

**RE-PRESENTING THE PAST: A STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS OF
JULIAN BARNES**

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2016

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in English of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

DECLARATION

Mizoram University

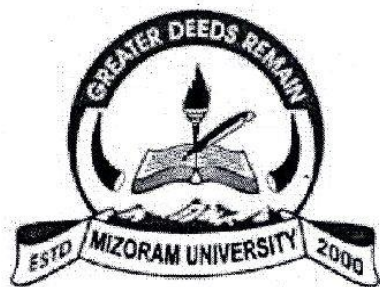
June, 2016.

I, Marlyn Lalnunmawii Sailo, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any other University or Institute.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that “Re-Presenting The Past: A Study of Selected Novels of Julian Barnes” written by Marlyn Lalnunmawii Sailo has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the M.Phil. regulations of Mizoram University. The dissertation is the result of her own investigation. Neither the dissertation as a whole nor part of it was ever submitted by any other University for any research degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I thank God for His blessings, guidance and for the gift of good health during the course of my research.

My heartfelt and humble gratitude goes to my supervisor Prof. Sarangadhar Baral, the Head of Department, for his support, encouragement, limitless patience and guidance throughout the course of my work.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the faculty of the Department of English, Mizoram University for giving me the opportunity to carry out the research and for their invaluable advice and support.

I also thank my family for their love, encouragement and prayers throughout my study.

(MARLYN LALNUNMAWII SAILO)

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Julian Barnes is one of the most interesting voices in contemporary British fiction. He was born in Leicester on 19th January 1946, the son of Albert Leonard and Kaye Barnes. His parents taught French in school. During his childhood, they would often travel through France which instilled in him a love of the country. His brother is Jonathan Barnes, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of La Sorbonne in France. Barnes received his education at the City of London School and studied modern languages like French and Russian at Magdalen College, Oxford. From 1969 to 1972, he worked as a lexicographer on the *Oxford English Dictionary* but eventually moved into journalism as a reviewer, literary editor and TV critic. He then read for the bar and qualified as a barrister in 1974 but he never practiced because at the same time he started working as a freelance journalist which appealed much more to him (Guignery 2).

From 1976 to 1978, he published satirical pieces as Edward Pygge in the ‘Greek Street’ column of *The New Review* and in 1977 became contributing editor under the direction of the poet, critic and literary editor Ian Hamilton. In 1981, he won Gourmet Writer of the Year under Basil Seals, another of his pen-names as a restaurant critic for *Tatler*. In 1977, Barnes joined the *New Statesman* as assistant literary editor under Martin Amis. There, he met and made friends with columnist Christopher Hitchens and poets Craig Raine and James Fenton. Until 1981, he reviewed novels and television programmes. From 1979 to 1982, he was deputy director of the *Sunday Times*, and from 1982 to 1986, television critic for *The Observer*. In 1979, Barnes married literary agent Pat Kavanagh, to whom most of his fiction is dedicated and whose surname he used as a pseudonym for his detective novels (2).

Barnes’ first short story ‘A Self-Possessed Woman’ appeared in *The Times Anthology of Ghost Stories* in 1975. He published his first novel *Metroland* in 1980. It won the Somerset

Maugham Award for a debut novel and was turned into a film in 1998. It was about the north-western suburb of London called Northwood where his family had moved to from Acton, west London. Barnes' second novel *Before She Met Me* (1982) was a mixture of horror and comedy which received mixed reviews. Apart from these, he has also published *Talking It Over* (1991) and *Love Etc.* (2001).

In 1983, one year before the publication of *Flaubert's Parrot*, Barnes had already been selected by the Book Marketing Council as one of the twenty 'Best of Young British Novelists' in a list that included Martin Amis, Pat Barker, William Boyd, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan and Salman Rushdie. He established his reputation with the novels *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) and *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* (1989). He continues to publish occasional reviews, essays and pieces on painting in "Modern Painters", the "New Yorker", the "New York Review of Books", "The Guardian" or the "Times Literary Supplement". From 1981 to 1987, Barnes published four detective novels as Dan Kavanagh. These novels were *Duffy* (1980), *Fiddle City* (1981), *Putting the Boot In* (1985) and *Going to the Dogs* (1987) (3).

Julian Barnes has written numerous novels, short stories and essays. His books have received considerable critical acclaim worldwide, and several have been nominated for and won prestigious literary prizes, including the 2011 Man Booker Prize for *The Sense of an Ending*. He has published more than fourteen novels. He has also translated a book by French author Alphonse Daudet and a collection of German cartoons by Volker Kriegel, *The Truth about Dogs* (1988). He also wrote an unpublished non-fiction work entitled *A Literary Guide to Oxford* in the 1970s, as well as drafts for two screenplays, *Growing Up in the Gorbals* (1987) and *The Private Wound* (1989). From 1990 to 1994, he became the London

correspondent of the *New Yorker* and wrote long essays on his own country that were later collected in *Letters From London 1990-1995*. His writing has earned him considerable respect as an author who deals with the themes of history, reality, truth and love.

Barnes achieved his first commercial and critical success with the publication of *Flaubert's Parrot* in 1984. He called it 'an upside-down sort of novel' and said, "I suspected that *Flaubert's Parrot* might interest a few Flaubertians and perhaps a smaller number of psittacophiles (parrot lovers)". The novel is a story about the obsession of Geoffrey Braithwaite, the narrator, with Gustave Flaubert- 'the hermit of Croisset who sacrificed living to his unending quest for style, the father of modernism who wished most of all to write "a book about nothing"' (Brooks 1). The protagonist Geoffrey Braithwaite is an English doctor in his sixties who spends his time pursuing details about the life of Flaubert. He attempts to find out the inspiration for *Madame Bovary*, the place where Flaubert had trysts with his mistress and the true identity of the stuffed parrot that was placed on Flaubert's desk while he was writing 'A Simple Heart' (1). The book was shortlisted for a Booker Prize, but did not win it. Barnes has said, "I don't want to think about it. It's much more important whether one's satisfied with the book oneself and whether it's still in print in ten years' time, and anything on top is a bonus" (2).

Barnes second critical and commercial success came with the publication of *A History of the World In 10 ½ Chapters* in 1989. It is a collection of short stories written in different styles. The story is told in eleven parts. The events in these ten and a half chapters seem to be separate events but are all connected. It has an element of absurdity in the creation of events that should never have happened. The result is at once funny and tragic. These stories often seem separate but they have points that are similar. It is an illustration of how history repeats itself. The first

chapter is narrated by a woodworm after finding itself a stowaway on Noah's Ark. He appears in almost all of the ten and a half chapters and shares his historical perspective and knowledge. One of the recurring motifs in the novel is the portrayal of ships.

Barnes has also published a political novel *The Porcupine* (1992) which is a satire on the fall of the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe. Barnes tries to explore a new area of experience and experiments with different narrative modes in his writings. He aims to present the relationship between fact and fiction and the irretrievability of the past in his novels (Guignery 1). Julian Barnes is perhaps the most versatile and idiosyncratic author of an astoundingly talented generation of writers, and he is also intensely prolific and at home in many genres (Groes and Childs 1). Through the years, Barnes has received several awards both in Britain and abroad: the E.M. Forster American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award for Work of Distinction in 1986, the Gutenberg Prize in France in 1987, the Premio Grinzane Cavour in Italy in 1988, the Shakespeare Prize of the FVS Foundation of Hamburg in 1993, and the Austrian State Prize for European Literature in 2004. He was named Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters in France in 1988, promoted to Officer in 1995, and finally to Commander in 2004.

Though it is difficult to map out the dominant trends in contemporary British fiction, it can be said with relative certainty the past is a central concern (Rennison 134). Alongside the response to contemporary issues, contemporary British fiction shows a continued interest in the past tradition (Shaffer 158). Revisiting the narratives and genealogies of the past is a continuing trend, and contemporary British novelists like Julian Barnes, Martin Amis and Ian McEwan have all produced novels that engage with the complexities of a person's relationship with the past.

Julian Barnes, as a contemporary British writer, recognizes the importance of history in his novels. In his works, he articulates the dynamics of the relationship between the past and the present and the relationship between fiction and history. What is significant is he examines this relationship and how it affects the construction of individual identities. His works emphasize the overlapping themes of personal memory and history. Barnes' contemporaries also reflect the ethos of the postmodern British society. Though his contemporaries like Martin Amis and Ian McEwan share the same style of writing they are often concerned with geographic space (Bentley 35).

It is important to note that Barnes does not attempt to represent the past in his novels as representation would entail accountability and responsibility from the writer; nor does he assume to present objects, facts or accounts of the past as it is. As a postmodern writer, he suggests that there is the possibility of revisiting the past and re-presenting it. In re-presenting the past in his novels, he is not constrained by the responsibility to be truthful or accurate to past events and experiences. Rather, he acknowledges that there can be more than one representation of the past; and that the gaps in earlier representations can be dealt with by attempting to re-present them.

Barnes' contemporary Martin Amis has produced notable works like *Money* (1984) and *London Fields* (1989). In his novel *Money* (1984), Martin Amis speaks boldly of a decade of greed and mindless overindulgence. The protagonist is John Self. He works in advertising and has offices in New York and London. The novel describes modern life with all its excesses in a conversational and hilarious tone. His works explore the sordid undercurrents of life in the late twentieth century Britain. They are centred on the material excesses of Western society. Ian McEwan published the novels *Amsterdam* (1998) and *Atonement* (2001). His works are

concerned with memory, history and fiction and how a particularly romanticized view of the world can be both dangerous and soothing (Bradford 158). Ian McEwan's celebrated novel *Atonement* provides an insightful take on the ways that fiction intervenes in the lives of people. It is told from the perspective of Briony Tallis, a young English novelist. It follows her life which is overshadowed by the events of her youth and the Second World War. It is told in dramatic prose how her lies create misery and mercy reminding the reader of the inevitable presence of fiction. It shares a similarity with the selected works of Julian Barnes as they rely on unreliable narrators whose recollections of the past are doubtful and uncertain. The characters and events are subjected to change according to a change in perspective or the introduction of a new point of view. Like Barnes' Tony Webster in *The Sense of an Ending*, Ian McEwan's Briony Tallis in *Atonement* also embellishes the past and recollects her memories inaccurately to create a version of the past that she is most comfortable with.

In view of all the appreciations made for the literature of Britain's past, a relatively small amount of attention has been paid to England's post-war canon. Contemporary British fiction does not address the same social issues as that of Austen's or Dickens' time. These novels express the difficulties of adjusting to suburban life, the rejection or acceptance of new subversive movements. They help discover the manifold trends that affect the hearts and minds of the people in a postmodern age (*Contemporary British Novelists* n.p). Julian Barnes has written many unique works, many of which combine to create a complex, interwoven whole. His novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) contains subtle interjections from a speaker haunted by a past he does not want to confront. The novel is an indication of the capabilities and the limitations of fiction and subjective narration, and how one uses it to deal with conflicts in life.

Peter Childs, in *Contemporary Novelists: British Fiction Since 1970*, points out that Barnes is considered a postmodernist writer because “his fiction rarely either conforms to the model of the realist novel or concerns itself with a scrutiny of consciousness in the manner of modernist writing” (86). A clear definition of postmodernism might be useful to better understand the recurrent postmodernism in Barnes’ fiction. Postmodernist theory has challenged traditional notions of history. This has resulted in a pluralization of historical accounts, a focus on the inevitable bias of the individual recounting or constructing any historical event and how writing transforms experience (Bentley 45). The term ‘postmodern’ came into expanded use in the 1970s after Ihab Hassan, who would become one of postmodernism’s most well-known spokesmen, connected literary, philosophical, and social trends under the term in 1971 (Cahoone 9). The playwrights of the late 19th and early 20th century like August Strindberg, the Italian author Luigi Pirandello and the German playwright and theorist Bertolt Brecht have influenced the aesthetic of postmodernism (Felluga 1). In the 1910s, artists associated with Dadaism celebrated chance, parody, playfulness and challenged the authority of the artist. Dadaism also influenced postmodernism in its development of collage, specifically using elements from advertisement or illustrations from popular novels. The surrealists developed from Dadaism and continued to experiment with chance and parody while celebrating the flow of the subconscious mind (McCaffery xv). Surrealist Rene Magritte’s experiments with signification are used by Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Foucault also uses examples from Jorge Luis Borges, an important direct influence on many postmodern fiction writers. The influence of his experiments with metafiction and magic realism was not fully realized in the Anglo-American world until the postmodern period. Other early twentieth century novels such as Raymond Roussels’

Impressions d'Afrique (1910) and *Locus Solus* (1914), and Giorgio de Chirico's *Hebdomeros* (1929) have also been identified as important postmodern precursors (Lewis 234).

It is difficult to summarize what postmodernism means, because there is much disagreement among writers labeled postmodern. Some postmodernists deny having any doctrines or theories at all. Perhaps the very idea of a summary is antithetical to postmodernism (Cahoone 10). Postmodern literature is characterized by reliance on narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox and the unreliable narrator. It is often described as a trend which emerged in the post-World War II era. Postmodern works are seen as a response against dogmatic following of Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature (Felluga 1).

Both postmodern and modern literatures represent a break from nineteenth century realism. In character development, both modern and postmodern literatures explore subjectivism. They break from external reality to examine inner states of consciousness. They also explore fragmentariness in narrative and character-construction. The main difference is that modern literature sees fragmentation and subjectivity as an existential crisis, a problem that must be solved, and the artist is often the one who should solve it. Whereas postmodern literature demonstrates that this chaos is insurmountable, the artist is irrelevant and the only way to deal with the ruin is to play with it. In postmodernism, playfulness becomes central as the achievement of order and meaning is unlikely. Gertrude Stein's playful experiment with metafiction and genre in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Tokias* (1933) has been interpreted as postmodernism (McHale, *Contemporary* 1).

Postmodern literature does not have a specific date for the rise and fall of its popularity. The year in which James Joyce and Virginia Woolf died, 1941, is sometimes used as a boundary for its start. The literary theorist Keith Hopper regards *The Third Policeman* (1967) by Flann O'Brien as the first of the genre that they call the postmodernist novel (Hopper 8). The prefix 'post' does not necessarily imply a new era. It could indicate a reaction against modernism in the wake of the Second World War. It could also imply a reaction to significant post-war events – the beginning of the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, postcolonialism and postcolonial literature, and the rise of Cyberpunk fiction and Hypertext fiction (Sponsler 625).

There are critics who argue that the beginning of postmodern literature is marked by significant publications or literary events. Some mark the beginning of postmodernism with the first publication of John Hawkes' *The Cannibal* in 1949, the first performance of *Waiting For Godot* in 1953, the first publication of *Howl* in 1956 or of *Naked Lunch* in 1959. For others the beginning is marked by moments in critical theory: Jacques Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play" lecture in 1966 or as late as Ihab Hassan's usage in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* in 1971. Brian McHale details his main thesis on this shift, although many postmodern works have developed out of modernism, modernism is characterized by an epistemological dominant while postmodernism works are primarily concerned with questions of ontology (McHale, *Postmodernist* 72).

Though postmodernist literature does not include everything written in the postmodern period, several post-war developments in literature such as Theatre of the Absurd, the Beat Generation and Magic Realism have significant similarities. These developments are occasionally collectively labeled postmodern. Samuel Beckett, William S. Burroughs, Jorge Luis

Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez are cited as significant contributors to the postmodern aesthetic. The work of Samuel Beckett is often seen as marking the shift from modernism to postmodernism in literature. He was friends with James Joyce but he realized that in order to move away from his shadow, he must focus on the poverty of language and man as a failure. He was definitely one of the fathers of postmodern movement in fiction which has continued undermining the ideas of logical coherence in narration, formal plot, regular time sequence, and psychologically explained characters (McHale, *Contemporary* 45).

Postmodern literature tends to resist definition or classification as a ‘movement’. Indeed, postmodern literature converges with various modes of critical theory, particularly reader-response and deconstructionist approaches. It also subverts the implicit contract between author, text and reader by which works are often characterized. This has led novels like *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) by Cervantes and *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne being considered as early examples of postmodern literature in retrospect (Graf 22).

