

Storytelling and Trauma in Historiographic Metafiction: Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger*

Tarihsel Üstkurmacada Hikâye Anlatımı ve Travma: Penelope Lively'nin *Ay Kırıkları* Romanı

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Abstract



This study explores storytelling as a narrative strategy in Penelope Lively's novel *Moon Tiger* within the context of historiographic metafiction. This study is important for the field since it explores storytelling as a narrative strategy in historiographic metafiction. The study argues that Penelope Lively employs metafictional elements to demonstrate that storytelling can heal characters experiencing war trauma, challenging the conventional boundaries between fiction and history. The protagonist, Claudia, engages in a fragmented narrative, questioning the concept of time and presenting alternative versions of history. The study examines Claudia's nonlinear storytelling, her skepticism toward objective history, and her exploration of the subjective nature of memory. The study emphasizes Claudia's personal history as a form of resistance to the official history and highlights the novel's contribution to developing historiographic metafictional elements. Lively's *Moon Tiger* is portrayed as a thought-provoking exploration of the interplay between personal and official histories, inviting readers to reconsider traditional notions of historiography. Ultimately, this study claims that it is only through verbalizing traumatic war experiences that the characters in the novel can reveal, present, and confront their war traumas. The small stories they construct serve as a relief for their traumatic war pains. In these stories, the protagonists sometimes modify, change, or hide the truths about their traumatic war experiences as an outcome of their traumatic memories. This study demonstrates that storytelling is a beneficial narrative strategy for revealing, presenting, and confronting traumatic war pains for individuals and communities.

Keywords: storytelling, historiographic metafiction, trauma narrative, war trauma, trauma fiction

Genişletilmiş Özet

Bu çalışma, Penelope Lively'in *Ay Kırıkları* adlı romanında anlatının bir anlatı stratejisi olarak kullanımını, tarihsel üstkurmaca bağlamında incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, edebiyat alanında, tarihsel üstkurmacada anlatının bir anlatı stratejisi olarak kullanımını analiz eden ve literatüre katkı sağlayan bir çalışmadır. Çalışma, Penelope Lively'in üstkurmaca unsurlarını kullanarak hikâye anlatımının, savaş travması yaşayan karakterler için bir iyileşme süreci olarak hizmet edebileceğini, kurgu ile tarih arasındaki geleneksel sınırları sorguladığını göstermektedir. Lively bu romanda, okuyucuya parçalı bir anlatı sunarak zaman kavramını sorgular ve tarihin alternatif versiyonlarını gösterir. Çalışma, Claudia'nın belli bir zaman çizgisi olmayan anlatısını, nesnel tarih konusundaki kuşkularını ve belleğin subjektif doğasını incelemektedir. Claudia'nın kişisel tarihini resmi tarihe karşı bir direniş biçimi olarak vurgulamakta ve romanın tarihî üstkurmaca unsurlarının gelişimine katkısını ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Lively'in *Ay Kırıkları* romanı, kişisel ve resmi tarih arasındaki etkileşimin düşündürücü bir keşfi olarak tasvir edilir ve okuyucuları geleneksel tarih anlayışını yeniden düşünmeye davet eder. Romanın karakterlerinin oluşturdukları küçük hikâyeler, travmatik savaş acılarına karşı bir rahatlama olarak hizmet eder. Bu hikâyelerde, kahramanlar bazen travmatik savaş deneyimleriyle ilgili gerçekleri değiştirir, düzeltir veya gizlerler, bu da travmatik belleklerinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu bağlamda çalışma, hikâye anlatmanın hem bireyler hem de toplumlar için travmatik savaş acılarını ortaya çıkarma, sunma ve yüzleşme konusunda faydalı bir anlatı stratejisi olduğunu göstermektedir.

Hikâye anlatımı, yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında tarihsel üstkurmacada dikkate değer bir anlatı stratejisi haline gelmiştir; çağdaş bir romancı olarak Penelope Lively, romanı *Ay Kırıkları*'ndaki parçalı anlatısıyla bu alt türde tarihsel üstkurmacaya büyük katkı yapmıştır. Lively, hikâye anlatımını, dünya tarihinde alternatif versiyonların olduğunu kanıtlamak için bir anlatı stratejisi olarak kullanır. Hikâye anlatımı ayrıca savaş travması yaşayan karakterlerin iyileşme sürecine katkıda bulunmak için de kullanılır. Hikâye anlatımının anlatı stratejisi olarak kullanımı aynı zamanda Lively'in romanında kullanılan tarihsel

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üstkurmaca unsurların gelişimine de katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, çağdaş romancı Penelope Lively'nin anlatı stratejisinde bazı üstkurmaca unsurları kullandığını göstererek, hikâye anlatımının savaş travması sonucu oluşan yaraları iyileştirmek için kullanılabileceğini kanıtlamaktadır.

