

I wanted to say, just like people do in cheap dramas: Don’t please! Come back! I wanted to say as if it really were some (convincing) death scene – ‘Ruth, stop acting! Please. Stop acting’.

In going back to anteriority to find out his parallels in the past, Bill behaves like other Swiftian characters – Tom in Waterland and Harry in Out of the World. His passion for ‘research’ as a seducing agent takes him beyond the present century – thereby erasing from his memory the suicidal act of swallowing sleeping pills and engaging in Matthew’s conversion from a believer to non-believer. Swift contextualizes Matthew’s story with real historical events and personages – especially Brunel the engineer, Lyell the geologist and Darwin the evolutionary theorist.

Bill betrays his own self by doubting his maleness and his ability to teach at par with other so-called scholars – ‘an endangered and… protected species’ (2). He attempts his self-slaughter but is saved and transformed. Who betrays who, is in fact, a tough question to answer in Swift’s Ever After.
seem to betray themselves and each other as well. Simultaneously, Matthew betrays Elizabeth and his father-in-law George Hunt, by leaving them in distress and getting lost into the mid-Victorian progress of science and technology.

Coming back to Bill’s present, Sylvia’s betrayal- the affair with the Railway engine driver-is confusing and muffled under the clouds of doubt. Ruth betrays Bill by committing suicide and makes her departure smooth and easier. The most stunning act of betrayal is seen in Bill’s response to Sam, the great financial supporter of Sylvia. Bill denies joining Sam’s business and surprisingly accepts the meanest job of managing Ruth’s theatrical activities.

The professional historian, Michael Potter, whose special field of study has been ‘Victorian idealism and Victorian doubt,’ seduces Katherine, Gabriella, and Bill and betrays everybody with his selfish acts. He plans Bill’s seduction by his wife Katherine and plays with Gabriella’s body as his fees for scholarly guidance. Potter betrays Bill by intentionally evaluating him as a mediocre researcher and tries to prove his so-called supremacy: ‘He is all head and loins with no beating heart between’ (Levenson, Republic).

Swift’s next novel, Last Orders (1996) which won the prestigious Booker Prize for fiction, is in fact a postmodern patchwork and a pub centered funeral narrative of a journey of four friends from London (Bermondsey) to Margate. The narrative present of the story is April 2, 1990 and the novel is based on the activities that take place on this particular day. The month of April as described by T.S. Eliot in The Wasteland becomes once again alive in this fictional work-connecting the pub and Margate Pier:

April is the cruellest month

Connect[s] …

Nothing with nothing. (Eliot, Wasteland)
Almost identical to William Faulkner’s *As I lay Dying* (1930), this novel brought about the metamorphoses of Graham Swift as a novelist and his readers who responded positively and furiously over Prof. John Frow’s allegations of unacknowledged plagiarism of *As I lay Dying*.

The opening line of the novel –‘It ain’t like your regular sort of day’, surprisingly looks like a non-Swiftian element, which foreshadows the ruminations that are to follow. The whole sequence of events that are to take place on this very day and the respective meditations on the past happenings is the chief substance of discussion. A little silent pow-wow in the pub, ‘Coach and Horses', transforms into the visible activity of chucking the ashes of a dead man into the Sea near Margate Pier and comes to an end with the meaninglessness of human life.

*Last Orders* is all about the last wish of a dying man, Jack Dodds – a butcher by profession- and his friends Ray, Vic and his adopted son Vince. As seen in Swift’s earlier novels, most of the seducing agents seem to be repeating here. Prominent among them is love, lust, greed for money, fame, the sense of guilt, obligation, confession, alienation, revelation and friendship. Betrayals like cheating, deceptions, treachery, death and loss of belief are active in this novel. It deals with the family as a unit on the brink of fragmentation and its grief and scars as discussed by Adrian Poole:

There is bereavement, remorse and guilt. Bombs and orphans. War in North Africa and on the North Sea. Photographs. A clock. A moron in a mental home … Plenty of full stops. Children are orphaned, adopted, abandoned, and fugitive. Men are abashed at their own lack of manhood and envious of others. And woman? Quite a lot of question marks too. (Poole, *Guardian*)

Salman Rushdie praised Swift for the wonderful portrayal of the ritual of death and post-death communion (Salon: Interview, 2006). In this novel Swift follows a group of four friends from working class Bermondsey in South London to the sea at Margate, on a mission to dispose of the ashes of their friend and wartime comrade, a butcher with a troubled family. This sober,
concentrated book, without stunts or distractions, serves up its character’s passions and regrets.