There is little consensus on the precise characteristics, scope and importance of postmodern literature. Five prominent postmodern themes can be distinguished: four are objects of its criticism, and one constitutes its positive method. Postmodernism typically criticizes: presence and presentation (versus representation and construction), origin (versus phenomena), unity (versus plurality), and transcendence of norms (versus their immanence) (Cahoone 18). Postmodernism argues that language is subject to contingency, indeterminacy, and the generation of multiple meanings. Reason, rather than being an instrument of understanding, is instead an instrument of mastery, discipline and social control. All the values, ideals and norms of western philosophy and western social life – from truth conceived as a clear idea present to the conscious mind to the individual conceived as a free agent who determines his or her own destiny – deny

the materiality and contingency of existence. This is characterized by movement, change and multiplicity, rather than logic, regularity and identity (Ryan 67).

Postmodernists are more concerned with the contingencies of identity, the undecidability of meaning, and the indeterminacy of the world. Postmodern literature can be defined in relation to a precursor. A postmodern literary work tends not to conclude with the neatly tied-up ending as is often found in modernist literature. It rather often parodies it. Postmodern writers tend to celebrate chance over craft, and further employ metafiction to undermine the writer's authority. Another characteristic of postmodern literature is the questioning of distinctions between high and low culture through the use of pastiche, the combination of subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature (Fowler 372).

Linda Hutcheon claimed postmodern fiction as a whole could be characterized by the ironic quote marks, that much of it can be taken as tongue-in-cheek. This irony, as well as black humour and the general concept of 'play' which is related to Jacques Derrida's concept of the ideas advocated by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text* are among the most recognizable aspects of postmodernism (Hutcheon 18). These traits became central in most postmodern works. Postmodern works represents a decentered concept of the universe in which individual works are not isolated creations, but rather puts emphasis on intertextuality. There often is a relationship between one text and the other or one text within a text in literary history. Critics often call this as an example of postmodernism's lack of originality and its reliance on clichés. Intertextuality in a postmodern literature can be a reference or parallel to another literary work, or the adoption of a style (McHale, *Contemporary* 27). A good example of intertextuality is *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* by Jorge Luis Borges, a story with significant references to Don Quixote.

Another characteristic of postmodernism – pastiche means to combine together different elements. In postmodern literature this can be homage to or a parody of past styles. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic aspects of postmodern society. For example – William S. Burroughs uses science fiction, detective fiction and Westerns while Margaret Atwood uses science fiction and fairy tales. Metafiction is another characteristic of postmodern writing. It is about essentially writing about writing and or ‘foregrounding the apparatus’ (Dyer 29). It is typical of postmodernist approaches, making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader. Postmodern sensibility and metafiction dictate that works of parody should parody the idea of parody itself (Ayala and Bernabe 331). Italo Calvino’s novel *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* (1979) is about a reader attempting to read a novel of the same name.

Julian Barnes is concerned with the use of the past and the relationship between social and personal history in his novels. He explores the element of reconstruction of the past and the unreliability of memory in his fiction. In *The Sense of an Ending*, Julian Barnes addresses the way in which history and narratives of the past affect the present. In the novel *England, England*, the character Martha Cochrane struggles to reconcile her public and private self. She fails to faithfully recall the past. Her memory also appears to distort past events for its own purposes. In the reiteration of identity, Barnes shows that memory is performative rather than strictly commemorative. This novel is an example of how the recollection of memory and the past is explored.

England, England (2012) is a novel by Julian Barnes, published and shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1998. The novel introduces the idea of replicating England in a theme park on the Isle of Wight. It is divided into three parts entitled "England", "England, England" and

"Anglia". The novel has dystopian elements as it sees the country of England being led to ruin and going back to a primitive rural way of living. The first part focuses on the protagonist Martha Cochrane and her childhood memories. It opens with the lines- 'What is your first memory', someone would ask. And she would reply, 'I don't remember'" (Barnes, *England* 1). This indicates the importance of memory and the past in the novel. Martha remembers and recalls her childhood days. She remembers that she used to love her Counties of England jigsaw puzzle. Her father would hide a piece of the puzzle and would reproduce it only after she had furiously searched for it. This was a happy memory for Martha. She would also visit Agricultural Shows with her parents in their village and fall in love with the scenery and the people there. When her father left, Martha believes that he took the Nottinghamshire piece of her jigsaw puzzle because she could not find it anywhere. She associated her childhood, especially her father leaving off, with the jigsaw puzzle. She would always think about the puzzle whenever she tried to recall her history. Years later, after she graduated college and began working, her father contacted her and she asked him about the Nottinghamshire piece. When her father could not remember any of it, she felt angry and betrayed that what was such a big part of her childhood had been completely forgotten by her own father.

The second part, "England, England" shows the character Martha in her forties as she gets employed by the entrepreneur Sir Jack Pitman for his project of turning the Isle of Wight into a gigantic theme park which contains everything that people, especially tourists, consider to be quintessentially English, selected according to what Sir Jack himself approves of. It shows Martha as a divorced, career-driven woman who tries to climb the corporate ladder. The chapter depicts and follows different characters that hold different positions in the Project's Coordinating Committee as they try to develop the attractions for theme park. These attractions

include the royal family, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Manchester United Football club, Robin Hood and his Merrie Men and Samuel Johnson. The chapter also reveals more about the character of Sir Jack Pitman and describes him as a wealthy man with a huge ego and questionable sexual inclinations. The theme park called 'England, England' thus becomes a replica of England's best known historical buildings, figures and sites. The chapter also sees the rise of Martha to the CEO of the Pitco Company by blackmailing Sir Jack, and also her fall. It also shows the Island and the theme park becoming a success so much so that the Old England was ruined as people preferred the replica of the country to the original land.

The third part of the novel, "Anglia" is the final chapter of the novel. It is set decades later after the construction of the theme park and depicts Martha who has returned to a village in England after many years of wandering abroad. Martha ultimately spends her final days in this rural setting pondering about her past. The Isle of Wight, now called 'England, England' continues to prosper and grow. After functioning for a time under Sir Jack, he is now dead and the Island is now under new management. New characters are also introduced to depict the scene of England, which was now known as Anglia, picking itself up after suffering extreme devastation. They are seen trying to restore old traditions by organizing community activities. In the wake of the downfall of the original land of England, other countries had refused to help the country. The leaders of other countries believe that the downfall of England could be the case of history exacting its revenge on a country which had occupied and colonized other countries. The country England in the novel also has a history of colonizing other countries. The dystopian element of the story is seen in the third chapter as the England describes is that of a pre-industrialized community. The theme of memory is brought up again as the schoolmaster of the village where Martha lives asks her to remember her childhood in the English countryside.

Though Martha was unable to contribute much, the village has its fete in which Martha participated. The novel ends with a tone of misery at what has been lost combined with cheerfulness at the prospect of a new beginning. Barnes draws us, perhaps against our better judgement, ‘toward the possibility that there might just be something, albeit wonderfully intangible, that touches a genuine emotion a sense of belonging’ to the memory of a lost England (Groes and Childs 3). This could be an indication of how the main protagonist Martha feels about the replica of England that she had helped create. Though she had been a vital part of the island’s construction and management, she finds herself leaving it all behind and going back to the old England.

The novel shares important concerns with many other contemporary British novels. It focuses on the question of how much one can know about the past. This novel shows the features characteristic of postmodernist historiographic metafiction, because, it is “intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lays claim to historical events and personages” (Hutcheon 5). The novel also reflects the feature which has been the major focus of attention in most of the critical work on postmodernist; that is, a self-conscious assessment of the status and function of narrative in literature, history and theory. Its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past (5). The novel is concerned with the relationship with the past and the present. It focuses on the characters’ recollection of their memory and also what the history of England means to them. The aspect of personal memory is presented to a large extent through the main protagonist Martha Cochrane in the novel.

The novel explores, constructs, parodies and deconstructs the invented traditions and the past of England. It incorporates a large number of different traces of the English cultural past, including many myths and legends. It explores the complexity of any account of a person's memory and identity. It offers self-conscious reflections upon the invention of the past and the questionable notion of historical authenticity (Pakditawan 3). It concentrates not on the irrelevancy of art but on the greater reality of history. Barnes' book is a devastating indictment of what the world has come to, of the artificiality of reality and of the indifference to authenticity. The dismissal of the notion that tourists demand the truly authentic is one of the many marvelous riffs in the novel. He warns the reader of a pre-packaged and pre-programmed world. He gives the book a great resonance by emphasizing history over art.

Barnes has claimed that in the course of the twentieth century reality has been superceded by simulacra- a representation of the original (3). The history of England is used in the novel as a basis for the plan to rebuild a replica of people's concept of history. History is not obviously and transparently reflected in the novel. It rather self-consciously explores the nature of history and how its established versions can be invented and upheld.

The Sense of an Ending is a 2011 novel written by the same author Julian Barnes. It won the Man Booker prize in the same year that it was published. The novel is divided into two parts, entitled "One" and "Two", both of which are narrated by Tony Webster when he is retired and living alone. In the first part of the novel, the protagonist Tony recalls his childhood days. He belonged to a group which consisted of Alex, Colin and later Adrian. The chapter depicts their friendship, their observation of life and their philosophical dilemmas. Tony recalls how he and his clique met Adrian Finn at school. Tony, Alex and Colin had one thing in common – their admiration and respect for Adrian and they all tried to impress him. Adrian is more serious and

intelligent than the rest, which was evident in his performance at school and was somewhat of a teacher's pet. The chapter follows them during their college years and the various relationships that they formed. When they part for higher studies, they all swear to stay friends forever. But they find it extremely difficult to stay in touch after living in different places and attending different schools. Then Adrian commits suicide and the friends move on and try to forget. Apart from the recollection of childhood, the chapter is filled with philosophical musings of four teenage boys like the concept of suicide – how they thought it was not morally wrong in spite of what they were taught at school; and the general observation of time.

The second part of the book depicts events that happened forty years later. Tony, who has had a career, a failed marriage and a daughter, receives a lawyer's letter. The letter leaves with Tony an unexpected bequest which leads him on a search through the past that has suddenly turned murky. The letter happens to be a will of Sarah Ford, Tony's ex-girlfriend Veronica's mother. It turns out she had bequeathed some money and Adrian's diary to him. The information that Adrian had kept a diary and that it was bequeathed to him totally disrupts Tony's life. It forces Tony to reach out to Veronica. Tony unwillingly does this as he had ended things with her rather badly after finding out that Adrian dated Veronica after they broke up. Veronica refuses to give Tony the letter and burned it. But through their conversations, Tony realizes that he himself may be at fault for judging Veronica too harshly. He also comes to see that Adrian might not have been the man that they made him out to be. Tony reconsiders the opinions he has formed and the judgements he has made after he finds out that Adrian had fathered a child with Veronica's mother. Tony retracts his statements about Veronica and his past in general as he admits he has been too quick in offering up his version of what happened. The novel ends with a note of somewhat of a reconciliation with the past. Tony softens towards Veronica and Adrian

and the grudges he has held against them. He accepts that he would always find his life ordinary if he tries to measure up to the standards of his ideals as a young man. The novel is an interesting read as it deals with philosophical issues like the concept of suicide as understood by the main characters; and personal memory that affects the narrative of a middle-aged man.

In his novels *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*, Julian Barnes attempts to represent the past and show that there can be multiple ways of revisiting history and personal memory. His novels provide an example of the undecidability of meaning when it comes to representation of the past; and how it is inadvisable to decide that there can only be a single representation of the past.

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This chapter deals with the manner in which the fiction of Julian Barnes is concerned with the different ways of recounting the past. This is done by studying the novel *England, England* in particular. In this novel, one of the main characters Martha Cochrane recounts her childhood memories and how they affect her present. Her memories are conveyed to the reader through her act of recollection. For whatever thematic purpose or narrative structure it endorses, this chapter probes the presentation of her past with regards to personal and national history.

The term ‘memory’ is defined by *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* as “an individual’s power to remember things, a thought of something that one has seen, done or experienced previously” (730). It can also mean the period over which people can remember events. The novel *England, England* by Julian Barnes is a story which deals mainly with the memories of the main protagonist Martha Cochrane and the other characters. The novel takes place simultaneously in the present and the past through Martha’s memories recollected in her present situation.

In *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (1970), David Hackett Fischer says:

Novelists and playwrights, natural scientists and social scientists, poets, prophets, pundits, and philosophers of many persuasions have manifested an intense hostility to historical thought. Many of our contemporaries are extraordinarily reluctant to acknowledge the reality of past time and prior events, and stubbornly resistant to all arguments for the possibility of utility of historical knowledge. (307)

This statement suggests that Fischer believes that postmodern fiction is ahistorical. Barnes, as a postmodern writer, also faces this accusation. But what Barnes tries to do is to reflect that the

past is a problematic issue. His writing does not attempt to find reason, logic, continuity or linearity in his representation of the past. Hayden White writes:

One of the distinctive characteristics of contemporary literature is its underlying conviction that the historical consciousness must be obliterated if the writer is to examine with proper seriousness those strata of human experience which is modern art's peculiar purpose to disclose. (31)

There have been strong oppositions from critics like White who accuse postmodernism of neglecting the past. But Barnes does not render the past irrelevant in his fiction. He merely suggests that the past should be revisited and reinterpreted.

At the start of the novel *England, England*, it is not possible to know the timeframe—whether the passages describe the past or the events happening in the present. But on closer reading, it becomes clear that the passages are the recollections of the main protagonist Martha Cochrane. The significance of the concept of memory is brought up in the first sentence when Martha recollects a situation in which she is asked about her first memory:

‘What’s your first memory?’ someone would ask. And she would reply, ‘I don’t remember’. . . There’s always a memory just behind your first memory, and you can’t quite get at it’. (Barnes 3)

It is evident that there will never be an answer to the question that would be adequate to encompass the significance of memory. It is not a solid, sizeable thing like a first friend or a first kiss. It is something that is abstract and will always be impossible to give an exact definition. An undertaking in some postmodern writings is to subvert the foundations of accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the meaninglessness of existence and the underlying abyss

or void or nothingness on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended (Abrams 176). And where an exact definition of a memory is left wanting, something would be said or made up to fill in the gap:

A memory was by definition not a thing, it was. . . a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when. . . Martha Cochrane was to live a long time, and in all her years she was never to come across a first memory which was not in her opinion a lie. So she lied too. . . Yes, that was it, her first memory, her first artfully, innocently arranged lie. (Barnes 4)

In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, Linda Hutcheon writes:

What the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past. In other words, the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past events into present historical facts. This is not a “dishonest refuge from truth” but an acknowledgement of the meaningmaking function of human constructs. (89)

Julian Barnes makes it clear that there can be more than one way of re-presenting the past. A particular story or incident can be recounted in many ways. One perspective cannot be the single authority of personal or collective history. In *England, England*, Martha Cochrane remembers her childhood and the counties of England jigsaw puzzle she played. But she knows that she would have to make up the part where her father had participated in the game because he had left her when she was just a child. In depicting an image of her childhood, she had filled up

the holes in her story. This is because her version had fallen short of being a complete recollection:

This was a true memory, but Martha was still suspicious; it was true, but it wasn't unprocessed. . . Memories of childhood were the dreams that stayed with you after you woke. You dreamed all night, or for long, serious sections of the night, yet when you woke all you had was a memory of having been abandoned, or betrayed, caught in a trap, left on a frozen plain; and sometimes not even that, but a fading after-image of the emotion stirred by such events. (Barnes 6)

In remembering the past, Barnes says that there is the intervention of the outer person when the inner person is telling a story. The part that wants to cover up mediocrity will recall a different past than the part which accepts that he has led a mediocre life. The protagonist Martha believes that people disappointed with their lives might think of something that would justify their disappointment and those that were content would remember their heroic deeds of their past. There is no escape from the need to embellish certain aspects of their past to continue to move forward. Martha observes:

And there was another reason for mistrust. If a memory wasn't a thing but a memory of a memory, mirrors set in parallel, then what the brain told you now about what it claimed had happened then would be coloured by what had happened in between. It was like a country remembering its history: the past was never just the past; it was what made the present able to live with itself. The same went for individuals, though the process obviously wasn't straightforward. (6)

Another example is seen when Martha recounts her university days. One of her friends Cristina, who was from Spain had said that Francis Drake was a pirate while Martha had always seen him as an Admiral, an English hero and a gentleman. In revisiting both their countries' history, they realized that their history had differing views on the same person. In looking up a British Encyclopedia, Martha sees that though Francis Drake was never described as a pirate, rather the words 'privateer' and 'plunder' were often associated with him. She concedes that one person's 'pirate' could be another person's 'plundering privateer'. The fact that Cristina is a Spaniard and that Martha is British makes them interpret the history of Francis Drake differently. This shows that memory and history can be subjective. The history of Francis Drake, as it is historically recorded, is understood to be malleable to change. But it does not mean that it makes their memory any less true. She states that memory is a:

A continuing self-deception as well. Because even if you recognized all this, grasped the impurity and corruption of the memory system, you still, part of you, believed in that innocent, authentic thing – yes, thing – you called a memory. (7)

Most critical works on postmodernism focus on the reflection of the self-conscious assessment of the status and function of narrative in literature, history and theory. Linda Hutcheon says, "Its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (5). Martha revisits a particular day she spent with her family – before her father left them. It was the Agricultural Show hosted by the District Agricultural and Horticultural Society. She recollects with clarity all the details of that particular day. The recollection of this day differs from her other memories as it is the only memory seemingly recollected truthfully. The protagonist Martha Cochrane says that she remembers it as it is:

When she looked back, then, she saw lucid and significant memories which she mistrusted. . .But nothing had gone wrong, not that day, not in her memory of that day (Barnes 8).