Romanın anlatısı, tarihsel olayları ve kişilikleri paradoksal bir şekilde sunması nedeniyle postmodern bir anlatı olarak değerlendirilebilir. Roman, okuyucuya tarih ve kurgunun her ikisinin de insan yapımı olduğunu ortaya koyar; bu nedenle, hem kurguyu hem de tarihi yeniden düşünmeye ve yeniden incelemeye yer açar. Kişisel ve kamusal tarihlerle ilgili olduğu kadar, anlatısında güçlü bir strateji olarak hikâye anlatımını kullanan *Ay Kırıkları*, zaman kavramını sorgular ve geleneksel roman niteliklerini, kurgu, karakterler ve mekânı alt üst eder. Romanın kahramanı Claudia, kişisel tarihini yazar ve onun söylemi giderek kamusal bir tarih versiyonuna dönüşür. Bu gerçek, resmi tarihin bir kurgu biçimi olduğu gibi, Lively'in kurgusu da resmi tarihin bir versiyonu haline gelir. Yani, Claudia'nın kişisel tarihi, anlatı stratejisi olarak hikâye anlatımıyla tarihleştirildiği için kamusal tarihin bir versiyonu haline gelir. *Ay Kırıkları*, kurgu ile gerçeklik arasındaki çizgiyi bulandıran, okuyucuları hikâye anlatımının doğası ve anlatıların oluşturulması üzerine sorgulamaya davet eden tarihsel üstkurmacanın dikkate değer bir örneği olarak gösterilebilir. Yenilikçi anlatı stratejileri, öz farkındalıklı karakterler ve geleneksel edebi formların kullanımı aracılığıyla, Lively ustaca üstkurmaca unsurlarına başvurarak okuyucuların deneyimini zenginleştirir ve geleneksel hikâye anlatımı kurallarını sorgular.

Başkarakter Claudia, kurgusal bir yapı içinde var olduğunun son derece farkındadır. Sıklıkla kendi hikâyesi hakkında yorum yapar, hikâye anlatma eylemini ve karakterlerin yaratılmasını kabul eder. Bu öz farkındalık, karakter ile yazar arasındaki sınırları bulandırır ve okuyucuları Claudia'nın deneyimlerinin gerçekliğini ve anlatısının güvenilirliğini sorgulamaya zorlar. Lively, parçalı bir anlatı yapısı kullanarak, kronolojik düzene karşı doğrusal olmayan bir anlatım yaklaşımını tercih eder. Claudia'nın geçmişine dair olaylar, II. Dünya Savaşı sırasındaki deneyimleri de dahil olmak üzere, ayrı bir şekilde sunulur. Bu bilinçli kronoloji bozulması, geleneksel hikâye anlatımı normlarını sorgular ve belleğin ve tarihin subjektif doğasını vurgular. Okuyucular, metnin içine girmek zorunda kalır ve Claudia'nın hayatından tutarlı bir hayat hikâyesi oluşturmak için parçalı anlatıları bir araya getirirler.

Ay Kırıkları, genellikle aynı olaylar hakkında çelişen hesapları sunarak çoklu bakış açılarına yer verir. Claudia, Gordon ve Tom gibi karakterler, geçmişe dair kendi versiyonlarını sunarlar, gerçeklikle kurgu arasındaki sınırları bulandırır. Bu güvenilir anlatıcılar, belirsizlik duygusu yaratırlar ve sunulan bilgilerin güvenilirliğini sorgulamaya yönlendirirler. Bu strateji aracılığıyla, Lively hikâye anlatımının içsel ve öznel olduğunu vurgular ve anlatılarda nesnel gerçek kavramını sorgular. Lively'nin romanı, metin içinde tarihi olaylar, edebiyat ve kültürel fenomenlere atıfta bulunan metinler arası referanslar ve edebi göndermeler içerir. Bu referanslar, okuyucuları hikâyenin geliştiği daha geniş bağlama dikkat etmeye davet eder. Mevcut anlatılar ve kültürel referanslar üzerinden Lively, okuyucuları hem kurgusal hem de gerçek hikâyelerin birbirleriyle nasıl etkileşimde bulduklarını ve birbirlerini nasıl etkilediklerini düşünmeye teşvik eder. *Ay Kırıkları*, Claudia'nın tarih, bellek ve hikâye anlatımı üzerine düşünceleri aracılığıyla gerçeklik ve kurgunun doğası hakkında varoluşsal sorunlar ortaya koyar. Lively, gerçeklik ve hayal arasındaki sınırları zorlayarak, okuyucuları hikâye anlatmanın dönüştürücü potansiyeli ve dünyayı anlama yeteneğini şekillendirme gücü üzerinde düşünmeye davet eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: hikâye anlatımı, tarihsel üstkurmaca, travma anlatısı, savaş travması, travma kurgusu