Following the tradition of commenting upon mortality, Swift links up himself in the chain which begin with Homer and moves forward with T.S. Eliot (connect nothing with nothing), E. M. Forster (only connect), and William Faulkner (the rotting corpse in *As I lay Dying*). His novel uses East London’s colloquial language instead of sophisticated one and ends as an archetypal thing describing a sort of nakedness that Swift had not achieved before. The main setting of the story is central Britain in the late nineteen eighties. The story is narrated chapter by chapter in the first person perspective. About half of the chapters are in flashbacks, while the remaining comes from different perceptions: ‘the past is the matrix of the present’ (Widdowson 77). In an interview with Stef Craps, Swift comments on his preference for first-person over third-person narration: ‘…and I don’t want to have that elevated, omniscient role’ (*Critique*).

The story of this novel is convincingly told through the south London voices of five men and two women. They are Ray ‘Lucky’ Johnson, Lenny ‘Gunner’ Tate, Vic Tucker, Vince Dodds, Amy Johnson, Mandy and the ‘dead’ Jack Dodds. The most prominent of them is Ray who works as an insurance clerk and a horseracing gambler. He is around sixty-eight like Jack (the dead) and Lenny, who fought in the Second World War in North Africa. After the end of the war, they keep on meeting in the famous pub named ‘Coach and Horses.’

The most dominant is Jack whose absence is felt more severely than anybody’s presence. Butcher by profession, he is more mature by nature than Lenny and Vic. He successfully carries forward his business, loves his wife Amy and takes care of Vince as his adopted son. Unfortunately, he neglects his mentally retarded daughter June, who has been kept in a mental asylum for the last fifty years. Jack’s hopes are shattered when Vince denies joining their
family business. Suddenly Jack dies of cancer and all his friends and Vince plan to fulfill his last wish-to scatter his ashes in the sea near Margate Pier. The whole novel is a collective piece of the groups’ joint activities on a single day and at the same time, their lonely musings on their respective individual pasts, as narrated by Swift in flashbacks.

Though the novel chiefly tells the story of a group of friends who are preparing to scatter the ashes of Jack, it is also a story of their car journey from East London to the Kentish coast. It is a collection of reminiscences by each of the characters in turn. Little by little, Jack’s life and his portrait emerge and he stands firm in the roaring winds of familial and cultural changes until he becomes the inevitable friend of all. Though the story is related with only one day, it covers a vast time and space, from 1939 to 1990 and from London to Margate. The journey starts from Bermondsey to Margate via old Kent, Blackheath, Dartford, Graves End, Wick’s farm, Chatham and Canterbury.

The life in Bermondsey has been portrayed as secular – the men’s world of work, the pub, the betting shop, and the more difficult and often ill-understood world of their women. The people, their past life and the places they visit contribute to the formation of their story; a story of seduction and betrayal, written with “impeccable honesty and paced with unflagging momentum” (Pub. Weekly). The vernacular dialogues and elliptical internal monologues slowly reveal the mysterious lives of South-East London people.

The everlasting bond of friendship seduces males in the story. They have been acquaintances for minimum thirty years. Some are good friends – Jack, Vic, Ray and Lenny – while others merely tolerate each other – Lenny and Vince in particular. They happily live in and around Bermondsey and frequently meet at the pub, where most problems and tensions are smoothed over at some point; the exception being Jack and Vince’s father-son relationship. The chief and solid base of their friendship is their peer, Jack while his adopted son, Vince is ‘the kid’ in their eyes. As soon as the binding
force of this group disappears, the hidden tensions once again come to the surface.