After her father left her and her mother, there was such a significant change in Martha's life that she often got confused when she tried to remember the past. She would often try to recount the Counties of England jigsaw puzzle she did as a child and she would try to picture her father playing with her. She would look back and force herself to remember because she hoped her father would return. But it became evident that he would not, and the passage of time and the changes that have happened affected her so much that she was afraid of falsely remembering the past. Whenever she is faced with this dilemma, she chooses to focus on other things:

She did not know whether she was meant to remember or forget the past. At this rate she would never build her character. She hoped there was nothing wrong with thinking about the Show; in any case, she could not stop it glowing in her mind. (17)

Years later, when Martha had graduated from university, her father contacted her again. The meeting between father and daughter and the conversation that follows provide a different way of recounting the past. While Martha had felt the passage of time acutely, for her father Philip it was just the opposite. Her father narrated how he had fallen in love with a woman named Stephanie and how they had a son named Richard. But the past that Philip narrates is 'not untruthful, but irrelevant' (24) for Martha. She had remembered the jigsaw she played with him and was shocked when her father could not recall what for her was the biggest part of her childhood:

‘I was doing my counties of England jigsaw’. She felt awkward as she said it, not embarrassed, but as if she were showing too much of her heart. ‘You used to take a piece and hide it, then find it in the end. You took Nottinghamshire with you when you left. Don’t you remember?’. He shook his head. ‘You did jigsaws? I suppose all kids love them. Richard did. For a while, anyway. . .’ ‘You don’t remember?’ He looked at her. ‘You really, really don’t?’ She would always blame him for that. (25)

Martha desires to relive the past with her father. She attempts to connect to it because she regards it as meaningful. But the present interferes when she tries to link the past because her father could not be a reliable collaborator. He has forgotten about Martha’s past. His memory had deemed it irrelevant what Martha had cherished. It is not that his memory of her refuses the things he considered irrelevant. It rather suggests that his memory had undergone subtle changes. The past that Martha has subjectively constructed had been challenged and shattered by her father.

In the second chapter of the novel entitled ‘*England, England*’, there is a shift from Martha’s recollection of her childhood to her present situation. The opening pages of the chapter see her trying to secure a job under Sir Jack Pitman, a wealthy businessman. When Sir Jack Pitman is first introduced by the author, he is presented as a larger-than-life, intimidating man. He offers an approach to history that is different from Martha’s. While Martha is concerned with her personal history, Sir Jack is occupied with national history. But it is important to note that Barnes never engages in the politics of the colonial history of England in his novel. Rather, it seems that he is deliberately distancing himself from the politics of colonialism. Though he talks about England’s past, his interest is on personal experience and perspective. The novel is a historiographic metafiction because it is intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lays

claim to historical events and personages (Hutcheon 5). Sir Jack's attempt to capitalize on the past of England is shown at the very outset:

As Sir Jack musingly proposed, 'Rightly though we glory on the capabilities of the present, the cost should not, I feel, be paid in disdain for the past'. Slater, Grayson & White had tried to point out that the building was, alas, nowadays considerably more expensive than building the present or the future. (Barnes 29)

Barnes creates an interesting character in Sir Jack. Though he is a knighted Englishman, it is made clear from the beginning that his origins are rather vague. He tries to create a theme park that is based on the history of England. The theme park that Sir Jack constructs is described in the introductory chapter. The novel deals with a literary exploration of England's past, and can be regarded as kind of echo-chamber of England's cultural history, for it displays deliberate Englishness (Bradbury 361). Sir Jack is not concerned with the truthfulness but rather the commercial value of historical sentiment. He is a man who tries to build a different past for England. It is fitting that such a man who tries to alter history should have a murky past. This is acknowledged not only by him but also by the people surrounding him:

But there were also times when you wondered if Sir Jack was merely standing before you holding in his face a pair of small mirrors, circles in which you read your own confusion. . . 'Is my name real?' Sir Jack considered the matter, as did his two employees. Some believed that Sir Jack's name was not real in a straightforward sense, and that a few decades earlier he had deprived it of its *Mitteleuropaisch* tinge. (Barnes 32 &33)

Barnes provides a different and interesting attitude to the observation of time and the past through Jerry Batson, one of Sir Jack's lawyers. Jerry Batson reacts interestingly to Sir Jack's

proposal to create a park exploiting England and its history. He believes that England as a country and as nation has not adapted well to time and is in need of change. He says:

‘Time is the problem,’ Jerry began. ‘In my judgement. Always has been. People just don’t accept it, not even in their daily lives. “You’re as old as you feel,” they say. Correction. You are as old, and exactly as old, as you are. True of individuals, relationships, societies, nations. (37)

The commercialization of time and history is the main preoccupation of Sir Jack Pitman. His observation of time and history is purely along the lines of its market value. If he had any other inclinations other than its commercial value in exploiting England’s past, there is no evidence. Barnes does not concern himself with the politics of the history of England. For Sir Jack, England has a rich potential in the sense that its past can be exploited and made into a marketable unit. He says, “Sometimes we are ahead of the game, sometimes behind. But what we do have, what we shall always have, is what others don’t: an accumulation of time. Time, my keyword, you see” (39). This sentiment is echoed by his lawyer Batson. He recognizes that England has a rich history. But he sees this as a way to increase his wealth and that of his client:

The consultant to the elect helped himself to another thumbful of snuff. ‘You – we – England – my client – is – are – a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated wisdom. Social and cultural history – stacks of it, reams of it – eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate. Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, Industrial Revolution, gardening, that sort of thing. . . This isn’t self-pity, this is the strength of our position, our glory, our product placement. We are the new pioneers. We must sell our past to other nations as their future!’ (40)

The concept of time as pertaining to Sir Jack is again highlighted. He is a man who dabbles and plays with history and time, but that does not mean he can escape from the passage of time. He is not immune to the effects of his history. In a sense he is living on extended time as his passport does not reflect his true age or his true past:

Still, if you crossed his palm with silver, Jerry would usually put his finger on it for you. Time. You are as old, and exactly as old, as you are. A statement so apparently obvious that it was almost mystical. So how old was Sir Jack? Older than it said on his passport, that was for sure. How much time did he have? (43)

Barnes seems to hammer again and again the point that in the novel history is important so far as it suits the needs of the characters. The characters in this novel do not hesitate to tamper with history – personal or national if it means that it would have a beneficial result for them. In her interview for the post of Special Consultant for Sir Jack Pitman's Project, Martha shows no hesitation to alter her past if it would prove advantageous for her. She shows a willingness to change certain facts about her when she is asked how old she is:

'Let's see. You are forty. Correct?' 'Thirty-nine'. She waited for his lips to part before cutting him off. 'But if I said I was thirty-nine you'd probably think I was forty-two or three, whereas if I say I'm forty you're more likely to believe me. Sir Jack attempted a chortle. 'And is the rest of your application as approximate to the truth as that?' 'It's as true as you want it to be. If it suits, it's true. If not, I'll change it'. (45)

Here, the perspective of Martha suggests that history is subject to emotional manipulation as well as commercial manipulation. The tendency to change the past and substitute it with whatever is advantageous is often found in the novel. By using history as both a reference to the

real past world and as a discursive construct, the novel differs substantially from the use of history in the traditional historical novel where history, as a group of facts which exist extra-textually and which can be represented as it really was, is never in question (Lee 35). Martha lying about her age and Sir Jack tampering with history show the treatment of history as both a real occurrence and a discourse which is open to interpretation. In his project of building a miniature England, Sir Jack hires a French intellectual to address the Project's Co-ordinating Committee. He too has no hesitation in meddling with the past. Barnes here gives another example of the different ways of reproducing the past. The French intellectual believes that the reproduction of the past with changes is better than the past as it is:

‘What is fundamental,’ he announced, once the coloured scarves had floated to the ground and the doves had perched, ‘what is fundamental is to understand that your great Project – and we in France are happy to salute the *grand projets* of others – is profoundly modern. We in our country have a certain idea of *le patrimoine*, and you in your country have a certain idea of *Eritage*. . .No. we are talking of something profoundly modern. It is well-established – and indeed it has been incontrovertibly proved by many of those I have earlier cited – that nowadays we prefer the replica to the original. (Barnes 53)

In this context, he poses the question as to why people appreciate a reproduced product of a country more than the original country and why it is commercially more viable. The country of England is referred to as the original because a replica of the country is constructed in the Isle of Wight by Sir Jack. The Frenchman believes the miniature England has a greater effect which suits the needs of the ‘modern’ man. He says:

It is important to understand that in the modern world we prefer the replica to the original because it gives us the greater frisson. . . Now, the question to be asked is, why is it that we prefer the replica to the original? Why does it give us the greater frisson? (54)

He explains that this tendency is because in the minds of modern men, a reproduced product gives more satisfaction than the original. A modern man's inclination is towards the replica because it has been remodelled to better suit his needs.

The effort to build a miniature England goes underway and it is evident that history will be appropriated to cater to the needs of the Project and Sir Jack in particular. It is interesting to note that the role of the Official Historian is to make sure that he changes the past and adapts it to meet the needs of the people targeted for the Project. The Concept Developer, a man named Jeff, tells Dr. Max, the Official Historian of the project, exactly this- that it was his job to embellish the past:

The Concept Developer paused . . . Let me put it this way. You are our Official Historian. You are responsible, how can I put it, for our history. Do you follow?. . . Right. well, the point of *our* history – and I stress the *our* – will be to make our guests, those buying what is for the moment referred to as Quality Leisure, *feel better*. (70)

Barnes brings to light the manner in which most people view their past – personal and national. This is done through a test conducted by Dr. Max for the Project. The test subject is a middle-class, educated Caucasian who is considered as a best representation of an Englishman. The test conducted on him proves that he knows only the bare essentials of history without any original thought or interpretation. Dr. Max finds it disheartening to see that people did not pay much attention to the past, nor try to recount it truthfully. There is a hint of distress and alarm in

Dr. Max when he files this reports. But he concedes that it is the lies we tell ourselves and the truths we choose to neglect that makes us able to live with ourselves:

Dr. Max uncapped his fountain pen and leaked his reluctant initials on to the report. There had been many others like this, and they were beginning to depress him. Most people remembered history in the same conceited yet evanescent fashion as they recalled their own childhood. It seemed to Dr. Max positively unpatriotic to know so little about the origins and forging of your nation. And yet, therein lay the immediate paradox: that patriotism's most eager bedfellow was ignorance, not knowledge. (82)

This view is also shared by another of Sir Jack's employees Mark, one of the members of the Project's Co-ordinating Committee. When there was a suggestion that the project would have to be relocated, he had no objection to it. This shows that for him, the past is not something that is fixed, but rather malleable. For him, the past would bend to whatever shape required:

Then he felt compelled, given the candour and openness of the current talks, and the assurances to secrecy, to mention that the palace was at this very moment seriously considering a relocation proposal. No! Why not? Nothing was set in concrete: that was the nature of History. (127)

It would be seriously misleading to categorize the novel as merely another example of historiographic metafiction. The novel rather questions and revises conventional notions of history. The novel provides ample support for the view put forward by the critic Nicole Fugmann that "postmodern genres expand rather than just problematize our historical understanding" (Grabes 334). Barnes creates a very interesting character in Dr. Max. Though he is the Official Historian of the Project, he is expected to reshape history in such a way that it would cater to the

need of the market. But he takes offence when the man he tested had little or no knowledge of their national history. When he asked by Martha if he had made up a particular story, he takes offence again. This is seen in his conversation with Martha:

‘Did you make that story up, Dr. Max?’ . . . ‘Which story?’ ‘The one about the woman and the eggs.’ ‘Make it up? I am a historian. The Official Historian, you forget’. (Barnes 130)

Through his character, another version of the reproduction of history is shown. Though he is a Professor of History and often appears on talk shows to talk about history, he changes his perspective according to whatever a situation demands. For him, it is about survival. He wants to reproduce History correctly, but he can adapt if his survival is at stake. His intellect makes it possible for him to see that toying with the past is improper. But he sees the point in making a profit for a corporation. His view is seen in his conversation with Martha about what the Project really is to him:

‘Still, do you think the Project’s bogus?’ . . . ‘Bogus? No, I wouldn’t say that, I wouldn’t say that at all. Vulgar, yes, certainly, in that it is based on a coarsening simplification of pretty well everything. Staggeringly commercial in a way that a poor little country mouse like myself can scarcely credit. . . .Manipulative in its central philosophy. All these, but not, I think, bogus. (131)

He presents an interesting perspective on how a person recollects and reproduce the past. Barnes is perhaps trying to say through him that there is no such thing as an authentic recollection of history or a past event. When it is reproduced, it is already influenced and shaped by several factors. Dr. Max believes that there is no pure recollection of history. He tells Martha:

We may choose to freeze a moment and say it all “began” then, but as an historian I have to tell you that such labelling is intellectually indefensible. What we are looking at is almost always a replica, if that is the locally fashionable term, of something earlier. There is no prime moment. (132)

In the case of the little England Project that Sir Jack and his company Pitco are building, Dr. Max says the Project is only possible because there is a market for it. In his opinion, it is not that Sir Jack is a madman deliberately trying to distort the past to provide an alternate history. The Project is a manifestation of the inability to live with the reality of one’s past. The recounting of history is twisted and altered by the ones who are recounting their past because they want the best possible version of the past which is necessarily not the truth. He says:

Reality is rather like a rabbit, if you’ll forgive the aphorism. The great public – our distant, happily distant paymasters – want reality to be like a pet bunny. They want it to lollop along and thump its foot picturesquely in its home-made hutch and eat lettuce out of their hand. If you gave them the real thing, something wild that bit, and, if you’ll pardon me, shat, they wouldn’t know what to do with it. (133)

On a personal level, the novel focuses on the character of Martha and how much her past is affecting her present. She finds herself unable to commit to a relationship with her colleague Paul because of her past. Martha revisits her sordid past and lets it affect her relationship. She could not shake off the feeling that she had done all this before. The negativity with which she recounts her past weighs heavily on her:

Paul behaved as if their relationship were already a given: its parameters decided, its purpose certain, all problems strictly for the future. She recognized this trait all too well,

the blithe urgency to get on with being a couple before the constituent parts and workings of coupledness had been established. She had been here before. Part of her wished she hadn't; at times she felt burdened by her own history. (135)

One of the main attractions at the park was Robin Hood and his Merrie Men. The inclusion of the story as part of the Project in the first place is because it is a quintessential British myth. The history of Robin Hood is grossly tampered with and questioned by the Committee members. It is an integral part of national history and thus has a commercial value for the park:

Riding through the Glen. Stole from the rich. Gave to the poor. Robin Hood, Robin Hood. A primal myth; better still, a primal English myth. One of freedom and rebellion, justified rebellion, of course. (146)

There are insinuations that Robin Hood himself could be a woman as the name Robin is sexually ambiguous and 'Hood' denotes a garment which is ambisexual. One of the Men was indeed Maid Marian. The appropriation of history to go with the current demand is again illustrated clearly. The myth of Robin Hood is changed and distorted to create something that would sell. This echoes Dr. Max's belief that there is truly nothing that can be truly authentic especially when things are re-presented according to the demands of current situations.