Introduction

Storytelling became a remarkable narrative strategy in historiographic metafiction in the second half of the twentieth century; as a contemporary novelist, Penelope Lively makes a great contribution to the subgenre, historiographic metafiction with her fragmented narrative in her novel *Moon Tiger*. Lively uses storytelling as a narrative strategy to prove that there are alternative versions in the history of the world. Storytelling is also used to contribute to the healing process of the characters who suffer from war trauma. The study also claims that it is only through verbalizing their traumatic war experiences that the characters in the novel can reveal and present their war traumas. The small stories they construct serve as a relief for their traumatic war pains. This use of storytelling as a narrative strategy also contributes to the development of historiographic metafictional elements used in Lively's novel.

The narrative of the novel is problematic in that it paradoxically deals with historical events and personages. It reveals to the reader that history and fiction are both human constructs; therefore, it makes room for rethinking and restudying both fiction and history. Concerning both with personal and public histories as well as employing storytelling as a powerful strategy in its narration, *Moon Tiger* questions the concept of time and subverts the traditional novelistic qualities of plot, characters, and setting. The protagonist of the novel Claudia writes her personal history, and her discourse gradually becomes a version of public history. This fact proves that, as the official

history is a form of fiction, Lively's fiction becomes a version of the official history. In other words, Claudia's personal history becomes a version of the public history since her discourse is historicized through storytelling as a narrative strategy.

Theoretical Background

2.1. Storytelling and Historiography

Linda Hutcheon explains the role of historiographic metafiction in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* as follows:

Historiographic metafiction refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity. (1988: 93).

It encourages readers to ask who narrates, from whose point of view, under what circumstances, and what the narrator's aim is. Hutcheon maintains that "the producer of the text is never, strictly speaking, a real or even an implied one, but is rather one inferred by the reader from her/his positioning as enunciating entity" (1988: 81). Hutcheon's perspective suggests that the reader's role is not passive but actively involved in the creation of meaning. The author's intentions become elusive, and the reader is left to navigate a textual landscape where multiple interpretations and perspectives are possible. The act of reading is, therefore, a co-creative process, with the reader assuming the role of an enunciating entity, extracting meaning from the text based on their individual context, experiences, and cultural background.

Historiographic metafiction does not primarily aim to present a story claimed to be true or to decorate the story with fictional details; it rather foregrounds the constructed nature of historical narratives. Furthermore, although the primary focus of historical novels is on the past, in historiographic metafiction, the plot is often formed at the present. Historiographic metafiction aims to get access to the past and come to terms with it. In some novels under this category, the focus on the present attitudes towards the past results in a situation in which the discourse gains more importance than the story. That is, what matters most is not what happened in the fictional world, but rather how it is told, that is, how the past is reconstructed. Still, historiographic metafiction does not aim to bracket the referent or to express disbelief in the existence of reality; but rather it aims to question people's ability to know the reality, and it also aims to be able to represent the reality in language. The interest of historiographic metafiction changes the focus from the past to the present. By doing so, it emphasizes the role of the context of narration in both historiography and storytelling.

Storytelling has a significant impact on societies. Cultures are shaped, reshaped, transmitted, or ruined in the process of storytelling. In addition, telling a story contributes to the forming of social sciences. Timothy R. Tangherlini states in *Talking Trauma*:

Storytelling pervades our everyday lives and to a great degree structures how we view the world. We learn the beliefs, values, and norms of our culture through stories, respond to certain situations by telling stories, entertain each other with stories, and employ narration to voice our fears, hopes, frustrations, and joys (1998: xx).