Jack, Ray, Lenny and Vic are ex-comrades from army who had an opportunity of fighting at different places in North Africa during the Second World War. When Jack and Ray were fighting together, Lenny was also fighting elsewhere in the same country. Though Vince later on joined Army for five years, it was just an act of escape and betrayal. All these five people have their families and their own problems, which become more troublesome once Jack is gone. When Jack falls victim to the unexpected Stomach Cancer, all of them feel broken, lonely and betrayed by Jack.

They seek to carry out Jack’s last orders. Jack’s written request to scatter his ashes into the Sea at Margate Pier moves all of them, except Amy, who has special reasons to deny joining the party. When they meet in ‘Coach and Horse’ the day before their journey, they feel devastated to find their senior friend contracted and packed in a jar. Even, Bernie, the bartender feels a void created by Jack’s absence – presence of an absence. The ‘just died’ Jack becomes alive through flashbacks.

Jack, once back from the war front in Africa, is seduced by his father’s advice on saving the wastage:

“Whole art of butchery’s in avoiding wastage … You got to keep a constant eye on wastage, constant. What you’ve got to understand is the nature of the goods… perishable.” (285)

He was a strong man, stronger than Ray physically and luckier for having the beautiful Amy as his wife. Ray describes his war experiences in Africa and Amy’s photograph that seduced both of them. Jack loved and married Amy, whom he had sought during their hop-picking sessions. He preserved her like a monument, until June was born and till they honeymooned at Margate-Sea-Shore. Their sick daughter June, who has been at the ‘home for disabled’ for last fifty years, couldn’t speak anything meaningful and
couldn’t respond to her parent’s adult talk. Jack was upset by June’s condition and forgetting his fatherhood, abandoned her much to the shock of her mother. He never visited June during his lifetime and even, surprisingly though, hinted Amy to forget June.

Amy is seduced by her responsibility to care and love her deformed daughter. Jack, on the contrary, is never moved by Amy’s appalling condition. He remains, atrocious by neglecting her and by denying his responsibility. In this way, he not only betrays his own self but also Amy and the whole humankind. Jack is a deeply flawed individual, as is evident from his act of throwing away the Teddy Bear into the sea. It was during their honeymoon at Margate. The couple, Jack and Amy participates in a ‘three shots for tuppence’ duck shooting and win the game. The lucky woman goes for a teddy bear, unconsciously for her disabled daughter June. However, Jack’s betrayal destroys her dreams and the ‘happiest’ moment of the innocent’s life is so easily wasted. Whatever he may be like, finally he proves to be a great benefactor to the family when he borrows one thousand dollars, asks Ray to invest it in betting and earns thirty three dollars, thereby ‘bringing the corpse back to life as a powerful social force’ (Goodwin, Critique).

Although not faithful, Amy lives like a dutiful wife and mother who plans out her life with Jack. After the teddy bear incident, she makes a decision to choose June over Jack. It shows that she was seduced by the role of a dutiful mother-‘I still had the power to choose, I chose June, not him’ (229). This act of Amy’s bravery and benevolent motherhood in bringing up Vince and her weekly visits to the house of disabled to see June make her character really great and she is hardly condemned by anybody for her short affair with Ray.

She betrays nobody- not even Jack, Vince or June apparently but inwardly she feels seduced by the uncontrollable force of feminist rationality. Unconsciously, she betrays the golden period of her beautiful romantic life and the innocent hop-picker girl deeply rooted in her. She has always felt
betrayed, alienated and isolated by Jack and Vince. The last order, Jack’s last wish addressed to whoever it may concern, functions as the last terrible blow to her lifetime loyalty as a dutiful, torn and unfortunate wife. Nevertheless, she ignores the betrayal and sees to it that Jack’s wish be fulfilled.