The Robin Hood myth brings out different perspectives of the characters on how they recount history. There is a critical attitude to a characteristic that is considered to be typical of English history and myth. There echoes Anthony Easthope's belief that true Englishness is to be found in the past (Easthope 12). Perhaps Barnes wants to indicate that the perception of national history is a construct. Jeff, the Concept Developer of the Project, hesitates to meddle with

something he thought was as concrete in the English consciousness as the myth of Robin Hood. His unwillingness to mess with the history of Robin Hood shows that he wants to re-present the past truthfully and as it is. But Dr. Max rebuts his ideas and calls his opinion ‘complacent’. He mocks Jeff’s assumption that the job they were doing, that of representing the past, should be a transcript of reality:

What, my dear Jeff, do you think History is? Some lucid, polyocular transcript of reality? Tut, tut, tut. The historical record of the mid-to-late thirteenth century is no clear stream into which we might trillingly plunge. As for the myth-kitty, it remains formidably male-dominated. History. To put it bluntly, is a hunk. (Barnes 148)

In the third part of the chapter ‘England, England’, Sir Jack’s dream of creating a miniature England has materialized. There is a gap of two years between the second part and the third part of the chapter. The park is built on the Isle of Wight and the history of the isle is lost with the establishment of the park:

Once upon a time this used to be the Isle of Wight, but its current inhabitants prefer a simpler and grander title: they call it The Island. Its official address since declaring independence two years ago is typical of Sir Jack Pitman’s roguish, buccaneering style. He named it ‘England, England’. (179)

It is clear to see that the Committee did little to consider the consequences erasing the past might have for the local inhabitants of the isle. The name of the isle itself was changed after declaring independence from England. The geographical terrain of the island had also been modified to meet the needs of the many attractions that the park advertised. So in a way, the history of the island is completely erased to make way for a new place:

There were no lawyers except Pitco lawyers. There were no economists except Pitco economists. There was no history except Pitco history. (202)

There is also a change in the perspective of Martha after she becomes the CEO of Pitman House. There seems to be a difference in her ways of recounting her personal history and national history. Though she is a keen and sensitive observer when it comes to her personal memory, the case is entirely different when she deals with the reproduction of national history in the construction of the theme park. She is of the opinion that the replica is much better than the original and that people adjust better to it:

There is a dismissive tone to her voice when she pronounces the word ‘originals’. . . .What’s more, ninety-three percent of those who polled expressed the view that, having seen this perfect replica, they felt no need to seek out the ‘original’ in a museum. . . .as Pitman surveys confirm, most people here are first time visitors making a conscious market choice between Old England and England, England. (181 &184)

When the island started functioning at full speed, the character of Dr. Max comes into the forefront again. His position as Project Historian started to become obsolete. People were no longer concerned with the theoretical aspects of history when there was a physical manifestation of it. This shows that when history was physically manifested, however altered and distorted it might be, it suited people better because factual representation was not important. And the factual representation of the past, symbolized by Dr. Max, was no longer relevant. Martha, as CEO of Pitman House, decides to fire him. But Dr. Max stands firm in his conviction that what they were doing was just another version of reality, but reality nonetheless:

The past is really just the present in fancy dress. Strip away those bustles and crinolines. . .and what do you discover? People remarkably like us. . .peer inside their slightly under-illuminated brains and you discover a range of half-formed notions, which, when fully formed, become the underpinnings of our proud modern democratic states. (195)

The effects of the distortion of history also had a psychological effect on the actors that were recruited to play historical figures in the Island. The authenticity of the past became redundant even in the case of their personal identity. It becomes evident that it was easier to adjust to a past that was designed and altered rather than live with the reality of their past:

This separation- or adhesion – of personality was something the Project had failed to anticipate. Most of its manifestations were harmless. . .their case was initially misdiagnosed. They were thought to be showing signs of discontent, whereas the opposite was the case; they were showing signs of content. They were happy to be who they had become, and didn't want to be the other. (198)

Moreover, the island has become a sovereign land after declaring its independence from England. The championing of the ideals of England, England made it clear that the distorted version was better than reality. The inhabitants of the Island viewed the people who live in Old England as people who were trapped in time. They saw them as being unable to break free from the chains of history. Life in the island was better because they could invent a different past for themselves:

Why become voyuers of social strain? Why slum it where people were burdened by yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that? By history? Here, on the Island, they had learnt how to deal with history, how to sling it carelessly on your back and stride

out across the downland with the breeze in your face. Travel light: it was true for nations as well as for hikers. (203)

One of the main attractions in the island, Dr. Johnson caused problems when he sunk into a deep depression. His was a case of taking his character too far as he refused to do what was expected of him and his role. This crisis is an example of how far the Islanders have gone to make sure that they have erased their past. Martha could not even remember what his real name was. They have become comfortable with the past they have created for themselves. When Dr. Johnson developed serious issues with his identity, Martha realized that she too had rarely remembered her true past:

For thine is the wigwam, the flowers and the story. She ran through her childhood text again, long forgotten, until revived by a mutter from Dr. Johnson. It didn't seem blasphemous any more, just a parallel version, an alternative poetry. . . And the story: an acceptable variant, even an improvement on the original. The glory is the story. Well, it would be, if only it were true (219) If only it were true. At school her fretful scorn and clever blasphemies had come from precisely this fact, this conclusion: that it was not true, that it was a great lie perpetuated by humanity against itself. (220)

The history she had created on the Island had rubbed off and she had become negligent of the memories of her childhood. She believes that the version of reality which she created might be better than the real thing but admits that it can never be true.

In the third chapter of the novel title 'Anglia', the narrative focuses on Martha after her retirement from the Pitco House. She reminisces in her new surroundings and recounts her past with more clarity than she allowed herself in England, England. In her moments of quiet, she

realizes that she had remembered her past vividly when she was younger than she allowed herself to remember as she had gotten older. This seems to be an example of selective memory. She had become impractical in her choice of memory as she had gotten older:

‘The chiff-chaff is a restless bird, which does not form in flocks’. Where had that come from? It had just entered her head. No, that was wrong: it had always been in her head, and had taken this opportunity to flit across her mind. The operation of memory had become more random; she had noticed that. Her mind still worked with clarity, she thought, but in its resting moments all sorts of litter from the past blew about. Years ago, in middle age, or maturity, or whatever you called it, her memory had been practical, justificatory. For instance, childhood was remembered in a succession of incidents which explained why you were the person you had turned out to be. Nowadays there was more slippage. . .and less consequence. Or perhaps this was your brain hinting at what you didn’t want to know: that you had become the person you were not explicable cause-and-effect, but acts of will imposed on circumstance, but by mere vagary. You beat your wings all your life, but it was the wind that decided where you went. (242)

After her fall from the post of CEO at Pitco, Martha had moved back to Old England which was now called Anglia. The country had been ruined by the success of England, England and was in a state of decrepitude. It suffered economically as people preferred the replica to the original. In an effort to restore its past glory, the schoolmaster in the town where Martha lived arranged to have a village fete:

It had been Mr. Mullin's idea to revive – or perhaps, since records were inexact, to institute – the village Fete. . . .Over mugs of chicory and shortbread biscuits they petitioned her for memories. (246)

Martha was the only one with knowledge of what it was really like to grow up in a countryside before the creation of England, England. It seems logical that the village would turn to her to provide instructions. But Martha finds herself unable to recollect any memory that seemed joyful. She did remember details about the District Agricultural show that she had attended with her parents. What was once a happy memory had turned sour. The change in the process of recounting the past is clearly shown in the recollections of Martha:

The prompt did not work: no memory of joy, success or simple contentment returned, no flash of sunlight trees, no house-martin flicking under eaves, no smell of lilac. She had failed her younger self by losing the priorities of youth. Unless it was that her younger self had failed by not predicting the priorities of age. (247)

It is interesting to note that Barnes creates the scene of a nation simply ceasing to exist in the face of a newer version of itself. The creation of a new state in the form of England, England had proved disastrous for Old England. It could not cope or compete with a more encompassing version of itself. Its history had been rendered useless and unfavourable when compared to the history that was modified and adapted for mass appeal at England, England:

Old England was to be compared disadvantageously to some backward province of Portugal or Turkey. . . .Old England had lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself. (251)

Barnes suggests that the history of Old England was in some ways to blame for its demise. England is a nation famous for its act of colonialism. When it crippled under the advancement of its replica, foreign nations had refused to offer help. The protagonist Martha observes:

There were some who saw a conspiracy in Europe's attitude to a nation which had once contested the primacy of the continent; there was talk of historical revenge. (251)

Perhaps the case was that England had notoriously dabbled in the history of other nations before, distorting and misrepresenting history and historical perspectives of other nations that history had exacted revenge on it. Martha says that it became a 'false memory' enforced by people in England, England. The reason is unclear and unknown but it could perhaps be because there was an alternate, better memory which was encouraged in England, England.

According to Michel de Certeau, "the past is the fiction of the present" (10). This is illustrated by the Project's Co-ordinating Committee's activities and their construction of the theme park, the search for traditions and identity by the inhabitants of the theme park and Martha Cochrane's attempt at recapturing her childhood. In the novel, there is neither continuity in the recollection of past nor the present; nor does anything like objective recollection exist. History – personal and national - differs according to the needs of the present.

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This chapter studies how Julian Barnes' characters observe the passing of time; and how they show passivity and self-reflexivity. This is done by studying the novel *The Sense of an Ending* in particular. In this novel, the protagonist Tony Webster shows a passive and reflexive reaction to the passing of time. His observation of time is detached and disconnected as he recounts his past life and his past relationships.

Postmodern fiction often refuses the omniscience and omnipresence of the third person and engages instead in the dialogue between a narrative voice and a projected reader. Its viewpoint is avowedly limited, provisional, personal (Natoli and Hutcheon 250). Julian Barnes uses the character of Tony Webster as a first person narrator of the novel. There is often the case that the reader places his naïve but common trust in the representational veracity of a first person narrator. This plays with the convention of literary realism (Fokkema and Bertens 82).

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 'time' means all the years of the past, present and future. It means the passing of these taken as a whole. Memory is defined as "an individual's power to remember things, a thought of something that one has seen, done or experienced previously" (730 & 1251). The British postmodern writer Julian Barnes uses the concept of time heavily in his novels. His novels are predominantly concerned with the passing of time and how time occupies a centrality in the lives of the characters. In the novel *The Sense of an Ending*, time is as much a character as the human characters are. The passage of time is an integral part of the novel. The narrative goes back and forth to the past and the present. It seems like the stories of the characters and the events happening in the novel cannot progress if time does not shift from the past to the present and vice versa. The protagonist Tony Webster recounts his past- his school days and college days, and the things that happen in between like his recollection of a particular vacation. His memories are referred to many times for the narrative to

progress and to take shape. But Tony does not seem to be a keen observer of the passage of time. His recollections are haphazard and untidy, and are often random and chaotic. It seems that synchronicity of events is not a concern for him. This indicates the author's attempt to show that a single representation of events is often unreliable. This is evident in the opening lines of the novel:

I remember, in no particular order: a shiny inner wrist, steam rising from a wet sink as a hot frying pan is laughingly tossed into it; gouts of sperm circling a plughole, before being sluiced down the full length of a tall house; a river rushing nonsensically upstream, its wave and wash lit by half a dozen chasing torchbeams; another river, broad and grey, the direction of its flow disguised by a stiff wind exciting the surface; bathwater long gone cold behind a locked door. (Barnes 3)

From the above lines, it can be seen that Barnes does not intend for the reader to register a chronological progression of events, or the adherence to a regular clock-time. The narrator of the novel, Tony Webster, does not aim to portray an organized recall of time or the passage of time. For him, it seems to be the case that time is fluid and therefore one cannot attempt to have a structured and ordered assembling of it. The things that he remembers seem casual and unimportant, as if he is undertaking an inconsequential task in his act of recollection. They lack coherence and discipline, and could not possibly be more random. He himself admits that he does not necessarily remember things in a specific order.

At the start of the novel, the protagonist Tony introduces the reader to incidents in his life which have become memories. But the way that his memory is recollected seems to have no specific meaning or purpose. It does not seem to foretell an event that might be significant. The

way that it is presented suggests that the narrator is reflexive when he recalls the past. It may be the case that the narrator is passive in his observation of time. He does not want to hold to his observations or affirm them. He says, "...what you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed" (3). Tony does not want to be held accountable for what he remembers. He seemingly tries to distance himself from his memories, while relying on them to narrate his past and what he had experienced. As a postmodern fiction, the novel often refuses the omniscience and omnipresence of the third person and engages instead in the dialogue between a narrative voice and a projected reader. In Umberto Eco's terms:

The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently. (Hutcheon 67)

Julian Barnes uses the character of Tony Webster as a first person narrator in the novel. He refuses to hide his interpretative and narrating acts behind a third-person voice of objectivity. This echoes Linda Hutcheon's belief that postmodern works challenge narrative singularity and unity in the name of multiplicity and disparity (90). Barnes, through the character of Tony, challenges the implied assumptions of historical statements like objectivity, neutrality, and impersonality.

"We live in time - it holds us and moulds us- but I've never felt I understood it very well" (Barnes 3), he confesses, when he tries to explain what time means to him. He insists that he is not referring to theories of time but rather ordinary time measured by the passing of a clock hand. It is interesting to note that though he does not profess to be able to explain what time means to him, he relies heavily on it:

. . . it takes only the smallest pleasure or pain to teach us time's malleability. Some emotions speed it up, others slow it down; occasionally, it seems to go missing – until the eventual point when it really does go missing, never to return". (3)

It is evident that his recollection will not be reliable. Tony is honest when he says that he will not produce a factual recollection of the past. He says:

I need to return briefly to a few incidents that have grown into anecdotes, to some approximate memories which time has deformed into certainty. If I can't be sure of the actual events anymore, I can at least be true to the impressions those facts left. That's the best I can manage. (4)

This indicates that most of the things he remembers depend a lot on his convenience and his whim; and shows how subjective the retelling of the past can be. He remembers what he wants and neglects what he does not want to divulge.

Kosinski calls this postmodernist form of writing 'autofiction': 'fiction' because all memory is fictionalizing, 'auto' because postmodern literature is a literary genre, generous enough not to let the author adopt the nature of his fictional protagonist – not the other way around (Fokkema and Bertens 82). There is a need to rid the reader of illusions of totalizing explanations and system of ethics. This kind of genre also challenges the borders between life and art that plays on the margins of genre (Kosinski 34). The narrator of the novel tries to provide an example of how unspecific recollection can be. He believes that the phrase "something happened" would suffice in any effort to recall any event that has happened in the past. Though the phrase does not inform the reader or the listener of an event in its specificity, it does affirm that something did happen and is acknowledged and recalled:

But there is one line of thought according to which all you can truly say of any historical event – even the outbreak of the First World War, for example, is that something happened. (Barnes 5)

In his youth, the narrator shows a passive reaction to the passage of time. He is not willing to go into details whenever he recounts any past incident. Time for him suddenly starts and stops. He tells his story, but not the whole story. It seems that he cannot be specific because he realizes that what he says will be biased and one-sided. His recollection of an event or incident will be different from another person's perspective. This can be seen in the passage which talks about his adolescence in the novel. He talks about what he and his friends understand about the process of moving from adolescence to adulthood:

In those days, we imagined ourselves as being kept in some kind of holding pen, waiting to be released into our lives – and time itself – would speed up. How were we to know that our lives had in any case begun, that some advantage had already been gained, some damage already inflicted? (9)

When Tony's class at his school are asked to define what history means to them, one of the main characters, Adrian Finn says, "History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (17). This explanation seems to resonate with the author's suggestion that time is malleable and subjective. The narrator seems to agree with this definition as he reiterates it over and over again in the novel when things are not made clear, or when a new fact is brought to the notice of the narrator which forces him to change his perception.