At times, people use storytelling to criticize individuals and groups, or to convince others that they are right. Welsch claims that "we are drawn to history because its story is our story – by gazing backwards we learn the past as well as something of the present and possibly even something of our future" (1998: 116). In this sense, there is a strong relation between storytelling and historiography. Fonioková claims that "it is only by storytelling, the basic method of making sense of what happens around us, that people assign meaning to events and place them in a certain frame or master

narrative, such as that of linear progress or cyclicity” (2017: 567). In this sense, storytelling is a crucial narrative strategy in that it helps to reveal the traumatic experiences of individuals. Storytelling also contributes to the relief of the storyteller; that is, by turning these experiences into stories, the storyteller attributes more concrete meanings to his/her traumatic experiences.

Writing different versions of history, that is to say, personal histories, is also an alternative way to reveal the traumatic experience and even to reveal from the pains caused by this experience. Turning these experiences into language has a healing effect on the victim. Van Der Kolk states that “traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language” (1995: 176).

In exploring the intricate relationship between storytelling, historiography, and trauma, it becomes evident that narratives serve as powerful tools for individuals and societies to make sense of their past, present, and future. Historiographic metafiction can underline the complex interplay between fiction and reality, challenging traditional historical narratives. The notion that historiographic metafiction highlights the constructed nature of history rather than aiming to abolish it underscores the nuanced ways in which storytelling intersects with our understanding of the world. Through storytelling, cultures transmit their beliefs, values, and norms. Stories can shape, reshape, or even dismantle societal norms and expectations. Storytelling serves as a means of criticism and persuasion, reflecting the power of narratives to influence opinions and beliefs.

In essence, the interconnection between storytelling, historiography, and trauma highlights the profound impact of narratives on human experience. Through stories, individuals and societies navigate the complexities of their past, challenge prevailing narratives, and find healing and meaning amid traumatic experiences. The dynamic relationship between storytelling and history ultimately underscores the enduring power of narratives to shape our perceptions of reality and our collective understanding of the world.

2.2. Trauma and Storytelling in Fiction

The concept of trauma was coined in Ancient Greece, and it can be defined as “a psychological wound” in simple terms. Trauma is related to a multitude of wounds. In this sense, trauma is supposed to occur several times. Cathy Caruth claims in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, trauma has an “endless impact on a life” (1996: 16). Trauma is typically caused by disastrous events such as war, sexual violence, child abuse, or betrayal. However, individuals might react differently to the same events. Therefore, not all traumatic events traumatize individuals. Traumatization can be defined as the process of the formation of a mental wound. The traumatized person can be called as a victim. Cathy Caruth defines trauma in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* as

a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (1996: 4).

In this sense, traumatized individual carries a tragic memory in his/her subconscious mind. To manage and get rid of this sorrowful obsession, the person needs to transform his/her history into language. Therefore, reconstruction of history functions as a healing medium to get rid of the pains of traumatic experience. Traumatic experience cannot be easily interpreted since this experience is distorted in the victim's mind. A victim who is suffering from trauma is indeed in a psychological paralysis. Krystal defines this traumatic case as follows:

In the traumatic state there is a psychological paralysis which starts with a virtually complete blocking of the ability to feel emotions and pain as well as other physical sensations and

progresses to inhibition of other mental functions. The subjects themselves are able to observe and describe the blocking of affective response (1978: 101).

Similarly, trauma prevents victims from feeling their emotions and physical pains in some circumstances. This case also makes victims remain silent and isolated about the world around them. Traumatized individual cannot get rid of such a depressive mood when he or she cannot tell anyone or write about his or her sufferings. Here, the expression and depiction of traumatic experiences seem to have a significant function for the victim's recovery. The traumatized person is obsessed with an image or an unusual event that finds its roots in the unconscious mind. Furthermore, Brown claims that trauma is revealed when the person experiences an event that is "outside the range of human experience":

Categories of symptoms follow: reexperiencing symptoms, nightmares, and flashbacks; avoidance symptoms, the marks of psychic numbing; and the symptoms of heightened physiological arousal: hypervigilance, disturbed sleep, a distracted mind. But, first and foremost, an event outside the range of human experience (1995: 100).