Ray Johnson, nicknamed lucky is seduced by the sense of confession, reconciliation, and guilt and desires to support the next generation. Ray inherited a scrap yard but betrays his father by denying to carry it on further. Ray’s infatuation for Daisy Dixon, marriage with her sister Carol and short affair with Amy are the important diversions in his life, which make him unhappy throughout. In the ‘present’ of the narrative, this energetic old man is disturbed by the divorce and his daughter’s elopement to Australia. His daughter, Susie, betrays him by leaving for Sydney never to return and stops communicating with him. Carol’s sudden outburst of saying goodbye to him is a great shock and an unforgettable betrayal. He however does not want to reveal that he is ‘so lucky with horse races, [but] so unlucky in life’ (59). Ray is mentally addressing Susie and constantly feeling sorry for not being able to understand his family members.

The continuous betrayals by Vince can be attributed to the feeling that he is an orphan and belongs to nobody else. The sense of parent’s loss and gain does not bring any change in his personality. On the other hand, he gets lost in the fake ideology of artificiality. Vince’s seduction for motor business is beyond his control. ‘Out of sight, out of mind’ is Vince’s betraying motto which makes him leave the pregnant Sally shelter less and move to the war field for five years. Consequently, Lenny betrays Sally by forcing her to abort the child. Vince realizes the natural justice when he is ashamed of facing Katherine whom he had nearly sold to an Arab: ‘…there goes Vince Dodds who pimps for his own daughter’ (168). Finally, on the day of their journey Vince behaves sensibly. Jack’s death brings a transformation in him and he
relates his identity and existence with the Dodds. He drives the car, makes
detours and fulfills Jack’s last wish.

To conclude, Last Orders is about ‘how we live and how we die and our
struggle to make abiding connections between the two’ (Reynolds, TLS). Peter
Widdowson feels sorry for not having ‘told’ anything by Swift about what
happens after April 2, 1990. Still, while concluding his response to Last Orders,
he seems to have been impressed by the seducing elements of telling and being
told and redemption through confession:

All the novel seems to confirm once more is that in the
dreamland-waste land of the late twentieth century only
‘telling’ offers the chance of redemption: by bringing
the secrets of wasted lives into the light of day.
(Widdowson 91)

After the successful performance of the ‘ash’ ceremony in Last Orders,
Swift once again, in The Light Of Day, returns to celebration of a murder. The
‘Lucky’ Johnson of the previous novel transforms into the unlucky, expelled
police officer cum private detective, George Webb. George is the single male-
narrator who tells us the story of his life. The novel, set in South London, is
concerned with adultery, renunciation, redemption and glorifies Sarah Nash, a
spiritually mysterious woman. The novel boastfully declares – ‘everything is
fair in love and war’ and ends with a new definition of love -‘to love is to lose’
(69) and the perpetual war on physical and mental level. The geographical area
in this novel is much reduced than Swift’s previous novels. The single day in
Last Orders witnesses the friends’ visits to external places and interiors of the
minds whereas in The Light of the Day, we find George journeying from his
office in Wimbledon to Bob’s grave at Putney Vale Crematorium. Hermion
Lee describes the journeys vividly:

Up St. Mary’s Road, up Park side to the hospital, across
the common to the Putney Vale Crematorium: the plot
of this book is bounded by the postal district of S19,
with excursions as far as Chislehurst and Heathrow.
(Lee, Review)
The novel is also much reduced in chronological scope – the single day of November 20, 1997 and George’s mind journey from the present to the end of the Second World War. Swift, as he puts it in an interview, very much wanted to ‘make ordinary simple words do extraordinary things’ (O’Mahony) and achieves it by using short sentences and sometimes a single word. Widdowson calls it Swift’s ‘slow-release mode of narration, with small fragments of ‘what really happened … in an unhurried non-linear and apparently piecemeal fashion’ (92). While talking to Robert Birnbaum, Swift explains his ‘ordinary word’ strategy:

My sense of writing … is that what you are dealing with really is what lies beyond the word. The words themselves are not the be all and the end all of writing. They are only there to give something, to transmit something. And that’s why often the best words are the least noticeable words, because they are transparent.

(Birnbaum, Interview).