When one of their schoolmates Robson dies of an apparent suicide, the whole school was left awed and fascinated. The shroud of uncertainty that surrounded this death was brought up in the history class when Adrian said Robson cannot be a part of history because there was no specific documentation to attest to his life and death. Their teacher counters this suggestion saying, “Historians have always been faced with the lack of direct evidence for things. That’s what they’re used to” (18). The uncertainty of the situation is further intensified when after narrating this particular dialogue the narrator is unsure if he is recollecting it perfectly:

Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange (19).

The reader is sucked in to the excitement of the situation and the interesting exchange between student and teacher, but the narrator is unsure of his memory of the situation. What seems to be a pivotal and important event in the plot of the novel is once again rendered doubtful because of the narrator’s uncertainty.

When the narrator’s girlfriend Veronica Ford is introduced for the first time in the story, the narrator feels the need to establish the concept of going out during his youth- “I’d better explain what the concept of ‘going out’ with someone meant back then, because time has changed it” (21). The narrator is all too aware that everything is susceptible to change. He does not trust his recollections and if things that seem as real and as firm as social conventions of dating can change, a thing as vulnerable as memory can change. His time and experiences with his girlfriend occupy a pivotal part in the narrative. In the passages dealing with the initial stages of their relationship, Tony recounts their first few dates and his understanding of Veronica’s character but ended the passage with the confession:

But I was wrong about most things, then as now. . .where's the logic in that? . . .I was so ill at ease that I spent the entire weekend constipated: the rest consists of impressions and half-memories which may therefore be self-serving. . .though whether this was the cause, or the consequence, of my insecurity, I can't from here determine. (28)

A consequence of the far-reaching postmodernist enquiry into the nature of subjectivity is the frequent challenge to traditional notions of perspective. The perceiving subject is no longer assumed to be a coherent, meaning-generating entity. Narrator in fiction become either disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate, or they become resolutely provisional and limited – often undermining their own seeming omniscience (Butler 192). Tony does not recall with security or conviction. His tone is defensive and self-protective. He does not like the implication that all he did at college was seeing his girlfriend, but he narrates little else. He says:

I don't want to give the impression that all I did at Bristol was work and see Veronica. But few other memories come back to me, one that does- one single, distinct event- was the night I witnessed the Severn Bore. (Barnes 35)

This statement does not help his case. He cannot recall his other memories and the ones that he does are vague. He does not explain what the Severn Bore is nor gives any inclination into its significance. The reader is left hanging and wanting more. The memory he latches on to and recalls again and again of his college years have something or the other to do with Veronica.

The narrator is deeply unsettled at the treatment he receives at Veronica's home by Veronica, her brother and her father. He recollects the events and wonders whether they were treating him like lower-class scum. But he is also apprehensive to form a decided conclusion as it all might appear as extreme sensitivity from his part. But when a letter arrives from Veronica's

mother after his relationship with Veronica ended, he felt that he was right in his belief that they were all condescending. The contents of the letter seem to confirm his belief, and later in his life, as he remembers that awful visit to the Fords' home, he wishes that he had kept that letter as proof of his mistreatment:

I wished I'd kept that letter, because it would have been proof, corroboration. Instead, the only evidence comes from my memory- of a carefree, dashing woman who broke an egg, cooked me another, and told me not to take any shit from her daughter. (39)

He feels justified in his belief that he was mistreated. He believes that Mrs. Ford was his witness and her letter a confirmation. This does not mean that the events that had happened had changed a single bit. But it indicates a postmodern characteristic of challenging a reconsideration of the point of originality or the idea of origin (Natoli and Hutcheon 251). But initially it was his word and his memory that he relied on and he was apprehensive to call it the truth. But Mrs. Ford and her letter provided what he thought was a witness, a corroborator.

The tone in which the narrator narrates his story is irresolute and hesitant. He admits that what he says does not necessarily make sense. When he starts to recollect a certain event his words have a certain uncertainty. There is an awareness of the lack of coherence and reason. For example, in a particular instance when he tries to narrate a past event, he says, "Logic: yes, where is logic? Where is it, for instance, in the next moment of my story?" (Barnes 40). This shows that he is aware of his lack of consistency in his recollection of memory. When a letter from Adrian asking him to go out with his ex-girlfriend Veronica reaches him, he tries to make sense of what the situation implied. He is amused and angered at Adrian's 'moral scruples', and

the fact that he would believe ‘some modern principle of ethics had been infringed’. But then he hesitates and says that this is his reading of the situation at that time- that is- the past:

Again. I must stress that this is my reading now of what happened then. Or rather, my memory now of my reading then of what was happening at the time. But I think I have an instinct for survival, for self-preservation. Perhaps this is what Veronica called cowardice and I called being peaceable. (42, 43)

It is indicated that there is no documentation or proper record of this incident. The understanding of this situation is based on one person’s recollection which may or may not be biased and false. It shows that history, the past and memory can be open to a number of interpretations. In Charles Russell’s terms, with postmodernism the reader encounters and is challenged by ‘an art of shifting perspective, of double self-consciousness of local and extended meaning’ (Butler 191). The perception and the understanding of situation are different for each character. Although different characters are involved in and influenced by the same event and situation, their perspectives almost always contrast. What Veronica understands as cowardice on the part of the narrator is understood as self-preservation by Tony.

The novel cannot be read in the traditional sense of literary analysis because it moves into that of discourse. In the discourse of the past in the novel, discontinuities and gaps are favoured in opposition to continuity. Michel Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (1972), has said that discourse:

. . .is not an ideal, timeless form that also possesses a history but is from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself, posing

the problem of its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality rather than its sudden irruption in the midst of the complicities of time. (117)

This idea challenges a totalizing thought and therefore a totalizing authority on the process of remembering. The characters in the novel are all guilty of embellishing their past when they revisit them. When Tony rereads and reassesses his visit to the Ford's family home in Kent gain, the tone is that of self-pity. That particular weekend becomes a sordid memory for him:

But whenever I looked back on that unhappy weekend, I realized that it hadn't been just a matter of a rather naïve young man finding himself ill at ease. . . I could sense a complicity between Veronica and her heavy-footed, heavy-handed father, who treated me as substandard. (Barnes 43)

He accuses his girlfriend Veronica and her father of having a secret understanding and mistreating him on purpose. But what he feels and thinks is not necessarily true or right. He admits as much when he says:

Again. I cannot know. I have no evidence, anecdotal or documentary. But I remember what Old Joe Hunt said when arguing with Adrian: that mental states can be inferred from actions. . .Whereas in the private life, I think the converse is true: that you can infer past actions from current mental states. (44)

Tony has a theory- he believes that every person has suffered some kind of damage because no one is born with perfect parents, siblings, neighbours and companions. This could be preachy, self-justificatory rubbish on his part. He admits that his justification of how his

relationship ended with Veronica, that “After we broke up, she slept with me” flips easily into “After she slept with me, I broke up with her” (44). He observes:

You might even ask me to apply my ‘theory’ to myself and explain what damage I had suffered a long way back and what its consequences might be: for instance, how it might affect my reliability and truthfulness. I’m not sure I could answer this, to be honest. (45)

Just as unsure as he is about his theory of damage and his memory of his time with Veronica, Tony also recounts things outside of his experiences with his friends and Veronica. He recalls a trip he took across America after finishing college. On this trip, he meets a girl named Annie who seems to glide through life. He feels that he identifies easily with this. Years after his encounter with Annie he wonders why he wasn’t shocked at her attitude towards life. He comes to the conclusion that it is exactly the uncertainty of Annie lifestyle that he identifies with. Like Annie, he does not want to be held accountable for what he says and what he does and in the case of his story, what he remembers and recalls. In this way, he excuses himself from any sense of responsibility and he can settle for uncertainty:

Later, looking back, I wondered if something in me wasn’t shocked by this very easiness, and didn’t require more complication as a proof of. . .what? Depth, seriousness? Although, God knows you can have complication and difficulty without any compensating depth or seriousness. Much later, I also found myself debating whether ‘Easy come, easy go’ wasn’t a way of asking a question, and looking for a particular answer I wasn’t able to supply. (46)

After a career in arts administration, and going through a divorce, the narrator looks back on his marriage and his career as a retiree. He concedes that he hasn’t led an extraordinary life.

He has stumbled and he has faltered. But he says that in his opinion, he has led somewhat of an interesting life. But he is quick to acknowledge that others might not think the same. It is from his perspective alone that he is making these observations. The recollection of the past is not about one person monopolizing a single narrative, it is about what is remembered and observed by all participants:

And that's life, isn't it? Some achievements and some disappointments . . . History isn't the lies of the victors, as I once glibly assured Old Joe Hunt; I know that now. It's more the memories of the survivors, most of whom are neither victorious nor defeated. (56)

The note of doubt is seen again when the narrator Tony takes a passive approach to try to define his past life. He understands that he has lived his life and he has reached middle age. His inability to provide a clear definition and account of his life shows that he is detached from his own history. He says if his story does not have corroboration and confirmation, it cannot be a true representation of the past. It seems like there need to be a consensus over whether an incident really happened or not, otherwise it will not withstand verification:

Perhaps I just feel safer with the history that's more or less agreed upon. We live in time, it bounds us and defines us, and time is supposed to measure history, isn't it? But if we can't understand time, can't grasp its mysteries of pace and progress, what chance do we have with history – even our own small, personal, largely undocumented piece of it? (60)

In the past, history has often been used in criticism of the novel as a kind of model of the realistic pole of representation. Postmodernist fiction problematizes this model to query the relation of history to reality. In Lionel Gossman's terms:

Postmodern literature has rejected the ideal of representation that dominated then for so long. It now conceives of its work as exploration, testing, creation of new meanings. Rather than as disclosure or revelation of meanings already in some sense ‘there’, but not immediately perceptible. (38 &39)

When the will of Veronica’s mother arrived from her solicitor, the narrator is taken aback. He had not thought about her for a long time. Someone as crucial to the story as Sarah Ford, whom the narrator attributed as a witness to his degradation under her own family, had faded into oblivion. But while the narrator had chosen to exclude her from his memory, she had lived a life and was an integral part of the events that unfolded as the narrative progresses. The narrator remembers how different she was from her family, but could not understand why she would include him in her will. He had not even known her Christian name. He thinks he must have forgotten it. It is surprising that he remembered much of the particular weekend but has forgotten the name of a key person present there. It shows how selective he is in his act of remembering as he recalls only the embarrassment and the slight he felt he experienced. He acknowledged the shortcoming on his part:

We live with such easy assumptions, don’t we? For instance, that memory equals events plus time. But it’s all much odder than this. Who was it said that memory is what we thought doesn’t act as a fixative, rather than a solvent. But it’s not convenient – it’s useful – to believe this; it doesn’t help us get on with our lives; so we ignore it. (Barnes 61).

The facet of falsehood that permeates the narrator’s account is seen in the moment when news of Veronica’s mother’s death first reached Tony. He is seen trying to recall whatever had made Sarah Ford include him in her will, but he could not remember a single thing past what he

wanted to remember. His recollection of that time had always been centred on him and about him. All he could remember was the things he told himself again and again- what he thought were the facts about that particular weekend. But it fell short when he tried to be a little more inclusive in his memory:

I searched for any moment, incident or remark which might have seemed worthy of acknowledgement or reward. But my memory has increasingly become a mechanism which reiterates apparently truthful data with little variation. I stared into the past, I waited, I tried to trick my memory into a different course. (64)

The view that postmodernism relegates history to ‘the dustbin of an obsolete episteme, arguing gleefully that history does not exist except as text’ (Hyussen 35) is wrong. The past is not made obsolete; it is, however, being rethought – as a human construct. It does not stupidly deny that the past never existed, but only that its accessibility is conditioned by perspective (Newman 10). Tony does not deny the existence of the past. But he revisits his past through his memories and concedes that his recollections are one man’s perspective. He does not attempt to represent the perspective of other characters and acknowledges that their versions might be entirely different from his.

The irresponsibility of the narrator in retelling his past is again seen in his conversation with his ex-wife. Tony tells Margaret about Sarah Ford’s will and the issue of Veronica came up. Tony realizes that he had always been a little biased in his description of Veronica’s character. Without ever having met her, Margaret calls her “Fruitcake”. Margaret had heard about the relationship between Tony and Veronica only from the side of Tony. It is evident that there were

a few embellishments on Tony's part. He did not recount it as it is but rather told it in a way which would best show him in a sympathetic light:

It's possible that when I finally got around to telling Margaret about Veronica, I'd laid it on a bit, made myself sound more of a dupe, Veronica more unstable than she'd been. But since it was my account that had given rise to the nickname, I couldn't very well object to it. (Barnes 75)

When the possibility arose that Tony could be in possession of Adrian's diary, he is filled with a sense of determination. He knows that his history has been narrated by him without any proper documentation. There had been no written record or proof to attest to his recollections. But Adrian's diary could be physical evidence of what he has been narrating. A story which had been told from a single perspective could suddenly be corroborated. He explains his desperation to possess the diary to Margaret:

I've no idea. It's just mine. I recognized at that moment another reason for my determination. The diary was evidence; it was – it might be – corroboration. It might disrupt the banal reiterations of memory. It might jump start something – though I had no idea what. (77)

Tony suspected that Veronica's brother Jack would be unwilling to help him in his effort to acquire Adrian's diary from Veronica. But when Jack supplied him with information, he finds himself surprised by the act of assistance. Tony had formed an opinion of Jack's character after knowing him for only a day. He says:

I was surprised. I'd expected him to be unhelpful. But what did I know of him or his life? Only what I'd extrapolated from memories of a bad weekend long before". (79)

He had been too quick to judge. This again is irresponsibility from the part of the narrator. In his assessment of a person's character, Tony did not make an active study but rather had allowed himself to pass judgement passively.

Julian Barnes knows how vulnerable personal memory is. In the novel, the narrator retelling his past is an example of how complicated and complex the process of remembering can be. The re-presentation of the past is an intricate thing. The characters in the novel are all guilty of embellishing their past when they revisit them. It goes deeper than just the characters. They are guilty of it in the different stages of their lives. It is just that they embellish the stages which they are not presently experiencing:

It strikes me that this may be one of the differences between youth and age: when we are young, we invent different futures for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different pasts for others. (80)

For the narrator, remembering the past is not only about his pain and failures. It seems there is an acknowledgement that his passivity is often because he lives with regret and the feeling that he has not done much with his life. The act of remembering is a complex process for him as he does not want his story to portray him in a bad light. He recalls his time with his wife Margaret and the initial stages of their marriage and the birth of his daughter Susie. He acknowledges that these are precious moments that he can be nostalgic about. But he certainly does not want to be nostalgic about things that did not really happen. His history with Veronica and his time with her family will always be a sore topic for him. But he accepts that they are a part of his story, his past:

I certainly don't get soggy at the memory of some childhood knick-knack, nor do I want to deceive myself sentimentally about something that wasn't even true at the time – love of the old school, and so on. But if nostalgia means the powerful recollection of strong emotions, and a regret that such feelings are no longer present in our lives- then I plead guilty. . . I suppose it's possible to be nostalgic about remembered pain as well as remembered pleasure. (81)

It is no surprise that in portraying his past relationship with Veronica, the narrator has given a very convoluted story. He admits that he has not been entirely honest in his portrayal of her, because he has suffered so much at her expense that he does not want to say positive things about her. When Veronica refuses to give him Adrian's letter after many requests, he realizes that he has not been entirely wrong either. What seemed as an apathetic approach to Veronica's assessment of personality had actually some truth to it. He observes:

At the same time, it made sense that Veronica didn't give me a simple answer, didn't do or say what I hoped or expected. In this she was at least consistent with my memory of her. (82)

The tendency to be oblivious to the passage of time is again shown when Tony thinks about his past. He experiences a sense of unease and discomfort as he is afraid that he had let life just pass him by. He knows he could have been more active. But like a typical modern man he had not endeavored to be active and extraordinary. He did not try to have the ability to make brave moral decisions like his friend Adrian did. Adrian did commit suicide, but he had taken matters into his own hands. He had been a keen and sensitive observer of the things that happened. He notes with a hint of regret:

We muddle along, we let life happen to us, we gradually build up a store of memories. There is the problem of accumulation, but not in the sense that Adrian meant, just the simple adding up and adding on of life. And as the poet pointed out, there is a difference between addition and increase. Had my life increased, or merely added to itself? This was the question Adrian's fragment set off in me. There had been addition - and subtraction - in my life, but how much multiplication? And this gave me a sense of unease, of unrest.

(88)

After his meeting with Veronica turned futile and she still would not hand over Adrian's diary, the narrator remembers when as a young man he would often dream about living a life filled with adventure. But as he puts it, rather than go off on an adventure and live 'as people in novels live and have lived', he 'mowed his lawn', 'took his holidays' and 'had his life'. The tone of disillusionment is apparent as the narrator realizes that he had let life slip past him. This is the result of not paying attention to life:

I remember a period in late adolescence when my mind would make itself drunk with images of adventurousness. But time. . .how time first grounds us and then confounds us. We thought we were being mature when we were only being safe. We imagined we were being responsible but were only being cowardly. What we called realism turned out to be a way of avoiding things rather than facing them. Time. . .give us enough time and our best-supported decisions will seem wobbly, our certainties whimsical. (91)

At their meeting, Veronica refused to give the narrator Adrian's diary, saying 'people shouldn't read other people's diaries'. Instead she gave him a photocopy of a few pages of the diary. She

also included a letter that Tony had sent to Adrian after Adrian and Veronica started dating. After re-reading the letter that he had sent, the narrator observes:

How often do we tell our own life story? How often do we adjust, embellish, make sly cuts? And the longer life goes on, the fewer are those around to challenge our account, to remind us that our life is not our life, merely the story we have told about our life. Told to others, but - mainly – to ourselves. (95)

Tony realizes that he had not been truthful in recounting his past and his relationship with Veronica. He had cheated on his own memory. He had chosen to omit his own part in the breakdown of their relationship. While he had freely told people about his mistreatment at the hands of Veronica, he had conveniently forgotten to mention that it was in part his fault too. Veronica, by letting him read his letter again, makes him realize his complicity and his irresponsibility. He had called her a bitch and had wished the worst upon them. In his passivity and his negligence, he had carelessly provided only a version of the past heavily edited by him:

My younger self had come back to shock my older self with what that self had been, or was, or was sometimes capable of being. And only recently I've been going on about how the witnesses to our lives decrease, and with them our essential corroboration. . . And when I had written that time would tell, I had underestimated, or rather miscalculated; time was telling not against them, it was telling against me. (98)

With the benefit of hindsight, the narrator feels that as he gets older, he learns to put things in a clearer perspective. This can also be applied to how he recollects his past and how he has described the other characters. While as a young man, his tone had been defensive, as he got older, he is more sensitive and aware of his words and the effect his representation can have:

The next day, when I was sober, I thought again about the three of us, and about time's many paradoxes. For instance: that when we are young and sensitive, we are also at our most hurtful; whereas when the blood begins to slow, when we fell less sharply, when we are armoured and have learnt how to bear hurt, we tread more carefully. (99)

The tone of regret in the narrator's words is overwhelming in the final pages of the narrative. He accepts and regrets the carelessness on his part when reproducing his story. He realizes he had given up on being a keen and ardent observer and has suffered deeply for it. To be a passive and self-reflexive observer to the passage of time had resulted in his not paying attention to what matters most- his family and friends:

In Adrian's terms, I gave up on life, gave up on examining it, took it as it came. And so, for the first time, I began to feel a more general remorse. . .I had lost the friends of my youth, I had lost the love of my wife. I had abandoned the ambitions that I had entertained. I had wanted life not to bother me too much, and had succeeded – and how pitiful that was. (100)

The need for corroboration of Tony's story is his main preoccupation toward the end of the novel. But he hesitates to include other perspectives because they might tell a different story. And the version that he had built be be rendered false and irrelevant. In this novel, the past is remembered, but it is not possible to remember exactly what happened:

I briefly considered tracking down Alex and Colin. I imagined asking for their memories and their corroboration. But they were hardly central to the story. I didn't expect their memories to be better than mine. And what if their corroboration proved the opposite of

helpful? No, they wouldn't be any help. And Mrs. Ford was dead. And Brother Jack was off the scene. The only possible witness, the only corroborator, was Veronica. (108)

Since Tony is a person who tells his story again when he is middle-aged, he says his story cannot be specific and precise. It becomes increasingly difficult to believe his version of events when he fears a contradiction by what his friends would have to say. The part of him that has always refused to pay proper attention to his present is again shown when he notes:

When you start forgetting things – I don't mean Alzheimer's, just the predictable consequence of ageing – there are different ways to react. You can sit there and try to force your memory into giving up the name of that acquaintance, flower, train station, astronaut. . .Or you admit failure and take practical steps with reference books and the internet. Or you can just let go – forget about remembering – and then sometimes you find that the mislaid fact surfaces an hour or a day later, often in those long waking nights that age imposes. Well, we all learn this, those of us who forget things. (111 &112)

The tricky thing with remembering is that the act itself is already predisposed to partiality. When he narrates his story for the first time, Tony chooses to exclude certain facts but in the end, he goes back and admits that he had not done justice to the people in his past. The things that he had overlooked out of his shame or embarrassment came back to him when he got a little wiser with age. Just because they had not been included in his version do not make them any less true. He observes:

Don't imagine you can rely on some comforting process of gradual decline – life's much more complicated than that. And so the brain will throw you scraps from time to time, even disengage those familiar memory-loops. That's what, to my consternation, I found

happening to me now. I began to remember, with no particular order or sense of significance, long-buried details of that distant weekend with the Ford family. . .And suddenly, a complete memory came to me: of Veronica dancing. Yes, she didn't dance – that's what I said – but there'd been one evening in my room when she got all mischievous and started pulling my old pop records. . .On the train up I was remembering when you danced in my room. . .but she only said, 'I wonder why you remembered that.' And with this moment of corroboration, I began to feel a return of confidence . . .I told her the story of my life. The version I tell myself, the account that stands up. (112,114&116)

This debunks the complaint that postmodernism is ahistorical, or that it uses history in a naïve and nostalgic way. What starts to look naïve, by contrast, is the reductive belief that any recall of the past must, by definition, be sentimental nostalgia or antiquarianism (Russell 261). Postmodern writing confronts and contests any kind of modernist discerning and recuperating of the past in the name of the future. It suggests no search for transcendent, timeless meaning but rather a re-evaluation of, and a dialogue with the past in the light of the present. This is called the 'presence of the past' or 'presentification' by Ihab Hassan (Hassan 1).

Towards the end, the narrator Tony recognizes that he had been too negligent in his examination of time. He had given in too much to his personal predispositions. If he had stood in a court of law and was asked to present his facts, he would not have been able to supply any answer. He would have only been able to say that he was affected by certain events in his life, but he could not be accountable or responsible for them:

I could only reply that I think – I theorize – that something – something else – happens to the memory over time. For years you survive with the same loops, the same facts and the same emotions. . .The events reconfirm the emotions – resentment, a sense of injustice, relief – and vice versa. There seems no way of accessing anything else; the case is closed. Which is why you seek corroboration, even if it turns out to be contradiction. But what if, even at a late stage. Your emotions relating to those long-ago events and people change? . . .I began remembering forgotten things. I don't know if there's a scientific explanation for this – to do with new effective states reopening blocked-off neural pathways. All I can say is that it happened. And that it astonished me. (Barnes 120).

In the end, the observation of time seems to come down to person inclination. There will be different perspectives in the re-presenting of the past and they all would be prejudiced at one moment or the other. The narrator believes that it depends on a person's preference to relate and reproduce what they felt and think is important and to be the arbiter of what really matters:

The time-deniers say: forty's nothing, at fifty you're in your prime, sixty's the new forty, and so on. I know this much: that there is objective time, but also subjective time, the kind you wear on the inside of your wrist, next to where the pulse lies. And this personal time, which is the true time, is measured in your relationship to memory. So when this strange thing happened – when these new memories suddenly came upon me – it was as if, for that moment, time had been placed in reverse. As if, for that moment, the river ran upstream. (122)

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This chapter probes how Julian Barnes uses personal memory and the past to illustrate characters and personalities in his novels. The description of past events contrasted with the present situation drives his narrative and attempts to provide a way for the definition of selfhood.

According to *Oxford's Advanced Learners' Dictionary*, 'identity' is defined as "who or what somebody or something is" and 'recollection' means "the action of remembering something from the past" (589 & 974). The search for identity and meaning is one of the characteristics of postmodern writing and subsequently contemporary British fiction. Julian Barnes uses the concept of the past heavily in his novels *The Sense of an Ending* and *England, England*. He uses the past as a narrative mode to present his stories and to illustrate different characters in his novels. In such cases, the description of events and situations in the novels shine light on the possibility or futility of character construction and creating a sense of identity for the characters.

The problem of realizing a sense of identity in the novels of Julian Barnes is that his stories often rely on the recollection of an unreliable narrator. The anecdotes related by the protagonists in his novels are often inconsistent and do not accommodate multiple perspectives. This results in a difficulty to locate and understand the characters and their sense of identity. Besides, this unwillingness to be specific and definite is a major characteristic of a postmodern writer like Julian Barnes. In *Literary Theory: A Practical Introduction*, Michael Ryan states, "Postmodernism is concerned with the contingencies of identity, the undecidability of meaning, and the indeterminacy of the word" (68).

New constructions of the past are periodically arising and changing the course of politics and history. It is not safely locked up in history books and stowed away in libraries but continually reclaimed as an important resource for power and identity politics. History is not

only what comes long after politics; it has also become the stuff and fuel of politics. This paradigmatic change focuses on the entangled relationship between history and memory. To better understand this complex relationship, it is important to look at it from different historical perspectives. The relation between ‘history’ and ‘memory’ has itself a history that has evolved over time, passing through three stages - the identity between history and memory; the polarization between history and memory, and the interaction between history and memory (Miri 2).

The voices of professional historians are as important as ever when it comes to judging and correcting evidence, probing the truth of representations, discovering new sources and interpreting them in a new light. Taking into context the importance of the narrator in identifying the personalities of characters, the difficulty of taking into account a single perspective must be acknowledged. The narrators in the novels of Julian Barnes rely on their memory to illustrate characters and to give an idea of a character’s identity. But the accuracy of their memories is debatable especially in the task of identifying identity in the characters. The question of whether “memory presupposes personal identity becomes the question of whether these conditions can be met without identity between the rememberer and the person who had the experience remembered” (Schechtman 66).

Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is. Identities can be focused on the past - what used to be true of one, the present - what is true of one now, or the future - the person one expects or wishes to become, the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. Identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens and focus one's attention on some but not other features of the immediate context (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith 69). In

The Sense of an Ending, Julian Barnes uses the protagonist Tony Webster to narrate the story and illustrate the characters in the novel. The character of the protagonist himself is understood in terms of him being situated in the past and the present. He narrates his past and the story of his family, friends, acquaintances and ex-lover as a middle-aged man. He goes back in time and presents certain events and draws characters from his own perspective. But this does not necessarily mean that his narrative is correct or accurate. His perspective is vulnerable to subjectivity and partiality. Thus, if the characters and identities that he attempts to locate are tempered with personal prejudices, they cannot be an accurate depiction or representation. This tendency echoes postmodernism's sensibility of refusing to be definite and explicit but rather dwell in ambiguity and uncertainty when it comes to locating identities.

The assumption of stability in identity construction is belied by the malleability, context sensitivity, and dynamic construction of the self as a mental construct. Identities are not the fixed markers people assume them to be but are instead dynamically constructed in the moment. Choices that feel identity-congruent in one situation do not necessarily feel identity-congruent in another situation. This flexibility is part of what makes the self useful (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith 70). The character of Tony's ex-girlfriend Veronica is also initially presented as that of a woman who is difficult and condescending. This is seen through the protagonist's recollections. Tony recounts certain events in his past and blames Veronica for the end of his friendship with Adrian and accuses her family of being snobbish in their treatment of him. But as Tony revisits his past again, and as he begins to consider other perspectives regarding the past, he concedes that he might not be accurate in his depiction of Veronica and perhaps other members of her family as well. Barnes depicts the creation of a character out of the recollection of a person. It is only after Veronica is introduced in the present time in the novel that a different perspective

regarding her character is taken into account. Thus, the identity of Veronica is shown to be constructed dynamically in a moment by the narrator to suit what he needs in a specific moment.

Memory does not logically presuppose personal identity. This view is necessary to respond to charges that memory-based accounts of personal identity are viciously circular. For memory charges to define personal identity, there has to be a clear distinction between actual memories and delusory memory-like experiences. If memory must be defined in terms of personal identity, a theory that defines personal identity in terms of memory is not going to be informative (Schechtman 69). The protagonist Tony in *The Sense of an Ending* finds it hard to come to terms with what he has become towards the end of the novel. He feels like he has led a mediocre life despite the grand beliefs he had during his adolescence. The memories that he recollects in trying to present himself in a better light becomes doubtful and uncertain as he revisits them and concedes that he was not entirely truthful. The feeling of knowing oneself and the dynamic construction of who one is in the moment are depicted in Tony's struggle to narrate a past and a sense of identity that attempts to be truthful but cannot help being partial. Hence, identities in the novels of Julian Barnes can be said to be dynamically constructed in context. The self is useful because people look to their identities in making choices and because these identities are situated, pragmatic, and attuned to the affordances and constraints of the immediate context (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith 70).

Does character develop over time? In novels, of course it does: otherwise there wouldn't be much of a story. But in life? I sometimes wonder. Our attitudes and opinions change, we develop new habits and eccentricities. (Barnes, *The Sense* 102)

The above lines taken from the novel *The Sense of an Ending* clearly indicates that perspective is conditioned by time and new changes; and subsequently identity and character construction are also conditioned by the same. One person's recollection cannot be taken as a sole testimony to locate a character's identity. It is bound to be tempered by outward influences and personal prejudices. So there could be a difficulty in taking a single perspective into account. This difficulty can also be read vice versa. Identity in itself is neither sufficient nor necessary for the legitimacy of memory. A person can be given a suggestion for a representation of memory which as a matter of chance, happens to be the one that the person who had the experience remembered. Otherwise, what is meant as an implicit sense of relevance and inclusion in trying to form an identity could translate to be a feeling of irrelevance and exclusion.

It has been claimed that in memory there is a special, logically distinct, access to our own identities, and that without such an access to our own identities, the very notion of a person would be inapplicable. As Shoemaker says:

Each of us has, in memory, a kind of access to his own past history which no other than himself can have. The statements we make about our own past histories are not infallible, but they are immune to one sort of error to which statements of other persons are subject; they are immune to what might be called error through misidentification". (Miri 2)

He says that the ability to locate past and present events within a single, unified system, and the ability to know one's own place within that system rests on the special access one has to events in one's own past. The protagonist Tony Webster in *The Sense of an Ending* realizes that his memory is limited and it cannot be taken as a representation of reality. He realizes the

shortcomings and the danger of relying on a sole recollection of a person. He also acknowledges that memory is not constant or consistent and that sometimes it is self-serving:

When you are in your twenties, if you're confused and uncertain about your aims and purposes, you have a strong sense of what life itself is, and of what in life you are, and might become. Later. . .later, there is more uncertainty, more overlapping, more backtracking, more false memories. Back then, you can remember your short life in its entirety. Later, the memory becomes a thing of shreds and patches. It's a bit like the black box aeroplanes carry to record what happens in a crash. If anything goes wrong, the tape erases itself. (*The Sense* 105)

Tony recounts his life and his past experiences with his friends and acquaintances. Initially, he seems to carry out this task truthfully and sincerely. Certain characters are portrayed in certain lights and the reader is allowed to draw his own interpretations about them. The illustrations of the characters provided are one-sided. But when the novel starts entertaining the presence of another representation, the interpretation of the characters' identity becomes much more complex. It has to be taken into account that the representations become plural.