Trauma studies reveal that storytelling and narrative might contribute to the recovery of a traumatized character or a group. The healing of trauma begins when the traumatized individual can convert the traumatic experiences into a logical and coherent narrative. Therefore, "the main step for the recovery of trauma is to verbalise the experience of suffering" (Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin, 2013: 2-3). This verbalisation process is frequently completed via storytelling that is employed as a narrative strategy in fiction.

The main purpose of storytelling in fiction is to break the silence and fear that characters have. By telling their stories, they find a way to reveal their traumatic experiences that make them silent and isolated from the world around them. Converting a person's trauma to a discourse is like taking him/her to a hospital to bandage his/her wounds. Most contemporary novels present the power of trauma in literature to capture reader's attention to possible reasons and relative outcomes of traumatic experiences. Parallel to this assertion, fiction regards trauma as an essential of human survival and development.

Trauma, as a psychological wound resulting from overwhelming events, has been a topic of exploration since ancient times. Cathy Caruth's definitions of trauma emphasize its enduring impact on an individual's life, manifesting as intrusive memories, dreams, or behaviours stemming from the traumatic event. Trauma, often caused by disastrous occurrences such as war, abuse, or betrayal, creates a psychological paralysis, hindering emotional and physical responses and isolating the victim from the world. In the face of trauma, storytelling emerges as a powerful mechanism for healing and recovery. By transforming traumatic experiences into language and weaving them into narratives, individuals find a means to verbalize their suffering. This verbalization is a vital step toward healing, enabling victims to break the silence and fear that often accompany trauma. Stories become a medium through which characters can articulate their pain, providing a way to bandage their wounds and find solace.

In the realm of fiction, storytelling plays a crucial role in addressing trauma. Through narratives, authors shed light on the complexities of human experiences, drawing readers into the psychological and emotional landscapes of traumatized characters. By engaging with these stories, readers confront the multifaceted nature of trauma and gain insight into the silent battles waged within the minds of those who have experienced overwhelming events. Furthermore, contemporary literature demonstrates the transformative power of trauma narratives. Novels serve as both a mirror and a window, reflecting readers' own experiences and opening their eyes to the diverse ways individuals cope with and overcome trauma. By exploring the intricacies of trauma through fiction, readers develop empathy and understanding, breaking down the barriers of silence and isolation that often surround the topic.

In essence, storytelling in the context of trauma serves as a bridge between the unspeakable pain of the past and the possibility of healing in the present. Through narratives, individuals, both real and fictional, find their voices and reclaim their agency, ultimately illustrating the resilience of the human spirit. As literature continues to explore and illuminate the intricacies of trauma, it offers a path toward healing, empathy, and collective understanding, emphasizing the profound impact of storytelling on the human experience.

Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger*

Lively (1987) begins *Moon Tiger* as follows: "I'm writing a history of the world" (1987: 1) and she claims that what she is writing is indeed her protagonist Claudia's personal history. Indeed, it is "the history of the world as selected by Claudia: fact and fiction, myth and evidence, images and documents" (Lively, 1987: 1). Claudia states, "My story is tangled with the stories of others – Mother, Gordon, Jasper, Lisa, and one other person above all; their voices must be heard also" (Lively, 1987: 5-6). Lively presents these different voices to prove that there are alternative histories as a challenge to the official history. The voices of the characters are functional in the strategy of narration. In the narration of the novel, there is a shift from the omniscient narrator to Claudia, then to Gordon. This shift in the narration is presented several times. After Claudia depicts a certain event, Gordon might portray it again in subsequent paragraphs. The shift might also be revealed in the timeline of the plot. Several chapters begin with Claudia's depiction in the hospital room where she is receiving a treatment but suddenly present a shift to Claudia's old days when she was witnessing the war period. This sudden shift in the timeline contributes to the formation of flashbacks in the narration of the novel.

Claudia does not have a linear timeline in her story. Instead, she gathers the pieces to tell her story: "Shake the tube and see what comes out. Chronology irritates me. There is no chronology inside my head. I am composed of a myriad Claudias who spin and mix and part like sparks of sunlight on water" (Lively, 1987: 2). Furthermore, she believes in her story, that is, her personal history as she claims: "My Victorians are not your Victorians. My seventeenth century is not yours. The voice of John Aubrey, of Darwin, of whoever you like, speaks in one tone to me, in another to you. The signals of my own past come from the received past" (Lively, 1987: 2). As for the official history, Claudia believes that every historical event is ambiguous since all historical events are conditioned by the culture and the relative period. She exemplifies this idea by stating that the history of Cortez's conquest of the Aztecs written by a nineteenth-century Bostonian is "a mirror of the mind of an enlightened, reflected American of 1843" (Lively, 1987: 154). In this sense, Claudia regards time as a subjective term, rather than an objective and chronological one. For Claudia, time is constructed in such a way that it can be restructured in people's minds with the coexistence of past and present.