It is as if ordinary words and thereby ordinary characters like lesser educated George, lesbian Helen, crazy Sarah and dreamy Jane attract Swift. Whatever may be the reasons for Swift’s seduction by ordinariness of ordinary people and their ‘his-stories’, he doesn’t seem to be betraying his inner voice which has always craved to find the answers to ‘what really happened’. If studied from Sarah’s point of view, The Light of Day expresses a hope that her husband can love her again, and when she does not trace a single sign of love on his face, she straightway kills him.

Though she is imprisoned at present, she still loves her dead husband. However, the novel is more than that. Full of the lost and found elements, the novel concludes as a story of George, a disgraced cop turned private detective and his mental revisiting. This thriller-murder mystery raises a philosophical question regarding the reasons that drive a person to such extremity – killing her own husband for no obvious reasons and comes to a resolution, which is more fatalistic and unscientific than any reader would guess. Adam Mars Jones considers it as the story of ‘a dead man [Bob] who resents an imprisoned
woman [Sarah] he loves and waits for’ (Jones, Observer). Guided by emotions and lyricism of the seemingly ordinary words, Swift takes certain intellectual freedoms in handling the narrative structure and tries to portray a perfect world – a world of institutionalized and incarcerated characters:

There’s a kind of compulsion in great novelists – towards a scene, a subject, an obsession something they have to keep going after in book after book. For Swift, the key recurring scene is the visit to an incarcerated person. (Lee, Guardian)

As Hermione Lee puts it, The Light of Day has a brilliantly slow, precise and careful structure, which covers every hour, every minute and every detail of the ‘adultery’ case. Within the tight little map of South England, Swift manages to tell wildly extreme, sensational and romantic story through George’s mouth. However, the moment of the crime (betrayal) remains obscure to us, Swift extends the curiosity of readers and makes it a work of suspense and confinement.

Sebastian Shakespeare describes this novel as a ‘somber silhouette rather than a firework’s display’ (Review). It is true that the obscurity of the vital moment of murder and the oblique language used for the minimalist, lyrical prose sometimes disrupts the tension. As a result, this ‘beautifully crafted meditation on love and loss’ (Hoffert, Review) does not quite come off. According to a reviewer, there are no surprises, no revelations; just the slow unwinding of a domestic tragedy in the form of unexplained betrayals (The Economist).

The Light of Day is a story of love and loss, faith and deception, romance and perversion, originals and substitutes and reconciliation. The chief protagonist George Webb is the sole narrator of this novel, who tells us about what happened on Nov. 20, 1995. The narrative present i.e. Nov. 20, 1997 takes us back to the particular day in 1995 and many other eventful days in the past. For us, The Light of Day is a story of seductions and betrayals and throws light on cultural, ethical and individual transformations.
Son of a war veteran and photographer, George was born in 1947. After joining police force in 1965, he could prove himself a better cop involved in solving matrimonial affairs. Unluckily for him, due to his ill-treatment to a convict, he was expelled from his job in 1989, the same year that snatched his mother away from him. The same year Rachel abandoned him and he could not see her and his daughter, Helen, for many years.

Divorced and estranged from Rachel, George has endured a fraught relationship with his daughter Helen, and has struggled to come to terms with the destruction of his domestic life, the loss of his profession and its reaction; the loss of his wife sends him into ‘a spiral of black despair’ (Lea 191). It is only when Helen comes back, he finds rescued from the invisible, mental torture and starts spending his free time in cooking for his daughter. This cooking ‘matrimonial’ detective establishes himself as a successful investigator. He buries himself in collecting evidences against unfaithful husbands, as per the demands of wives in trouble.

It was before two years when he was first asked to investigate and handle the case of Sarah. Sarah was a successful lecturer in a college and happily married to Bob, a famous gynecologist. Their happy married life was disturbed by the arrival of one Croatian refugee, Kristiana. Later on, Sarah is shocked when the Bob-Kristiana affair is revealed. After the revelation, Sarah should have acted boldly but she gives them concession. The illegally joined pair then moves to Fulham in a flat.

As the war between Croatia and Serbia ends, Kristiana sets out to leave for her motherland. Now when Kristiana is leaving England behind, Sarah wants her assured departure and Bob back to her. For this purpose, she hires George web, the private ‘matrimonial’ detective who already had slept with many of his women clients. George, divorced from Rachel and recently visited by Helen is busy handling different delicate matters. George sees to it that Kristiana left for Croatia alone and follows Bob back to his house.
Bob, a lost soul without Kristiana, comes back to Sarah in a hopeless mood, which annoys her. Instantly, in a sudden homicidal wrath, Sarah stabs him to death. She is in the jail at present and it is George, the once hired detective now seduced by her knees and nature, visits her on every alternate Thursday afternoons and even lays flowers on Bob’s grave. Now, he has decided to wait for Sarah for another eight years when she would be free under the clear light of day.

Though not highly educated, George works efficiently as a cop and proves himself an able investigator and a patron saint for the troubled wives. His overgrowing confidence as a wise cop and a benevolent senior officer invites a danger for him and his job. His parents die before he was kicked out of the force for reasons partially obscured. It was in September 1989 when during an interrogation of two suspects accused of stabbing an Asian Shopkeeper, George, assaults one of the prisoners in front of his solicitor and he ‘[gets] the axe’(134).

This fatal incident in George’s life is pivotal – he is charged with corruption and expelled from the office. Twenty-four years of honest, sincere police service gave him nothing more than this uninvited defamation and a great shock at the age of retirement. It was a great betrayal, which transforms George thoroughly.

As soon as George is nominated as corrupt, his wife Rachel, who had grown sick of him, immediately leaves him. The grief-stricken George cannot digest this mental blow easily and feels guilty for this. Rachel’s betrayal at such a crucial moment in George’s life, when actually he needed a firm support and sincere love, changes the whole scene and paves a way for the further events in the story.

George is a great secret keeper. It is his passion to keep secrets and keep the emotional world of the people intact. When he tells his stories of his father and Carol, his soul suffers for his mother Jane. Finally, when at the last
moment of passing away, Frank utters carol’s name; George keeps quiet as if he knew nothing about it. He hides everything about Frank’s Carol, Napoleon’s golf, Eugenie’s struggle for survival and Bob’s visit to Fulham after the flight. It is due to George’s seduction for keeping secrets and hiding truths, he could save Frank’s married life. George’s industriousness and his ability to cope with tragic situations transform him into a man of hope. His agency office above a tanning studio on Wimbledon Broadway brings about a change in him – a contented, complacent man who tries to forget the sad memories of the past.

Their interests in cooking seduce both George and Sarah – she loves Chicken Marsala and he is fond of new recipes. It is important to note that his ‘cooking’ interests brings back Helen to him and Bob’s disinterestedness in ‘Coq an Vin’ diligently prepared by Sarah brings about his sudden death. George’s growing interest in Sarah’s affairs disturbs Rita. Though she does not show it on her face, the sense of betrayal can be judged by what she says to George: ‘something’s come over you’ (3).

However, Rita does not succeed; Sarah succeeds in grabbing the opportunity of making him her faithful investigator and a loser in the long race of ‘fulfillment’. Hugo Barnacle considers George’s sympathy as a corrective measure to the mistakes of his past, particularly of his father:

\[\text{We never do understand George’s obsession with Sarah} \]
\[\text{… A partial and indirect clue lies in his childhood,} \]
\[\text{when he discovered his father was having an affair. He} \]
\[\text{kept the secret for decades but his mother found out in} \]
\[\text{the end. Her dignified response to this bombshell seems} \]
\[\text{to be at the root of George’s sympathy for wronged} \]
\[\text{wives. (New Statesman)} \]

George asserts that he has crossed a line by keeping alive the flame of love for a murderer. In order to vindicate his move, he defines love in a new way- ‘to love is to be ready to lose … it’s not to keep. It’s to put someone else’s happiness before yours’ (69).
The civil war in the former Yugoslavia, especially between Serbs and Croats runs parallel to the war between George’s two selves. Bob wanted the Serbs to win; Sarah wanted the Croats to win, but George, not very clear about his secret ‘passion’ for Sarah, does not understand who should win the civil war. Luckily, his assistant, Rita, most uncompromisingly tries to break his infatuation. And for this act of hers, in Peter Widdowson’s words, ‘it is Rita rather than Sarah who is the heroine of The Light of Day’ (104). She keeps on telling George to control and not be controlled—‘Grow up, George, Get bloody real’ (231). Finally, Sarah succeeds in seducing George. She thinks of him as a real find that she finds on his first visit to her house (192).

Hovering and encroaching suburbia that spreads with an extreme speed redefines the modern day civilization, the beaches and the golf courses. In 1995, Sarah and Bob had been married for twenty-five years. She was happily doing the job of teaching and he was enjoying the profession of a lady doctor. In 1993, Sarah allows Kristiana in her house-bungalow no. 14, Beecham Close, Wimbledon and the tragedy begins. Kristiana Lazic is a Croatian student whose visa was just to expire. Sarah tries to save her from becoming an asylum-seeker or returning to her war-ravaged country. They take her in and she moves into their Wimbledon house. Sarah, apart from being a good teacher, goes a little bit ahead, shows pity, charity and tries to play the role of a protector. ‘Have a heart. Can’t a good deed be a good deed? (132) Sarah talks to herself and commits a great mistake: ‘the wife’s fault for putting temptation under the husband’s nose’ (32).

Sarah is seduced and betrayed by Kristiana who forgets about her asylum and responds to Bob’s carnal desire. Bob betrays Sarah by establishing sexual relations with the Croatian girl. The saint like Sarah again goes on committing mistakes. She rents a flat in Fulham for them and suddenly adjusts herself to play the role of a part time wife of Bob. Rest of the story, until the murder of Bob, is an obvious after effect of her submissive and mild nature.
Published four years after *The Light of Day*, *Tomorrow* (2007) emphatically narrates Paula’s memories of the past and her personal involvement, as she lies awake in bed on the summer night of 1995. Paula who is forty-nine and a mother to Nick and Kate, the sixteen-year-old teens, narrate the novel. It is the twenty-fifth year of her marriage with Michael. They got married in 1966 and Nick and Kate were born in 1979.

Just a week after her twin’s sixteenth birthday, she is anxiously narrating the story of what happened in the past and what is going to happen tomorrow. According to what she narrates, the ‘proper’ day has come now when Michael, the father of the children, will tell them a secret, a secret that the couple has kept away from them. Finally, what she converses in a fantastic dramatic monologue with Nick and Kate forms the substance of the novel. It appears as if she is charged with an uncontrollable urge and seduced by the sense of threat, guilt, confession and reassurance. She is all alone in this expedition, her husband lies asleep in her bed and the twins are enjoying the dreams of their post-birthday life.

Most of the readers are mentally prepared by the gradual evocation of the life in England, the couple, the mating, the slow moving sperms, artificial insemination and Michael’s right to fatherhood. She is anxious to tell the secret of the birth of Nick and Kate because she is seduced, and feels like betraying her children by keeping the secret – not even thinking that the couple would be actually betraying them by revealing the truth. Critics have found this novel less interesting as compared to Swift’s earlier novels, may be due to delayed revelation and lack of presence of the mysterious Mr. S., the anonymous sperm donor. Deborah Friedell finds nothing new in this over-elaborated story except that the story is told from other side: ‘Swift is telling a story he has nearly told before, but here he tells it from the other side, the narrative of the deceiver, not [of] the deceived’ (Friedell, Review).
Nearly all of Swift’s novels hinge on similar moments of disclosure. In *Waterland*, Tom’s brother learns that he is the product of father-daughter incest. In *Shuttlecock*, Prentis is on the stage of asserting his father’s award winning expedition of saving his superior officer. In *Ever After*, Colonel Unwin’s suicide closes all the doors of doubt about his so-called secret mission as a spy and his wife’s infidelity. In *Last orders*, Vic Tucker successfully hides the extra-marital affair between Ray and Amy and in *The Light of Day*, George discloses the reasons behind Bob’s merciless murder by Sarah. According to Sebastian Smee, it involves us as voyeurs in the revelation of a truth (Smee, *Review*). According to Sophie Ratcliffe, the novel achieves an impressive level of banality due to lack of passion on the part of the narrator. She is governed by the fear of destruction of a happy family and takes so long to reveal the truth:

Paula is keeping no one waiting except the implied reader – one is still left wondering why it takes her so long to explain what the big secret is. (Ratcliffe, *Review*)

Tomorrow is a bedtime story of a middle-aged couple; the beautiful wife narrates it and the husband remains at the passive end. Paula tells the twins that she wants them to listen to her story and not to react – as if she is afraid of their reaction. In the course of her ‘interior monologue’ kind of narration, she talks not only about the artificial insemination episode but also sketches a clear picture of the after war years, their ancestors, their happiness and losses, births and deaths.

Paula is seduced by her happy past, by her father Dougie and her mother, Fiona. She dislikes her mother and even laments over her father’s three unsuccessful marriages. She glorifies the war veteran Pete, Mike’s father and her mother-in-law Helen, an efficient and alert homemaker. The war, which has been permanently present in every Swiftian story, finds scope through Paula’s description of Pete, who, for some years during the war, was a missing ‘honest’ fighter. She touches the year 1945, for not only the bombings, but also for DNA and for their births. She is very much seduced by the Orpington and Kensington houses as her pre-conception setting. She keeps on narrating the
happy Thatcherite days, Sussex of the sixties and the much-revolutionized nineties that has witnessed many innovations in scientific thinking about painless parturition and prolonged life span.

The narrative present of the novel, is the happiest period in the life of this family. Paula, one of the directors of West End Art Gallery and her husband, Michael, publisher of the Living World Books, specializing in publishing popular science books, are living happily in Putney. On this particular night, their children, Nicholas and Katharine, who are sixteen, are fast a sleep in the adjacent room of their flat and Mike is snoring peacefully.

Tomorrow is going to be a special day as this couple has planned; Mike would reveal the secret of their children’s birth. It is, in fact, so simple a thing that Mike is not their biological father, he had a low sperm count and so Paula had to ‘borrow’ somebody’s semen for the conception. It has been decided that Mike will tell the story and by doing so, will confess, reveal and win back the love and moral support of the children. It is of course a tough task to tell the truth to the twins and at the same time keep the family intact and Mike’s role as a father, as likable and lovable as earlier.

Anxious over the future happenings, Paula is fully awake and contemplates the imagined situation. She is seduced by the thought of bringing about a happy conclusion to the revelation episode. Alan Brownjohn calls Paula ‘something of a triumph’ (TLS) and the first of Swift’s small number of female narrators to have a novel to her. Paula, who belonged to the contraceptive pill generation, does not change many partners like her two flat mates. She sleeps with Mike and does not allow the sharing. Though she has been seduced by the lust for Dr. Pope, Dr. Chivers and Mr. Simon Fitch, she falls victim to Dr. Alan Frazer’s mute demand. When she met Mrs. Lambert, she realizes that she needed a baby.

However, she gets a substitute in the form of a black cat named ‘Otis’. It works as a catalyst and intensifies their copulation. Suddenly Frazer happens
to taste her body and she is seduced by the sense of comparison. Whenever she compares Frazer with Mike, Mike stands superior. Having sex with Frazer was, of course, an act of betrayal on Paula’s part. However, the sense of betrayal, unconsciously though, increases after she gets the artificial insemination done.

Paula develops a habit of looking at people. Though it appears shameful, she does it in order to find the anonymous donor of the sperm:

I used to ride the train up to work, the tube from Victoria to Green Park, and look constantly, furtively, at men around me … Your mother, I’m afraid, has a fundamental and incurable habit of looking at other men… assuming … he’s out there somewhere … your real father, my demon lover.(188-9)

Finally, Paula hopes that all will be well, nobody will be betrayed and Michael will be restored as a scientific father of the twins and a new age biological transformation will be easily accepted.

The domestic tragedies, as we have noted in the discussions, very subtly indicate the disconcerting cause embedded chiefly in the very act of seductions and betrayal both in the literal as well as implied sense and makes a devastating statement on the prevailing cultural situations.

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