Postmodernists advocate a shift in analytic focus, deemphasizing observation and deduction and elevating concerns with public discourse. In the spirit of Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault, the postmodern writer deconstructs established identity categories and their accompanying rhetoric in an effort to explore the full range of being. Works in this tradition call into question models that equate discourse with truth; they expose the ways in which discourse objectified as truth both forms and sustains collective definitions, social arrangements and hierarchies of power (Cerulo 391). Whether or not the

access theory of memory is correct, and whether it is, as alleged, essential to the notion of a person, what is its connection with the view that memory is a constitutive factor of personal identity, or that it is the criterion of personal identity. Shoemaker writes that if a person remembers any event at all, whether it be an action of his own, an action of another person, or an event that is not the action of anyone, it follows that he, the very person, who remembers must have witnessed the event at the time of its occurrence. The fact that memory is a causal notion should lead us to the conclusion that memory is 'constitutive of' personal identity (Miri 2).

All memory is individual, unreproducible - it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, that this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings. (Assmann 49)

As long as the requirement for identity is actual memory and not potential memory, difficulties about distinguishing correct memories from merely seeming memories can be set aside. In regarding memory as the necessary condition of personal identity, there is no fear of invoking a prior criterion of personal identity. As long as the person's actual memory forms a coherent system, it is possible to construct the history of the person on the basis of these memories alone. But there is the possibility that the history constructed might be fictitious because the memories might all be incorrect. Memories must be coherent with each other and correct if they are to form the correct history (Miri 4).

The plurality of accounts can also be seen when Tony, on a very philosophical note, contemplates his death and how he would be remembered after his death. It is possible that he expects a certain amount of fiction in his memory as he himself had not been innocent of the fabrication of the past. He expects, even encourages, people to make up false claims about him saying that they miss him rather than not to matter and be forgotten:

Don't think ill of me, remember me well. Tell people you were fond of me, that you loved me, that I wasn't a bad guy. Even if, perhaps, none of this was the case. (*The Sense* 108)

This suggests that his recollections were not always accurate and his portrayals were not consistent as he feels he cannot hope for the truth in other people's memory of him. It also suggests that memory in general is not always accurate and often conditioned by the needs of the present situation:

Individual remembering, as psychologists tell us, does not preserve an original stimulus in a pure and fixed form but is a process of continuous re-inscription and reconstruction in an ever-changing present. Historiography, as theoreticians explain, involves rhetorical use of language and, in spite of all claims to impartiality, a specific vantage point, an unacknowledged agenda, a hidden bias. (Assmann 53)

This idea suggests that the identities and characters in the novels cannot have one core. Permanent self because they have many influences and constructs. This results in a multiplicity and hybridity of self. The boundaries between one character and another are continually in process depending on the context of recollection undertaken by the narrator. The different parts of themselves are negotiated and re-negotiated.

A postmodern writer like Julian Barnes realizes that he cannot assume the creation of a separate and coherent identity in his characters. He uses the memory of the protagonist Tony Webster to show an aspect of Veronica's character. Tony remembers a particular night when Veronica has come to visit him at college. In this particular depiction, Veronica is presented in a flattering and charming. The event is described in a nostalgic fashion and shows Veronica as she had never been shown before. They had gone with their friends to Minsterworth in quest of the Severn Bore. But Tony shows doubt again in his recollection as he fears it will not stand the test of a second inquest:

At least, that's how I remember it now. Though if you were to put me in a court of law, I doubt I'd stand up to cross-examination very well. 'And yet you claim this memory was suppressed for forty years?' 'Yes,' 'And only surfaced just recently?' 'Yes'. 'Are you able to account for why it surfaced?' 'Not really'. 'Then let me put it to you, Mr. Webster, that this supposed incident is an entire figment of your imagination, constructed to justify some romantic attachment which you appear to have been nurturing. . . (*The Sense* 119)

The character of Veronica is what the narrator is preoccupied with the most. It is also subjected to various revisions throughout the course of the novel. When he is confronted with the fact that his earlier depiction of Veronica might not be entirely accurate, he tries to look for new clues in his memory of her. He is affected by the new revelation of Veronica's character at the present time. She had changed and it was like he had never truly known her before. This approach to the past to reassess Veronica's character also brings in new self- introspection on the narrator. It makes him think if his younger self had perhaps had been inaccurate with the truth:

I spent a week trying to liberate new memories of Veronica, but nothing emerged. Maybe I was trying too hard, pressing my brain. So, instead I replayed what I had, the long-familiar images and the recent arrivals. I held them up in the light, turning them in my fingers, trying to see if now they meant something different. I began re-examining my younger self, as far as it's possible to do so. (*The Sense* 121)

The narrator concedes that he had been crass and naïve in his depiction of Veronica. Up to a certain point, Veronica's character had been portrayed according to the narrator's version. He had deliberately toyed with the truth because his younger self had needed to convince everyone else that Veronica was a bad person. The memory and the past are construed to serve a specific purpose:

What had Old Joe Hunt answered when I knowingly claimed that history was the lies of the victors? 'As long as you remember that it is also the self-delusions of the defeated? Do we remember that enough when it comes to our private lives? (122)

The mistake of misinterpreting the past to suit his needs also weighs heavily on Tony. After he realizes that he had wrongly judged Veronica about her relationship with Adrian, he acknowledges that he had been ungrateful in his memories of Veronica. He decides to reassess Veronica in a new light. After one excursion visiting a community wellness centre with Veronica, he decides to check out the premises once more and see in a new light the significance of the excursion:

I sat there remembering all this, registering the differences, without coming to any conclusions. I neither applauded nor disapproved. I was indifferent; I had suspended my right to thoughts and judgements. (133)

Tony finds out that his friend Adrian, who he had looked up to all his life, had fathered a son with Veronica's mother. After this moment of clarity, he says:

We listen to what people say, we read what they write – that's our evidence, that's our corroboration. . . We recognize the hypocrisy of the false claim, and the truth stands evident before us. (137)

The truth was that when he went looking for the man who had called Veronica 'Mary', he had realized that the person was Adrian's son. Veronica had sacrificed her life in order to bring up the child, who needed special care. His earlier description of her as 'difficult, unfriendly and charmless' was not a just depiction at all. Tony deeply regrets his misrepresentation:

There was no one I could tell this to – not for a long while. As Margaret said, I was on my own – and so I should be. Not least because I had a swathe of my past to re-evaluate, with nothing but remorse for company. And after rethinking Veronica's life and character, I would have to go back into my past and deal with Veronica. My philosopher friend, who gazed on life and decided that any responsible, thinking individual should have the right to reject this gift that had never been asked for – and whose noble gesture re-emphasized with each passing decade the compromise and littleness that most lives consist of. 'Most lives': my life. (140)

Tony had judged Veronica too hastily. He had blamed her for concealing Adrian's diary from him. He had always looked up to his friend Adrian and always wanted his approval. He had accused Veronica of seducing Adrian and forcing him into a relationship. But when the truth surfaces, he realizes that Adrian was the one who was at fault.

Tony reads the words that he had written to Adrian and Veronica, and he feels deeply ashamed. In his blind grief, he had done much harm to Veronica:

Remorse, etymologically, is the action of biting again: that's what the feeling does to you. Imagine the strength of the bite when I reread my words. They seemed like ancient curse I had forgotten even uttering. (138)

Adrian's character also undergoes a significant change through the recollections of Tony. Barnes also uses memory of characters in the novel to present the character and personality of Adrian. Adrian had always been the smartest person in Tony's circle of friends. He, Alex and Colin had always looked up to him. He was always presented as a philosophical and clever person, and his friends had always competed for his approval. After his character was presented as an extraordinary gifted and intelligent person, the reappearance of his diary throws a different light on him. The narrator admits that Adrian was not what he said he was. He thought that his suicide was a grand philosophical gesture. But in the end, Tony realizes that Adrian had not committed suicide because he grandly refused an existential gift. It was not because he was clever nor had moral courage. He did it because he was afraid of 'the pram in the hall (142). The narrator had romanticized his character in the earlier stages of the narrative, presenting him as a teenager with deep philosophical insight. But it turns out that he had chosen death instead of responsibility, which, in the eyes of the narrator, makes him a coward.

Barnes provides a way for the definition of the narrator Tony's character. He uses Tony's thoughts and introspections to gauge his character. At the start of the novel, the character of Tony is seen through his recollections as somewhat of a passive character. He lets life happen to him and it seemed like he had no real goals or purpose. He relates his experiences and his past

and the narrative placed him at the centre of interesting characters like Adrian and Veronica and to a certain extent, Veronica's family. From his anecdotes, it seems like he was the type of person who always had something happen to him and not making anything happen on his own. The characters of Adrian and Veronica are seen through his eyes and his love/hate relationship with them only made him seem more detached and disconnected. It helped him be an observer and he passed his judgement on Veronica and Adrian. But towards the end of the novel, he reflects on his own life and regrets that he had not lived enough:

What did I know of life, I who had lived so carefully? Who had neither won nor lost, but just let life happen to him? Who had the usual ambitions and settled all too quickly for them not being realized? Who avoided being hurt and called it a capacity for survival?
(142)

He thinks of the things that had happened to him over the years, and he regrets how little of it he had made happen. His character undergoes a transformation from one who was content being a casual observer to someone who deeply regrets not having been active or keen enough. The development of his character

Amelie Rorty says, "To have character is to have reliable qualities, to hold tightly to them through the temptations to swerve and change. A person of character is neither bribed nor corrupted; he stands fast, is steadfast" (n.p). Barnes' narrators and characters do not share any of these traits. In refusing to locate a definite identity, Barnes evokes the postmodern characteristic of rejecting the achievement of order and meaning. Barnes understands the problems of fragmentation and subjectivity in the attempt to locate a sense of identity. But rather than trying to solve it, as a postmodern writer, he decides to play with the "insurmountable chaos" (McHale

1). He suggests that rather than trying to locate a specific identity of his characters, his readers should accept the futility of finding anything specific in a postmodern world and try to deal with the chaos and disorder as they are.

Identity has been a major issue in postmodern discourses and novels. The issue is sometimes explicit, sometimes subtextual and ultimately unresolved in postmodern literature. In the essay 'Modernism, Postmodernism and the Question of Identity', Mihaela Dumitrescu writes:

The postmodern notion of identity is one that decentres the individual, causing a shift from sheer subjectivity to an almost total loss of subjectivity. The decentred subject is perceived as multifaceted and contradictory, hence identity is no longer viewed as singular and stable, but rather as plural and mutable, and ultimately impossible to grasp through the usual exercise of reason. . . It is the general postmodern indeterminacy and uncertainty that renders every single component of its value system (identity included) unstable. (12)

The sense of uncertainty is an obvious product of the sense of loss or the absence of a grand narrative. With unreliable narrators and the subjective nature of memory, Barnes' characters do not possess identities that can be defined because they are verbal constructs who lack substance.

In his novel *England, England*, Barnes also uses personal memory and the past to illustrate the characters in the novel. The life and history of the main protagonist Martha Cochrane is understood and related through the recollection of her memory. Her life is revisited by her as a grown woman through her memories. She recollects:

‘What’s your first memory?’ someone would ask. And she would reply, ‘I don’t remember’. . . There’s always a memory just behind your first memory, and you can’t quite get at it’. (Barnes, *England* 3).

It can be seen that Martha is hesitant in her recollections because they could be inaccurate. The protagonist is unsure of her past and her memories, but it is the only way the reader can know about her as there is no other representation to rely on. It seems like a deliberate tool by the author, to have to rely on the testimony of a protagonist who is unsure of her own recollections.

A memory was by definition not a thing, it was. . . a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when. . . Martha Cochrane was to live a long time, and in all her years she was never to come across a first memory which was not in her opinion a lie. So she lied too. . . Yes, that was it, her first memory, her first artfully, innocently arranged lie. (4)

Martha seems relieved when one of her co-workers at Pitco could not place a particular thing in the past and says that it does not matter because it was irrelevant. The argument was about the identity of a musician. He could not remember his name and concluded that it did not matter because it was history. Martha seems reassured at this nonchalant treatment of history as she herself could not be accurate in her recollections:

‘History doesn’t relate.’ He finally replied. Wouf. Well done, Martha. Just got out of that alive. History doesn’t relate. She liked the way he couldn’t remember the name of the composer. And whether or not it had been the Caucasus. (68)

Barnes seems to hammer again and again the point that in the novel history is important so far as it suits the needs of the characters. Martha does not hesitate to tamper with history –

personal or national if it means that she would have a beneficial result from them. In her interview for the post of Special Consultant for Sir Jack Pitman's Project, Martha shows no hesitation to alter her past if it would prove advantageous for her. She shows a willingness to change certain facts about her when she is asked how old she is:

'Let's see. You are forty. Correct?' 'Thirty-nine'. She waited for his lips to part before cutting him off. 'But if I said I was thirty-nine you'd probably think I was forty-two or three, whereas if I say I'm forty you're more likely to believe me. Sir Jack attempted a chortle. 'And is the rest of your application as approximate to the truth as that?' 'It's as true as you want it to be. If it suits, it's true. If not, I'll change it'. (45)

Long after Martha had quit her job at Pitco and settled herself in the land of Anglia, she remembers her past again and revisits her childhood memories. In trying to recount her past, she says, "First the neutral, non-interpretative possibility – though no true historian believes neutral non-interpretation to be possible" (151). But she is a woman who has been deeply scarred by her past and thus she is unwilling to trust her own memories:

Into her mind came an image, one shared by earlier occupant of these pews. . .A woman swept and hanging, a woman half out of this world, terrified and awestruck, yet in the end safely delivered. . .Part of you might suspect that the magical event had never occurred, or at least not as it was now supposed to have done. But you must also celebrate the image and the moment even if it had never happened. That was where the little seriousness of life lay. (238)

In her attempt to recreate an image from her childhood, she realizes the insignificance of such an effort because she will never be able to attest if it true or not. Her earlier portrayal as a

woman in control at Pitco undergoes a significant change as she is seen in all her frailty and vulnerability towards the end of the novel.

Barnes creates an interesting character in Sir Jack. Though he is a knighted Englishman, it is made clear from the beginning that his origins are rather vague. He tries to create a theme park that is based on the history of England. The novel deals with a literary exploration of England's past, and can be regarded as kind of echo-chamber of England's cultural history, for it displays deliberate Englishness (Bradbury 361). Sir Jack is not concerned with the truthfulness but rather the commercial value of historical sentiment. His treatment of history and the past brings to light the character of a man who is exploitative and egotistical. He is arrogant and narcissistic enough that he believes he can create a replica of England which will be much better than the original. He is a man who tries to build a different past for England. It is fitting that such a man who tries to alter history should have a murky past. This is acknowledged not only by him but also by the people surrounding him:

But there were also times when you wondered if Sir Jack was merely standing before you holding in his face a pair of small mirrors, circles in which you read your own confusion. . . 'Is my name real?' Sir Jack considered the matter, as did his two employees. Some believed that Sir Jack's name was not real in a straightforward sense, and that a few decades earlier he had deprived it of its *Mitteleuropaisch* tinge. (*England* 32 &33).

He is a man who dabbles and plays with history and time, but that does not mean he can escape from the passage of time. Sir Jack sees the history of England as a way to increase his wealth:

The consultant to the elect helped himself to another thumbful of snuff. 'You – we – England – my client – is – are – a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated

wisdom. Social and cultural history – stacks of it, reams of it – eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate. Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, Industrial Revolution, gardening, that sort of thing. . . This isn't self-pity, this is the strength of our position, our glory, our product placement. We are the new pioneers. We must sell our past to other nations as their future!' (40)

But he is not immune to the effects of his history. In a sense he is living on extended time as his passport does not reflect his true age or his true past:

Still, if you crossed his palm with silver, Jerry would usually put his finger on it for you. Time. You are as old, and exactly as old, as you are. A statement so apparently obvious that it was almost mystical. So how old was Sir Jack? Older than it said on his passport, that was for sure. How much time did he have? (43)

Barnes provides a different and interesting character in Jerry Batson, one of Sir Jack's lawyers as seen through the observation of time and the past. Jerry Batson reacts interestingly to Sir Jack's proposal to create a park exploiting England and its history. He believes that England as a country and as nation has not adapted well to time and is in need of change. He says:

'Time is the problem,' Jerry began. 'In my judgement. Always has been. People just don't accept it, not even in their daily lives. "You're as old as you feel," they say. Correction. You are as old, and exactly as old, as you are. True of individuals, relationships, societies, nations. (37)

Like Sir Jack Pitman, The commercialization of time and history is the main preoccupation of Jerry Batson. His observation of time and history is purely along the lines of its market value. For him, England has a rich potential in the sense that its past can be exploited and

made into a marketable unit. He agrees with Sir Jack that, “Sometimes we are ahead of the game, sometimes behind. But what we do have, what we shall always have, is what others don’t: an accumulation of time. Time, my keyword, you see” (39).