As Joyce Appleby et al. suggest in their book *Telling the Truth about History*, "all histories are provisional; none will have the last word" (1994: 217) Claudia claims that people's understanding of history as a reliable source might not be probable at any time. That is, she believes that it is much difficult to know about the real history, completely what happened in the past. She questions:

And when you and I talk about history we don't mean what actually happened, do we? The cosmic chaos of everywhere, all time? We mean the tidying up of this into books, the concentration of the benign historical eye upon years and places and persons. History unravels; circumstances, following their natural inclination, prefer to remain ravelled (Lively, 1987: 6).

In this sense, by writing her story, that is her personal history, Claudia questions the probability of the existence of a certain, objective, and official history. She believes that history is a controversial issue since she states: "argument, of course, is the whole point of history" (Lively, 1987: 14). Claudia loses her father in Somme War (WWI). She loses her lover, Tom in WWI as well; therefore, she has a post-war trauma. In her pray for her father she utters:

Let him not be dead. Let him not be lying blown apart in the desert. Let him not be rotting out there in the sun. Above all let him not be dying slowly of thirst and wounds, unable to call out, over-looked by the ambulance units. If necessary, let him be taken prisoner. That I will tolerate (Lively, 1987: 58).

These words prove that Claudia suffers from a major trauma when she loses her father at war. The only way that she can recover from this trauma is to reconstruct history, to have a voice in the history of the World War I and to tell her personal story about the war. She states, "history killed Father" (Lively, 1987: 6). In this sense, by writing her personal history, she wants to change it. By forming an alternative version of her history, she wants to take revenge from the official history.

Claudia, who is now seventy-six years old, is portrayed to be staying in a hospital room in London for her treatment. However, she is aware that she has already begun to die with the death of her father at a very young age. The second major impact that causes her war trauma is the loss of her lover, Tom. Her anxiety about the war in Egypt stems from her major psychological pains. Krystal claims that "in the traumatic state [...] painful affects, e. g. anxiety is experienced as the first part of dying" (1978: 101-102). Therefore, Claudia's war trauma can be interpreted to be an illness like a type of cancer that is slowly and mischievously killing her. Her previous psychological pains and traumatic feelings turn into physiological wounds through the end of Claudia's life.

Penelope Lively's novel *Moon Tiger* stands as a remarkable example of metafiction, a genre that blurs the line between fiction and reality, inviting readers to question the nature of storytelling and the construction of narratives. Through innovative narrative strategies, self-aware characters, and the manipulation of traditional literary forms, Lively masterfully employs metafictional elements, enriching the readers' experience and challenging conventional storytelling conventions.

One of the prominent metafictional elements in *Moon Tiger* is the self-reflexivity of the narrative. The protagonist, Claudia, is acutely aware of her existence within a fictional construct. She often comments on her own story, acknowledging the act of storytelling and the creation of characters. This self-awareness blurs the boundaries between the character and the author, forcing readers to question the authenticity of Claudia's experiences and the reliability of her narrative. Lively employs a fragmented narrative structure, eschewing chronological order in favour of a nonlinear storytelling approach. Events from Claudia's past, including her experiences during World War II, are presented in a disjointed manner. This deliberate disruption of chronology challenges traditional storytelling norms and emphasizes the subjective nature of memory and history. Readers are compelled to actively engage with the text, piecing together the fragmented narrative to construct a coherent understanding of Claudia's life.

Moon Tiger features multiple perspectives, often presenting conflicting accounts of the same events. Characters such as Claudia, Gordon, and Tom offer their versions of the past, blurring the lines between truth and fiction. These unreliable narrators create a sense of ambiguity, prompting readers to question the reliability of the information presented. Through this strategy, Lively highlights the inherent subjectivity of storytelling and challenges the notion of objective truth in narratives. Lively incorporates intertextual references and literary allusions, referencing historical events, literature, and cultural phenomena within the text. These references serve as a metafictional device, inviting readers to consider the broader context in which the story unfolds. By drawing on existing narratives and cultural references, Lively prompts readers to reflect on the interconnectedness of stories, both fictional and real, and their influence on one another.

Through Claudia's musings on history, memory, and storytelling, *Moon Tiger* raises existential questions about the nature of reality and fiction. Claudia's belief in the power of myth and fiction over historical accounts challenges conventional notions of truth. By questioning the boundaries between reality and imagination, Lively invites readers to contemplate the transformative potential of storytelling and its ability to shape our understanding of the world.

Small stories in *Moon Tiger* challenge to the official history of the world. At the end of her life Claudia decides to “align my own life with the history of the world” (Lively, 1987: 2). Personal experience is usually omitted from historical accounts. However, Claudia focuses on her personal story and intends to include it in historiography. When she reads her lover, Tom’s war diary in the end of the novel, she draws no parallels between what he wrote and the official historical documents: “Your experience – raw and untreated – does not seem to contribute to any of that. It is on a different plane. I cannot analyse and dissect it, draw conclusions, construct arguments” (Lively, 1987: 207). In this sense, there is a large gap in discourse between the historians’ reports and the horrible experience of the soldiers who fought in the war. This fact addresses the limits of historiography.

Linda Hutcheon claims in *Narcissistic Narrative* that “the most authentic and honest fiction might well be the one which most freely acknowledges its fictionality” (1991: 49). Claudia has parallel assertions in *Moon Tiger*. She states: “fiction can seem more enduring than reality” (Lively, 1987: 6). With this expression, Claudia claims that stories are more real and satisfactory than what reality offers. She maintains: “Mythology is much better stuff than history: it has form; logic; a message” (Lively, 1987: 7). In this sense, she does not give much significance to history since she believes that history does not have logic or a message.

Claudia believes that “we [all people] are sleeping histories of the world” (Lively, 1987: 65). All people are loaded with the words, customs, and attitudes of the previous generations. Thinking and reconstructing them is the first process of writing history. As for Claudia, to reconstruct history, she needs to write her own stories in the first stage. The practice of telling these stories helps her feel better. The reason that she does not follow a linear timeline is that she wants to solve her traumatic feelings one by one as they appear in her mind. These stories later come together as a form of alternative history to challenge the official history of the world.

Claudia is very much aware of the impossibility of writing an objective narrative about the past. She is also aware of the impossibility to escape from evaluating the events with the circumstances of the present. She states: “I cannot shed my skin and put on yours, cannot strip my mind of its knowledge and its prejudices, cannot look clearly at the world with the eyes of a child, am as imprisoned by my time as you were by yours” (Lively, 1987: 31). She also displays an honest attitude towards history: “As a historian, I know only too well that there is nothing I can do about the depth and extend of misrepresentation, so I don’t care” (Lively, 1987: 125). For instance, she retells Gordon’s meeting Claudia at the train station for more than once but each with different details. Claudia calls this “kaleidoscopic narration” (Lively, 1987: 2).

Claudia goes to Egypt to work as a war correspondent. This is an opportunity for her to construct her own history. She believes that she will erase the sorrowful memory of her dead father once she experiences a vast, true war. “What happened there happens now only inside my head – no one else sees the same landscape, hears the same sounds, knows the sequence of events” (Lively, 1987: 70). When Claudia begins to tell stories about this war, she supposes that she can get rid of her traumatic war experience about her father. Claudia believes that historiography is never objective. Therefore, to challenge the authority of the historian and the notion of absolute truth provided by the official history, the novel presents a war diary in the end. Tom’s war diary that is revealed in the end of the novel functions to assign meaning to Claudia’s war trauma. For a traumatized person, assigning meaning to his/her traumatic experience is necessary for his/her healing process. History is presented in the novel as a medium for grasping reality. Tom claims that his intention in writing a war diary stems from his wish to attribute meaning to the recorded events: “This is as it was, raw and untreated. At some point, I shall want to make sense of it” (Lively, 1987: 204). This idea suggests that experience, whether personal or official needs to be transformed into language to be interpreted.

Narrative has the power to revive the past both in history and fiction. Tom’s war diary keeps him alive and fresh in Claudia’s mind. Tom writes: “the story continues; I am still in it” (Lively, 1987,

p. 204). Claudia thinks: “we are no longer in the same story” (Lively, 1987: 206). Claudia’s last statements are as follows:

All I can think, when I hear your voice, is that the past is true, which both appals and uplifts me. I need it; I need you, Gordon, Jasper, Lisa, all of them. And I can only explain this need by extravagance: my history and the world’s. Because unless I am a part of everything I am nothing (Lively, 1987: 207).