The characters in the novel have the tendency to change the past and substitute it with whatever is advantageous for them. By using history as both a reference to the real past world and as a discursive construct, the novel differs substantially from the use of history in the traditional historical novel where history, as a group of facts which exist extra-textually and which can be represented as it really was, is never in question (Lee 35). Martha and Sir Jack are two characters who are desperately trying to escape from the shadows of their past and do whatever is necessary to survive. In the pursuit of this, they distort and alter their past to build and create different identities for themselves.

With the use of unreliable narrators and recollections, Barnes’ novels are plagued with the problem of the characters realizing a sense of identity. The narratives related by the protagonists are often inconsistent and do not accommodate multiple perspectives. This results in a difficulty to locate and understand the characters and their sense of identity. Besides, this unwillingness to be specific and definite is a major characteristic of a postmodern writer like Julian Barnes.

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In his novels, Julian Barnes aims to explore a new area of experience and experiments with different narrative modes. His works have underlying themes of obsession, love, death, truth, infidelity, sexuality, obsession, religion, the relationship between fact and fiction, and the irretrievability of the past. Barnes feels uncomfortable when critics point out common topics or strategies throughout his novels. He addresses his unease with critical approaches to writing by clarifying, “You do often feel when you read academic criticism, not that I do it much, or when you hear academics talking about their books, that they forget that theirs is a secondary activity. They forget that however important a critic is, a first-rate critic is always less important, and less interesting, than a second-rate writer” (Guignery and Roberts xii). He has a refined and demanding view of literature and the role of writing. When asked what the purpose of fiction is to him, he answers, “It’s to tell the truth. It’s to tell beautiful, exact, and well-constructed lies which enclose hard and shimmering truths” (x). This statement seems as paradoxical as the ideas in his novels regarding the presentation of the past and the concept of identity. He says:

In order to write, you have to convince yourself that it’s a new departure for you and not only a new departure for you but for the entire history of the novel. (Guignery 1)

British writer Alain de Botton has described him as ‘an innovator in the form of the novel’ (2). Peter Childs points out, “Barnes is sometimes considered a postmodernist writer because his fiction rarely either conforms to the model of the realist novel or concerns itself with a scrutiny of consciousness in the manner of modernist writing” (Childs 86). Despite his skepticism about critical writing, critical debates have classified his writing as representative of postmodernist writing. This is because his works resort to and subvert realistic strategies, are self-reflexive and celebrate the literary past but also consider it with irony (Guignery and Roberts xii).

The blurring of fact and fiction is one of several issues that recur in Barnes' novels *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*. A.S. Byatt explains:

An awareness of the difficulty of realism combined with a strong attachment to its values a formal need to comment on the fictiveness combined with a strong sense that models, literature and the tradition are ambiguous and emblematic goods combined with a profound nostalgia for, rather than the rejection of the great works of the past. (Bradbury 34)

In the first chapter of this study, the life and major works of Julian Barnes are studied in detail. The novels chosen for this particular study are also summarized and described. The narrative technique, writing style and various themes are also explored. The major characters of the novels are also introduced and described at length. Barnes is a postmodern British writer, and therefore the major characteristics of postmodernism are also talked about. Postmodernist theory has challenged traditional notions of history. This has resulted in a pluralization of historical accounts, a focus on the inevitable bias of the individual recounting or constructing any historical event and how writing transforms experience (Bentley 45).

It is difficult to summarize what postmodernism means, because there is much disagreement among writers labeled postmodern. Some postmodernists deny having any doctrines or theories at all. Perhaps the very idea of a summary is antithetical to postmodernism (Cahoone 10). Postmodern literature is characterized by reliance on narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox and the unreliable narrator. It is often describes as a trend which emerged in the post-World War II era. Postmodern works are seen as a response against dogmatic following of Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature (Felluga 1).

In the second chapter entitled ‘Recounting the Past’, the use of memory as a means of reconstructing the past is explored. This is done by studying the novel *England, England* (1998) in particular. The chapter deals with the manner in which the fiction of Julian Barnes is concerned with the different ways of recounting the past. The novel *England, England* is studied in its relation to the past in particular. In this novel, one of the main characters Martha Cochrane recounts her childhood memories and how they affect her present. Her memories are conveyed to the reader through her act of recollection. It probes the presentation of the past with regards to personal and national history. This chapter shows how Julian Barnes deals with the concept of the past mainly through the memories of the main protagonist Martha Cochrane and the other characters. The novel takes place simultaneously in the present and the past through Martha’s memories recollected in her present situation.

Barnes’ novels, as postmodern fictions, raise the issue of heterogeneous discourses that acknowledge the undecidable in both the past and the knowledge of the past. His novels are “paradoxical confrontations of the self-consciously fictive and resolutely historical representation” (Hutcheon, *The Politics* 63). The narrativization of past events is not hidden; the events no longer seem to speak for themselves, but are shown to be consciously composed into a narrative, whose constructed – not found - order is imposed upon them, often overtly by the narrating figure (63). Barnes constructs plots out of sequences and makes stories out of chronicles. He does not say that the past is not real, but focuses on the act of forcing order on the past.

Barnes brings up the significance of the concept of memory when in the first sentence of the novel *England, England* the protagonist Martha recollects a situation in which she is asked about her first memory:

‘What’s your first memory?’ someone would ask. And she would reply, ‘I don’t remember’. . . There’s always a memory just behind your first memory, and you can’t quite get at it’. (Barnes, *England* 3)

Martha is unable to define exactly what memory is. This gives an implication of Barnes’ idea of the meaning of the past - that it is not a solid, sizeable thing but rather a flexible and bendable concept. Julian Barnes makes it clear that there can be more than one way of re-presenting the past. A particular story or incident can be recounted in many ways. One perspective cannot be the single authority of personal or collective history as shown in Martha’s understanding of her past.

The character of Sir Jack is also an interesting creation. It is made clear from the beginning of the novel that his origins are rather vague. He tries to create a theme park that is based on the history of England. Barnes deals with a literary exploration of England’s past through this character and further denotes that truthfulness is not a concern in re-presenting a nation’s past but rather the commercial value of historical sentiment. Sir Jack is a man who tries to build a different past for England. It is fitting that such a man who tries to alter history should have a murky past. This is acknowledged not only by him but also by the people surrounding him:

But there were also times when you wondered if Sir Jack was merely standing before you holding in his face a pair of small mirrors, circles in which you read your own confusion.

. . ‘Is my name real?’ Sir Jack considered the matter, as did his two employees. Some believed that Sir Jack’s name was not real in a straightforward sense, and that a few decades earlier he had deprived it of its Mitteleuropaisch tinge. (32 &33)

It is interesting to note how Barnes deals with the issues of the past and memory – both personal and national. He does not assume to present an accurate recollection of history nor does he attempt to present them as impartial and objective. He seems to say that the reconstruction of memory and the past is a personal and subjective process.

The third chapter entitled ‘The Examination of the Concept of Time and Memory’ shows how Julian Barnes’ characters observe the passing of time; how they show passivity and self-reflexivity. This is done by studying the novel *The Sense of an Ending* in particular. In this novel, the protagonist Tony Webster shows a passive and reflexive reaction to the passing of time. His observation of time is detached and disconnected as he recounts his past life and his past relationships. As a postmodern fiction, the novel often refuses the omniscience and omnipresence of the third person and engages instead in the dialogue between a narrative voice and a projected reader. Julian Barnes uses the character of Tony Webster as a first person narrator in the novel. There is often the case that the reader places his naïve but common trust in the representational veracity of a first person narrator.

This chapter shows how the narrator of the novel, Tony Webster, does not aim to portray an organized recall of time or the passage of time. For him, it seems to be the case that time is fluid and therefore one cannot attempt to have a structured and ordered assembling of it. The things that he remembers seem casual and unimportant, as if he is undertaking an inconsequential task in his act of recollection. They lack coherence and discipline, and could not

possibly be more random. He himself admits that he does not necessarily remember things in a specific order. In this chapter, Barnes attempts to show how fluid and self-reflexive memory can be. In an interview with NPR's Linda Wertheimer, Barnes says this novel is about “. . .memory and time. What time does to memory and what memory does to time, how they interact. And it's also about what happens to someone in later years when they discover that some of the certainties they've always relied on, certainties in their mind and memory. . .are beginning to be undermined” (n.pag).

“We live in time - it holds us and moulds us- but I've never felt I understood it very well” (Barnes, *The Sense* 3), the narrator confesses, when he tries to explain what time means to him. He insists that he is not referring to theories of time but rather ordinary time measured by the passing of a clock hand. It is interesting to note that though he does not profess to be able to explain what time means to him, he relies heavily on it:

. . . it takes only the smallest pleasure or pain to teach us time's malleability. Some emotions speed it up, others slow it down; occasionally, it seems to go missing – until the eventual point when it really does go missing, never to return”. (3)

Barnes knows how vulnerable personal memory is. In the novel, the narrator retelling his past is an example of how complicated and complex the process of remembering can be. The representation of the past is an intricate thing. The characters in the novel are all guilty of embellishing their past when they revisit them. It goes deeper than just the characters. They are guilty of it in the different stages of their lives. It is just that they embellish the stages which they are not presently experiencing.

The fourth chapter is titled ‘The Construction of Identity through Recollection’ and it probes how Julian Barnes uses personal memory and the past to illustrate characters and personalities in his novels ‘*The Sense of an Ending*’ and ‘*England, England*’. The description of past events contrasted with the present situation drives the plot of the novels and provides a way to examine the concepts of identity. Barnes seems to think that the past is not closed and fixed and that the future is open to change. His novels seem to suggest that the experience of the past is constantly changing and the future proves to be heavily determined by the past.

A narrator can go back in time and present certain events from his own perspective. But this does not necessarily mean that his narrative is correct or accurate. In the context of constructing identities, Tony’s perspective is vulnerable to subjectivity and partiality. This is what Barnes explores in his novels. The protagonist of *The Sense of an Ending* Tony revisits his past, and as he begins to consider other perspectives regarding the past, he concedes that he might not be accurate in his depiction of certain characters in the novel. Amelie Rorty writes:

The conscious possession of experiences is the final criterion of identity. The continuity of the self is established by memory; disputes about the validity of memory reports will hang on whether the claimant had as hers the original experience. Puzzles about identity will be held as puzzles about whether it is possible to transfer, or to alienate memory (that is, the retention of one’s own experience) without destroying the self (Popova n.p)

If it is the intentions and the capacities for choice that define a person, there is a difficulty in locating the identities of characters as the novel is constrained by a single narrator. Barnes depicts the creation of a character out of the recollection of a single person. Perhaps what Barnes

tries to imply in his novels is that there can never be a solid definition or representation in the case of identity.

The chapter clearly indicates that perspective is conditioned by time and new changes. One person's recollection cannot be taken as a sole testimony to locate a character's identity. It is bound to be tempered by outward influences and personal prejudices. Rorty says, "To have character is to have reliable qualities, to hold tightly to them through the temptations to swerve and change. A person of character is neither bribed nor corrupted; he stands fast, is steadfast" (n.p). Barnes' narrators and characters do not share any of these traits. In refusing to locate a definite identity, Barnes evokes the postmodern characteristic of rejecting the achievement of order and meaning. Barnes understands the problems of fragmentation and subjectivity in the attempt to locate a sense of identity. But rather than trying to solve it, as a postmodern writer, he decides to play with the "insurmountable chaos" (McHale 1).

Identity in itself is neither sufficient nor necessary for the legitimacy of memory. Barnes indicates that a person can be given a suggestion for a representation of memory which as a matter of chance, happens to be the one that the person who had the experience remembered. As Shoemaker says:

Each of us has, in memory, a kind of access to his own past history which no other than himself can have. The statements we make about our own past histories are not infallible, but they are immune to one sort of error to which statements of other persons are subject; they are immune to what might be called error through misidentification (Miri 2).

The characters in the novel have the tendency to change the past and substitute it with whatever is advantageous for them. Martha and Sir Jack are two characters who are desperately

trying to escape from the shadows of their past and do whatever is necessary to survive. In the pursuit of this, they distort and alter their past to build and create different identities for themselves.

The problem of realizing a sense of identity in the novels of Julian Barnes is that his novels often rely on the recollection of an unreliable narrator. The anecdotes related by the protagonists are often inconsistent and does not accommodate multiple perspectives. This results in a difficulty to locate and understand the characters and their sense of identity. Besides, this unwillingness to be specific and definite is a major characteristic of a postmodern writer like Julian Barnes.

It is important to note that Barnes does not attempt to represent the past in his novels as representation would entail accountability and responsibility from the writer; nor does he assume to present objects, facts or accounts of the past as it is. As a postmodern writer, he suggests that there is the possibility of revisiting the past and re-presenting it. In re-presenting the past in his novels, he is not constrained by the responsibility to be truthful or accurate to past events and experiences. Rather, he acknowledges that there can be more than one representation of the past; and that the gaps in earlier representations can be dealt with by attempting to re-present them.

Barnes seems to suggest that the observation of time seems to come down to personal inclination. There will be different perspectives in the re-presenting of the past and they all would be prejudiced at one moment or the other. It depends on a person's preference to relate and reproduce what they feel and think is important and to be the arbiter of what version of their recollection really matters. Barnes challenges the impulse to totalize history and contests

continuity in re-presenting the past. He revises and reinterprets what is accepted as history and transforms the conventions of representing the past in narrative.

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APPENDICES

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE	:Marlyn Lalnunmawii Sailo
DEGREE	: M.Phil.
DEPARTMENT	: English
TITLE OF DISSERTATION	: Re-Presenting the Past: A Study of Selected Novels of Julian Barnes.
DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION	: 30.07.2014
(Commencement of First Semester)	
COMMENCEMENT OF SECOND	
SEMESTER/DISSERTATION	: 01.01.2015
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL –	
1. BOS	: 15.05.2015
2. SCHOOL BOARD	: 21.05.2015
3. REGISTRATION NO. & DATE	: MZU/M.Phil./219 of 21.05.2015
4. DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION	: 30.06.2016
5. EXTENSION, IF ANY	: 1 Semester

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Educational Qualifications :

Class	Board/ University	Year of Passing	Division/Grade	Percentage
X	MBOSE	2007	I	61%
XII	MBSE	2009	I	71%
BA	NEHU	2012	II	53%
MA	MZU	2014	I	69%
M.Phil.	MZU	Course work completed in 2014	I 'A' Grade awarded. 10 pt. scale grading system, 'A' corresponds to 6 – 6.99 pts.	Corresponds to 60% in terms of percentage conversions.

M.Phil. Regn. No. and Date:

MZU/M.Phil./219 of 20.05.2015.

Other relevant information:

1. Currently working on M.Phil. dissertation titled “Re-Presenting the Past: A Study of Selected Novels of Julian Barnes” under the supervision of Prof. Sarangadhar Baral, Head of Department, Department of English, Mizoram University.
2. Attended and participated in a national seminar entitled “Emergent Identities: Its Literary Representations” organized by the Department of English, MZU under UGC-DRS-SAP I on 4-6 March 2015.
3. Attended and participated in an international seminar entitled “Indigeneity: Expression and Experience” organized by the Department of English, MZU under UGC-DRS-SAP I on 25-26 February 2016.
4. Awarded the UGC-Junior Research Fellowship for a period of five years from the date of declaration of result i.e. 10th November 2014.