Claudia, here, addresses the unification of the personal history and history as a grand narrative. She implies that both terms stand with each other since personal history functions as a complementary term in the narration of the official history. Personal stories about the past include some details, personal feelings, and civilians’ experiences which are all needed to complete the picture that the official history draws.

Penelope Lively’s novel *Moon Tiger* delves deeply into the intricate relationship between personal history and official history, challenging traditional notions of objective historiography. Through the character of Claudia, Lively explores the complexity of human experiences, especially the traumas of war, and the subjective nature of interpreting historical events. Claudia’s narrative strategy, characterized by non-linear storytelling and the inclusion of multiple voices, emphasizes the multiplicity of perspectives within historical events. By weaving together fact and fiction, Claudia constructs her personal history, intertwining it with broader historical events. Her refusal to adhere to a linear chronology mirrors the fragmented and subjective nature of memory, illustrating the intricate ways in which individuals construct their own histories.

The novel raises profound questions about the reliability and objectivity of historical accounts. Claudia’s scepticism towards the official historical narrative underscores the limitations of traditional historiography. She recognizes the inherent biases, prejudices, and misrepresentations that shape historical records. Through Claudia’s perspective, Lively challenges the conventional understanding of history as an objective truth, highlighting the malleability of historical interpretations. Furthermore, Claudia’s traumatic experiences during the wars serve as a focal point, emphasizing the deeply personal and emotional aspects of historical events. Her attempts to make sense of these traumas through storytelling and reconstructing her personal history reflect the healing power of narrative. Claudia’s narrative journey becomes a means of coping with her war-related traumas, demonstrating the cathartic role of storytelling in processing and understanding complex historical events.

Lively’s novel ultimately underscores the importance of personal narratives in enriching our understanding of history. By embracing the subjective, diverse, and often contradictory nature of individual experiences, *Moon Tiger* challenges the notion of a singular, definitive historical truth. Instead, it advocates for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to historiography—one that acknowledges the multiplicity of voices, experiences, and perspectives that contribute to the rich tapestry of human history. Through Claudia’s story, Lively invites readers to reconsider the boundaries between personal history and the broader historical context, encouraging a more empathetic and comprehensive view of the past.

Conclusion

In *Moon Tiger* Penelope Lively skilfully employs metafictional elements to create a narrative that is self-aware, fragmented, and intellectually stimulating. By challenging traditional storytelling conventions, Lively prompts readers to critically engage with the text, questioning the nature of truth, memory, and the act of storytelling itself. Through the novel’s metafictional complexity, Lively invites readers on a thought-provoking journey, encouraging them to explore the intricate interplay between fiction and reality, ultimately enriching their literary experience.

Moon Tiger is an example of historical representation of a civilian. It employs an unconventional narrative method to present themes like history, life story, memory, time, and reality. To tell her story, Claudia moves back and forth to gather the pieces. Her story is stored in memory as fragments. She recalls the events first, and then constructs them with language. This act of narrating stories helps her recover from her traumatic experience stemming from her father's death in Somme War. As the war continues Claudia decides to write her own story that would become her personal history as a challenge to the official history of the world.

Claudia's, Gordon's, and Jasper's stories about the on-going wars as well as Tom's war diary are presented in *Moon Tiger* to prove that there are also alternative versions of history. These personal, historical documents fill the gap of what the official historical documents do not tell. In this sense, storytelling that is used as a narrative strategy in the novel is also used to reconstruct history. Contributing to the rewriting process of history, these personal stories also function as a healing medium for Claudia's war trauma. To historicize these traumatic experiences, to look at them from a distance, and to share these experiences by turning them into stories necessarily relieve Claudia in her bed where she waits for her death.

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Çatışma Beyanı

Makalenin herhangi bir aşamasında maddi veya manevi çıkar sağlanmış veya sağlanmamış ise belirtilmelidir.

Yayın Etiđi Beyanı

Bu makalenin planlanmasından, uygulanmasına, verilerin toplanmasından verilerin analizine kadar olan tüm süreçte “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiđi Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen tüm kurallara uyulmuştur. Yönergenin ikinci bölümü olan “Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiđine Aykırı Eylemler” başlığı altında belirtilen eylemlerden hiçbirini gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Bu araştırmanın yazım sürecinde bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışma herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiştir.