DISCOVERING SELF AND NEGOTIATING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD: A STUDY OF THE SELECTED NOVELS OF JULIAN BARNES

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

English

By

Sunayna
Registration Number:41800660

Supervised By

Dr. Sonia Luthra (28303)

Department of English (Assistant Professor)

Lovely Professional University

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB
2025

DECLARATION

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled "*Discovering Self and Negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes*" in fulfillment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Sonia Luthra, working as Assistant Professor, in the Department of English of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

(Signature of Scholar)
Sunayna
41800660
Department of English
Lovely Professional University,
Punjab, India

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled "*Discovering Self and Negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes*" submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Department of English, is a research work carried out by Sunayna, 41800660, is bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

(Signature of Supervisor)
Dr. Sonia Luthra
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Lovely Professional University,
Punjab, India

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u>

Abstract

The thesis entitled *Discovering Self and Negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes* aims to study the relationship of Self with Others while living in society**.** Human beings worldwide are connected while living in society. Aristotle aptly observed that man is a social being who loves to live in society. Such contacts have led to the formation of stereotypes and prejudices that dominate, through the concept of otherness, the ways one's identity is created. Each individual has to understand the nature of other people living in society. Many philosophers in the 18th century reflected on the role of self in developing relations with others. Gergen (2011) contends that the self is socially constructed. Man lives in society and comes in contact with 'Others' while living in society. All relations are the product of his interaction with others. Love, greed, religion, marriage, avarice, violence, and sacrifice are the social constructs. Julian Barnes explores the growth of human relations in his novels, believing that the self is a reality and that the development of the self determines human consciousness and identity. It has generally been observed that society is a social network where everyone is related to others. The study explores how people struggle to discover and develop themselves while negotiating various relations in their lives and how these relationships help these characters realize and explore their concept of 'Self'. In this study, the famous theories of Self have been investigated, and it is argued that the theory of Self can be conveniently used as a research tool. In this respect, the so-called "pattern of theory" is significant in sociology. Self includes the experiments and experiences of the individuals; the urge of the individuals to gain social and political awareness and to gain knowledge to cope with the existential realities of life.

Julian Barnes sought inspiration from postmodern writers and employed postmodern techniques such as intertextuality, fragmentation, pastiche, and magic realism. He discarded the methods employed by Hemingway and Joseph Heller, who celebrated the glories of war in their novels. He was greatly impacted by the postmodern fiction of Vladimir Nabokov, Flannery O'Connor, Bernard Malamud, and John Cheever. Heller presented a fragmented view of society and followed Jameson's postmodern theories; Jameson's theories also impacted Barnes as he explained the

fragmented view of self. Barnes disagreed and rejected the ideas and theories of Enlightenment. Barnes believed that absolute truths are fragmented ideas.

Objectives of Research

1) To make a theoretical framework of Self-Other Relationship Theory (SORT) proposed by William W. Wilmot

2) To investigate the elements of cultural variability developing the Self and the Other

3) To analyze the quest for individual and collective identities from the Vantage point of Self-Other Relationship Theory

4) To compare personal and collective experiences of the characters

5) To assess the behavioral and communicational tendencies of the characters in the light of SORT

Julian Barnes's debut novel *Metroland* (1980) explores 20th-century society in England and France through the story of Christopher. It was followed by *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), and the novel is a fine juxtaposition of biography, fiction, and literary criticism. It was followed by *Before She Met Me* (1982), depicting the wounded psyche of human beings. The novel's plot features a man's jealousy of his wife's former lovers. Barnes's novel *Talking It Over* (1991) further deals with the theme of fragmentation of self. *Love Etc.* (2000) narrates the tale of love in a heart-rending style. His memoir *Nothing to be Frightened Of* (2008) critically examines his relationship with his parents and elder brother. His other novels like *England, England,* and *Arthur and George* were nominated for the awards. His latest novel, The Only Story (2018), deals with Paul and Susan's love relationship, bringing them untold psychological ailments. In this study, the various novels of Julian Barnes, namely *The Sense of an Ending*, *Metroland*, *Talking it Over*, *Love, Etc.*, *The Only Story* and *The Noise of Time* are explored by applying the theories of Self and the Other. The theories of Self are explored in the first chapter entitled *Genesis and Development of Self-Other Relationship Theory*. Julian Barnes is a novelist who depicts the plight of people afflicted with the absurdities and tensions of life. He explores the role of self in developing human relationships. Outside society, man has no social existence. His growth is possible only in society, and all his relations with the "Other" people are conditioned and defined while living in society. The concepts

of individualism and collectivism can be discussed to show the impact of cultural variations on the behaviour and communication of individuals. Still, every individual's behaviour cannot be expected to be guided by these culture-level variations within a given social setting, as suggested by the study of William Gudykunst and Young Kim (1992) observe that people have individual identities and collective identities (Gudykunst and Kim 55).

The dialectical relations of Self with the other is the root cause of growth and expansion. All human relations such as love, marriage, friendship, political and matrimonial alliances are the product of Self and the Other relationships. Man lives and dies in society since he has no existence outside it. The quest for identity of individuals, the marriage and the divorce, the rebellious and deviant behavior, the dissolution of Self, loss of Self, and the disintegration of human relations are the outcome of Self and the Other relationships. In the old tribal society, man was in direct communion with his fellow beings; he would live in his tribes. The marriages were allowed only within the tribe, and nobody was allowed to leave the tribe. Awareness of oneself determines one's personality and individuality in society. In society, one can find that most issues occur due to conflict between self and others. Barnes contends that in the postmodern world, relations are disintegrating, and man is living alone, being disconnected from his fellows in society. The term relationship had acquired a new meaning, leading to the fragmentation of Self. Julian Barnes depicts this traumatic experience in all his novels. Luhmann talks of double consciousness in interpersonal relations. This study analyzes the characters' experiences while they are in a relationship with others. The chapter will examine the characters drawn from the different novels discussed earlier. It will analyze their feelings while they are not related to others and discuss their experiences while in a relationship. Julian Barnes is a typical postmodern novelist who employs the techniques of Postmodernism in his novels, exploring the role of self in developing human relationships. Self includes the experiments and experiences of the individuals; the urge of the individuals to gain social and political awareness and to gain knowledge to cope with the existential realities of life.

Julian Barnes sought inspiration from postmodern writers and employed postmodern techniques such as inter-textuality, fragmentation, pastiche, and magic

realism. He discarded the methods employed by Hemingway and Joseph Heller, who celebrated the glories of war in their novels. He was greatly impacted by the postmodern fiction of Vladimir Nabokov, Flannery O'Connor, Bernard Malamud, and John Cheever. Heller presented a fragmented view of society and followed Jameson's postmodern theories; Jameson's theories also impacted Barnes as he explained the fragmented view of self. Barnes disagreed and rejected the ideas and theories of Enlightenment. The study explores the perceptions and vision of Julian Barnes, who deeply examines the matrix of human relationships. The plot of the novel *The Sense of an Ending* deals with the themes of youth and age, innocence and experience.

Role of Language in Self-Development

George Herbert Mead is a famous sociologist who propounded his theory of social Self. He firmly argued that no human development is possible outside society and that social interaction with others is critical to developing the Self. The Social Theory of Self by Mead is based on the concepts of "Me and I and Other." This theory explores the socialistic forces that lead to Self-development. He argued that the Self emerges from social interactions. Self-development is a continuous social process. The social institutions teach man the importance of social interactions for his survival. His interdependence on others is invest-able and a holistic experience. An individual who fails to comprehend the significance of social interactions behaves like an animal. He learns to comprehend the responses of others and gain multiple experiences while living in society. He observes the activities of others and learns to decide the significance of these activities in his life. He learns to internalize external opinions and internal feelings and becomes a mature person with time. He can decide grave matters, and interacting with others helps him cope with life's adversities. Mead argues that man is not strong from birth but becomes strong by social forces. Mead further argues that social activities such as language, games, plays, and dances teach him new things about life. He gathers knowledge, and the experiences of others give him the confidence to confront the existential challenges of life.

Language helps man to respond to the perceptions and opinions of others. He understands the role of games, words, and symbols. Language is a medium of interaction with others. Language helps an individual convey his opinions and attitudes about a matter. The dialogue between two individuals is always healthy,

promoting mutual understanding and the development of the Self. In the Greek world, dramas played a very significant role in society. Drama was considered an essential part of society to depict the current issues of life, and each play ended with a social message. Role-playing leads to the development of human consciousness, bringing social awareness into his life. An individual can understand the perspective of others and can peep into their thoughts.

George Herbert Mead has investigated the role of love, power, money, and revenge in governing human relations. Man's Self comes in contact with the Other in society, and his relationship often involves love, power, and money. Man is often jealous, envious, deviant, rebellious, and selfish in his relations with the Other. Julian Barnes is a bold writer depicting the issues of family and male-female bonds in the contemporary social setup. He has depicted his views of social relations. The dominating theme of the novels Barnes is focused on the growth and evolution of the life of his characters and their struggles for existence and their quest for identity. It is argued in this study that there is inalienable "interaction between society and the individual as well as how institutions, conventions, and values affect artists' ability to express themselves creatively (Merton 138). This sociological perspective is employed in this study to observe the complex intersections between her personal experiences, the social setting, and the main themes of the novelist. Robert Merton comments thus:

> In every society, Adaptation I (conformity to both culture goals and means) is the most common and widely diffused. Were this not so, the stability and continuity of the society could not be maintained. The mesh of expectancies which constitutes every social order is sustained by the modal behaviour of its members falling within the first category. Conventional role behaviour oriented toward the basic values of the group is the rule rather than the exception. It is this fact alone which permits us to speak of a human aggregate as comprising a group or society. (138)

It is argued in this study that there is inalienable "interaction between society and the individual as well as how institutions, conventions, and values affect artists' ability to express themselves creatively (138). This sociological perspective is

employed in this study to observe the complex intersections between her personal experiences, the social setting, and the main themes of the novelist.

The social order is disturbed when the Self and the Other relation begin. Social thinkers observe that society pressures individuals to achieve socially accepted goals. The stress and depression promote criminal behavior to stabilize their finances, such as selling drugs or engaging in prostitution. Some people have a better chance of success than others merely because of their social class or race. Individual strain is caused by causes such as low self-esteem or a lack of drive. A multitude of conditions, including childhood trauma, mental illness, or drug misuse, can contribute to this form of tension. It is argued that anomie develops when the social rules that control conduct are weakened or missing. People are less likely to comply with social standards and more likely to engage in deviant conduct in society. The characters of Barnes, such as Chris, Tony, and Gillian, are indoctrinated to regard things like wealth, success, and power as cultural objectives. Tony's existential musings reveal his seriousness as, at the end of the novel, he unlocks the mystery about Veronica. He recalls discussing Robson's suicide with his school friends. He narrates how Mrs. Ford, Adrian, and Adrian's son have all suffered mightily. Adrian's suicide was an act of desperation; there is nothing absurd about the decision and its circumstances. Tony's fantasy that he can understand his and others' lives is revealed by Julian Barnes. The novel's final words, "There is great unrest," are the words of the dullard in their history class who cannot remember anything more to say about the reign of Henry VIII. The suggestion is that there is nothing more to be said. Indeed, Tony's story uncovers and makes sense of his confusion and misguided assumptions.

Barnes argues that the relationship between the Self and the Other memory also plays a vital role in the life of individuals. Barnes is interested in memory and its unreliability, a theme explored in many of his novels and perhaps especially vividly in his meditation memoir on aging and the fear of death, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of.* Barnes says:

> We lose hold of what happened, who we were, what it was like to be in a particular moment; and we supplement, build narratives from the materials we have to hand, accommodate sudden up wellings by neatly assigning predetermined categories. From my casual survey of reviews

of The Sense of an Ending, it seems that readers have generally taken Barnes to here be working out this same theme in a particularly vivid way. "But that is, I think, to take Tony's schoolboy musings about memory and history, his own commentary on how he is unreliable, as we all are (one more feature of his dedication to being unremarkable), too much at face value. (Barnes, *Frightened* 90)

The novel's plot poses a profound challenge to explore human tragedy. Adrian's tragedy is traumatic, and this brings depression in the mind of Tony. He expresses his psychological anguish thus:

> We muddle along, we let life happen to us, we gradually build up a store of memories. There is the question 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. (96–97)

He continues, shading into self-recrimination, "Yes indeed, if Tony had seen more clearly, acted more decisively, held to truer moral values, settled less easily for a passive peaceableness which he first called happiness and later contentment" (97). Barnes gives his readers the hope that Tony will be shaken out of his complacency by better understanding the events of his life. But this hope is swiftly dashed: "If Tony hadn't been fearful, hadn't counted on the approval of others for his own self-approval ... and so on, through a succession of hypotheticals leading to the final one: so, for instance, if Tony hadn't been Tony" (97). In the end, Tony's reflection leads him to conclude that certain things may be regretted about how he has led his life. The mental contortions Tony needs to perceive clearly how his dearly held values are a self-serving fantasy. However, when we closely examine his reflection style in the musings and commentary he offers throughout the novel, these contortions seem perfectly appropriate to him instead. Tony's problem isn't that he's blind to himself. Take his self-described peaceableness. He recalls how he first came to identify himself this way, in response to Veronica calling him a coward in the conversation that he takes to have signaled the beginning of the end of their relationship. He doesn't want complications and admits—at least to himself—to not being "much

good at discussing this stuff" (37). This doesn't, however, bother Tony in the slightest. He's not interested in talking to Veronica about "this stuff" because he's not interested in what she thinks or feels. He's much more interested in his version of her thoughts or feelings; he usually can't tell those things apart. He later says, "When we are young, we invent different futures for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different pasts for others" (88). One of his most savage reflections on Veronica, as being one of "those whose main concern is to avoid further damage to themselves, at whatever cost, ... who are ruthless, and the ones to be careful of" (48), Tony struggles throughout the novel to comprehend the nature of tragedy human beings experience in life. He observes thus in his mood of sullenness:

> 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; but that's something different, more like decoration. Perhaps character resembles intelligence, except that character peaks a little later: between twenty and thirty, say. And after that, we're just stuck with what we've got. We're on our own. If so, that would explain a lot of lives, wouldn't it? And also, if this isn't too grand a word, it's our tragedy. (113)

When Tony and his friends talk about moral development, they talk about children or adolescents. That's the stage at which Tony and his friends used to imagine they were waiting to enter into life, but, as he rightly points out, their "lives had in any case begun" (10). Equally, it seems that Tony's commitment to the thought that he is "not odd enough not to have done the things" he ended up doing is itself a kind of moral commitment, a commitment to life being already over" (71). When Tony receives a letter from a solicitor that the deceased mother of his college girlfriend Veronica left him £500 and two documents, it does not make much sense to him. Tony starts to re-examine his past; he thinks back about his relationship with Veronica and about his friend Adrian, who started going out with Veronica after Tony and who later committed suicide. He looks back and tries to find the truth about events that happened in the past, not so much to him but to people with whom he was once connected. He tries to find out what exactly happened and how he was

personally involved in it. The novel is concerned almost exclusively with memories and what time does to them.

The dialectical relationship between Self and Other is explored in the second chapter entitled: *Formation of Self and Relationships in The Metroland and The Sense of an Ending of Julian Barnes*. The conspicuous feature of the novels of Julian Barnes is the pervasive vogue of the fracture of the identity of characters who live in a harsh British environment. Ihab Hassan's *The Modern Self in Recoil* (1967) is written to resolve the loss of self and disruption of human relationships. Hassan propounded new theories of postmodernism, laying stress on the features of "discontinuity, cruelty, violence and radicalism" (Hassan 121). In the early years of his writing career, Julian Barnes realized that values are fast declining and man is running after money. He closely discovered the oppressive and cruel nature of people trapped in the abyss of darkness and absurdity. The plays of the Theatre of Absurd changed the vision of life and the universe.

Beckett propagated the wave of nihilism and pessimism, declaring that life is meaningless and that, in the end, every project of man is doomed to fail. Beckett observed that human society is on the verge of destruction. The nihilistic ideas eventually led to the deflation of Self, and no wonder a new age emerged that propagated the idea that Truth is an illusion. Mind and Soul are meaningless as the soul has lost its transcendental value. Religion had sustained in the people of Victorian Age but in the post-world war society man lost his communion with Nature and God. Wordsworth believed that Nature is the manifestation of God. It is argued that human beings are feeling alienated. The loss of integrated self is the core issue depicted by Barnes' novels. The wave of pessimism and nihilism got impetus by the Holocaust of the concentration camps of Auschwitz. The Nazis perpetrated unimaginable crimes on the millions of innocent Jews of Europe; gas chambers were set up to decimate the Jews. The novels *Talking it Over and Love, Etc.* of Barnes depict the mysteries of human relationships employing the strategies of postmodernism. Barnes describes the themes of love and sex in the context of postmodern society as his characters experience the loss of human values and fragmentation of self. In Shakespeare's plays and George Eliot's novels, love is a way of life; it sustains human beings. But Barnes's characters live in a world of illusion.

Love has no moral strength as the characters are lost in the world of lust and sexual pleasures. Barnes deals with the prevalence of ambiguity, threatening the characters' lives. Love and Truth are illusive as they are irrelevant to society. Barnes's characters come into contact with others, but their relationship is directed by greed, selfishness, and nihilism.

The third chapter of the thesis, entitled: *Quest for Identity and Communicative Tendencies in The Noise of Time and The Only Story* explores the complexities of Self and the challenges of the protagonists as they are in the quest for their identity formation in society. Julian Barnes is a postmodernist who seeks inspiration from Frederic Jameson's postmodern strategies. In his novels, Kafka depicted a world of chaos and disorder, and Nabakov and Pynchon employed postmodern strategies to project the isolated self. Many critics have explored the nature of the dissolution of the Self, and it is found that Barnes employs cultural symbols to depict the disintegration of the Self of the characters. Identity plays multiple roles in the lives of Barnes' characters. It is essential to comprehend the nature of identity. Marcia (1994) observes that "identity means a coherent view of the individual; his potential to confront the challenges of life and his association with the past and the present" (Marcia 70).

This chapter examines and investigates the novels of Julian Barnes, relying on the theories of dissolution of self propounded by Erick Erickson and David Laing in his book *The Divided Self* (1960). Laing explores the nature of the dissolution of the Self and demonstrates his deep understanding of the self in the postmodern world. He explores the nature of flex, which brings erosion of old human values. Laing believes contemporary human beings have lost faith in Nature, God, and religion. They are in the mad race of making dollars and feel disconnected with "Others". They are suffering from the virus of alienation. John Lifton published *The Protean Self* (1993), discussing the fluid nature of identity.

In the fourth chapter entitled: *Dialects of Human Relationships and Cultural Behaviour in Talking it Over and Love, Etc.*, the main issues of human relationships found in the novels of Julian Barnes are explored. It is contended that the Self is socially constructed. Man comes in contact with "others" while establishing many relations with the others. The chapter explores the development of self while

negotiating relationships with others in the postmodern world, as depicted in the works of Julian Barnes. Julian Barnes started writing when the world passed from the transitional phase as he moved from modernism to postmodernism. Barnes's critics and reviewers examined his texts from a postmodern perspective. Self-other understanding forms the core of human relationships. Progress in the study of relationships depends partly on the recognition that relations are not exactly similar to interaction or the behaviour of individuals. So, it must be explained by emphasizing the relationships as linking individuals. The chapter analyses the characters drawn from the different novels discussed earlier. It will analyze their feelings while they are not related to others and discuss their experiences while in a relationship. The study explores the perceptions and vision of Julian Barnes, who deeply examines the matrix of human relationships. The plot of the novel *The Sense of an Ending* deals with the themes of youth and age, innocence and experience. Barnes gives the message in the plot that life can be awful. Tony Webster is the protagonist in the novel, struggling in the postmodern world. He is confronted with the challenges of existence as he finds love, truth elusive, and all relations measured in money. He is disgusted to see the uncertainty and instability of life and society, and the novel's plot is concerned with the themes of decay and loss. Tony is shocked to find society's pervasive vogue of hatred, greed and selfishness. His first experience with Susan's family is quite challenging. He goes to Kent's countryside to spend a few days with Veronica's family. Things begin to fall apart, and he discovers that Veronica is in love with Adrian, one of his best friends.

The *Conclusion* resolves all the issues and fulfills all the objectives of the study. It is maintained that each individual has a role in self-interest when it comes to relationships with others. Thus the Paradigm II view of relationships shifts the focus from Self to the understanding of human relationships., The recognition of the Other leads to the Paradigm III view of relationships in which Self, Other, and Relationships are seen as closely connected, suggesting that people are constructed in their transaction with others and one comes into being using one's transactions with the Others. Hence Self, the Other and the Relationship are inseparable. This theory also conceptualizes that all parties in a relationship undergo significant changes in their personality while participating and expressing in a relationship. It helps the person to

be self- aware" (Mead 123). Erick Erikson (1902-1994) investigated the process of personality development and discussed the trajectory of an individual's personality development. He argued that human personality continued to change over time and was never finished. Erikson's view of Self-development emphasized the social aspects.

In this thesis, the novels of Julian Barnes are explored, relying on the theories of Erik Erikson and William. W. Wilmot. The study interprets and examines the major novels of Julian Barnes from a new perspective depicting the journey of each protagonist; his epical struggle to establish relationships with others. The theories of Erick Erickson and other psychologists are applied to explore and investigate the concept of self and other relationships in the novels. The research is based on textual analysis of the novels and the application of SORT. The novels will be analyzed in light of the SORT and scholarly publications.

This study explores the significance of the Self and its dialectical relationship with the Others while living in society. The wave of postmodernism greatly impacted Julian Barnes, and he employed his writing talent to examine and investigate the multidimensional roles of the Self in understanding human relationships. This study has social relevance because of the following observations:

1) Social needs are critical, as no one in this world can live without society. Man lives in society and dies in society. Interdependence and interconnection are inevitable in postmodern society. Human beings learn and teach others and acquire multidimensional experiences, developing ties with "Others."

2) All human feelings, passions, and sentiments are the creation of human relationships. Each man ought to comprehend the importance of these human relationships. Good and cordial relations with "Others" lead to happiness and comforts of life, while ignoble relationships breed contempt, hatred, and aggression. Man is judged in society by his sense of understanding and his sensitiveness about the feelings and passions of "Others."

Preface

Julian Barnes is a postmodern British novelist who won the Man Booker Prize. His novels explore the dialectical relations of Self and the Other in society. This thesis, entitled *Discovering Self and Negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes*, is based on the socialistic theories of Self and the relationship of individuals while living in society. Although there are many critical books and research papers on Julian Barnes, critics of the past or present have yet to explore and investigate his texts from the perspective of the Self and the Other theory. The present study examines the development of the Self while negotiating relationships with Others in the postmodern world in Barnes's novels. It is argued that society is a social network where everyone is related to others. The study investigates how people struggle to discover and develop themselves while negotiating various relationships.

The idea of Self-in-relation marks a shift in emphasis from separation to relationships as the basis of self-experience and development. The Self-in-relation model asserts that other aspects of the Self, such as creativity and autonomy, develop within this primary context of relationships. Progress in the study of relationships depends partly on the recognition that relations are not exactly similar to interaction or the behavior of individuals and so require an explanation that emphasizes relationships as linking individuals. The concept of Self can be defined as the totality of our beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and opinions organized systematically toward our existence. In simple words, Self is how we think of ourselves and how we can think, believe, and act our various roles in life. The idea of Self is thought to develop as a person ages, as perceptions are affected by environmental factors.

Secondly, a person is supposed to stick to their views of themselves, and to change this perception may take a long time, but it is possible. So, it can be said that the formation of the concept of Self is a continual development wherein one lets go of the things and ideas which are not as per this concept of Self and may go on holding those which prove to help build a favorable perception of one's existence or discovering oneself. This leads to the role of relationships in realizing one's Self. As the Self is organized and found in the context of essential relationships, relationships

have an important role to play in shaping an individual's personality. For instance, how children are treated early in childhood influences how their sense of Self develops. This proves that a person's culture and relationships are vital in developing the idea of Self.

Self-Other Relationship Theory

The relationship between persons depends much on the variations arising out of the cultures they belong to and the relations people build during their lifetime. This leads to the concept of Self, Other, and relationships. Based on this concept, William W. Wilmot described three main paradigmatic views about relationships. Paradigm I view of relationships asserts individual selves loosely connected to other people. This paradigm holds the Self and Others as separate units loosely connected, as there is no thick emotional attachment or involvement in human life. According to Wilmot, Paradigm I view "emphasizes the Self, de-emphasizes the Other, and reduces the relationship to a fragile connecting mechanism" (Wilmot 37). The concepts of individualism and collectivism can be discussed to show the impact of cultural variations on the behavior and communication of individuals. Still, every individual's behavior cannot be expected to be guided by these culture-level variations within a given social setting, as suggested by the study of William Gudykunst and Young Kim, in which they note that "Although most people in the U.S. have individual tendencies, some people do have collectivistic tendencies. Similarly, although most people in Japan have collectivistic tendencies, some people do have individual tendencies" (Gudykunst and Kim 55). In another study, Gudykunst and Kim observe that individualistic cultures favor individual goals over group goals, care for themselves and their immediate family, and place a high value on materialism, success, progress, and rationality.

Paradigm II view of relationships refers to the interconnections and inter dependencies that develop human relations. This paradigm is commonly found in people anxious to achieve goals and establish contact with other people in society. It is maintained that each individual has a role in self-interest when it comes to relationships with Others. Thus, Paradigm II view of relationship shifts the focus from the Self to the recognition of Others in the context of relationships, maintaining that each individual has a role in Self-interests, the Other's interests, and the relationship

as the interplay between the two. The recognition of the Other leads to the Paradigm III view of relationships in which Self, Other, and relationships are seen as closely connected, suggesting that people are constructed in their transactions with Others and one comes into being employing one's transactions with the Others. Hence, the Self, Other, and relationship are inseparable. This theory also conceptualizes that all parties in a relationship undergo significant changes in their personality while participating and expressing in a relationship.

Apart from this theory, there are sociological theories of Self-development. Charles Cooley asserted that people's self-understanding is constructed, in part, by their perception of how others view them. Another pioneering contribution to the sociological perspective of the Self is by George Herbert Mead, who suggested that the "Self," a person's distinct identity, is developed through social interaction. However, this ability to socialize is not inborn, so to engage in the process of "Self," one should be capable of viewing oneself through the eyes of others. It helps the person to be self-aware. Another psychologist, Erik Erikson, created a theory of personality development. He argued that human personality changed over time and was never finished. Erikson's view of Self-Development emphasized the social aspects. Psychological theories regarding the Self-development of humans have been expanded by sociologists such as Charles Cooley and George Mead, who explicitly study the role of society and social interaction in the development of the Self.

Barnes's novels depict the intricacies of relationships. It is observed that there is a dialectical relationship between the Self and the Other. Love and money are a few critical and forceful factors governing the relationship between Self and the Other. Barnes's novels offer an interesting study of the development of these relations. Love and money create multiple complications in relationships, and this study will explore the depth of these relationships. Erikson also observed that human behavior is determined by the interplay of these relations, such as loyalty, aggression, anger, and violence. Love and hatred are revealed through the interplay of these relations. This socialistic study explores the forces that bring human beings together and often the breaking of the relations that lead to tragic consequences. So, it can be assumed that people don't build relationships; instead, relationships build people. Hence, viewing relationships from such a perspective will improve understanding of communications

in personal relationships. This study will investigate Julian Barnes's major novels describing the subtleties and intricacies of human relations.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

The thesis entitled: *Discovering Self and Negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes* aims to study the relationship of Self with Others while living in society. The history of old communities clearly reveals that they have been in direct contact with others as trade and transportation were the means to develop relations with others. Such contacts have led to the formation of stereotypes and prejudices which dominate, through the concept of otherness, the ways one's identity is created. Many philosophers in the 18th century investigated the relationship of self with others. It is basically the awareness about one's self that determines an individual's personality. In society, one can find that most of the issues occur due to conflicts between self and others.

And on the other hand many positive things emerge if there is a sound relationship between the Self and the Other. Hence the proposed research aims to deal with the issues caused by the Self and the Other in relationship with each other. In the Postmodern world, the term relationship assumes more significance as in the postmodern era, there is a sense of fragmentation of Self. There are multiple and conflicting identities. People do not feel connected to each other. Relation has lost its meaning, making society fragmented. In the thesis the main focus is to explore the dialects of human relations depicted by Julian Barnes in his novels. The philosophers have propounded different theories about self, and these varieties of theories have also created a host of problems.

Gergen (2011) contends that the self is socially constructed. Man lives in society and comes in contact with 'Others' while living in society. All relations are the product of his interaction with others. Love, greed, religion, marriage, avarice, violence and sacrifice are the social constructs. Julian Barnes has explored the growth of human relations in his novels, believing that the self is a reality and that human consciousness and individual identity is determined by the growth of the self. The self of the individual thus reacts in his relationship with others.

In this study, it is argued that relationship processes occur in the minds of the

individuals, where they hold their idiosyncratic views of the relationship and shared ones. The relationships are determined by the perceptions and attitudes of the characters while living in British society. The Self of a man gains identity and development in the context of relationships with others.

Julian Barnes' books have received considerable critical acclaim worldwide, and several have been nominated for and/or have won prestigious literary prizes. The distinctive feature of Barnes's work, taken as a whole, is its diversity of topics and techniques, which confounds some readers and critics but enchants others. While some underlying themes can be identified, such as obsession, love, the relationship between fact and fiction, or the irretrievability of the past, it is clear that in each novel Barnes aims to explore a new area of experience and experiments with different narrative modes. He explains: "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" (qtd. in Freiburg).

Julian Barnes started writing when the world passed from the transitional phase, as the shift from modernism to postmodernism was quite visible. Jean-Paul Sartre visited America in 1960 and rejected the traditional themes of love and glory of war celebrated by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and Joseph Heller. Fredric Jameson took up the challenge and wrote about postmodern culture. In England the wave of postmodernism gripped the psyche of Julian Barnes. The critics and reviewers examined his texts from a postmodernist perspective. Malcolm Bradbury (2000) talked of the changing role of fiction in the contemporary era. He says: "In the postmodern age the writers have changed the theory of the novel to cater the tastes of the contemporary people. They have created characters presenting them anxious, questioning and victims of internal and external disorder" (Bradbury xvi). It has generally been observed that society is a social network where everyone is related to others. The study explores how people struggle to discover and develop themselves while negotiating various relations in their lives and how these relationships help these characters realize and explore their concept of

'Self'. In this study, it is argued that the theory of pattern of self can be applied to explore the complexities of human relationships. The Pattern Theory of Self clearly reveals that the self is interrelated in understanding the strength of human relations. The philosophers

have propounded different theories about the Self, and these varieties of theories have also created a host of problems. Gergen (2011) contends that the self is socially constructed. Man lives in society and comes in contact with 'Others' in the society while establishing relationships. Schechtman (2011) observes that self is a product of narrative. The binary of self is a reality and human consciousness and identity of individuals is determined by the growth of self. James (1890) observes that there are many varieties of the self, but the most important of them is the dialectical relationship between the private self and the social self. Niklas Luhmann (2000) has explored the intricacies of human relations thus in communicating with others. He contends that "in society the individuals come in contact with others and get new awareness about others. They articulate their individual tastes; likes and dislikes and displaying their whims and oddities" (Luhmann 81). Luhmann talks of double consciousness in his theory of self. He is of the view that self is interpersonal" (81). Barfield (2000) has discussed the relationship of self with the other with his wife thus:

> I am suddenly aware of the difference between my wife and me. Not that this has not occurred to me before. But I am suddenly aware in a very in a very new and unsettling way. We live very different lives, and it is not only because I grew up in a large metropolitan area, not because of tree anxiety but because I cannot fade into the country. I cannot take a weekend trip without a strained obviousness that I am there. There's no choice attached to my difference. I cannot suppress it in order to grant my wife a weekend in the country. Even if I dress differently, cut my hair differently, speak differently. I cannot slip into the expense. I cannot be black. (Barfield 15)

C. E. Izard (1972) propounded "the famous theory of a Pattern of Self claiming that "emotions are complex patterns of bodily processes, experiences, expressions, behaviours and actions, and such they are individuated in patterns of characteristic features" (Izard 15). The individuals have to form an attitude in order to develop relations with other human beings in society. They have to form a certain attitude to develop healthy relations with others for growth and development. The social behaviour of the individuals is an essential part of personality formation. Self-other understanding forms the core of human relationships.

Objectives of Research

1) To make a theoretical framework of Self-Other Relationship Theory (SORT) proposed by William W. Wilmot

2) To investigate the elements of cultural variability developing the Self and the Other

3) To analyze the quest of individual and collective identities from the vantage point of Self-Other Relationship Theory

4) To compare personal and collective experiences of the characters

5) To assess the behavioural and communicational tendencies of the characters in the light of SORT

Proposed Methodology

In this thesis the novels of Julian Barnes are explored relying on the theories of Erik Erikson and William. W. Wilmot. The study interprets and examines the major novels of Julian Barnes from the new perspective depicting the journey of each protagonist; his epical struggle to establish relationship with the others. The theories of Erick Erickson and other psychologists are applied to explore and investigate the concept of self and other relationship in the novels. The research is based on textual analysis of the novels and application of the theory of SORT. The novels are analyzed in the light of the SORT with the use of scholarly publications.

Chapter I

Genesis and Development of Self-Other Relationship Theory

The idea of self and other relationships is the main focus of this chapter. The self and the other relation model form the basis of all human relations in the social world. Progress in the study of relationships depends partly on the recognition that relations are not exactly similar to interaction or the behaviour of individuals. So, it must be explained by emphasizing the relationships as linking individuals. Our beliefs, ideas, attitudes and opinions are organized, and a consistent view of Self is formed. Self- formation is a continuous process in society. Each individual sticks to his views of himself and develops perceptions in his communion with others. Secondly, a man is supposed to stick to his opinions of himself, and changing this perception of himself may take a long time, but it is possible. The formation of the concept of self is a continual development in society. An individual establishes relations with others when he feels that the ideas of others are in accordance with his tastes and likes. The relations are cemented in mutual understanding. Self-development is always a two-way process. This proves that culture and relationships are interrelated. Julian Barnes is a novelist who depicts the plight of people afflicted with the absurdities and tensions of life. He explores the role of self in developing human relationships. Outside society, man has no social existence. His growth is possible only in society, and all his relations with the "Other" people are conditioned and defined while living in society. The theory of Self and its relation with the "Other" forms the core of Barnes's novels. He writes in his novel *The Sense of an Ending* thus:

> Another detail I remember: the three of us as a symbol of our bond, used to wear our watches with the face on the inside of the wrist. It was an affectation of course, but perhaps something more. It made time feel like a personal, even a secret thing. We expected Adrian to note the gesture, and follow suit; but he didn't. (Barnes, *Ending* 6)

The Self-Other Relationship Theory originated from self-other interaction taking place among individuals. The concept of the Self-Other relationship relies upon various principles and theories propounded from time to time by different theorists.

To understand how Barnes dramatizes these relationships, we must first establish a theoretical foundation that moves from classical sociological insights through contemporary psychological research to postmodern literary applications. This progression reveals how the self-other dynamic has evolved from stable social mirrors to fragmented, uncertain negotiations of identity.
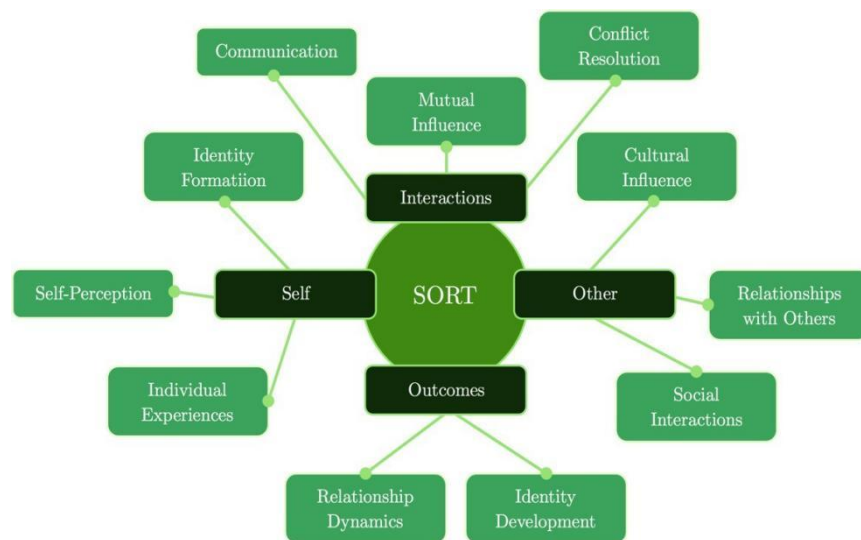
Figure 1.1: Framework of the Self-Order Relationship Theory

Building upon this foundational understanding, we must first examine how classical sociologists conceptualized the self-other relationship before exploring its contemporary manifestations.

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) provides our foundational framework through his revolutionary theory that individual identity emerges exclusively through social interaction. Mead's crucial insight lies in his dialectical conception of self as comprising two aspects: the "I" and the "Me." The "Me" represents the socialized aspect of personality—our understanding of how others perceive us and society's expectations. The "I" represents our spontaneous, creative response to these social

expectations. Mead observes: "An individual has to act according to the needs and demands of the society. He is not an alien and has to behave in a way society demands. He has to follow the rules and norms of social interaction" (Mead 12). Mead has explained the checks and balances operating in the dialectical relationship between "I" and "Me." The "Me" exercises control over one's social expectations. The 'me' prevents an individual from breaking the boundaries of rules and regulations. The 'I' allows the individual to gain growth and power in social interactions. The 'I' and the 'me' comprise the self.

Charles Cooley (1864-1929) extends Mead's framework through his "looking-glass self" theory, demonstrating how this self-formation occurs through three stages: observation (how we think others see us), imagination (how we think they judge what they see), and interpretation (our emotional response to their perceived judgment). Cooley argues: "In the first stage, an individual meets a stranger the way he looks at the mirror. He enters into a new phase of personality development and the stage of imagination begins. In the second stage he expresses his thoughts and passions. In the third stage, he gets new awareness to interpret and to investigate the issues" (Cooley 121). Cooley further argues, "The first stage is of observation the second is that of reaction and the third is that of understanding and exploration" (121). Together, Mead and Cooley establish that the self is not a pre-given entity but a social construction emerging through our relationships with others.

Contemporary psychology has built upon these classical insights, particularly in understanding how relationships facilitate personal growth and identity expansion.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory demonstrates how the Mead-Cooley framework operates in contemporary relationships. Their research reveals that healthy self-other relationships require three components: autonomy (maintaining individual identity), competence (growth through relationships), and relatedness (genuine connection). This extends Mead's I/Me dialectic by showing how the "I" can maintain autonomy while the "Me" develops through meaningful connections.

Aron's (1999) Self-Expansion Theory further develops this framework, showing how individuals in close relationships experience "self-other overlap"—a

blending of identity from "I" to "we" that reflects Cooley's looking-glass self in intimate contexts. Aron and Fraley argue that individuals in close relationships, particularly as romantic partners, become best friends and experience higher cognitive interdependence with partners. There is an obvious blending of identity from "I" to "we", exploring their societal potential. This leads to mutual understanding of each other's growth. This is called shared intimacy by the critics. This closeness is the backbone of interpersonal closeness. Weidler and Clark (2011) contend that "Such intimacy encourages a way of relating to partners that is more closely connected to one's own self-views and self-expectations" (Weidler and Clark 89). For example, individuals allocate resources for the growth and the benefit of each other in their mutual intimacy and understanding; this "closeness with the other would "tend to cognitively process information about close others as if it were about themselves" (89). As Aron observes: "In addition, under conditions of high self-other overlap, individuals tend to treat others' identities, behaviors, goals, and resources as if these were their own" (Aron 89). Mashek (2003) explored the matrix of "self-other overlap promotes a more invested and intensely personal way of relating in both friendships and romantic relationships" (Mashek 74). He contends that in all mutual relations, positive outcomes are found as the mutual understanding increases in matters of love, marriage, business, and finance. The association of two or more individuals leads to harmony and mutual growth as each individual learns positive things from their partners. The individuals who suffer from deficiencies come in contact with those who are learned and experienced and invest in those with whom they experience high self-other overlap. They get emotionally involved and are attuned to their partners. Waugh (2006) Observes that "such intimacy is thought to promote more positive relational outcomes, such as complex understanding of partners" (Waugh 23). Batson (1997) argues that in mutual relationships, more complex and potentially conflictual relational outcomes emerge, giving opportunities to the partners. Amodio (2005) observes that "an important component of relationships, this self-other overlap has also been linked to generally positive outcomes for the relationship, impacting both self and partner" (Amodio 123). Knee (2013) observes that individuals with low self-determination are defensive in close relationships and building emotional relations

with their partners. As they grow old, their closeness increases. A husband falls in love with his wife for emotional and psychological relief. As time passes, his faith and closeness with his partner increase. This body of literature also suggests that, as closeness increases, individuals low in self-determination respond with defensive behaviour, and their partners may experience relationships in more negative ways. Extrinsic incentives, inner pressure and expectations regulate the self. Valler and Ratelle (2002) argue that, at the most global level, it reflects an individual difference that is broadly transferred across domains and relationships, including close relationships.

Interpersonal relations are developed among romantic partners, family members and friends. These relations play a vital role in the growth of the self and social lives.The individuals explore their potentialities through these relations. From these relationships and the influence of varied experiences, individuals can discover themselves and patterns of personal development throughout their lifespan. Cultural transformation results from relational change, which transforms the partners' lives. The trans-formative nature of the communicative processes is associated with an individual's relationships. Thompson & Robinson (2000) observe that in medical science, these changes are visible in society. Cancer patients often go through the health care system. Interest in studying interpersonal communication and the ageing process has rapidly expanded in recent years (Nussbaum & Coupland).

Organist Study of Relationships Across the Lifespan

The individual, the dyad, the triad, the society and the culture are vital for understanding the communicative processes within relationships. An organismic approach to systems theory provides a means of understanding an older adult's changing relationships across the lifespan. Altman and Rogoff (1987) describe organismic approaches as "the study of dynamic and holistic systems in which person and environment components exhibit complex, reciprocal relationships and influences" (Altman and Rogoff 19). Briefly stated, each relationship is more than the sum of the individual characteristics of the two interactants, is more than the environmental factors that influence the relationship, and is more than the patterns of interdependence. Relationships are not static but are inherently characterised through

the assumptions of change, process, and development over time. Thus, "the lifespan frame of the interaction gives meaning to the interaction" (Nussbaum 3).

Triadic, Social, and Socio-Cultural Influences

Transactions in triads have been studied from a sociological perspective for several decades. Simmel (1959) was one of the first to recognize that triadic communication, ranging from a family of three to a brief conversation among three persons, is an essential component of a functioning society.

The idea of Self-in-Relation is the main focus of this chapter. The Self-in-Relation model forms the basis of all human relations in the social world. Progress in the study of relationships depends partly on the recognition that relations are not exactly similar to interaction or the behaviour of individuals. So, it must be explained by emphasizing the relationships as linking individuals. Our beliefs, ideas, attitudes and opinions are organized, and a consistent view of Self is formed. Self-formation is a continuous process. Each individual sticks to his views of himself and develops perceptions in his communion with others. Secondly, a man is supposed to stick to his views of himself, and changing this perception of himself may take a long time but is possible. The formation of the concept of self is a continual development in society. An individual establishes relations with others when he feels that the ideas of others are in accordance with his tastes and likes. The relations are cemented in mutual understanding. Self is always a two-way process. This proves that culture and relationships are interrelated. Julian Barnes is a novelist who depicts the plight of people afflicted with the absurdities and tensions of life. He explores the role of self in developing human relationships. Outside society, man has no social existence. His growth is possible only in society, and all his relations with the "Other" people are conditioned and defined while living in society. The theory of Self and its relation with the "Other" forms the core of Barnes's novels.

The relationship between persons depends much on the variations arising out of the various cultures they belong to and the multiple relations people build during their lifetime. William W. Wilmot (1995) described three main paradigmatic views about relationships. Paradigm I view of relationships asserts that individuals are loosely connected to other people. This Paradigm holds "Self" and "Other" as

separate units loosely connected to each other as there is no thick emotional attachment or involvement in human life. According to Wilmot (1995), "An individual explores his real identity only when he comes in contact with others and expresses his ideas; vision and ideology of life" (Wilmot 121). The cultural diversity present in society leads to individualism and collectivism. No one can ignore the impact of cultural variations on individuals' behaviour and communication. Still, every individual's behaviour cannot be expected to be guided by these culture-level variations within a given social setting as suggested by the study of William Gudykunst and Young Kim (1992) in their historical study note that "when an individual enters into the relationship with others in the society; he expresses his thoughts and perceptions of life through his communication" (Gudykunst and Kim 81). In another study, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) observe that an individual's culture plays a vital role in determining his personality. He is always concerned about his family and religion and struggles for the growth of his family. He is conscious of his success and is guided by his materialist goals" (21). Barnes found that people in the postmodern world are after wealth creation as they discard all old values. For them, the main motive is success, and one who makes up plenty of money is society's most successful person. He can achieve name and fame as most contacts are built easily with money. The main focus of Barnes's characters is progress, growth, and profit.

Paradigm II view of relationships refers to the interconnections and inter dependencies that develop human relations. This Paradigm is commonly found in people who are anxious to achieve goals and establish contact with other people in society. It is maintained that each individual has a role in self-interest when it comes to relationships with others. Thus, Paradigm II's view of relationship shifts the focus from Self to the understanding the nature of others. The theory of Self maintains that each individual is worried about their growth and progress. The recognition of the Other leads to the Paradigm III view of relationships in which Self, Other and Relationships are seen as closely connected, suggesting that people are constructed in their transaction with others and one comes into being using one's transactions with the Others. Hence, the Self, the Other and the Relationship are inseparable. This

theory also conceptualizes that all parties in a relationship undergo significant changes in their personality while participating and expressing in a relationship.

Apart from this theory are the sociological theories of the concept of Self-development. Erick Erikson (1902-1994) became famous in the domain of sociology by creating the theory of Self and personality development. He believes that the development of an individual is possible only in a society and the development of human personality is a continuous process. Many social, political, and economic factors are at work in the development of an individual. Human personality changes with the emergence of new forces. He outlined various stages for the growth and development of a sound integrated Self. This development is possible only when an individual comes in contact with others.

Bakhtin gave great significance to dialogue between two people. He published Art and Responsibility (1918), Rabelais and His World (1965), and Dostoevsky's Poetics (1984) and laid emphasis on language. Bakhtin believes that when two people meet, they exchange their ideas, which is the beginning of social interaction. In his book The Dialogic Imagination, Bakhtin gave his own dialogue theory. He investigated the act of dialogue as a social process and observed a genuine dialogue between two people.

Barnes explored the dialectical relations of self and the intricacies of the relationship depicted in his novels. He observes that communication plays a vital role in human relationships, and it is argued that "there is a dialectical relationship between Self and the Other. Gudykunst and Kim argue that communication is key to understanding intercultural communication. Kim argues, "Strangeness and familiarity make up a continuum" (Gudykunst and Kim 12). Different kinds of communication can be understood by social cognition, which involves people representing different cultures. Generally, communication helps in reducing uncertainty in behaviour. Uncertainty in behaviour can be related to the stranger's attitudes, feelings and beliefs. Frequent interactions with strangers, such as observing them passively, can reduce one's anxiety about interaction with strangers.

While classical and contemporary theories assume relatively stable social contexts for self-formation, postmodern conditions fundamentally disrupt these

processes. This disruption creates the psychological landscape that Barnes explores in his fiction.

Postmodern theorists reveal how traditional self-other relationship patterns have become unreliable. Derrida (1978) argues that "The very nature and peculiar characteristic of Self is dissolution. The radial forces at play in the society bulldoze the personality of man and in these circumstances the self becomes fluid and the very identity of an individual is eclipsed" (Derrida 23). In the "Postmodern World, Self dissolves to be a personal signifier" (23). Postmodernism philosophers have new theories of history and society. They have discarded the old views of history observing that man is the creator of his own destiny. An individual is independent as his actions lead to his loss of self. In the novels of Barnes the themes of alienation, isolation, loss of self, depression and frustration of the characters is depicted.

Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard were the pioneers of postmodern thoughts. They published books and conducted seminars to react against the old and traditional theories of modernism. Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), Jean Baudrillard's *From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* (1989) brought about massive transformation in cultural thoughts. Fredric Jameson soon became the father of postmodernism who analysed the postmodern issues of media culture, consumerism and capitalism for the first time. Jameson's *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1990) highlighted the growth of postmodern culture in America. Jameson's analysis of postmodern culture shows how fragmentation, consumerism, and the collapse of grand narratives leave individuals struggling to form coherent identities through relationships.

This theoretical progression—from Mead's stable social mirrors through contemporary self-expansion to postmodern fragmentation—provides the framework for understanding Barnes's characters, who attempt to form meaningful relationships in conditions where traditional self-other dynamics have become unreliable.

The theoretical journey from classical sociology through contemporary psychology to postmodern disruption reveals a crucial pattern: while the fundamental human need for self-formation through relationships remains constant (Mead), the social contexts that once provided stable mirrors for identity development (Cooley)

have become fragmented and unreliable (Derrida, Jameson). Contemporary relationship theory (Aron, Deci & Ryan) describes what healthy self-expansion requires, but postmodern conditions often prevent these requirements from being met.

This creates the precise psychological territory that Barnes explores: characters who retain the basic human drive for self-development through relationships but must navigate a social world where the traditional frameworks for such development have collapsed. Barnes's genius lies in dramatizing how his protagonists attempt to achieve the self-other connection that Mead identified as essential for human identity, while operating within the fragmented conditions that postmodern theorists have diagnosed.

Thus equipped with this theoretical framework, we can now examine how Barnes's novels embody these dynamics.

Love and money are a few essential and forceful factors governing the relationship between "Self and the Other". Barnes' novels offer an interesting study of the development of these relations. Love and money create multiple complications in relationships, and this study explores the depth of these relationships. Erickson also observed that the interplay of these relations, such as loyalty, aggression, anger and violence, determines human behaviour. Love and hatred are revealed through the interplay of these relations. This study is socialistic and explores the forces that bring human beings together, and often, the breaking of the relations leads to tragic consequences. So, it can be assumed that people don't build relationships, rather relationships build people, hence viewing the relationships from such a perspective will lead to an improved understanding of communications in personal relationships. This study will investigate the significant novels of Julian Barnes describing the subtleties and the intricacies of human relations.

This study explores the dialectical relationship between the Self and human relationships found in the novels of Julian Barnes during the Postmodern times. This study highlights the different ways Barnes uses the concept of Self in the selected novels. This will be done by analyzing individual novels drawn from philosophy, contemporary literary criticism and cognitive psychology; they will be analyzed chronologically, and special attention will be given to how Barnes deals with the

issues of Self and Relationships while struggling in British society. In postmodern society, Barnes argues that the vision and perceptions of people have changed. There is a cultural transformation as the attitudes, opinions, and thoughts have changed. Individuals act independently and like to live alone, being cut off from society. They have grown selfish and money-minded as they lose connections with others. The Self and the identity of persons keep developing continuously, wherein the boundaries between themselves and others are negotiated. Meanwhile, modernism holds that people are independent; they act rationally and use their potential to grow in society, excluding others and de-emphasizing relationships and connections. The postmodern approach emphasizes fragmentation, diversity, discontinuity, multiplicity, and connections, as stated by a theorist named Bauman (2007).

In defining the Self, a number of factors affect the way one feels about oneself; these may be internal sources, including what one is thinking about oneself, what one is paying attention to, and how one goes on interpreting the events and circumstances of his life. Then there are the external sources, including the environment in which one spends the time, how one interacts with others, and how others judge one. In external sources, rejection, criticism, judgment and attitude play an important role in the way one feels about oneself. Hence, the formation of the concept of the Self is also determined by one's atmosphere and the people who surround one, and the relationship one has with others in a given social setup. As our theoretical framework predicts, Jameson observes that in the postmodern society self has played vital role in building mutual relationships.

Julian Barnes is a famous British novelist; he has an older brother who teaches philosophy in Sorbonne, France. Barnes graduated (with honours) from Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1968; he majored in modern languages (French and Russian). His writing parallels between English and French culture brought him a very rare honour from France. The characters in Barnes' novels are seen trapped in the abyss of ignorance, darkness and despair as they struggle to affect societal relationships. His debut novel *Metroland* (1980) explores 20th-century society in both England and France through the story of Christopher. It was followed by Flaubert's Parrot (1984), and the novel is a fine juxtaposition of biography, fiction and literary criticism. It was

followed by Before She Met Me (1982), reflecting the depressing side of the human psyche. The novel's plot features a man's jealousy of his wife's former lovers. Barnes's novel *Talking It Over* (1991) was followed by a sequel*, Love, Etc.*, (2000). His memoir Nothing to be Frightened Of (2008) is a critical book on his relationship with his parents and elder brother. His other novels like England, England and Arthur and George were nominated for the awards. His novel *The Sense of an Ending* won him the Man Booker Prize. In this study, the various novels of Julian Barnes, namely *The Sense of an Ending*, *Metroland*, *Talking It Over*, *Love, Etc.*, *The Only Story* and *The Noise of Time*, are explored by applying the theories of Self and the Other. He created a galaxy of characters confronting the uncertainties and absurdities of life in their struggle to establish relationships with others. He uses the tools of irony, playfulness, and black humour to portray the conflicts in the lives of his characters in the postmodern world. Julian Barnes has used the words, phrases and quotations of other writers to explore the subtleties of human relationships in his works.

Julian Barnes has depicted the cultural transformation of the postmodern age. His novels depict the themes of loss of self, societal fragmentation, values and alienation, sexual aberrations and dissonance. Vladimir Nabokov and John Updike depicted the themes of anxiety and despair of characters living and struggling in the American world. Barnes is of the opinion that values have declined and there is no absolute truth. Barnes closely observed and investigated the theories of nihilism and existentialism. He examined the ideas of Kierkegaard and Roland Barthes. In an interview, Barnes said that his main protagonists are aware of the contemporary cultural changes of life in British society. He rejected the traditional theories of fiction to portray a unified vision of life and society. Barnes sees human experience as ambiguous, fragmentary, and internally contradictory. Barnes came under the influence of Beckett and Ionesco, who propagated nihilism and pessimism. Barnes employs the techniques of Dadaism and Surrealism in his postmodern novels. Malcolm Bradbury observes that "in the postmodern culture, the purpose of fiction writing has changed. The writers are not much concerned with portraying the characters enjoying life, love and sexuality but are depicted as trapped creatures struggling to come out of the bog of darkness and alienation" (Bradbury 10).

Like Kurt Vonnegut, Julian Barnes employs postmodern techniques and strategies depicting his own vision of postmodern society. He created a galaxy of characters confronting the uncertainties and absurdities of life in their struggle to establish relationships with others. He uses the tools of irony, playfulness, and black humour to portray the conflicts in the lives of his characters. Julian Barnes borrowed heavily from Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. He used the words, phrases and quotations of other writers to explore the subtleties of human relationships.

Embodying the theoretical dynamics we have established, Julian Barnes was greatly impacted by the postmodern ideas and theories. He realized that new themes are required to depict the sentiments and visions of people of British society. The techniques of Thomas Hardy and George Eliot had become outdated. Barnes employed pastiche as a powerful and effective tool to dramatize the dialectical relationships between the Self and the Other. Pastiche means pasting together all diverse experiences, as Barnes has depicted the themes of love and sex in a postmodern style. The plots of Barnes highlight the multiple elements dealing with the cancerous absurdity gripping the people's psyche. He pasted the old elements and created a new version of the narrative voice. He was impressed by the fiction of William S. Burroughs. The novels of William S. Burroughs presented science fiction, detective fiction and other diverse elements. He created a fictional world to present the absurdity of British middle-class society. Barnes's fiction is considered meta-fiction, and his novels such as England, England, Arthur and George and *The Sense of an Ending* are epical in dimension. Barnes invents new themes dealing with romance, mystery and wonder. He projects a pessimistic worldview depicting the deflation of self of people. The British people are suffering from alienation, absurdity, pessimism and nihilism. Barnes amalgamates diverse elements such as intertextuality, magic realism fragmentation and dissonance. Hutcheon talks about the non-linear features of the novels of Julian Barnes.

Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children is packed with the elements of magic realism. Barnes pastes the elements of brutal incidents, which are the source of sensational elements. His novels, such as *The Noise of Time* (2016) and *The Only Story* (2018), depict the depressing impact of love and the role of haunting memory in

life. Paul is an aged person who recalls all the events of his life that brought chaos and disorder.

His love with Susan proved counter-productive. Irony is an important tool used by poets and playwrights since antiquity. Mark Antony uses this tool in his famous speech in Julius Caesar of Shakespeare and his famous ironical stroke 'Well! Brutus is an honourable man,' is memorable in the history of criticism. Irony is a significant tool to expose and ridicule society's evils and lash at vices such as affectation, snobbery and prudery. Morris Niedenthal (1980) "talks of incongruous reality and decline of human values in the postmodern society. There is a conflict between falsehood and truth but the characters put their faith in falsehood and betrayal in love" (Niedenthal 142). Kierkegaard propounded the postmodernist theory of 'Mastered Irony', and Julian Barnes used this important tool in depicting the ambiguities and incongruities in the life of their characters. In all the major novels of Julian Barnes, the role of mastered irony, paradox and crisp wit is significant. Niedenthal further observes: "It can be the exaltation of hero figures or as applied to listeners, people are implored to be courageous, to stand up and be counted, to get involved, to do their duties, to put their lives on the line, to become heroes of the faith" (144). Barnes borrowed the concept of mastered irony from Kierkegaard. "His view of irony, though, was hardly static" (Frazier 417). Indeed, in his work *The Concept of Irony*, he elaborated the meaning and role of 'mastered Irony'.

Fragmentation is a very revolutionary concept that changed the very structure of the plots of the novels of Julian Barnes. Julian Barnes blends diverse elements of imagery and symbols. He rejects the techniques employed by Thomas Hardy as his plots are non-linear. The events are not coherent, and there is no systematic order in the sequence of events. The fragmented and dispersed nature of plots is quite significant as Barnes depicts the wounded psyche of the individuals living in British society. The character development and action are unpredictable. The readers cannot predict what will happen in the next part of the story. The purpose of fragmentation is to depict a metaphysically unfounded, chaotic universe. He uses a different type of language to articulate the stress and depression of his characters living in a chaotic universe. As our theoretical framework suggests, fragmentation reflects the

postmodern conditions where traditional identity formation through stable relationships has become impossible. Jean Baudrillard and Umberto have discussed in detail the concept of hyper-reality. In simple language, it is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality in postmodern societies of England. It is a condition in which what is real and fiction are juxtaposed. It is very difficult to find a distinction between where one begins and where one ends. Physical reality is mingled with virtual reality; human intelligence is blended with artificial intelligence in literature. Julian Barnes uses this device in all the major novels as his characters are involved in the hyper-real world, ignoring the physical real world. William Peden praised Julian Barnes in his review in New York Times Book Review for his interest in the common life of people struggling to interact and form relationships with others.

Richard Gileman talked of the split between the physical desires and the spiritual longings of the characters of Barnes. Julian Barnes *Talking* it Over is mainly a comedy of errors in the beginning, which gradually darkens while moving to the depth of complexities and messy situations. The novel records the details of contemporary life in modern England in a skilful manner. The story is basically about friendship but acquires a different dimension in the course of time. The story involves Stuart and Oliver's long- standing friendship and how this friendship is spoiled by Stuart's love for Gillian. Later, Gillian becomes the love interest of Oliver. His love for Gillian changes his nature. He quits smoking and talks straight without irony, which he used to do earlier. Therefore, the novel can be considered a love triangle. It presents an account of love and also relates the unwelcome changes love brings in the people who fall in love. The characters struggle for significance in the harsh and oppressive world where things are changing very fast, and faith is replaced by money and sex.

This study explores the perception and vision of Julian Barnes, who deeply examines the matrix of human relationships. Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* has been compared with Ian McEvan's *On Chesil Beach*. The plot of the novel deals with the themes of youth and age, innocence and experience. Barnes's main focus is on the aspects of ageing, memory and regret. Tony represents British

middle-class society in his sixties and is the main narrator of the novel The Sense of Ending. He frequently talks of a peaceful life, but ironically, he longs for peace and rest in his life. Tony's life is a long journey of failures and success, as his past is mysterious. He is trapped in the unresolved mysteries of life. Tony gets £500 from Veronica's mother. Tony is compelled to review his relationships with Veronica and about his friend Adrian, who betrayed him in his life. Barnes has given a true story of Tony, who explores the various stages of his Self and consciousness development. He re-examines his past and his relations with various people connected with him. He tries to find out what exactly happened and how he was personally involved in it. He revisits his past and tries desperately to resolve the challenges of life. Barnes has depicted the various layers of his thoughts and beliefs and his responsibility. Tony realizes that "the purpose of life is to reconcile us to its eventual loss" (Barnes, *Ending* 13). The novel also deals with the theme of the illusive nature of memory and its relation with the past. He is haunted by the old memories that bring untold miseries to his life.

Tony is found discussing the fragile and uncertain nature of memory in the long journey of his life. He is unconvinced about the exactness of memory, as all his discussions and recollections lead him nowhere. Adrian is his friend and a teacher of history who fails to convince him about the past. Past, Memory and Time are the main concerns of Tony in his life, and he is engaged with various people to discuss these issues. Tony remarks, "Could she change faces? It is all humbug. Memory is the real culprit in life" (19). Tony's constant concern is about the nature of questioning the truthfulness of his own memory. Tony emerges as an honest person and is depicted as a frank postmodern individual. Tony is known for his unreliability; he tries to be honest and critical when discussing truth and sexuality. He feels guilty about his past as he recalls unpleasant or shameful memories. He broods over the human relationship thus:

> I get on well with Susie. But the younger generation no longer feels the
> need, or even the obligation to keep on touch. Email will do for Dad,
> pity he hasn't learnt to feel. I do hope, he doesn't get Alzheimer's
> that's my greatest worry, really because Mum's hardly going to have

him back. Is she? No, I exaggerate, I misrepresent. Susie doesn't feel

like that, I am sure Susie and I get on fine. (61)

Outwardly, his relationship is healthy with Susie, but inwardly, the cracks are emerging, and he is always uncomfortable in her presence. He relies on the memories, using them as a psychological protective mechanism. Tony broods over his relationship with Veronica. He recollects how she had been denying her sexual pleasures. With the passage of time, Tony explores her mendacity and manipulation. He discovers selfishness and greed in his relationship with Veronica. Tony tells her frankly that there is no future for them and their relationship is fragile and uncertain. He is disgusted with her hypocrisy and uncertainty. He finds that he had been a victim of Veronica's calculating behaviour.

His second break-up too resulted in anxiety and restlessness. He confesses thus: "Yes! She slept with me, I woke up and found her in ecstasy of love. The poor sap, how he not saw that coming" (36). Veronica's sexual attempt was a fraud, an attempt to entrap him and to manipulate the circumstances. As our theoretical framework predicts, Tony emerges as a confused person; he is a lost self who fails in life and in developing sound and constant relationships. Tony is a confused self, suffering from the sickness of uncertain attitude. He fails to tell the readers the exact cause of their break up. Consistent perceptions are required to develop sound relationships with others. Tony-Veronica relationship is based on false ideals and manipulations. It can survive for a long, and most young couples suffer because of a lack of faith and certainty. He emerges as a neurotic self as he spends most of his time recollecting his past and reviewing the days he spent with Veronica. He has no tangible records, and most of the people are dead. He gets a strange inheritance, bringing turmoil in his life. The main cause of depression and mental agony of Tony is the betrayal of Veronica, who is hooked by Adrian. It is shocking to him that even the mother of Veronica had an illicit relationship with him. Veronica had taken a diary of Adrian in her custody. She had burnt the diary except the letter written by Toni, which gave a big jolt to Adrian before his suicide. The discovery of Adrian's and Veronica's relationship further troubles him. He comments thus when he receives the letter: "Let me know how she, Veronica, had traded up: To my cleverest friend and

21

what's more, a Cambridge chap like brother Jack. Also, to warn me, that she would be hanging if I planned on seeing Adrian" (41).

Adrian proves to be a villain who brings moral and mental chaos into Tony's life, giving him the knowledge that in the postmodern society, human relations are fragile, and it is difficult to depend upon others. Veronica's brother Jack belonged to a higher British middle-class society. Tony sends a postcard to Adrian to expose his artificial and mean attitude:

> I didn't use any of that silly epistle language. As far as I remember, I told him pretty much what I thought of their joint moral scruples. I also advised him to be prudent because in my opinion, Veronica had suffered damage long way back. Then I wished him good luck. (42)

This statement of Tony explains his experiences of human relationships with "Others". He discovers that life is full of mendacity and there is no truthfulness. People are selfish and dishonest, and even a fast friend like Adrian can be uncertain and a cheat. Tony feels hurt and suffers psychological torments as he uses the word "damage" in the letter written to Adrian. He exposes the false morality of Adrian, who betrays him by developing sexual relations with his girlfriend.

Indeed, Tony's confession is extremely painful, but this fragile relationship represents the cultural transformation of British society after the war. Tony's letter is a big shock to Adrian and to Veronica. He talks of damage done to Veronica and confesses thus: "I will leave the precise diagnoses to the headshrinkers. Even her own mother warned me against her. I hope that they get so involved, that the natural damage will be permanent" (43). Tony knows the hard reality about Adrian and Veronica. Tony had predicted that they would soon break up: "They would be left with a lifetime bitterness that will poison your subsequent relationships" (39). He expresses his disgust when he exposes the guilt of his friend, highlighting the consequences: "I know the time will take its revenge, give her time, and she will look down on you just as she looks down on me. I can't do anything to you now, but time can. Time will. It always does" (95). The letter of Tony is full of insults and humiliating language articulating the frustrations of Tony, who is defeated and psychologically tormented by Adrian Veronica's relationships. As our theoretical

framework suggests, people are suffering from fragmentation of life and deflation of self, and this is the root cause of their alienation. Disruption of human relationships is the main cause of suffering. Tony represents the tragic life of postmodern middle-class people. Tony longs for a peaceful, happy domestic life. He talks of "the instinct of self-preservation" (64), which eventually brought trauma in his life. Tony tried his best to forget the insults hurled at him. He begins the process of repressing bad memories but fails. He learns from the history teacher that the "mental set-up of a man reflects his inner anxiety and actions" (18). Tony recollects the letter from Adrian and feels humiliated: "He burnt it in an empty grate and decided the two of them were out of my life forever" (43). Tony burns the letter in desperation, symbolizing an attempt to forget the past. The letter expresses fears, feelings and intentions of Tony. He alleges the misconduct of Veronica and talks of her betrayal, "she had been indifferent to the emotions and feelings of others" (43). Tony is threatened by the darkness of the future and tells Veronica of "lifetime bitterness." He struggles to suppress memories of Veronica. The letter of Tony is very significant as it reveals the attitude, vision and depression of Tony and his experiences of developing relations in British society. In his letter, Tony articulates his frustrations thus: "You are not great art, just a cartoonist doodle" (95). In his youth, Tony feared that "life wouldn't turn out to be like literature that they will end up being onlookers and bystanders, part of a social backdrop against which real, true, important things could happen" (15).

Barnes has depicted the character of Tony as a representative of the British middle-class society, where it has become difficult to develop human relationships. His character falls under the "social backdrop" category, and he belongs to a cartoonist doodle. The novel *The Sense of Ending dramatizes* the themes of alienation, disruption of human relationships, anxieties and absurdities of life. Tony becomes a neurotic and pessimistic youth who doesn't find any truth in life and in the universe. Adrian committed suicide at the end of the novel, and Tony is presented as a frustrated man searching for the details of the diary of his old friend. Adrian also struggles to describe human relationships with mathematical equations. His diary describes the fragmented experiences of his life. He says: Yes indeed if Tony had

seen more clearly, acted more decisively, held to truer moral values, settled less easily for a peace-ableness which he first called happiness and later contentment. If Tony hadn't been fearful, hadn't counted on the approval of orders for his own self-approval. (89)

When Tony recollects his harrowing past, he feels sick and despondent. He says: Just when you think, everything is a matter of decrease, of subtraction and division, your brain; your memory may surprise you. And if it is saying: Don't imagine you can rely on some confronting process of gradual decline-life's much more complicated than that. (112)

The old memories of his relationship with Veronica haunt him; he thinks of the time when she danced in his room, and all the old memories revive again. He thinks of his intimacy with her, her sweet voice and charming body. He recollects how he longed to enjoy the sexual pleasures of Veronica. She refused the sexual intimacy, but he continued in developing the intimacy, though he could never imagine that she was betraying him in developing sexual relations with his friend Adrian. He remembers the intimate moments of their infra-sex: How attracted to one another we had been, how light she felt on my lap, how, even though we weren't having full sex, all the elements of it-the lust, the tenderness, the candour, the trust-were there anyway. And how part of me hadn't minded not going the whole way. (117)

Tony's experiences in life are shattering and a source of mental disturbance. He has come to the conclusion that life is not a source of happiness and there is sickness prevailing everywhere. Hamlet of Shakespeare found that the world is full of evil; his mother also betrayed him and became the root cause of his depression and restlessness. Tony, too, suffers from psychological anguish as he fails to find any strength in human relationships. Adrian, Veronica and Tony and their triangular relationships form the novel's core. Tony learns about the circumstances that led to the suicide of Adrian. "Yet once all the questions are answered, the reader is left in the same state that Tony is in the book's first pages-floored at life's essential mysteries, and frustrated that ate relieved" (Geoff 123).

Barnes's *The Only Story* is a small, grim novel about Paul and Susan's unconventional and failed love relationship. The novel deals with the intricacies of

life as the first love shapes his life. There are three important sections in the novel. All three sections deal with the connection of the self with the other. Paul's narrative is shifty as he goes on changing the sequence of events, describing the non-linear nature of the plot.

Paul says, "first love always happens in the overwhelming first person,"(Barnes, *Story* 25) but the second person is used in most of the plot. In the third section, Paul wants to forget so many things; he wants to escape reality as he fears and emerges as a shifty character. He narrates life's events with the purpose of distracting himself from reality. Love and lust bring into his life acute psychological anguish as he suffers heartbreak. The novel may be small in size, but its ambition and depth are much bigger. The story offers an insight into young love, memory bias, the author's retelling of the past, his commitments, his blinding by love and his thought-provoking story.

Love is a predominant theme in the novels of Julian Barnes. The titles *Talking it Over, Love Etc.* and *The Sense of an Ending* could be easily added to this group, and although it is not a central element in Arthur & George, love and relationships also have their place in the book. Barnes' *Before She Met Me* (1982), for example, was, in Moseley's words, "a short but intense, funny but terrifying study of love and over- mastering jealousy" (Moseley 6). Love is not always depicted as a noble feeling in Barnes' books. Moseley notices that apart from the interest in marriage, there is the subject of infidelity and adultery, even cuckoldry. It is true that in Barnes' earlier novels, the male protagonists "are often the victims of their wives' infidelity" (6). Despite the omnipresent humorous tone of his writing, Barnes is well aware that love often goes wrong, as he has had a bitter experience when his wife temporarily left him in the 1980s for another lover, author Jeanette Winterson. There is one place in Barnes' books where he specifically talks of love; he discusses the intricacies of love and narrates how love is a chief factor in governing human relationships. Barnes' treatment of love is done in a contemplative and philosophical manner. The semi-chapter intentionally stands out from the rest of the chapters, as the author adopts not only a subjective voice. Guignery believes Barnes' reference to the paintings of El

Greco depicts the analogy between him and the painter. Perhaps "love is essential because it's unnecessary" (Barnes, *Story* 236).

Judging from other Barnes' novels dealing with love, often in the form of a love triangle, love at least complicates matters. Barnes argues that love is people's chance for transcendence since, without love, the history of the world is trash. Perhaps what he hints at is also that the needlessness of love manifests a man's free will. People might be victims of history, but at least they can freely decide whether to love and who to love.

Barnes argues that in the postmodern society, love relationships fail because of the growing ego problem among the youth (Barnes, *Story* 201). Barnes realized that love is a major force in man's life and the chief weapon in building human relationships. Love has many forms, and love leading to lust, pushing people to falsehood brings untold miseries. His characters are involved in love and gain multiple experiences. Here, the author might refer to the very fundamental level of how love operates. When one truly loves somebody or even something, one tends to shift the focal point of one's being from selfishly considering only one's own interest to incorporating the needs and wishes of the beloved other. Love is a perfect cure for realizing it is not all about ourselves.

The Noise of Time (2016) is a novel about a man analyzing his life's right- or wrong turnings. The life of a Russian composer is in focus. Dimitri Shostakovich is an artist who has to compromise his principles for the sake of the survival of his wife, Nita, and children. It is more like a fictionalized biography of the man than the composer. The main theme or idea behind the story is a sense of artistic compromise that Shostakovich had to do while dealing with Stalin's reign of terror and how it left his soul affected. It is also about the anger, frustration, and feelings of guilt of a man who has submitted to power to sustain his art and his life and, at the same time, conveys the idea that by submitting himself to the tyrannies of power how he turns himself into a self-critical, self-pitying and self-hating individual. The concept of Self and Relationships will be analysed in the above-mentioned novels by Julian Barnes by exploring the characters and their relationships in the novels and how the

characters' lives undergo a substantive change by dealing with their relationships with others.

Talking It Over (1991) by Julian Barnes deals with many themes, one of which is love and relationship. The novel presents a triangular relationship based on an original narrative technique. The main characters of the novel are Stuart and Oliver, who are good friends in the novel, Stuart meets Gillian, a social worker turned picture restorer and marries her later on in the story; Oliver also gets attracted towards Gillian and makes her fall in love with him. In the course of time, Gillian is divorced, and he marries Oliver to overcome the tensions of life. Once again, the plot focuses on the triangular relationships of Gillian, Stuart and Oliver. In desperation, Stuart goes to America to begin a new business with a new partner. The novel's plot unfolds the triangular relationships of Stuart and Oliver and the changing relationships between Gillian and the two men. The friendship of Stuart and Oliver is very close and ideal. Both of them keep appreciating the qualities of each other, which strengthen their bond of friendship. Later in the novel, when Stuart and Gillian are having dinner in a hotel, Stuart observes her closely and interacts with readers while he says: Well, you have seen her for yourself, haven't you? Sis you spot that tiny patch of freckles on her left cheeks? You did? Anyway that evening her hair was swept up over her ears at the sides and fastened back with two tortoise-shell chips, her eyes seemed dark, and I just couldn't get over her. (Barnes, *Talking* 35)

These lines Indicate Stuart's love for Gillian and also stand for the relationship that exists between reader and narrator in the novel as stated by Merritt Moseley: "Another aspect of relationship as discussed in the novel is the straightforward expression about love made by Gillian" (Moseley 21). Though Gillian loves Stuart and Oliver, she is aware of her own individual identity. According to Mathew Paterman: If the notion of love is constructed from the discourses that seemingly describe it, then all individual identity in the novel is seen as being constructed in two ways . This is either a case of self representation (that is, talking about oneself to another) or a case of other-presentation (that is being talked about or to by another. (Paterman 123)

The writer of the novel also deals with Freudian principles of psychology. The Freudian concept of the Oedipus complex is depicted by Gillian, who had been abandoned by her father at the age of fourteen. So she was looking for a substitute for her father in Stuart, whom she married after her father left her. Despite this, she loves Stuart deeply and strongly. Stuart's nature and behaviour also undergo transformation in the company of Gillian, making clear that a healthy relationship in the life of a man is a holy bond created by God.

Gillian falls in love with him, but this love-making affair disturbs Oliver, who is also in passionate love with her. Barnes highlights the transcendental nature of relationships and social binding. Another aspect of the relationship is Oliver's feelings for Gillian. His mind is deeply occupied with her love. He clarifies strongly to her that he wants to marry her, but the affair between Oliver and Gillian shocks Stuart and leaves him feeling strange and lonesome, but Gillian does not care for him much as she is also in love with Oliver. She perceives that identity is created through the discourses people choose in their lives. In this context, Matthew Peterson comments: "Her identity is seen as one that is structured through its relations with other people and that an alteration in either the structure or the relation will have an impact on the possibilities that ground identity" (125). Thus it is explored that the relationships structure the identity of self. The desire of Gillian to lead life in the company of Oliver leaves Stuart feeling upset. His attitude towards the relationship has changed totally by her betrayal of him. In the end, Stuart's love for Gillian compels her to realize her actions, which hurt him. She is unable to forget the life and love she enjoyed with him.

The novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) deals with the themes of youth and age, innocence and experience. The novel also deals with the theme of the unreliability of memory and its relation with the past. The novel suggests a kind of deviation from any typical viewpoint as seen in the novel in the case of personal relationships. The characters settle their issues with each other despite being betrayed not by a relationship with a person but by one's own misjudgment of the status quo.

The Sense of an Ending deals with the concept of love and the relationship to focus on the inner life of the novel's main protagonist. The story is about a group of

boys who are known as a book-hungry, sex-hungry, meritocratic, anarchistic group: The newcomer Adrian Finn is one, who is intelligent and smart. The group of these boys have intellectual snobbery. Each and everything is examined through their own logical approach. When a boy at their school commits suicide after getting his girlfriend pregnant, this becomes a topic of their discussion of philosophy. Thus, Barnes refers to their relationship to depict these characters and their nature. Tony, the novel's main character, manages to have a romantic relationship with a girlfriend named Veronica. She is introduced to his friend Adrian also. But later on, their relationships come to an end. Later on, Adrian goes on a date with Veronica. But after some days, the news comes of Adrian's suicide. Later on, Tony meets Margaret and gets married to her, has a daughter and gets divorced. Such kinds of relationships are depicted by Barnes through the concept of love. Later, Tony receives a letter informing him that Veronica's mother has left five hundred pounds for him and Adrian's diary in her will. Veronica replies to the email of Tony in a strange way by calling 'Blood Money'. Thus, the story focuses on the characters' various relationships and their happiness. In concern to the 'relationships', the union theorists have complete belief in the word, 'we' than the word 'I'. The word 'we' continues with perhaps all the elements found and desired in the various theoreticians because it focuses on assimilating individuality into the partner loved. The variants of the principle of love and association can be traced back to Aristotle, Montaigne and Hegel. In the twentieth century, contemporary thinkers who propose such a thought in the relationships are Solomon, Nozick, Fisher, Scruton, and Delaney. Thus, the distinction between individual interests disappears only when they have shared goals and concerns. This provides the content to the idea of 'we' as the subject of the shared goals and concerns. The persons in a relationship redefine their identities by sharing their interests, roles, and virtues, which can constitute a new identity as a shared identity. The new identity is totally different from their earlier identity. In this new kind of identity, the other is allowed to play an important role in maintaining his own identity. According to new another thinker of the contemporary period, Nozick (1989), the desire between the lovers to form 'we' is different from Fisher and Scruton and Solomon. He has commented and claimed that this new identity 'We' as

'We' is a new entity in the world created by a new web of relationships between [the lovers], making them no longer separate.

According to Friedman, once we consider the union as a federation, we can see that autonomy is not a zero-sum game. But rather than that, love can both directly heighten the autonomy of each and give a higher rank to the growth of different skills, such as realistic and critical self-evaluation, that brings up the autonomy. It is a kind of love that binds the relation of them very firmly and long-lasting.

Barnes's next novel, *The Only Story*, is a small and grim novel about an old man who is reflecting on his life with a sense of pain at the relationship in his youth. The novel has three important sections. All the sections deal with the connection of the self with the other. The story offers an insight into young love, memory bias, the author's relating of the past, his commitments and his blinding by love, and his thought-provoking story.

It is the eleventh novel, written by Julian Barnes, reflecting an inner fear of the novel's male protagonist as he lives in a state of uneasiness due to the relationships he had in the past days of his life. The story is narrated in late middle age by the central character Tony Webster, who assumes his memories to be true, but a re-evaluation of his past challenges his belief about responsibility and a series of events that make up a sense of him. The idea of the unreliability of memory is another theme of the story. The novel deals with how we live, pretending to hide the pain and guilt caused by our behaviour.

The story begins in his school days with the friendship of four boys, namely Colin, Alex, and Adrian, including the narrator, Tony Webster. Later, Adrian joins Cambridge University, and Tony meets Veronica and falls in love with her. Later, Veronica feels like moving out of the relationship as Tony is unwilling to commit himself to Veronica.

Finally, both of them part ways, and Tony feels no sorrow about losing his relationship. Later on he marries Margaret, has a daughter and gets divorced. During the school days, what held the attention of Tony was the friendship he had formed with the group of boys. He welcomed that relationship. All the friends of the group had a holy bond of friendship. Thus, one sees that the novel focuses on the

relationship of different kinds. How they begin and end is very important and one of the novel's central themes. The first type of relationship is exhibited by boys and parents. Out of the four members of the group, the three had a stable home and family, but Adrian's parents had divorced prior to them meeting him. It clearly indicated here that Adrian and his parents had created a lasting relationship. The second type of relationship is marked by the arrival of Adrian in their group, which enriches their philosophy of life; Adrian is a principled and philosophical boy, a different type, a psychic wreck.

Tony Webster was content with her and liked spending time with her, and she also tried to improve his ways. This relationship lasted and became intimate step by step until the final year of his education, when he broke up with her while he showed disinterest towards her. She got attracted towards his friend Adrian. While Adrian tried to inform him about this, he reacted negatively by speaking about some damage in Veronica's nature. Later, Tony married Margaret, and even after he got divorced from Margaret, she, being open-minded, maintained her friendly relationship with him. He says: "But after a year or two of marriage, when I felt better about myself, and fully confident in our relationship, I told Margaret the truth. She listened, asked pertinent questions and she understood" (Barnes, *Ending* 70). Tony had a reasonably good relationship with Veronica, but later, Adrian also got involved in a similar relationship with her mother. The passionate relationship between Adrian and Sarah (Veronica's mother) gradually became very close and of intimate nature. It resulted in the birth of a baby owing to the fact that despite Adrian's love for Veronica, he was seduced by her mother, and he too started enjoying sexual favour from her. In the last chapters of the novel, Tony again comes in contact with Veronica; he remembers his past relationship with her and writes an email to her asking questions as, "Do you think I was in love with you back then? And when Veronica read that email she replied it as if you need to ask the question, then the answer is no" (106). In fact, Tony had repentance for his past life and activities. He was aware of the fact that he could not keep smooth relationships with anyone he came in contact with. So, in order to steer clear of his grief, he tried to show others that he was sorry for his failure to maintain good relations. To live a peaceful old life, he must be forgiven. He also

recalls his relationship with Veronica and Mrs. Ford, and he feels both happiness and nervousness. While recalling one of his meetings with Veronica when he told her that he remembered her dancing, she said, "I wonder why you remembered that I didn't think like this" (6). Finally, it becomes clear he feels nostalgic for her, but she didn't think like this. His relationship with her, in a way, sought to compromise erotic desire and spiritual enlightenment as suggested by the thus: "a love at once illicit and morally elevating, passionate and self-disciplined, humiliating, and exalting human and transcendental" (127). *The Only Story* (2018) is the title of Julian Barnes's latest novel, whose ageing narrator is a retrospection of his life to relate the only relation that finds importance in his life. He asserts that in each person's life, all the stories eventually lead to 'only one finally worth telling'. The novel's plot depicts the harrowing tale of the love relationship between Paul and Susan in lyrical language. Paul, the narrator, meets an old Susan, the famous tennis player on the tennis courts. Both of them start enjoying each other's company and begin a love affair. Their conversation proceeds on familiar matters, joking with nicknames using private slang and sharing moments of subversion. Their relationship does not seem to last long, being a transgression of the kind which can only exist in a mythical or a fairy tale, but the story of the novel moves in a different direction where around halfway through the story, we don't find any doomed first love and a disregard to social norms.

Thus the relationship of Paul and Susan are the main characters. *The Only Story* is based on a love that cannot be explained. It proves to be disruptive and catastrophic for both the persons involved in the relationship, but still, it manages to acquire a significant position in their lives. In this novel, Barnes explores the pain rendered by such love to the persons involved, but also the carefree nature of love is taken into account, "I was nineteen, and I knew that love was incorruptible, proof against both time and tarnish" (Barnes, *Story* 39). Paul had a high vision of love early in his life; he was romantic and believed in the traditional high love of old romances. He narrates his vision of high love to Susan while he reflects on that love over a span of decades, he puts forward a question, "Would you rather love the more and suffer the less? That is, I think, the real question" (89). Paul contemplates the far-reaching influence the first love exerts on his life when he exclaims that "first love fixes a life

forever.'' In the first part of the novel, Barnes makes use of the first person to describe Paul and Susan's relationship. But in the following parts, he switches to the second and then finally to the third person when the lovers realize that love always does not lead to happiness. And while in a relationship, one cannot escape his identity. The history of a person occupies a central position in the relationship. Later in the relationship, Susan compensates for her wrong actions by finding solace in drinking. She starts sinking in despair. She undergoes forgetting – "the closing of a face", making herself inaccessible to anyone. Slowly, she falls into a state of depression due to the traumas she faced in her past life on account of loveless marriage and spoiled relations. The novel also hints at social and historical dimensions of the relationships. Susan is always haunted by her past, and she can never forget that she lost her best people- her brother and her fiancé to the Second World War, leaving "the lesser ones "to struggle with their lives. Thus, the relationship between Paul and Susan gets entangled in addiction, violence, abuse and mental disorder, as indicated by desperation of Susan when she asks Paul: "Where have you been all my life?" (36). Barnes's novel suggests a kind of deviation from any typical viewpoint, as seen in the novel in the case of personal relationships. The characters settle their issues with each other despite being betrayed not by a relationship with a person but by one's own misjudgment of the status quo. In his novel *The Noise of Time* Barnes comments thus about love and life: As for love – not his own awkward, stumbling, blurting, annoying expressions of it, but love in general: he had always believed that love, as a force of nature, was indestructible; and that, when threatened, it could be protected, blanketed, swaddled in irony. Now he was less convinced. Tyranny had become so expert at destroying that why should it not destroy love as well, intentionally or not? Tyranny demanded that you love the Party, the State, the Great Leader and Helmsman, the People. (Barnes, Time 66)

The themes of love, power and art are discussed in Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time* (2016). Stalin is a symbol of despotism and communist bureaucracy. Julian Barnes examines the role of human freedom and the despotic powers of state rulers who crush the freedom of individuals. The state controls everything, and human beings are treated as slaves. The novel is set in a Russian background, exploring the

relationship between artist and power. Dmitri Shostakovich is the main protagonist, and his life is narrated, depicting his struggles against state oppression. This short novel is structured around the episodes taken from the life of Shostakovich are examined closely while he is threatened by 'power'. Through these 'conversations,' Barnes's novel attempts to know whether and how art can survive under oppressive conditions. The review by Stalin mentioning his work as Muddle instead of music makes the composer feel uneasy. As Barnes writes: In 1937, it was the month of May and reign of The Great Terror started. Dmitri's friends and relatives were arrested as the guards pounded at them in the middle of night and took them away in unknown places. Most of them were assassinated for their alleged anti-communist activities. (23)

Shostakovich's fears are the outcome of the harsh and oppressive environment where life is always threatened by killings. Shostakovich's are expressed when he waits by the lift: "I remember when my friends and relatives were arrested and taken to the big house. He was worried about his wife Nita, who loved me and thought of my children. He was shocked to know that most of his friends were killed" (34). His memory reflected the aesthetic nature of Shostakovich, who was given the music. Barnes uses the various sounds of music and the various tones to depict the horror and terror in Russian society. Dmitri is just an individual who struggles against the oppressive forces commanded by Stalin. In this section of the novel, Barnes uses the imagery of barking dogs to describe the tragic situation of the Russian communist world. It was a very tiring time as the lives of innocent people were in danger. There was no law and order, as people were killed just on suspicion. Barnes has depicted the symbolic significance of the musings of Shostakovich: He was a simple and poor farm boy given to music and art. He enjoyed great respect in the Russian society as he had large number of fans. His innovative musical tunes were liked by the Russians and he was considered as a distinguished Soviet composer. But the Communist leaders disliked him and they considered his presence in Russia a great threat to the existence of the rule of Stalin. (124)

The novel is full of pessimism as Barnes writes: Art is universal; it has no boundary as it belongs to all people of the world. Art has no concern of the Party

ideology as the rulers of Communist Russia believed. Art reflects the feelings and emotions of the people belong to different ages and have historical significance. Art is immortal and the time has no impact on art. (123)

While Shostakovich is seen to compromise with power, he nevertheless remains faithful to himself, but at the same time, he becomes corrupt in his discourses. He adopted meek survival tactics by showing indifference, avoiding power, and believing in his music's universal appeal. Music is, therefore, seen as a character exposing the oppressive nature of the terrorists who rule the state, crushing the liberty of innocent people.

Vanessa Guignery and Peter Childs are renowned scholars who publish regularly on contemporary literary works. The third selected book, *The Sense of an Ending*, is relatively new; it was published in 2011, and very little scholarly literary criticism on it is available to date. Since the novel is somewhat self-reflective and partly owes its existence to the qualities of human memory, it will be analysed predominantly within a psychological framework. Most observations will be drawn from psychological perspectives presented in Daniel Schacter's Seven Sins of Memory. In his book, Daniel Schacter, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, classified the most frequent errors of human memory into seven categories, analogically to the biblical seven sins. He divided them into two categories: sins of omission (failure to recall) and sins of commission (memory is present, but the fidelity is questionable). The first category comprises transience, the general deterioration of memory over time, absent-mindedness, …having to do with encoding and attention, blocking, often caused by interference of other memories and also includes the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon. The sins of commission include mis-attribution, correct recollection, but incorrect source, suggestibility dealing with one's current feelings and opinions distort the past memories, and finally persistence, an undesired and disturbing recollection of memories. (Barnes, *Ending* 123)

Most issues discussed further deal with long-term memory, particularly episodic memory, which is responsible for storing and recalling information about specific events. Embedded in it is the information about what, when and where. Semantic memory will also be used, which refers to the type of memory that helps

people store facts. Semantic memory issues consist of remembering facts but must include information about when, where, and how they were learned. When addressing problems philosophical of memory or history, Paul Ricoeur's comprehensive book Memory, History and Forgetting is to be referred to. His hermeneutic analysis of memory explores many issues about memory and manages to reconcile the unresolved conflicts or aporia, for instance, the one between memory and imagination. He provides many deep insights into the realms of individual, collective and historical memory and discusses a great many thinkers of the past who addressed the issue of memory themselves. These range from the ancient Greek philosophers of Plato and Aristotle to the much more contemporary Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson. One point of particular interest for the subject of this thesis will be Ricoeur's ideas on the contrast between history and fiction. Finally, in the part illustrating the effort to utilize corpora linguistics as a support method which either proves or disproves the initial hypothesis, lexical terms will be explained using Howard Dictionary. In this study, the famous theories of self are applied while exploring the multidimensional relationships developed by the characters of Julian Barnes. The study adds new dimensions to the critical domain of Julian Barnes and will be helpful for the researchers and scholars of Julian Barnes; the relationships are determined by the perceptions and attitudes of the characters while living in society.

Chapter II

Formation of Self and Relationships in *Metroland* and *The Sense of an Ending*

The conspicuous feature of the postmodern fiction of Julian Barnes is the pervasive vogue of the fracture of the identity of characters who live in a harsh British environment. Ihab Hassan (1961) made serious efforts to resolve the issues of loss of self and disruption of human relationships. Hassan argued that the predominant features of postmodern society are violence, aggression, fear, oppression and alienation. In this chapter, the loss of self of the protagonists of Julian Barnes is explored. Interestingly, the British novelist focuses on the gradual and continuous deflation of self. He was confronted with the problem of deflating self since there was no absolute reality and truth. The brutalities of the Great War brought about moods of nihilism and despair as man lost faith in religion and God. Primo Levi exposed the atrocities perpetrated on the Jews and the grotesque, and the scenes of genocide in the concentration camps shattered the faith of people. They believed that there was no God. How could He be silent when the Jews were killed on a whole scale? Darwin revolutionized the domain of philosophy, declaring that man is the result of long evolution and that all the mythical stories of the Bible are figments of imagination. Spengler's *The Decline of the West* further eroded man's faith in God as he pointed out that man's civilization is on the verge of destruction. The philosophical ideas of Sigmund Freud and Einstein gave new impetus to the thinking. Modern thinkers have discarded religion, old traditions, and thoughts. Nihilism and pessimism grew famous, and the writers discarded religion's spiritual and metaphysical power. Joseph Wood Krutch investigated the cause of increasing nihilism and pessimism in the postmodern world. Fromm observed that "the protagonists of Barnes are ignorant of reality as they are passionate and emotional and not brainy and
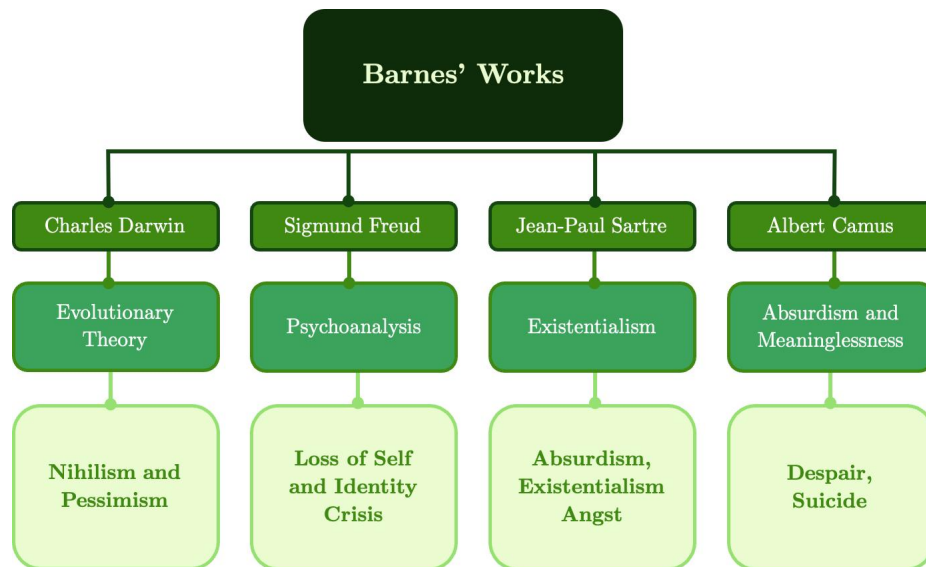
Figure 2.1: Philosophical Influences on Julian Barnes' Works

rational in their relationships" (Fromm 245). Julian Barnes was the product of a new revolution of science and technology as he had witnessed the growing pessimism and nihilism. A new wave of uncertainty and absurdity had gripped the people's minds. People believed that all rituals were false and misleading and that no spiritual power was operating in the universe. The only power is money and state power, which can rule and crush people's liberty anytime. People are freely robbed and killed in the streets, and there is no saviour. Love had been a source of eternal domestic happiness in the past, but in the post-world war society, all values are meaningless, and even life has no purpose. They argue that all religious ideas are misleading. Man found himself lonely in the crowd as he struggled for his identity. The loss of self had become a reality. Truth had no relevance in British society. Barnes realized that the Churches' sermons did not impact the people as they ran after money- making.

Nature was dead, and there was no Wordsworth left in the British society. The Greeks believed that man on this planet has a purpose in life. But the philosophical thoughts of Sartre and Camus brought about nihilism and pessimism. Man is doomed to suffer despair and death. All the plans and projects of man will fail. He has to struggle and struggle, but he will never get peace and happiness. His actions are

useless, and his struggles in life are meaningless. Sartre wrote *Nausea* (1938), *Being and Nothingness* (1943) *No Exit* (1944) and *Existentialism is Humanism* (1946) and observed that the death of man is an ordinary event; it is an outcome of absurdity which is prevailing all over the universe. Albert Camus concluded that suicide is the only reality in life. In the present chapter, the process of deflation of self-man is explored. The wave of pessimism and nihilism got impetus by the Holocaust of the concentration camps of Auschwitz. The Nazis perpetrated unimaginable crimes on the millions of innocent Jews of Europe; gas chambers were set up to decimate the Jews. Primo Lewis, Elie Wiesel and Charlotte Delbo recorded that the tiny babies were tossed on the burning chimney of Auschwitz. Elie Wiesel questioned the existence of God. The hero's disappearance is a conspicuous feature of modern fiction by Julian Barnes. The novels of Scott Fitzgerald, Norman Mailer and Joseph Heller depicted the trapped and truncated protagonists, the victims of the Catch-22 system. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is The Night* depicted the nightmarish experiences of the American Dream. All values of human society collapsed, and the dollar became God in America. Barnes deals with the themes of loss of life and the decline of human values that sustained human beings. The dilemmas and uncertainties of existence haunted the middle-class people of British society. They have no future as all relationships collapse, resulting in despair and depression. Virginia Woolf and James Joyce created new themes and plots based on life's instability. Their characters have no future as the fears of death and failure of projects always haunt them. The plots of these writers are fragmented, and a wave of uncertainty and fear grips the psyche of the wounded characters. David Reisman published his book *The Lonely Crowd* and explored the causes of alienation of postmodern man. Barnes believes that religion has lost its spiritual appeal as no unifying force operates in society. People are free to make their decisions, and often, they suffer because their actions are based on money values and not on truths. Self disintegrates as there is no certainty in life. Giraud argued that "man is a split personality; he has no solid and stable self like the Greeks. He is bound to suffer alienation and depression in the postmodern world" (Giraud 229). The quest of Hamlet is meaningful. He is alone but fights against the forces of disorder and chaos. The heroes of Barnes are defeated people; they are sick

and defeated. According to Julian Barnes, literature is derived from the day-to-day life of people. His novels explore the themes of human relationships; the characters come in contact with others and develop relations to enjoy romance, love and sexuality.

Barnes's approach to depicting character development and human relationships can be understood through his complex engagement with traditional literary forms, particularly the bildungsroman. The bildungsroman, or novel of formation, is a literary genre that traces a protagonist's psychological and moral development from youth to adulthood. Originating in German literature with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96), the bildungsroman typically follows a young person's journey away from home, through various formative experiences, toward eventual self-knowledge and social integration. The genre assumes that individuals can achieve authentic selfhood through experience and education, ultimately finding their rightful place in society. Barnes's exploration of fractured identity is further illuminated through his employment of bildungsroman elements, though significantly subverted for postmodern purposes. The traditional bildungsroman charts a protagonist's journey from innocence to experience, culminating in social integration and self-knowledge. However, Barnes presents what might be termed 'failed bildungsromans' or 'anti-bildungsromans,' where the expected psychological maturation either never occurs or proves illusory. This subversion reflects the postmodern condition where stable identity formation becomes impossible in a fragmented world.

Barnes explores the fundamental nature of love and romance and depicts people's strange behaviour and attitude. He is a postmodern novelist who dramatises real-life situations to explore the reactions and attitudes of people about love and sex. Barnes depicts the themes of love from a postmodern perspective. The characters are not serious about love as they are selfish and money-minded. Adultery and betrayal in love are everyday things in his novels. Barnes' *Talking* it Over and *Love, Etc*. deal with postmodern human relationships. It is not high love found in the plays of Shakespeare, but the feelings of love are non-serious. For the characters, love is not a way of life; it doesn't sustain their life, but it is past time pleasure. The characters find

a lack of faith, ambiguity and loss of truths. He creates situations that depict the characters' sufferings because they fail to understand the real meaning of love and truth. Irony grips their psyche as they suffer alienation and depression. Barnes argues that postmodern people are unfit to confront the existential challenges of life because they are selfish, mean and lustful. Barnes observes that values have changed as the postmodern society is based on money culture. His characters are helpless people groping in the darkness. They fail to maintain any sound relationship because their priority is sex, money and power. He employs the techniques of pastiche, fragmentation and magic realism in his plots. Realism is elusive as there is no absolute truth. Graham of Before She Met Me comes in contact with an actress and soon marries her. The conflict begins soon, and their life is paralyzed by passiveness and ego conflict. Barnes exposes the emptiness of their married life, depicting scenes of false love and romance that lead them to despair and frustration. English, English, of Barnes depict an unreal world and the characters' longing for material prosperity. Barnes exhibits the ambiguity gripping the psyche of the individuals. The characters of both novels fail to develop sound relationships because of their selfish and materialistic longings. The characters suffer because of divorces, infidelities, repeated betrayals and broken relations between men and women. Relationships were tossed away; they are considered salable commodities. The characters are reduced to scraps and are abandoned like torn-up furniture. The post-war British fiction of Julian Barnes depicts the significant patterns and themes of postmodern society. At the very outset, it is imperative to explore the new role of fiction in the postmodern world. Malcolm Bradbury (2000) articulates his views: "In the postmodern age the very purpose of writing fiction has changed; the writers don't celebrate the glories of war; they are not interested in writing fantasies but depict the hard reality confronting the people" (Bradbury xxxi). Barnes discards the old techniques Thomas Hardy and Eliot employed and concentrates on new techniques such as journalism, documentary and modes of reporting like a media professional. He has used multiple modes of narratives to describe the diverse human experiences; he has depicted their longings, failures, and eventual alienation from society. Christopher Lloyd is mad about being obsessed with sex. He is depressed as his family emerges as impostors. In his

interviews, Julian Barnes claims that "his novels start with life and not with an intellectual grid" (Moseley 10). Like Shakespeare, he devoted his life to observing nature and exploring the complexities of life and human relationships. He has used real- life material to structure the plots. Peter Childs observes, "The novels of Barnes are written to conform to the ideals of postmodernism. He discards the old values and imitates the techniques propounded by Jameson" (Childs 86). Barnes has discarded the theories of modern writers and expressed his postmodern perception of life and the Self. He believes that the self is a social construct and all human relations are determined by the interaction of the individuals while living in society. The concept of self is the totality of our beliefs, ideas, attitudes and opinions organized systematically towards our existence. Matthew Pateman (2002) observes, "The novels of Barnes depict man;s search for identity and truth about life. Each character struggles for survival in the harsh environment of the postmodern world. His characters are forced to live in a cruel and oppressive world where values are declining and man has no future" (Patterman 234). Barnes's *Metroland* (1980) is the debut novel characterised as a meta-historical romance describing the culture of two cities, Paris and London. The book explores the truth that is there and highlights the struggles of two young men, Toni and Chris, who struggle to escape their roots. The story is set in the suburbs developed due to a complex mix of economic and commercial advancement. The Prime Minister of England, Lloyd George, dedicated this suburb to commemorate the memories of the heroes who had won the war. Barnes describes the landscape of *Metroland* thus: Metro-Land is a country with elastic borders which each visitor can draw for himself. It lies mostly in Bucks but choice fragments of Middlesex and Herfordshire may be annexed at pleasure. A much of the country side as you may conveniently cover afoot from one Metropolitan Railway Station to another you may add to your private and individual map of *Metroland*. (Barnes, *Metroland* 38) The novel's plot depicts the characters' struggles to develop relations with the "Other" and the gradual growth of the self in the suburban environment of London and Paris. "I" in this novel is the narrator and the character in the story world. The plot is narrated from the adult perspective as Toni and Chris revolt against the bourgeoisie values and middle-class life. The plot focuses

on the characters' self-development; this is the central metaphor in the novel to reveal to the world what happens to the adults as they grow in the oppressive environment of big cities like London and Paris. The main theme of the novel *Metroland* is growing up and the growth of self-consciousness in developing relations with the Other. The main plot moves towards the conclusion, exposing the hollow hedonism of Toni and Chris, who matured into what they consider "life-learned happiness." Toni carries his schoolboy self despite his growth into his adulthood and struggles to establish a relationship with Chris. He continues to live without a sense of compromise. However, Chris perceives happiness as residing in society and being shaped by others' lives. He struggles to establish his own identity and rejects the rebellious stance. Christopher and Toni are two precocious adolescents growing up in a London suburb. Barnes's main focus is to depict the trajectory of the adolescent identity of the main characters. 1963 is the beginning of their identity, and both are or 16 years of age schoolboys at the City of London School. They make notes, hoping to discern and record the experiences and reflections of life. Christopher is haunted by the fear of death and is disturbed by the art. Barnes observes thus: "Belief in art was initially an effective simple against the routine ache of big D" (55). When he reaches home, he is caught by his sister Mary, who is sensitive, and his brother Nigel, who is insensitive to Chris's fears of death. Chris's relationship with his uncle Arthur provides a comical education on truth and lies. Toni and Chris make are, music and literature. The French culture and the values of life impact him. For both the schoolboys, everything contains "mere symbolism" (13). Their beliefs are embedded in late-nineteenth-century aesthetics. They conduct experiments on themselves while listening to music. They are in quest of truth; language and authentic art and love. There is a dialectical movement in Chris's life, whose Paris life from 16 to 30 years of age gives him ample opportunity to grow and explore the depth of French culture: art, music, and love. Their rootlessness is the leading cause of their romantic rebellion against the petty mores of suburbia. Barnes observes thus: Toni and I were rootless and jobless and had no future in this world. We discovered life meaningless and contradictory and love leading to despair. We lived with our parents who were under the burden of tiring responsibilities and had no time for us; they were not much concerned about our

future. prided ourselves on being rootless. (29) The novelist has dramatised the twin poles of suburban London and Paris. *Metroland* is a suburban area associated with the comforts of family life, home and ownership, as Toni says: "with wife, baby, family and conformity and mortgage flower garden" (202). Toni and Christopher are two 16-year-old schoolboys, sneering, contemptuous and aggressive. They have inexhaustible energy to explore the Truth of the universe, establishing relationships with other people in the process of their self– development. Toni believes in the decadent of aesthetics and is mesmerised by the "art for art's sake" philosophy. He is motivated by the values of independence, self- determination, and responsibility in life. He believes in the bourgeoning principles of youthful rebellion. It was the year 1963 when Philip Larkin wrote his poem Annus Mirabilis and declared that sex began, but they had been rootless in the principalities of life. Toni and Chris discuss the theme of the poem of Larkin and talks of "fug you up" but were soon "fugged up in their turn" (39). Barnes is acclaimed as a postmodern coming-of-age novelist, and the rise and fall of Chris and Toni form the novel's core. Barnes spent eight years completing the novel and presenting contemporary issues concerning the modern youth. The novel displays no continuous chronological narrative. The novel's three parts are the three aspects of Chris's life. The plot is circular as the novel ends with *Metroland*, where Chris returns with his wife from where he had started in his teenage.

The tripartite structure of *Metroland* follows the classical bildungsroman pattern: departure from the familiar world (suburban London), trials and education in a foreign environment (Paris), and return transformed to the original setting. However, Barnes complicates this trajectory. Christopher's Parisian sojourn, while providing sexual and cultural awakening, fails to deliver the self-knowledge and wisdom typically achieved in the bildungsroman. His return to *Metroland* represents not triumphant integration but capitulation to the very bourgeois values he initially rejected, suggesting the impossibility of authentic self-development in postmodern society.

The plot is replete with scenes of excitement and erotic in London and Paris. The three-part structure of the novel takes the action from *Metroland* to Paris and back, reflecting the progression of Chris's consciousness and the growth of his self.

Barnes has dramatised the tale of growth and rebellion: Paris in the 1960s representing love, transgression and unrestrained sexual freedom. London is described as a place where family life and the nuclear family flourish. Chris and Toni are rebellious characters as they emerge in the novel's first section. Ronald Hayman contends that the plot is focused on two clever cynicism, irony and rootlessness. Barnes dramatises the challenges of youth in their teenage. The protagonist is obsessed with sex, and he is offended by his "family romance" The episode emerges as a fantasy: Could it be that I was really related to all of them? And how could I bear not to point out the obvious differences?" "Mom, am I illegitimate?" "You sure there isn't a chance I am illegitimate?" I wanted an explicatory hand towards Nigel and Mary. (67) He hates everybody, including all the people of the school management. Christopher is representative of the postmodern youth given to sex and cynicism. Paul Bailey comments: Novels written in the first person, novels intent on establishing the peculiar quality of a single life, survive when they set that life against a vivid background of other, possible more interesting lives. There is a curious lack of people in *Metroland*. It is in creating the imaginative life of Christopher and Toni that Barnes provides the strongly individual character of the adolescent scenes. Toni shares the admiration of French culture, made up in roughly equal part. (Bailey 1) Barnes's primary concern is the central theme of snobbery. Christopher is thirty years old, and he is a young man when he reaches suburbia, along with his young and beautiful wife, Marion. They had high hopes of a new married life and high aspirations and dreams. Toni proves faithful to them and appreciates their passion for life, art and truth. Soon, the relationships start disintegrating as Chris's return is taken as controversial. Barnes presents the non-linear structure of the novel thus: 'I was concerned about to know the nature of people. My structure is focused on the development of a structure, an arc to show how people can change" (Barnes, *Metroland* 12). In this section, the themes of fidelity and cuckoldry are predominant, which bring depression and frustration into the lives of the characters. Christopher realises that death is inevitable when he returns from cremation. *Metroland* is a journey of a young boy narrating the various stages of growth of young adolescents; a proper description of their emotional and intellectual development. Metroland, Paris, and Metroland II are three interesting

sections dealing with various stages of growth. Each section highlights new episodes and describes new challenges and new situations, and these events are integrated into a fabric of interconnection. Christopher Lloyd and Toni Barbarowski hold similar views about love, life and sex at the novel's outset. But their ideas and opinions change with the passage of time and the result is the difference and separation; break up of relationships. Barnes believes it is not easy to keep lifelong relationships because human beings are suspicious, greedy and uncertain in their commitments. They have divergent opinions about life, art, and society. Toni grows rebellious and takes the job of a university scientist. In his revolting spirit, he refuses to marry. *Metroland* deals with the challenges of the youth living in harsh postmodern British middle-class society. Matthew Pateman observes thus: Barnes has depicted the heartrending journey of the life of Chris in the novel. He has narrated only the personal history of his protagonist highlighting his struggles and challenges. His love relationship is the main center of the plot; the loss of his self and virginity is the main concern of Barnes. (Pateman 123) Guignery observes thus: "The main focus of Barnes is the narration of the evolution of life and his relationship with Adrian and his first beloved Veronica. The novel is a study of love and betrayal; of youth and old age and of the desire of the young teenagers to enjoy freedom in postmodern society" (Guignery 13). The leaned critic further argues, "Indeed, Barnes has given a cultural study of British and French literature. He has borrowed the texts from the French writers such as Verlaine and Rimbaud, Mallarme and Moliere" (13). Postmodern fiction employs the technique of intertextuality, and Barnes uses these techniques to intensify the thematic significance of his novel. In the novel's third part, Bishop Butler describes the importance and relevance of Truth in life. In the last section, Chris is back in the suburbs of London, and we learn about his wife, child, and life. He is confronted with the dilemma and often thinks of deserting his wife and child. He had become what he despised in his early life, so the guilty consciousness doesn't give him peace and rest. Moseley observes that "each part of the novel ends with a recurrent statement of "Object Relations" as Barnes examines the evolution and the process of deflation of self" (Moseley 16). In the novel's first section, Christopher, who is self-conscious about his struggle in life, is introduced. He is mature, looking

back on his past and telling how he looked once when he was a young teenager. He has "narrated the ironic ways of his life, his problems and the eventual sufferings" (30). In the novel's beginning, the two main characters, Chris and Toni, hold the same views on life, art and sex. However, both the protagonists differ in their opinions as the plot progresses. Chris is critical of the middle- class sensibility. Toni revolts and joins the science department at the University. He refuses to marry and decides to lead a lonely and carefree life. *Metroland* introduces the personal history of the protagonists who begin their journey of life in their teenage years. Frank Kermod (1985) argues that "Barnes has described the emotional life of the teenagers living in postmodern society and their loss of self as they fail to cope with the challenges of love" (Kermod 7). Barnes has described the growth of their personal history of Chris his sentimental journey, and his sexual experiences. Toni and Chris, the two teenagers, develop cynicism and irony and typically like French values and culture. Barnes narrates an amusing picture of youth embarking on a journey of growth and development and coming in contact with the various people of the metropolises of London and Paris. Barnes's picture symbolises the realistic journey of all teenagers. In the novel's first part, Christopher Lloyd is a 16-year-old school-going boy who develops intimacy with his friend Toni Bararowski and sneers at the middle– class world. *Metroland* is a symbol of postmodern absurdity and abstraction: Barnes observes thus: The point about *Metroland* was that it is a bogus place, a concept dreamed up by an expanding railway network in partnership with property developers. It was not an existing area that the railway was designed to service but an invented area designed to service the railway. So it was a non-place… (Barnes, *Metroland* 38) Chris and Toni are young people anxious to escape their roots, expressing their "raucous cynicism" (9). They look after France and Paris, filling their hearts with French phrases. Chris and Toni are fired by the thoughts and revolutionary ideas of Voltaire, who brought the French Revolution in 1789 and launched their crusade against "the Church and its old conventions" (9). Both the boys seek inspiration from art and literature, are influenced by French artists, and are associated with the rebellion against bourgeois morality. Chris and Toni are portrayed as the models of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, and the novel's plot is loaded with the

writers of nineteenth-century France. Barnes uses the material of historical events to structure the plot following the tradition of historiographic metafiction of Linda Hutcheon. Many references to "Rimbaud, Gautier and Mallarme and Zola" (38) and Chris and Toni come under the influence of the poet Charles Baudelaire. No wonder Chris becomes famous as "Chris Baudelaire in his family and friends" (70). He breaks up with his first girlfriend, French Annick, and writes prose poems called Spleenters (150) in imitation of Baudelaire. He gives a vivid picture of modern life, which was a rootless affair for him, and summed up in his The Painter of Modern Life (1863). Chris expresses his passion for escaping from the dull life of modern cities. He is seen wandering in the streets of Paris, struggling to find meaning in life as all his efforts to build solid and stable human relations miserably fail, and he is alienated from the culture and tradition of his country. With a hint of self-satire, he pretentiously describes Spleenters as a set of "urban allegories" (150). Toni for the first time puts forward the concept of the Constructive Loaf thus: Our time, he argued, was spent being either compulsorily crammed with knowledge, or compulsorily diverted. His theory was that by lounging around in a suitably insouciant fashion, but keeping an eye open all the time, you could really catch life on the hip-you could harvest all the apercus of the flaneur. (24) The subtle irony of Barnes is visible as he applies the street philosophy of Baudelaire to the postmodern culture of metropolitan Paris. Barnes describes the unglamorous culture of London thus: Toni and I were strolling along Oxford Street, trying to look like flaneurs. That wasn't easy as it might sound. For a start, you usually needed a quaior, at the very least, a boulevard; and, however much we might be able to intimate the aimlessness of the flanerie itself, we always felt that we hadn't quite mastered what happened at each end of the stroll. In Paris, you would be leaving behind some rumpled couch in a chambre particulière' over here,we had just left Tottenham Court Road Underground station and were heading for the Bond Street. (11) Barnes has written elsewhere that *Metroland* is "a bogus place" (38), and his description of its historical development in the novel is unfavourable. The plot of the novel *Metroland* describes the cultural tensions of two countries, England and France. Barnes employs the dominant metaphor of Chris and Toni's "rootless" life. The first part of the fifth chapter begins with the word

"Rootless," as Barnes writes: "I grew up among unsettled people who were rootless and displaced being the victims of the Second World War. I lived among the people who suffered from psychological problems, and I was also one of them" (5). No wonder Chris assumes multiple identities. He travels, and his passion for the art and culture of London and Paris symbolises his revolutionary fervour. The French part of the novel is revealing and structured to depict the challenges the modern youth faces in surviving in the postmodern cities of London and Paris. Barnes alludes to Cross Channel, symbolising the hybrid identity of Chris and Toni. Barnes narrates the episode thus: Once Christopher came in contact with a stranger of middle age in the train. The stranger explained to him the historical details of the railway expansion of *Metroland*. Chris got the real knowledge of the British society. *Metroland* was the result of the expansion and ambition of the British people. (35) Chris's passion for art is typical; he rejects the contribution of Sir Edward Watk, the father of modern railway stations. Barnes employs the symbolical analogy of Watk's grand idea to describe the expansion of the railway network. Cynically, Chris comments thus: "Nonsense…Cozy homes for cosy war heroes" (38). Barnes has depicted the fractured identity of Chris realistically; he despises bourgeois mentality. In his revolutionary style, Chris expresses" his revolt by describing the barren and unsophisticated nature of *Metroland*" (41). Barnes employs the postmodern techniques of metafiction, narrating the historical episodes of the Beatles of 1963, the protest of students in Paris in 1968, and the famous Park Movement of 1977. Chris is depicted as an angry young man of John Osborne. Chris feels alienated and rootless as his life is full of painful experiences. His friend Toni expresses his cynicism of The National Gallery: Art is an essential aspect of man's life. Each individual is devoted to art as it greatly impacts his thinking and vision of life. No one in this world can be indifferent to art as it is linked with life. Man who has no passion for art is a dead man as his sensibility is that of an animal. A civilized person who is sensible and rational loves art and life. (29) Toni and Chris lived without a sense of compromise. They are "passionate, sexual and rebellious" (12). Chris's passion for art is suicidal since he is convinced that death is inevitable in life, and he suffers the ache of death in his daily life" (55). He is in conflict because he is in a dilemma about living with either Mary

or Nigel. Mary is his loving sister who is sensitive and charming. Barnes observes thus: Christopher and Toni make art, music and literature the focus of their lives' interest leaning towards all things French and assessing potential heroes on the basis of how much they advocate bohemian living and despite the bourgeoisie's placid domesticity. To the two boys, everything also contains more symbolism. (13) Barnes depicts the new self of Chris in the chapter "Object Relations'' highlighting the memories and awareness of his self as he admits: ''I remember things" (71). His room is filled with the stuff which hate; the whole room is filled with unwanted things, and each thing is revolting and dissatisfying" (72), articulating a sense of hope and frustration. Chris is a confused and bewildered young boy as Barnes writes: "He looks so strange; at this teenage he is a divided self; apart of his personality is willing and energetic; the other is consenting and confused" (72). Following the philosophical principles of Baudelaire and Rimbaud, Chris and Toni maintain, "Life didn't really get under until you left school" (64). Barnes depicted Chris as a teenager exploring the mysteries of truth: "I went to Paris with passion to learn love, art and life and to learn new language and culture. I was determined to get lost in the new culture and explore the street life of Paris" (105). In Paris, he begins to dream of "himself as an autonomous being" (85). His passion for research is meaningless compared to his exploration of truths about life and its existence. His stay in Paris transforms his thoughts and opinions. The large city Paris "reveals new life, new history, new culture and new spirit of revolution. I was immersed in new history and art and got new awareness of life and art" (93). When he begins flirting with a French girl, Annick, Chris experiences a fusion of art and life. In the early stages of life, Chris and Toni were just observers. They needed to be more serious about art, life, and its multifarious experiences. They focused on observing the interrelation of art and life. They were not serious about the reality of art and its effects on life. Chris admits: "Some people say that life is an activity but I have a strong passion for reading literature. I feel the emptiness in life and reading of literature empowers me to get away from the weariness of life" (128). When he leaves Paris, the questions about his connection with art and its relation with life haunt him, and he feels mentally disturbed. He leaves the apartment in Paris before leaving the room where he "stayed

for long and enjoyed the theatre programmes that were all there" (130). As a teenager, he fails to forge his identity in Paris, but he is guilty of knowing that he had no relevance to art. His life in *Metroland* was different from the passionate life that he led in Paris. Barnes completes the circle as the novel moves from all art and no life. All his childhood ideals vanish as the real challenges of his adult life threaten him. However, his friend Toni still clings to "half-truths, meta-communication as wonderful theory, but unreliable practice" (140). Toni hits the world as people had a version of art. Chris is now a grown adult as he thinks he is into life; he has become serious because he has explored the hidden mysteries of art and life. For him, life is more important, and art is just a passion for teenagers. Art doesn't run life, but life is a challenging thing. Toni wishes to live by theories, but Chris has grown practical as he observes: Do you remember when we were at school, when life had a capital letter and it was all out there somehow, we used to think that the way to live our lives was to discover or deduce certain principles from which individual decisions could be worked out? (150) Chris wants to enjoy sexual pleasures with a French girl. He is shocked to know that the French girl is unresponsive as she denies sex. But soon, he learns the lesson of honesty from Annick. She teaches him the lesson of "honesty of intention" (155) and opens his eyes, imparting him the real knowledge of life, which is far from art. In the chapter "Object Relations", Barnes expresses his fundamental philosophy of life, highlighting the implication of new human relationships. Chris doesn't want to fight with life and lives in the dream world, believing everything will be fine. Chris feels he does not need to confront the world as he can lead a comfortable, lazy life. He wants to enjoy "domesticity, as the various objects lying in the room remind him of his various memories and associations of various people that came into his life" (176). Chris feels guilty because he is also leading a bourgeois lifestyle that the stranger on the train had been living. He thinks of Mallarme "when he cuts the lawn on his Sunday afternoon" (174). Barnes imitates the novels of Charles Dickens in depicting the challenges of teenagers. He inspires the readers to contemplate life and art. To conclude, Chris's daughter, Amy, emerges as Chris's real teacher, depicting his real identity. Chris has become a severe interpreter of things as he understands the values of life and the nature of existence. New objects give him

new awareness in life. He is bewildered and puzzled by his contradictory approach to life: "Hey, Christ. You can't say that. It's not allowed. Look at yourself. I can call you bourgeois…You can't call yourself it" (37). Chris enjoys this paradox and lives his suburban life self-consciously accepting inconsistency and irony. In his heated discussions with Toni, Chris emerges as a confused self fighting for his identity. His conversation with Toni is cynical he is critical of Christ and all religious ideas. Life is a mystery for both of them as they fail to understand the challenges of existence. Art is meaningless as life is the real drama that teaches you the complex realities. Barnes has dramatised all the tiring stages of Toni and Chris's development as they are forced to explore the mysteries of art, life, and truth. The parents of Toni are religious, tough disciplinarians, loving, and poor. But the parents of Chris are dull: "His parent's outlook and morality are to be rejected and revered, his siblings both have bland soft-featured, unresentful faces and all the family live what Chris perceives to be an unendurably empty existence" (40). Chris is located in *Metroland* while Toni is an inner- city child but they are united in their hatred of "unidentified legislators, moralists, social luminaries and parents" (14). However both of them seriously ponder on such issues as "Truth, Authenticity and the purity of the language, the perfectibility of self, the function of art" (15). Toni and Chris struggle to escape their roots expressing their reflex action against the suburban environment in which they live. And which they vie with a "raucous cynicism" (9). Both of them turn rebellious and deviant, fired by the French culture. In their case, the self and the Other relation are based on their mutual desires and aspirations to run away from the oppressive environment. Chris and Toni live by two transgressive mottoes; they want to destroy the traditional society. They seek inspiration from art and literature and are fired by the French Revolution. They launch a crusade against the bourgeois morality: We cared for [French] literature largely for its combativeness. French writers were always fighting one another – defending and purifying the language, ousting slang words, writing prescriptive dictionaries, getting arrested, being prosecuted for obscenity, being aggressively Parnassian, scrabbling for seats in the Académie, intriguing for literary prizes, getting exiled. (10) Chris realises that the real purpose of life is to understand the meaning of existence and his role in society. He forgets the old ideals

of his teenage life and gives his heart to understanding love, life, sex and family. The burden of family makes him conscious as his quest leads him to social and psychological awareness. The novel explores teenagers' ideas and thoughts and the transformation that comes when they grow up. The main focus of this chapter is to analyse the characters' experiences while they are in relationships with others. The chapter will analyse the characters drawn from the different novels discussed earlier, examine their feelings when they are not related to others, and discuss their experiences while in a relationship. Julian Barnes is a typical postmodern novelist who employs the techniques of Postmodernism in his novels, exploring the role of self in developing human relationships. The study explores the perceptions and vision of Julian Barnes who deeply examines the matrix of human relationships. Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) depicts the self-reflective journey of the protagonist, Tony Webster, a retired person.

The Sense of an Ending presents an inverted bildungsroman, where the protagonist's 'education' occurs in old age rather than youth. Tony Webster's retrospective journey represents a delayed—and ultimately incomplete—attempt at the self-knowledge that traditional bildungsroman heroes achieve through their formative experiences. The novel suggests that the bildungsroman's promise of growth through experience may be fundamentally flawed, as Tony's accumulated years bring not wisdom but rather the recognition of his own capacity for self-deception.

Barnes has employed the metaphor of memory to structure the novel's plot. He has experienced life and has accumulated all the experiences of the world. Webster is leading a contented life, but he gets a letter from the mother of a girlfriend and is forced to go down into the memory lanes and recollect all the events of the past. The narrator, Webster, raises many questions relating to memory and its function and role in life in shaping the sensibility of an individual. Imagination and emotional outbursts play vital roles in the novel as he is forced to revisit his past life to continue his self–reflexive journey of life. Barnes believes that the self of a man is mainly responsible for shaping and constructing human relations. No human being can lead a life of isolation. Tony Webster leads a life of isolation, leading a contented life after

retirement, but soon, one letter from the mother of his old university girlfriend disturbs his life and forces him to recollect all the past events and to suffer a sense of remorse and guilt. Webster is forced to introspect and enters into a process of rethinking and re-evaluating his past actions. He feels guilt-ridden since he deserted his lovely girlfriend Veronica, who lives in Kent with her mother. Time again gives him a chance to express his remorse since he feels guilty. His soul cries out, and he feels mentally disturbed but comes to the conclusion that the unresolved mystery of life has to be resolved, and he has to carry out the unfinished journey of his Self. The plot of the novel *The Sense of an Ending* deals with the themes of youth and age, innocence and experience. Barnes gives the message in the plot that life can be awful. Tony Webster is the main narrator in the novel. The plot challenges this commitment to ethics in his commentary on the instability of memory. But Barnes demonstrates that Tony's real problem is his inability to make sense of himself, a failure of self-knowledge. Tony's past is tangled up with others, whom he can scarcely see as people. Let us hope we can do better. He came in contact with Veronica, and he developed intimacy with her; he wrote a letter to her: It's just a question of whether you can get pregnant before he discovers you're a bore. I hadn't even meant it at the time – I was just flailing around, trying to find a way to hurt. In fact, all the time I was going out with Veronica, I found her many things –alluring, mysterious, disapproving – but never boring. And even in my recent dealings with her, though the adjectives might be updated – exasperating, stubborn, haughty, yet still, in a way, alluring – I never found her boring. So it was as false as it was hurtful. (Barnes, *Ending* 131) He remains restless and struggled to find peace of mind and comfort. But his situation had been very traumatic because he is the only character in the novel who confronts reality about life, love and sex: She had become pregnant by Adrian, and – who knows? – perhaps the trauma of his suicide had affected the child in her womb. She had given birth to a son who had at some stage been diagnosed as what? As not being able to function independently in society; as needing constant support, emotional and financial. (132) Barnes deals with the themes of disease and decay. He has focussed on the issues of suffering, grief, hatred, and guilt in the novel. Tony Webster remembers meeting Adrian Finn at school, a new boy who joins his philosophically

minded circle of friends despite being cleverer and more severe than they are. While at school, a previously undistinguished boy, Robson, kills himself because he impregnated his girlfriend. The boys take note and wonder how to make sense of Robson's story without more information. Adrian's cleverness takes him to Cambridge, while Tony goes to Bristol. There, Tony continues to lead an unexceptional life, academically and otherwise. However, he goes out with Veronica Ford, who remains a mystery to him and sometimes seems to disdain him. Tony spends a particularly uncomfortable weekend with Veronica's family in Kent's countryside. Things begin to fall apart, and after meeting Tony's friends in London, Veronica ends up with Adrian, who writes to Tony to explain. Tony responds with a vitriolic and abusive letter casting imprecations on them and an imagined child. After wandering America for a time and finding a carefree romance, he returns home to find out that Adrian has committed suicide, apparently based on his rational convictions. After a quiet career and a peaceful marriage, a child, and an equally peaceful divorce (his wife Margaret leaves him for a restaurateur), Tony is now an old man. His unremarkable retirement is interrupted by a letter from Veronica's mother leaving him £500 on her death, which he discovers, to his great surprise, was formerly attached to Adrian's diary. The diary is now in Veronica's possession. After a long and indirect campaign of irritation, Tony is sent a single page of the diary, with some of Adrian's abstract reasoning in numbered propositions on it, tantalizing ending "So, for instance, if Tony," but with no further insight into why he killed himself. When Tony finally secures a meeting, Veronica tells him she's burned the diary and instead gives him the abusive letter he once wrote, which has the intended effect of appalling him. Undeterred, Tony continues his campaign and, after a further uninformative lunch meeting, is taken by Veronica to a remote part of north London, where from her car, they quietly observe a group of disabled adults in community care. The group recognises Veronica when she goes to greet them, and though Tony remains confused, she offers nothing more. He then takes it upon himself to discover who these people are on his own, waiting for them each week in the nearby pub and shop. When he next sees them and tries talking to them, he finally realizes that one of them is Adrian's son. Tony infers that Veronica must be his mother and

not any rational conviction must have precipitated Adrian's suicide. Tony finds some relief in the thought that Adrian, who in his life and death served as a reminder of the littleness of Tony's own life, is no more than another Robson. He apologises to Veronica, who replies that he still doesn't get it. Here 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 tore-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 Adrian. 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-emphasised with each passing decade the compromise and littleness that most lives consist of. (133) As the plot progresses, Tony's inner world is revealed. He is an alienated, dissolute self trapped in the abyss of darkness and ignorance. His experiments with life proved counter-productive. Tony nevertheless feels that he has finally found some purpose in his life and returns frequently to the pub. When he sees the community care group again and tries to make contact, Adrian's son and namesake are distraught. Their carer explains to Tony that Veronica is not Adrian's mother but his sister and that his feelings are a result of the recent death of his mother—that is, Mrs. Ford. With the knowledge of this affair and its consequence, bits of the diary page make more sense to Tony that why Mrs. Ford had the diary in the first place. Nevertheless, in reflecting on what else he might have done wrong now that the possibility of change is past, he is left only with the unsettled thoughts that there is accumulation and unrest in life. In the novel's first section, Tony is depicted enjoying his carefree life. He has no interest in the serious activities of life. He talks of his school life experiences, which are romantic and dreamy, far away from reality. In the second section, Tony is presented as an older adult of sixty leading a lonely life because of his fractured identity and harrowing experiences. In this period of life, he receives a letter that compels him to recall the old information. The letter is a source of psychological torment to him as he is not in a mood to recollect the past.

An unexpected inheritance inspires him to establish a relationship with a college girlfriend, Veronica Ford. He learns about Adrian Fins' diary, which contains Tony's

aggressive letter sent to Adrian long ago. This diary explains the circumstances that led to the suicide of Adrian. The diary describes the life of frustration of Adrian, who had a disabled child and, in desperation, killed himself. Tony's use of dirty language and superfluous arguments are highlighted. The letter also depicts the ambiguous character of Veronica and her real intentions. He claims he is inferior to Veronica, his family and his friend Adrian. He distorts the facts and presents flimsy situations and assumptions about his relationships. Veronica is portrayed as a culturally dynamic and promising girl with a wide range of knowledge of various subjects. She was a modern girl with modern dreams and aspirations. She was bright, charming and an enlightened sweet girl. She dominated Tony and ruled his heart by controlling his tastes and personality. She introduced Tony to her father, her brother, and her mysterious mother during a visit. He felt inferior as he was amazed to find Veronica's highly cultured people. He is not received so warmly by the family of Veronica as they display a high level of culture. Thus, it causes a bitter feeling in Tony's mind, who feels humiliated by his substandard treatment in Veronica's family. Tony also provides information about Veronica by focusing on her high sense of taste and aesthetics, which correspond to her socially superior status. He observes thus: "My girlfriend Veronica Mary Elizabeth Ford was a lover of poetry. Her father was a British civil servant, but Veronica loved music, and she was a girl of aesthetic tastes" (20). Tony perceived his affair with Veronica as inferior - superior social beings and a relationship disturbed by the tension between love and loss. He suffered from an inferiority complex as Veronica was a cultured lady compared to him. He expresses the complexity of his relationship with Veronica. Barnes depicts Tony as a product of postmodern forces. He is not very concerned about human values and thinks that life is about enjoying sexual pleasures. He has no convictions as he emerges as a shifty character. Barnes has pointed out the stages of his growth from teenage to adulthood. His fractured relationships are pointed out thus: I had no doubt that she was not a woman of tastes as she had read many books lying in my shelf. Her mind was grown up and she looked sensible but passionate. I tried to observe her activities and found her in dilemma. She had two sides of personality; she thought something else and did something else. This disparity threw me into a panic. (24) Many times during his

confrontation with Veronica and her family, he felt betrayed and inadequately treated by his family. "I couldn't believe the way her father treated me as though he considered me a low class scum" (27). Her brother "behaved toward me as if I were an object of mild curiosity, and by no means the first to be exhibited for his appreciation" (27). When they were on super that Friday, they behaved humiliatingly, and "I felt as if I were a count of injury" (28). He expresses his inner heart thus: "Veronica was good in communication. She talked of many colleges; of bookstores and tea shops where she had frequented. This made me feel low" (31). Tony's existential musings reveal his seriousness as he unlocks the mystery about Veronica at the end of the novel. He recalls discussing Robson's suicide with his school friends. He narrates how Mrs. Ford, Adrian, and Adrian's son have all suffered mightily. Adrian's suicide was an act of desperation; there is nothing farcical about the decision and its circumstances. Tony's fantasy that he can understand his and others' lives is revealed by Julian Barnes. The novel's final words, "There is great unrest," are the words of the dullard in their history class who cannot remember anything more to say about the reign of Henry VIII. The suggestion is that there is nothing more to be said. Indeed, Tony's story uncovers and makes sense of his confusion and misguided assumptions. On a Friday, when "we were at the Super with the family of Veronica, they threw volley of disparaging questions about my family and intellectual achievements" (28). Tony was not a genius and lacked cultural intelligence. He had poor intellectual acumen and remained on the surface of life, struggling for higher success. Veronica knew her frailties, and Barnes gave us a comparative analysis of Tony and Veronica, who emerge as superior ladies dominating all. Tony talks of his relationship with Veronica thus: Once I went to meet the daughter of Mrs. Sara Ford. She was the mother of Veronica; a lady of bourgeois family. Her husband was a civil servant so he patronized her. Her son scrutinized her activities and her daughter had learnt the art of manipulation. I needed the relationship of Veronica all the time but she was indifferent. She toyed with my heart and loved to betray others. (122) Adrian is another character in the novel who dominates others by his social superiority. He imposes his cultural norms on others, but he is a big hoax. He proudly says: "I hate English people who are not serious about life and art" (33). Veronica comes under his

magical influence and follows what he says. No wonder she breaks up with Tony and develops sexual relations with Adrian. She had been under his influence right from the beginning of the novel, but she betrayed and employed her sexual charms to bewitch Toni. Adrian treats Toni as his rival. Tony's letter in *The Sense of an Ending* exposes everything and unmasks the villainy of each character. Toni suffers because of Veronica's betrayal, but Adrian pays for his villainy and double standard. His victory in love is short, and the pains he has given Toni are immense. Adrian and Veronica enjoy for a brief period, but duplicity and treachery remain only for a short time in life. Veronica, proud of her cultural superiority, suffers at the end of the novel as she fails to achieve permanent domestic happiness. Adrian commits suicide, and she is punished for her betrayal. Tony, Veronica and Adrian are in a struggle to develop human relationships but suffer depression and deflation of self because of their lack of conviction and commitment in life. The novelist has indicated the presence of cultural power used as a surgical means to control not only the social and sexual relationships but also expose the cultural disparity among various sections of society. Barnes has depicted the alienation of his characters thus in poignant language: We muddle along, we let life happen to us; we gradually build up a store of memories. There is the question 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 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. (97) He continues his self-condemnation thus: "Unfortunately, Toni had never seen things clearly; never acted decisively. He disregarded truer values of life and was not very serious about his settlement and life. In the last phase of life, he realised the meaning of happiness and contentment" (97). Barnes tries his best to allow Adrian to enjoy a happy and peaceful life, but he remains in the gutter. He pretends to be Toni's true friend but, in reality, emerges as a snake in the grass. Toni is also given a chance to gain good understanding of life events but he too remains on the surface and never tries to get insight into the characters. All his hopes are dashed into the ground swiftly: "Toni hadn't been Toni; he was not serious about the experiences of life; he didn't bother the opinions of others and had his own way which ultimately led him to

despair" (97). Toni is blind to himself. Veronica calls him a coward. He "doesn't want complications, and he freely admits- at least to himself- to not being much good at discussing this stuff" (37). He is interested in his ideas and prejudices about others and doesn't bother to think critically and review the situations. He says: "When we are young, we invent different future for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different past for others" (88). He reflects on Veronica's character and concludes that she is one of those girls who is ruthless and careless and takes sadistic pleasure in damaging others" (48). He emerges as a lost young man with a poor vision of life. Indeed, it seems life has outplayed him as his smallness is reflected in his actions. Tony contemplates the character development thus: life outstrips him; his smallness undoes him. He contemplates the development of a personality thus: How about the character development? In fiction character development takes a lot of time. I wonder sometimes otherwise there wouldn't be much of a story. What about life? No wonder, the attitudes and opinions and perceptions of an individual change over time. Human beings develop their habits and with the passage of time habits become rigid and each person looks lie a decorated painting which cannot change. Our whims and emotions and new habits begin to dominate us. And in the age of twenty and thirty we become that we are as we stuck in a place where there is no exit. We're on our own. (113) Barnes has employed the narrative technique to depict the impact of old memories of an aged protagonist. Barnes describes the complexities of human relations thus: I don't expect you to hand over Adrian's diary. If you have burnt it, there's an end to it. If you haven't, then obviously, as it was written by the father of your son, it belongs to you. I'm puzzled why your mother left it to me in the first place, but that's no matter. I'm sorry to have been so vexations. You were trying to show me something and I always was too crass to understand. (136) Jan-Erik Ruth and Gary Kenyon elaborated on the significance of old age and its impact on life. Ruth and Kenyon (1996) have expressed the role of memory and its dialectical relationship with old age thus in building human relations: "Many studies in gerontology reveal that ageing is a very crucial process as the health starts deteriorating and regeneration of the life cells is not possible in old age. Humans begin to forget the things in old age often memory is their main source of happiness" (1). Kenyon has explored the impact of the ageing

process on the physical and biological aspects of human beings and their sociocultural importance. He described the understanding of the ageing process: "life is vital to each individual, the people struggle to explore the meaning of old age and the process of decay of organs" (2). Barnes is, of course, seriously interested in memory and its unreliability, a theme explored in many of his novels and perhaps especially vividly in his meditation memoir on aging and the fear of death, Nothing to Be Frightened Of, Barnes says: We lose hold of what happened, who we were, what it was like to be in a particular moment; and we supplement, build narratives from the materials we have to hand, accommodate sudden up welling by neatly assigning predetermined categories. From my casual survey of reviews of *The Sense of an Ending*, it seems that readers have generally taken Barnes to here be working out this same theme in a particularly vivid way. But that is, I think, to take Tony's schoolboy musings about memory and history, his own commentary on how he is unreliable, as we all are (one more feature of his dedication to being unremarkable), too much at face value. (Barnes, Frightened 90) The novel's plot poses a profound challenge to explore human tragedy. Adrian's tragedy is traumatic, and this brings depression in the mind of Tony. He expresses his psychological anguish thus: We muddle along, we let life happen to us; we gradually build up a store of memories. There is the question 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. (Barnes, *Ending* 96–97) He continues, shading into self-recrimination, "Yes indeed, if Tony had seen more clearly, acted more decisively, held to truer moral values, settled less easily for a passive peace which he first called happiness and later contentment" (97). Barnes gives his readers the hope that Tony will be shaken out of his complacency by better understanding the events of his life. But this hope is swiftly dashed: "If Tony hadn't been fearful, hadn't counted on the approval of others for his own self-approval and so on, through a succession of hypothetical leading to the final one: so, for instance, if Tony hadn't been Tony" (97). In the end, Tony's reflection leads him to conclude that certain things may be regretted about how he has led his life. The mental contortions Tony needs to perceive so clearly how his dearly held

values are a self-serving fantasy. However, when we look more closely at his style of reflection in the musings and commentary he offers throughout the novel, these contortions seem perfectly appropriate to him. Tony's problem isn't that he's blind to himself. Take his self-described peace. He recalls how he first came to identify himself this way, in response to Veronica calling him a coward in the conversation that he takes to have signaled the beginning of the end of their relationship. He doesn't want complications, and he admits at least to himself not being "much good at discussing this stuff" (37). This doesn't, however, bother Tony in the slightest. He's not interested in talking to Veronica about "this stuff" because he's not interested in what she thinks or feels. He's much more interested in his own version of what she thinks or feels; most of the time, he can't tell those things apart. As he later says, "When we are young, we invent different futures for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different pasts for others" (88). One of his most savage reflections on Veronica, as being one of "those whose main concern is to avoid further damage to themselves, at whatever cost, ... who are ruthless, and the ones to be careful of" (48), Tony struggles throughout the novel to comprehend the nature of tragedy human beings experience in life. He observes thus in his mood of sullenness: 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; but that's something different, more like decoration. Perhaps character resembles intelligence, except that character peaks a little later: between twenty and thirty, say. And after that, we're just stuck with what we've got. We're on our own. If so, that would explain a lot of lives, wouldn't it? And also if this isn't too grand a word—our tragedy. (113) When Tony and his friends talk about moral development, they talk about children or adolescents. That's the stage at which Tony and his friends used to imagine they were waiting to enter into life, but, as he rightly points out, their "lives had in any case begun" (10). Equally, it seems that Tony's commitment to the thought that he is "not odd enough not to have done the things" he ended up doing is itself a kind of moral commitment, a commitment to life being already over" (71). When Tony receives a letter from a solicitor that the deceased mother of his college girlfriend Veronica left him £500 and two documents,

it does not make much sense to him. Tony starts to re-examine his past; he thinks back about his relationship with Veronica and about his friend Adrian, who started going out with Veronica after Tony and who later committed suicide. He looks back and tries to find the truth about events that happened in the past, not so much to him but to people with whom he was once connected. He tries to find out what exactly happened and how he was personally involved in it. The novel is concerned almost exclusively with memories and what time does to them. The plot of the novel is formally divided into two parts. Part one could be described as before the solicitor's letter, and part two as after the letter. In part one, the reader gets a simple record of Tony's past, sieved through his autobiographical memory. For Tony, there is no evidence to support or disprove the truthfulness of his memories in the book's first part, apart from his reflections on their reliability. Indeed, Tony gives the reliability of his memories many thoughts. Throughout the novel, Tony challenges the exactness of memory, either by his thinking or through the recollections of discussions between his secondary school history teacher, his friend Adrian, and the rest of the class. These discussions about the relationship of past, time and memory are described at the book's beginning, and fragments are a leitmotiv throughout the novel. However, even of these discussions, there is no objective record. As Tony remarks, "Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange" (19). Tony's constant questioning of the truthfulness of his memory makes the reader aware of his unreliability. For example, this tendency can be observed when he reflects on his relationship with his daughter. "I get on well with Susie. However, the younger generation no longer feels the need or even the obligation to keep in touch. Email will do for Dad pity he hasn't learnt to text. They "do hope he doesn't get Alzheimer's; that's my greatest worry, really, because Mum's hardly going to have him back, is she? No: I exaggerate, I misrepresent. Susie doesn't feel like that, I am sure. Susie and I get on fine" (62). When Tony recalls his relationship with Veronica, he remembers how she was denying him sex, how she acted more mature and serious than him and, as time passes, he starts to see her behaviour as a manipulation. With time, Veronica's neutral or bad memories prevail over the good ones. Therefore, when he recalls how after their breakup, they slept together. Then Tony decided to tell

her that their relationship had no future, he remembers himself in the talk as being quite cynical. He is persuaded that he was the victim of Veronica's calculating behaviour and that it gave him the right to be sarcastic and nasty during their second breakup. As he says at the beginning of this chapter: "After we broke up [meaning their first breakup], she slept with me. Yes, I know, I expect you' rethinking: The poor sap, how he not saw that coming?" (36). Tony's memories from secondary school constitute the plot of the novel's first part to the present, and most of its story takes place in the distant past. The plot of the second part is about events that happened in Tony's present or near past, which make Tony re-examine his memories described in the first part of the novel. When Tony learns that he inherited the money and Adrian's diary from Veronica's mother, Tony's view of his past is challenged only by his own thoughts about (un)reliability of memory. He does not have any other sources of information about his past than his memories - no tangible records, and with people who could remember the same events as him, he is either no longer in contact or they are dead. The novel also deals with the unreliability of memory and its relation with the past. The novel suggests a deviation from any typical viewpoint as seen in the novel in the case of personal relationships. The characters settle their issues with each other despite being betrayed not by a relationship with a person but by one's misjudgment of the status quo. Barnes's next novel, *The Only Story*, is a small and grim novel about an older man reflecting on his life with a sense of pain at the relationship in his youth. There are three critical sections in the novel. All the sections deal with the connection of the self with the other. The story offers an insight into the young love, memory bias, the author's relating of the past, his commitments and his blinding by love, and his thought-provoking story. Lagretta Talent Lenker and Sarah Munson Deats (1999) further explore the dialectical relationship of Self with the Other. It is significant to understand and to explore the depth of the aging process to understand the challenges and intricacies of human relations. Old age is as significant as the young age as "in old age the real awareness dawns on individual; he understand the real meaning of life and truth since he acquires intellectual acumen to judge other people. Experience teaches him to understand the perceptions of other individuals in a given society" (Lenker and Deats 19). Lenker contends that "Art,

literature, and media are the main important ways to comprehend the conventions of society. These help an individual to lead a better life" (19). "Literature, the arts, and the media not only mirror society's conventions, but also create them" (19). Hepworth (2000) observes that the novels of Barnes deal with the aging problems of the postmodern people because "it gives them power and potential through imagination to explore the inherent ambiguities of life" (Hepworth 4). Gerben J. comes to the conclusion that narratives are used "to achieve unity and to impart real knowledge to the people of manifold experiences of the characters who struggle and suffer. Each novel is a moral teacher and these accumulated experiences help an individual in the old age" (Gerben 56). Tony Webster, of Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), is in a changed mood when he is gifted 500 pounds from Veronica. *The Sense of an Ending* reveals the tale of a retired person who has lived life. Tony Webster reviews his present situation thus: I'm retired now. I have my flat with my possessions. I keep up with a few drinking pals, and have some women friends-platonic, of course. I'm a member of the local history society, though less excited some about what metal detectors unearth. A while ago, I volunteered to run the library at the local hospital; I go round the ward delivering, collecting, recommending. It gets me out, and if it's good to do something useful; also, I meet some new people. Sick people, of course; dying people as well. But at least I shall know my way around the hospital when my turn comes. (Barnes, *Ending* 56) The plot revolves around four teenagers: Tony Webster, Alex, Colin, and Adrian Finn. Barnes has depicted the postmodern themes of life and loss, love and lust and hopes and frustrations of the young school-going boys. Barnes talks about the entry of Tony's thus; "Adrian was a tall and shy young boy, a new boy who very soon joined our group by his cleverness" (2). All these school boys explore the mysteries of Life and Truth. Barnes's main argument is based on the social theory that when human beings get freedom from mental stress, they can only enjoy the real happiness of life. All four characters belong to different sections of society and have different perceptions about life. Tony is reserved but an intellectual. He is far away from the world of reality as he lives in the dreamy world. His friend Adrian Finn had a terrible life. His mother left the family when he was a small child. On the other hand, Veronica grows in the company

of her father and sister. Adrian is under the spell of the teachings of Camus, who is nihilistic and pessimistic. Adrian quotes Camus: "Suicide is the only true philosophical question" (13). No wonder Adrian commits suicide in the novel. All these friends lead a different life; Adrian goes to Cambridge on scholarship, Tony is to Bristol, and Colin goes to Sussex. Alex is the son of a successful businessman. He joins his father and is lost in the world of earning pounds. Tony has multiple experiences in his eventful life. He tells his friends the tales of his relationships with women, the tragic story of their break-ups, marriages and divorces. His experiences are harrowing, and he introduces his girlfriend Veronica, whose father is "heavy-footed, heavy-handed". He talks of the brother of Veronica and calls him a self-appointed judge. He always dominates Veronica and her mother. Toni was impressed by Veronica's aesthetic tastes and exciting personality. He observes thus: "I saw her looking at me with her one eyebrow raised above from the glasses. I was five months younger than her, and it seemed she was five years older than me" (21). The beauty and charm of Veronica greatly impacts Toni as he describes her profile thus: "She had high forehead and looked beautiful with her ribbon tied in the hair. She had a broader face and had more than an average height. She looked like a colonial girl with her artistic disposition and humming opera arias" (24). Toni fell in love with Veronica, who also responded to his passion. Toni narrates the scene of his first love meeting with Veronica thus: Veronica and I continued going out together, all through our second year. One evening, perhaps a little drunk, she let me put my hand down her knickers. I felt extravagant pride as I scuffled around. She wouldn't let me put my finger inside her, but worldlessly, over the next days, we developed a way to pleasure. We would be on floor, kissing, wanted take off my watch, roll up down her thighs a little, then I would place my hand flat on the floor, and she rub herself against my trapped wrist until she came. For a few weeks this made me feel masterful, but back in my room my wanking was sometimes edged with resentment. (27) Veronica allowed her sexual liberty, and very soon, they had been very thick partners. Toni felt guilty, but Veronica called it "a relationship" The following conversation describes the love relationship between Veronica and Toni: "Bastard! She said, the next time we met" "Yes, well, there it is" "That practically makes it rape" ' "I don't think

anything at all makes it that" "Well, you might have had the decency to tell me beforehand" "I didn't know beforehand" "Oh so it was that bad?" "No, it was good, It's just… "Just what?" (29) His accurate tale begins when he tells how Veronica gets involved in Adrian. The first shock of life was inflicted on Toni when he got information about Veronica's break- up. He expresses his agony by exposing Adrian's villainy. Veronica Adrian's relationship was based on fraud and treachery; they conspired to betray Tony, and nature punished them. Adrian was not a worldly-wise person since he was philosophical and a dilemma: "He was a failure in spite of his academic success" (32). He received a letter about the relationship, and the tables turned when he was informed that she had deserted him. During these days, Toni came in contact with an American girl, Annie. They spent three months together enjoying the furtive moments of love and romance. Annie is an American girl encountered when I was on a holiday trip in America. She was a traveler like me and we soon hooked up. We spent three months together and were in living relationship. She had green eyes and wore plaid shirts and looked gorgeous on that day. I was lucky indeed to have her as my companion and to find her my bed companion. We laughed and enjoyed the holidays; drinking and smoking together a little dope together and to see the American world with passionate enthusiasm. (36) This relationship has no recrimination or blame because there is mutual consent. In the meantime, his mother fell ill, and he was forced to return home. Here, he receives a letter from Veronica revealing to him about the suicide of Adrian. He feels shattered and observes thus in desperation: Life is a natural gift and it falls on man spontaneously. An individual has the moral responsibility to consider the value of gift but Adrian couldn't understand the value of life since he lost it by committing suicide to escape and overcome the guilty consciousness, it is a moral and human duty to act on the consequences of that decision. (48) After a year, Toni, Collin, and Alex meet again. Toni tells his friends about his marriage with Margaret and the breakup, which frustrated him. He shocks them by saying that Margaret betrayed him by marrying one of his friends. She wants a different life, being modern and fashionable. He starts serving patients after his retirement to get peace of mind. His real awareness of life comes in the novel's second section when he contemplates and discovers the real

meaning of life. He says: "It is more about accepting the importance and power of Time; time first grounds us and then confounds us" (93). Tony finds comfort and psychological rest by getting engaged with younger people in old age. He learns new emotions and explores the absolute truth of life and the secret of real happiness. He leads a settled life when he gets a letter from a solicitor announcing him as the inheritor of Mrs. Ford's estate worth 500 pounds. The letter leads to the loss of moral and spiritual happiness. Tony narrates the harrowing experiences of life. His journey of life had been full of trials and tribulations. He tells them of his multiple sex relations, of marriage with Margaret and Susie's birth, and the eventual divorce that shattered him. He has suppressed memories of Veronica and remained restless for forty years as her memories haunted him day and night. Tony recollects thus: I thought I could overcome contempt and turn remorse back into guilt, then be forgiven. I had been tempted, somehow, by the notion that we could excise most of our separate existences, could cut and splice the magnetic tape on which our lives are recorded, go back to that fork in the path and take the road less travelled, or rather not travelled at all. Instead, I had just left commonsense behind. Old fool, I said to myself..no I was an odder old fool, grafting pathetic hopes of affection on to the least likely recipient in the world. (131) Toni is a changed man in his old age. His daughter Susie is busy, and in this period, Margaret and Veronica have left his life. He is lonely but tries to find life's real meaning in his old age. Tony spends most of his time in malls and pubs, meeting with the youth and comparing their lifestyle with his life when he was young and energetic. He thinks of "Adrian who betrayed him taking away Veronica not for love but for sexual pleasures. He impregnated her and ruined her" (140). He is reminded of Robins; suicide also in his mood of despair and remorse. He concludes that the fate of Adrian and Robinson were the same; both were cowards as they ended their lives so quickly to escape from guilty consciousness. He prays for Adrian and Veronica and Robinson's girlfriend and child. Many revelations in old age proved cathartic as he realised that Time controls all the activities of human beings. Man is a puppet in the hands of Time and Fate. Tony feels guilty, and his mind is stuffed with remorse for Veronica and her son. He feels sympathy for Robson's girlfriend and her child. These many revelations explore the fundamental

understanding of human life. He realises that man is nothing in this universe and only Time is powerful: We live in time-it holds us and moulds us…Is there anything more plausible than a second hand? And yet 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) His guilt is intensified when he thinks about Veronica's children. Barnes has depicted the despair and genuine emotions of a young boy who attains old age and is forced to revive his harrowing past. The novel has a touching message for the readers: Life is very subtle; we accumulate; we grow responsible, and eventually there is unrest in life" (150). Adrian killed himself to overcome the guilt, and Veronica died, leaving a young daughter and a disabled son. Tony comments thus in his exploration of truth: The fact that the young me who cursed Veronica and the old me who witnessed the curse's outcome had quite different feelings-this was monstrously irrelevant…Time's revenge on the innocent foetus. I thought of that poor, damaged man…avoiding my presence. I was a man against whom backs should be turned. If life did reward merit, then I deserved shunning. (39) Tony divorced Margaret, and this intensified his alienation. He felt guilty as all women in his life separated from him. It was a moral and emotional setback for him. Toni describes his alienation thus: Custody of Susie was shared. I never applied to her my theory of damage. After the divorce, I had a few affairs, but nothing serious. I would always tell Margaret about any new girlfriend. At the time, it seemed a natural thing to do. Now, I sometimes wonder if it was an attempt to make her jealous; or perhaps, as an act of self-protection, a way of preventing the new relationship from becoming too serious. Also in my more emptied life, I came up with various ideas I termed projects. (34) Toni's life changed when he met Margaret. He says: I left home and on that day I met Margaret and fell in love with her. I was only a trainee in arts administration at that time. We married and after three years Margaret give birth to Susie. We bought a small house and shifted in the new house. (38) Toni is a retired person who recollects the old days when he spent time with friends and girlfriends. He married Margaret, who gave birth to Susie. Toni expresses his vision of life thus: Also, when you are young, you think you can predict the likely pains and bleakness that age might bring.

You imagine yourself being lonely, divorced, widowed, widowed, children growing away from you, friends dying. You imagine the loss of status, the loss of desire-and desirability. You may go further and consider your own approaching death, which, despite what company you may muster, can only be faced alone. But all this is looking ahead. What you fail to do is look ahead, and then imagine yourself looking back from that future present. Learning the new emotions looking back from that future point. Learning the new emotions that brings. (65) Toni Webster is the main hero who narrates the specific episode that brought metamorphosis in his life. He contemplates the role of illusive memory beyond the reach of human beings and quite powerful in building and reconstructing human relations. Memory is revisited with a sense of remorse and guilt. Daniel L. Schacter (2001) has made intensive research on the role of memory and the ageing life and the impact of memory on human beings. He observes thus: "Sometimes we often forget the past, but these memories haunt us day and night. We have to depend upon these memories as they help to solve the daily problems of life and guide us in routine life" (Schacter 1). He further avers that "memory plays vital role in the life of an individual. In daily lives memory haunts us and we cannot escape their impact. Indeed, memory has a pervasive power on our life and activities" (1). The memory of the characters decides all human relations. Schacter comments thus: "Human beings rely on life experiences as they make them wiser and confident. The experiences of the past guide them as they are stored in the brain. Often we bias our memories by attributing them emotional color" (9). Webster continues living his retired life, forgetting either Veronica or Adrian. But he gets the news of the suicide of his old friend Adrian one day. He feels psychologically disturbed and never bothered to know the cause of the suicide of his friend thoughtfully. The first part of the novel describes these crucial episodes of Webster's life. Webster experiences the deceptive nature of memory and its impact on the life of human beings. Veronica had maintained this diary. Webster comes to know that Veronica and Adrian developed a relationship after he had deserted Veronica. Webster is mentally disturbed to know about the hidden facts of his old life and the mystery of Veronica and Adrian's relationship. He says: At first I thought mainly me, and how-what-I'd been: chippy, jealous and malign; also about my attempt to

undermine their relationship. At least I'd failed in this, since Veronica's mother had assured me the last months of Adrian's life has been happy. Not that this let me off the hook. 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'd been going on about how the witness to our lives decrease and with them our essential corroboration" (Barnes, *Ending* 98). His indifference is the leading cause of separation and break off with Veronica. Barnes explores the role of Self and its relationship with the "Other" in this part of the novel. In Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture, Jens Brockmeier (2001) talks of the formation of identity in society: "Through narration live of a man reconstructed and identity is moulded and man emerges as cultural beings" (2). At sixty-five, Webster realises that memory is integral to man's life.

Adrian followed a different path different from his life, and he established a sexual relationship with Veronica. Adrian's diary revealed new life facts, bringing drastic change in Webster's perspective. He feels remorse, gets some information from Veronica, and decides to follow her. She gave birth to a disabled and abnormal baby. Tony Webster concludes that both Veronica and Adrian suffered because they sinned moral transgression: As he puts it: I think-theories-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. I press a button marked Adrian and Veronica, the tape runs, the usual stuff spools out. But what if, ever at a late stage, our emotions relating to those long-ago events and people change? That ugly letter of mine provoked remorse in me. Then, not long afterwards, I began remembering forgotten things I don't know if there's a scientific explanation for this-to do with new affective states reopening blocked-off neutral pathways. All I can say that it happened and that it astonished me. (120) Tony Webster imagines that his old age is approaching, and in old age, he would suffer the decay of multiple organs. Old age is a period of quiet life. Still, he would experience the emotional tranquility of his past life: "In old age you expect rest in life and I believe you deserve it, Don't you? I did of course. But then you begin to understand the reality of old age and the force of memories that haunt

you" (259). Webster gets new awareness about life and truth and feels that his life is a long tale of guilt and remorse that gripped his psyche: "What you fail to do is to call back the old actions of your life, and then you are forced to review your actions and this activity gives you new awareness. You experience the force of new emotions which play a great role in your future" (59). Webster's life journey is complete, and the wheel of life has its full circle as he explores the mystery of human relations. For the first time, Webster understands the force of the reality of the facts. His guilty consciousness surfaces in his old age when he recollects his past. Webster says: You are ate end of life, no., life itself has not ended but your activities have closed down. There is visible change in your life and a pause is bound to happen in your life; this is a period when you can ask questions and review what you have done in the past. You can think of what wrong you have done in the past. Life brings an accumulation, a responsibility and beyond these there is unrest in life. The great unrest. (150) Gerben J. Westerh observes thus: "In old age man analyzes the healing role of his life and the narrator of the novel the protagonist goes on reviewing the activities of his life. His life's narrative is reconsidered and reconstructed in the light of new changes" (Westerh 23). Julian Barnes explores Webster's journey, which begins in youth and ends in old age. He gets a real awareness of life. Barnes also explores the meaning and role of memories in man's life. He manages the memories in life's journey even in old age. Tony Webster realises that: At the age of twenty in life man is often confused and uncertain in his activities. Man has a strong sense of life itself and he is able to consider the very nature of life. But later in old age there is a sense of uncertainty and life looks challenging. In the old age memory plays vital role as it becomes a thing of shreds and patches. (Barnes, *Ending* 105) To conclude, introspection is a prominent theme of the novel as Webster develops an analytical attitude in his old age to explore the consequences of the deeds of his youth. The plot explores the significance of man's behaviour and the meaning of self-reflexivity or self-introspection. Webster's internal exploration is the main focus of the novel. He accumulates life experiences and gets real awareness in this novel section. Briefly stated, Barnes has depicted the intricacies and complexities of human relationships in his novels relying on postmodern theories. Barnes concludes with the following

observation on life, love and sex thus: One day, I said to the barman "Do you think you could do me thin chips for a change? How do you mean? You know, like in France-the thin ones" "No, we don't do them" "But it says in the menu your chips are hand cut" "Yes" "Well, Can't you cut them thinner?" The barman's normal affableness took a pause. He looked at me as if he wasn't sure whether I was a pedant or an idiot, or quite possibly both. (137) Tony Webster realised that he was old when he turned sixty-six. He had experienced everything in life; he had explored the mystery of human relations and found the real cause of human suffering and the need to understand the real meaning of life and truth.

Chapter III

Quest for Identity and Communicative Tendencies in *The Noise of Time* and *The Only Story*

Julian Barnes stands as a postmodernist who seeks inspiration from Frederic Jameson's postmodern strategies, positioning himself within a literary tradition where writers like Kafka depicted worlds of chaos and disorder, while Nabokov and Pynchon employed postmodern strategies to project the isolated self. Building upon this foundation, Barnes employs cultural symbols to depict the disintegration of the Self of his characters, contributing to what many critics have identified as the dissolution of individual identity in contemporary literature.

The concept of identity serves multiple roles in the lives of Barnes' characters, requiring a comprehensive understanding of its fundamental nature. Marcia (1994) establishes that "identity reflects the coherent aspect of man's personality in the social context. Identity of a man depends upon the continuity of his past and upon a meaningful present and a clear direction about his future" (70-71). This definition, rooted in developmental psychology, provides the foundation for understanding how Barnes's characters struggle with fragmented selves in an increasingly disconnected world


Figure 3.1: Aspects of Spiritual Bankruptcy

This chapter examines and investigates the novels of Julian Barnes through the interconnected theories of dissolution of Self, drawing primarily from Erik Erikson's seminal work on identity crisis and David Laing's exploration in The Divided Self (1960). These theoretical frameworks work in conjunction to illuminate the complex process of identity fragmentation that Barnes depicts in his fiction. Laing's investigation into the nature of deflation of self demonstrates a deep understanding of how dissolution occurs in the postmodern world, particularly as rapid advances in science and technology create unprecedented psychological pressures.

Modern individuals face constant stress across all spheres of existence—at home, in the office, and in social interactions—leading to a fundamental transformation in how the self is conceived and maintained. The evolving concept of self reflects new ideas and theories that challenge traditional notions of stable identity. As Spengler observed, civilization appears to be approaching destruction, a theme that resonates throughout Barnes's work. This cultural anxiety finds further expression in John Lifton's The Protean Self (1993), which discusses the fluid nature of identity formation in contemporary society.

Lifton's analysis reveals how emotions have become fluid and floating within social currents, leading to transformed conventions and new stages of identity formation. He observes this evolutionary process: "Identity formation process is very subtle as we become fluid with the passage of time. We are in the evolution process when self is restless and many sided. The flux of time brings drastic changes in the identity formation process. The mode of identity differs from the past as we are engaged continuously in exploration and personal environment" (Lifton 1). This fluidity becomes central to understanding how Barnes's characters navigate their increasingly unstable identities.

The social theories underpinning identity loss reflect how individuals in the postmodern world face constant threats, including the specter of nuclear holocaust. The impact of war and the Jewish Holocaust fundamentally altered philosophical perspectives on life, death, and selfhood, rendering traditional religious and spiritual frameworks seemingly irrelevant. Consequently, values such as love, happiness, and

affection appear outdated as they often lead to pain and psychological anguish rather than fulfillment.

The majority of contemporary individuals become victims of trauma, suffering from anxiety and depression while existing without consistent relationships. This displacement and disruption of cultural values that once supported human civilization has created a psychological wasteland where Socrates' ancient wisdom to "Know then thyself" becomes meaningless. In postmodern English society, individuals suffer psychological oppression and psychic disorders, manifesting aggressive, angry, and skeptical behavior patterns. This loss of self represents a disintegration of the mind resulting from overwhelming psychic pressures, trapping human life within internal and external conflicts.

Lifton further elaborates on this condition: "We change ideas and partners frequently, and do the same with jobs and places and residence. Enduring moral convictions, clear principles of action and behaviour, we believe this must exist, but where? Whether dealing with world problems or child rearing, our behaviour tends to be ad hoc, more or less decided upon as we go along. We are beset by a contradiction; school led in the virtues of constancy and stability-whether as individuals, groups, or nation-our world and our lives seem inconstant and utterly unpredictable" (1). This observation perfectly captures the psychological landscape that Barnes explores through his characters.

Building upon this foundation, Michael Lacan's seminal work Mirror Stage (1949) provides additional insight into the theory of self-investigation, examining the causes and symptoms of identity deflation. Lacan argues that psychic pressures, tensions, and anxieties wreck human sensibility in ways that, unlike physical wounds, remain incurable. This psychological damage becomes a recurring theme in Barnes's fiction, where characters struggle with wounds that cannot heal.

Eric Fromm's Escape from Freedom (1941) contributes another crucial perspective by investigating how human freedom relates to personality development. Fromm's argument that degeneration of self results from the loss of freedom provides a framework for understanding how Barnes's characters become victims of psychological ailments and multiple psychic pressures. When individuals cannot think

original thoughts or maintain mental stability, their sensibility becomes corrupted, preventing them from forging stable identities within society.

The historical evolution of these psychological pressures can be traced through various cultural and intellectual movements. Laing identifies how "historical influences contributing to the protean self can be traced back to the Enlightenment and even the Renaissance in the west, and to at least the Meiji Restoration of the nineteenth century in Japan. These influences include the dislocations of rapid historical change, the mass media revolution, and the threat of human extinction" (Laing 3). These broad historical forces create the context within which Barnes's characters must navigate their psychological crises.

Supporting evidence for these theoretical frameworks appears throughout cultural and literary history. Malcolm X declared, "My whole life has been a chronology of changes" (qtd. in Haley 358), while Samuel Beckett discussed his "ambiguous multiplicity" (Beckett 10). These testimonies demonstrate how the dissolution of self has become a recognized cultural phenomenon rather than merely a literary device.

In his detailed analysis of History and the Self, Lifton discusses the evolutionary trajectories of identity deflation, arguing that "the potential for dissolution is, then, inherent in certain fundamental characteristics of the evolution of the human mind: the knowledge that we die, which is crucial to a sense of self" (Lifton 14). This existential awareness creates the foundation for the psychological fragmentation that Barnes explores through his characterizations.

Carl Jung's contribution to understanding multiple selves adds another layer to this theoretical framework. Jung recognized "the idea of self, recognising that it could contain many sub-selves and seeing in it a transcendent function that enabled it to bring together elements at variance with one another in conjoined opposites" (Laing 25). This multiplicity of identity becomes particularly relevant when examining how Barnes's characters contain contradictory aspects that cannot be reconciled.

Jacques Lacan's perspective on the elusive nature of the Self provides additional insight into identity instability. Lacan observes, "I can come into being and disappear from what I say" (Lacan 26), suggesting that for him, "I" and self are

77

essentially forms of illusions" (26). This theoretical position illuminates how Barnes constructs characters whose sense of self proves fundamentally unstable and dependent on external circumstances.

Susanne K. Langer (1951) contributes to this theoretical foundation by noting how "the great dreams of mankind, like the dream of every individual man, are protean, vague, inconsistent, and so embarrassed with the riches of symbolic conception that every fantasy is apt to have a hundred versions" (Langer 48). Langer's additional argument that the "Self becomes an engine of growth in the society as an individual comes in contact with various people and gets new awareness and accumulates his experiences" (28) provides insight into how identity formation occurs through social interaction rather than individual development.

Ralph Ellison's discussion of the Protean Self describes it "as standing for both America's rich diversity and its almost magical fluidity and freedom, and for our distorted realities and illusion which must be challenged" (Ellison 33). This characterization captures the dual nature of fluid identity as both liberating and problematic, a tension that Barnes explores throughout his fiction.

James Joyce's literary innovations provide a model for depicting this psychological complexity. In his novels, Joyce charted an endless "cultural chain of encounters, oppositions, contradictions, and visions to constitute the world with which contemporary man must deal" (Joyce 72). This approach to representing consciousness influences Barnes's technique for portraying characters caught between conflicting psychological forces.

These theoretical foundations establish that the self functions as an integral part of human existence that continuously grows as individuals accumulate new experiences through social encounters. However, this growth process also creates instability, as identity becomes increasingly fluid and subject to disintegration under pressure.

Erik Erikson emerges as the most significant theorist for understanding Barnes's approach to identity crisis. As a German-American psychoanalyst and psychologist, Erikson gained widespread recognition for his theory of psychological development, coining the crucial term "identity crisis." Despite his incomplete formal

education, Erikson worked at prestigious institutions including the University of California, Harvard, and Yale, developing concepts that prove essential for analyzing Barnes's fiction.

Erikson's research demonstrates that individuals must learn to manage specific life stages characterized by particular tensions and challenges. His theories focus on psychological struggles that determine different aspects of personality and identity formation. His worldwide fame in the 1970s resulted from identifying the "identity crisis" phenomenon, while his association with "psychobiography" (though he did not originate the term) contributed to understanding how personal history affects psychological development.

Most significantly, Erikson's concept of the malleable ego represents a departure from conventional theories suggesting that ego is determined solely by external forces. Instead, Erikson proposed that psychoanalysis should help individuals understand life's normal vicissitudes. He recognized that his patients, while bewildered and disturbed, were not mentally challenged but rather normal individuals facing normal crises while readjusting to postwar society. This perspective proves crucial for understanding Barnes's characters, who similarly face normal psychological challenges rather than clinical disorders.

Erikson (1968) investigates personality formation through "psycho-social relativity," which creates feelings of stability through the interaction of historical and sociological forces. His support for understanding the dissolution of Self process appears in his observation: "It is not possible to separate personal growth from the communal change and at the same time we cannot separate the identity crisis in individual from the contemporary life. The historical forces are always at play and the in historical development because impact both the personal life and the social life" (Erikson 33).

This theoretical framework explains how identity formation occurs through predetermined stages, with successful completion of each situation enabling new beginnings that result in healthier personalities. Applied to Barnes's novels, Erikson's theory provides tools for conducting psychoanalytical analysis that focuses on psychosocial conduct rather than psychosexual development. Each stage in Erikson's

theory relates to becoming capable and adjustable in every area of life, with successful navigation of challenges producing feelings of triumph.

Barnes's novels depict the multidimensional phases of character identity that reflect Erikson's developmental stages. Erikson's research into identity's fluid nature reveals three major factors contributing to this fluidity: "identity is a fluid construct as many political, social and historical forces impact the life of man when he struggles in society and comes in contact with various people. The 'I' represented is the agent that creates identity systematically" (33). This systematic creation of identity becomes central to understanding how Barnes's characters construct and lose their sense of self.

Erikson's argument that identity functions as a social construct, actively framed by socio-political forces, explains how individual identity results from social and political influences. Holland expands this concept, noting that "Identity is multidimensional and is constantly changing because of the emergence of new social and political laws. Human life is not always the same as new changes come and bring drastic changes in the opinions and perceptions of people" (Holland 34).

This multidimensional quality creates identity that falls into plurality, lacking any fixed pattern or framework for personality formation. The changeable and inconstant nature of identity makes fluidity an inescapable feature, where the ability to change becomes synonymous with dissolution of self. The etymological connection between fluidity and the Latin word "fluo" (meaning to flow) emphasizes the fundamentally changing, flexible, and fluctuating nature of fluid personality.

In the contemporary age of fragmentation and flux, Erik Erikson's investigation of fluid personality finds support in Laing's analysis of how internal psychological structures create fluid selves. Laing defines fluid personality through his observation that "the evolutionary forces give birth to new identity as people get an opportunity to reestablish and reassert in the wake of new changes operating in the society" (Laing 76). His concept of "Modus Vivendi" acknowledges that modifications and changes prove both desirable and essential for societal growth, with multiple natures helping human beings survive by integrating social conventions, identity patterns, and multiple social roles.

The mobility characteristic of postmodern society directly contributes to self-dissolution. Separation from family, community, and society creates the conditions for identity fragmentation, as the postmodern concept of identity differs fundamentally from fundamentalism. Laing contends that "fundamentalism doesn't adjust with these postmodern norms. The fundamental Self is constricted, closed down; obsessed that is holding self and all" (160). This departure from past patterns of self-formation creates new challenges for maintaining psychological coherence.

Building on Freudian concepts, the analysis reveals how individuals seek elusive stability and happiness while remaining under constant psychic pressure. In routine life, people become aggressive, inconstant, angry, and driven by sexual desires, with all these factors contributing to self-dissolution. This dissolution functions as a continuous process influenced by multiple socio-political forces that provide fluidity and mobility, forcing individuals to change in order to conform to external pressures.

Erikson's observation that fluid personality represents reality in the postmodern world leads to his argument that humans possess polymorphous personalities with multiple disguises and faces. Erikson provides "the image of a chameleon who can adapt in any situation and environment. The essential characteristic of a man's character is his elusiveness" (Erikson 51). This adaptability, while potentially beneficial, also creates the conditions for identity loss.

Laing's concept of fluid Self relies on progressiveness and material growth, creating problems when individuals pursue material happiness at the expense of connection with traditional values. When materialism advances, spiritualism automatically declines, leading to moral and spiritual degradation that introduces vice into human life. At this stage, individuals lose self-control and begin behaving like animals, becoming aggressive and angry as their selves disintegrate.

The transformation of living styles, including changing gender roles, creates what appears fashionable and modern but actually leads to identity fluidity. Women with fluid selves may avoid motherhood and frequently change partners, while men similarly struggle with consistent relationship patterns. Laing's argument centers on

how people fail to confront life's new challenges and existential realities, with personality determined by external and social forces operating in society.

When individuals become victims of internal and external disorder, this process continues indefinitely, filling life with bewilderment within a disturbed society. Real identity becomes lost, forcing people to live with fractured identities. Laing observes: "Then the identity of persons living in postmodern age has the identity of persons living in post modern age has turned incognito. Operated by complicated and combined powers, a self is broken down into common characteristics. The collaborative reduced the postmodern identity of person as fragmented, fluid and assorted" (Laing 89).

The literary tradition of depicting fluid selves appears in the work of postmodern novelist John Barth, whose characters struggle with identity instability. His novels The Floating Opera (1956), The End of the Road, The Sot-Weed Factor (1960), Giles Great Boy (1966), and Chimera (1972) depict characters who exist as borderline selves. Barnes follows this tradition established by Barth, depicting characters in his fiction who suffer from life's emptiness and struggle with traditional concepts of characterization.

Both Barth and Thomas Pynchon rejected conventional characterization, instead depicting characters with fluid selves who prove too fragile to confront human existence's realities. Scott Sanders, in The Disappearance of Character, observes: "Formation of the fluid personality is a natural process in the postmodern world. The creation of characters in the science fiction is sensational; the plots are non-linear and the characters living with void" (Sanders 23). This observation provides context for understanding Barnes's approach to character development.

David Laing's argument that the self functions as a symbol of the organism reveals how contemporary identity lacks solidity and stability. Self is not a permanent characteristic individuals receive at birth but rather a symbol of organic growth that declines and disintegrates through "the process of thought reform," eventually leading to identity fluidity. This process transforms feelings and beliefs, sacrificing values in relationships with spouses, friends, and relatives.

The continuous process of identity shuffling creates constant change, as Laing observes: "The role of our civilization is repressive; it stifles the instincts and passions of man and denies him even the transcendence. Man has to struggle alone and has to confront alone while living in the society. He has to bear the forces of change that change and modify his personality. He runs the risk of being destroyed and often is subjected to harsh realities" (Laing 13). This struggle becomes central to understanding Barnes's character development.

Barnes's characters confront daily uncertainties and obstacles that lead to self-disintegration. They discard traditional values, relying on falsehood and duplicity to survive and flourish in society. Characters like Tony Webster and Adrian from *The Sense of an Ending*, and Adrian and Veronica from the same novel, exemplify this category of people who engage in morally questionable behavior. Adrian's betrayal of his best friend Tony through developing sexual relations with Tony's girlfriend Veronica reveals their ideological flexibility and underlying drives of greed, lust, and sexuality.

Veronica's betrayal of her friend Tony through sexual intimacy with Adrian creates guilt and shame, leading to multiple psychological ailments and eventual disintegration. Adrian's suicide in his prime, after impregnating Veronica, demonstrates the heavy price paid for moral transgression. These examples establish the pattern of psychological consequences that Barnes explores throughout his fiction.

Laing argues that fluid self results from psychological forces, making Barnes's characters displaced people whose displacement results in self-dissolution. Laing observes: "The fluid Self is changeable and is subjected to social and historical forces. A man with fluid self is a dislocated and displaced person as he is disconnected with the society and suffers alienation and trauma. The culture, family, religion are systems that bring transformation in his self" (Laing 14). This transformation process creates the psychological landscape within which Barnes's characters must operate.

Barnes depicts shifter characters who change places and suffer alienation within the conspicuously changing and uncertain British society of the postmodern period. England's progression creates a society where "men and women begin their journey without knowing where they are heading; they start at one place and end in

other place without knowing why and where they are heading" (26). The experimental nature of 1960s and 1970s England, combined with tremendous advances in science and technology, created mechanical lifestyles that moved people away from family, religion, and traditional conventions.

This social transformation encouraged people to develop new relationships and shift to new employment while searching for alternative lifestyles. British writers such as Yeats and James Joyce depicted British self-exploration and self-change in their fiction, establishing the literary context for Barnes's work. The postmodern period of British society became remarkable for change and the spread of perplexity, making it difficult for people to live steadily and unchanged under challenging circumstances.

The relationship between Self and Other becomes central to this chapter's investigation, as this relationship leads to character disintegration in Barnes's fiction. Relationship processes occur within individual minds, where people hold both distinct personal views of relationships and shared perspectives. The analysis of individual and collective identity quests relies on psychological theories developed by William W. Wilmot (1995), who argues that important human relationships determine Self organization, with culture and relationships playing vital roles in human life.

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) argued that personal self develops through definite social identity, making self-development a product of social interaction rather than individual formation. This social construction of identity formation receives support from Schechtman (2011), who argues that self-development results from narrative outcomes. Communication plays a vital role in determining personal identity, as "the binary of self is a reality and human consciousness and identity of individuals are determined by the growth of self. The concept individualism and Collectivism play vital role in developing Self" (Schechtman 90).

Cultural variation impacts individual behavior and communication, though each person's behavior cannot be expected to follow culture-level variations within given social settings. Studies by William Gudykust and Young Kim (1992) in countries including the United States and Japan noted that "In England people have both individual tendencies and collectivistic tendencies" (Gudykust and Kim 55).

Therefore, Self and identity develop continuously as boundaries between themselves and others undergo negotiation.

David Laing explores fluid identity phases by connecting them to mind and body relationships: "The phases of fluid are associated with mind and the body. The self is subjected to many forces and in the process of disintegration continues. The operation of ego and superego and the id often clash and these conflicts bring fluidity. The internal and external pressures decide the identity formation in a society. An individual has to be very strong in confronting the negative forces and has to adapt to the changing environment" (21). This psychological framework provides the foundation for analyzing specific novels.

The individualistic and collectivistic identity quest finds expression in Barnes's novels *The Noise of Time* and *The Only Story*. Both novels feature characters who realize that their identities and personalities undergo significant changes while dealing with society and their personal associations. These novels examine characters facing relationship intricacies while interacting with others and society, though their interactions and experiences help them realize deeper meanings of existence.

Characters undergo both traumatic and pleasant experiences in relationships with others, with such experiences helping them become aware of their individualistic and collective identities and social positions as social beings. This awareness process becomes central to understanding how Barnes constructs character development throughout both novels.

The Noise of Time focuses on art's relationship with power, symbolized by Stalin and Communist bureaucracy. Barnes's novel mediates how character and integrity develop through relationships with power and self-understanding. While Shostakovich appears to compromise with power, he maintains faithfulness to himself, creating an elegant study of shame and cowardice that depicts surrender on the character's own terms.

Barnes has established himself as one of contemporary England's most powerful and leading writers, composing various literary forms that reflect different aspects of human nature. His novels offer meditation on life and behavior patterns of

people living in association with others, exploring concepts of love, truth, friendship, obsession, sexual fidelity, adultery, and human life through his fiction.

Dmitri Shostakovich's life and struggles provide the main focus for Barnes in *The Noise of Time* (2016). Dmitri Shostakovich appears as a music lover passionately committed to art and life, functioning as a reputed Russian composer highly trusted by people. Barnes's novel focuses on a real-life Russian composer fortunate to survive, chronicling turbulent periods of his life while seeking to avoid despotic forces, efforts that bring alienation and traumatic experiences.

Barnes depicts two crucial periods of Dmitri's life: New York City in 1948 and Russia in the 1960s. The novel's most compelling aspect involves Dmitri's struggle against ruthless forces of despotism, violence, and oppression. Dmitri experiences identity loss while struggling to maintain identity within Russia's oppressive society ruled by despotic leaders. Barnes dramatizes themes of destiny, power, and courage through Dmitri's strong artistic sense as he resists coercion.

When published, the novel received high ratings in journals, with Barnes acclaimed as a leading British novelist. The novel begins in 1936, with Dmitri returning to his room and becoming lost in old memories. He experiences panic, fearing kidnapping by oppressive state machinery. His latest opera, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, provoked Joseph Stalin, the Russian dictator. While Russian masses praised his new composition, Stalin interpreted it as revolutionary and anti-communist.

Dmitri becomes trapped in darkness, recollecting old days while thinking about parents and troubled youth. He suffers from physical ailments while worrying about psychic wounds inflicted by state power. Barnes depicts the conflict between art and state power, with Dmitri failing to understand why his work remains controversial. His opera receives condemnation as anti-government and anti- communist by Pravda, the state journal, leading the Russian public to regard him as a state enemy.

The assassination plot against Stalin becomes exposed, with Dmitri's involvement suspected. After extensive interrogation and physical torture, he gains freedom while real conspirators face execution. Dmitri composes patriotic film music

to please state rulers, and the Russian government sends him on a cultural delegation to New York.

The novel's second section presents Dmitri lost in dreams and old memories, recollecting his American visit where American arts fans treated him well. In New York City, he fears government agent surveillance and becomes shocked to discover treatment as a puppet of the Russian despotic government. He worries about the safety and security of his wife, Nita, Galya, and growing children Maxim. Homesickness and negative thoughts pressure his wounded psyche.

Although the government provided forgiveness for his opera Lady Macbeth, oppressive state machinery continues threatening him. Dmitri experiences use and abuse, forced into ambassadorial roles while many old operas face banning. State machinery forces him to denounce his mentor, Igor Stravinsky. He must compromise ideals and values for family survival, knowing he follows the wrong track and deviates from artistic ideals, but finding no choice except submission to oppressive state machinery.

The novel's final section begins in the 1960s after Stalin's era ended and Nikita Khrushchev became Soviet Union ruler. The new era reduces violence against citizens, allowing Dmitri to recollect old days of constant threats. Communist Party leaders approach him, persuading him to join the party for family safety and security. Pyotr Pospelov personally appeals for party strengthening, claiming his services are needed for state welfare. Dmitri has no choice but to submit to party leaders' appeals.

He gains name and fame but experiences psychological stress from compromising ideals, feeling like a traitor to principles. Intoxicated with recognition, he marries a beautiful young woman older than his daughter. State power uses and abuses him as he becomes bound to support party ideals against his soul. Jeremy Denk (2016) comments in The New York Times: "In Barnes's novel, Shostakovich gradually descends into self-mockery, clinging to his music to save his reputation in some future time. One key element of Shostakovich's heroism is missing. Think of it: He is denounced in Pravda, he lives in fear for his own life, the life of his family, the lives of anyone who ever supported him or performed his music; he looks forward only to decades of cowering. In that impossible situation" (Denk 12).

The plot investigates the dialectical relationship between art and power, providing a comparative study of individual liberty and state oppression. Oppressive state machinery destroys Dmitri's love for art, wrecking his creative spirit forever and leading to psychological trauma that makes him increasingly restless, cursing his compromised spirit. The fictional biography covers personal and professional life while exposing and ridiculing despotic Russian government operations.

Dmitri lives under constant arrest threats, keeping luggage packed while waiting for soldiers to invade his house. Barnes writes: "They pound on innocent people at midnight; take them away to unknown places and mercilessly kill them. It was the day of May 1937 when the Reign of Great Terror began in Russia. Many friends and relatives of Dmitri were kidnapped and assassinated" (Barnes, Time 13). Dmitri experiences constant fear and terror without peace or rest, feeling heavy pressure on his sensitive psyche.

While waiting for the elevator, his mind remains haunted by potential arrest thoughts. Dmitri's world becomes filled with uncertainty and terror reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe's ghost stories. He "tried to keep his mind on Nita, but his mind disobeyed. It was like a bluebottle, noisy and promiscuous" (78). Barnes reveals Dmitri's inner world through broken passages, writing: "His father had been a survivor of the previous war. Blessed by the village priest, he had set off to fight for his homeland and the Tsar. By the time he returned, priest and Tsar were gone, and his homeland was not the same. His wife had screamed when she saw what war had done to her husband" (8).

Dmitri experiences constant trouble from harsh and oppressive despotic environments, feeling alienated and restless while struggling to survive. Barnes provides details of various sounds from different life periods, dramatizing Dmitri's childhood, achievements, and musical compositions. Dog barking during his ill-fated performance creates psychological shock, making his dangerous life a reality under Stalin's disapproval. Barnes ridicules him: "Now the dogs were after him and he had no escape; it was a period of trauma and of big change and the time of tragedy for him" (36).

Dmitri appears sitting in a chauffeur-driven car, recollecting his past and feeling guilty. He has sacrificed his art and become enslaved to state power. In the conflict between art and state power, state power wins because Dmitri surrenders for his wife Nita's and children's safety and security. The older Shostakovich muses: "A farm boy throws an apple-core at a passing, chauffeur-driven car. A drunken beggar pulls down his trousers and bares his bottom to respectable folk. A distinguished Soviet composer inserts subtle mockery into a symphony or a string quartet. Was there a difference, either in motive, or in effect?" (87).

The plot fills with nihilism and pessimism as Dmitri realizes life's futility. Art loses power while state power proves destructive, leading to protagonist self-dissolution. Feeling guilty, Dmitri experiences alienation and loneliness in Russian society. The destructive environment crushes his liberty, reducing Dmitri to slavery. However, music's purity remains eternal: "Art belongs to everybody and to nobody. Art belongs to all time and no time. Art belongs to those who create it and those who savour it. Art no more belongs to the People and the Party than it once belonged to the aristocracy and the patron. Art is the whisper of history, heard above the noise of time" (97).

The novel's final section provides clear perspective on art and power: "So what is music, or any art, in relation to power? A battleground for competing ideologies or a pure and timeless form that outlives its formative conditions" (89). Barnes describes Second World War scenes, narrating how people run for safety. The railway platform metaphor describes terror and fear themes and people's longing to escape for safety and security.

During a train journey undertaken by Dmitri, he waits at the platform as his carriage is stopped by a wounded soldier, formerly a brave army soldier now reduced to begging. The soldier shares vodka with Dmitri to forget war worries and killings. Barnes depicts relaxation, friendliness, and temporary enjoyment amid destructive war outbreak. The vodka glass ringing proves symbolic while Barnes maintains serious motives for depicting music's spiritual power alongside anti-human forces that destroy individual identities.

Barnes comments: "Music is represented in Barnes' novella as a means of propaganda and control, a means of subverting that propaganda, and as a pure art form, free from the petty politics of history. It is this final sense, of music as freedom, joy, and contentment, that the book ultimately celebrates" (123). *The Noise of Time* reflects contradictions between Shostakovich's artistic ideas and Soviet government restrictions.

The story relates Shostakovich's personal life, examining his journey from childhood through first love to marriage and family life. While focusing on career and Soviet government interactions, it repeatedly reflects on personal life, examining how life spheres interact literally and thematically. Personal life examination demonstrates and explores his personality: "His mother was inflexible woman, both by temperament and necessity. She had protected him, worked for him, loaded all her hopes onto him. Of course he loved her-how could he not? - but there were. . . difficulties" (23).

Shostakovich's artistic promise demonstrates that his music possessed potential to influence society and impress generations, had talent not been hindered by political system shackles that continuously tormented him and prevented genius from reaching maximum potential. Novel characters receive analysis through Dmitri's thoughts and knowledge. Although narrated in third-person, it functions as first-person narrative presented from Dmitri's personal experiences, generally appearing as an isolated person struggling to pursue artistic beauty while resisting threatening Soviet government power.

Despite loving people in his life, while struggling with authorities to pursue passion against power will, he receives no support from these people, appearing to stand alone. This quote, occurring at story beginning, illustrates how uncontrollable events largely shape lives, explored throughout the book during situations when Shostakovich surrenders to circumstances and unchangeable things while using power in different life phases where possible: "[Shostakovich] had replied that his father 'was an entirely normal human being.' This was not a patronizing phrase: it was an enviable skill to be a normal human being, and to wake up every morning with a smile on your face" (1).

Shostakovich's envy of his father's ability to remain generally content and optimistic indicates the tone and mindset shaping Shostakovich. His father consistently avoided difficulties, cultivating humor and indirection when facing life and wife. Consequently, the son, though knowing himself more resolute than Dmitri Boleslavovich, rarely challenged his mother's authority. Dmitri's biography and conflict with state power provides main focus for Barnes in *The Noise of Time*, with the process of self-loss and dissolution history realistically described.

> Dmitri was not a hard believer and was a man of independent ideas. He was an artist and was devoted to the satisfaction of his fans in Russia. He would often go to the church and would light a candle wishing good for his family and children. He loved his Bible well and was quite familiar with the sins of life. He had never dream that the state power would become his enemy and would torture him morally and psychologically. (29)

He confronts distressing events while struggling to save personal identity and integrity, feeling disgusted and distracted by his time's noise.

Barnes comments: "Dmitri was a lovable son of his mother. He loved his family and parents as he lived with his brother and two sisters. He was a devoted artist and had artistic temperament and he was an acclaimed musician in Russia" (33). The novel's plot begins with the famous refrain: "One to hear, one to remember and one to drink" (2). The plot involves three people waiting for trains when war breaks out. Three novel chapters, "On the landing; on the aeroplane; in the car" (23), reveal scenes of value subversion and protagonist Self dissolution, reflecting multiple crises and traumatic events following each other in 12-year intervals.

> Nita came into his life. Nina Varzar, eldest of the three Varzar sisters, straight off the tennis-court, exuding cheerfulness, laughter and sweat. Athletic, confident, popular, with such golden hair that it somehow seemed to turn her eyes golden. A qualified physicist, an excellent photographer who had her own dark-room. Not over-interested in domestic matters, it was true; mixture of strength and weakness. (38)

The three separate Shostakovich identities opening the novel's story at a train station slowly combine to become one person, Shostakovich himself. "All the traumas which he faces transform him" (123).

His self cracks and splits under state coercion pressure:

> He was becoming a split personality; he was a victim of terror in the state. His position was like a man crushed into hundred pieces of rubble. He was vainly struggling in Russia to save his identity but it was not possible as he had come under the pressure of the rule of terror" (155). Dmitri's consciousness becomes depicted as "a technique for survival" through sacrificing integrity each time he declares: "Here I am your slave and heading towards degradation and slavery. (79)

Barnes portrays his self-dissolution:

> And sometimes he was drunk, and sometimes he hadn't really known what was happening until he got home, or went to the apartment of a friend, where he might collapse in tears and sobs and cries of self-loathing. It had got to the point where he despised being the person he was on an almost daily basis. He should have died years ago. (136)

Dmitri lives with void as his life becomes empty, devoid of charm and enjoyment. He "struggles to survive knowing that it is the worst period of his life as he has become a fallen person; an abject figure; a worn out person heading towards degradation" (156).

His fate becomes sealed forever, though he possessed courage to resist oppressive forces. Barnes comments:

> I have to admit that I have never truly grasped the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Indeed, they once appointed a tutor for me, Comrade Troshin, and I dutifully read all the books they provided, including, as I remember, one of yours, but I made such poor progress that I fear I must wait until I am better equipped. (152)

He becomes forced "to lie like an eyes witness" when experiencing self-doubt, betraying his art and others' good opinions about him as an artist.

His love and reverence for Stravinsky's music had never wavered. And as proof, he kept a large photograph of his fellow composer beneath the glass of his desktop. He looked at it every day and remembered that gilded salon at the Waldorf Astoria; remembered the betrayal, and his moral shame. (132)

Barnes portrays the invisible: "Dmitri's life is visible and understandable only in the form of a tragic tale. He was pitted against circumstances as he found himself trapped in the vicious cycle of life and death" (128).

The final third chapter occurs in the 1960s, when Khrushchev Government forces him to join the Communist Party. He becomes "a soul to be destroyed in one of three ways: by what others did to you; by what others made you to do to yourself, by what you voluntarily chose to do to yourself" (154). The plot depicts confrontation between art and power, showing all artist types dealing with power:

He was a composer; he felt bitter and helpless and was in extreme despair. He had grown nihilistic and pessimistic. Time was against him and he had no place to go and there was nobody who could listen to his mercy appeal. All political forces were against him as he was considered as an enemy of the state power. His music was anti-communist. (125)

The novel authentically portrays a Russian composer forced to submit to state power. Barnes employs subversion, irony, and oppression techniques to accommodate power politics while describing art submission:

More, always more. They wanted the artist to be a gladiator, publicly fighting wild beasts, his blood staining the sand. That's what they required: in Pasternak's words, Total death, seriously. Well, he would try to disappoint such idealists for as long as possible. (107)

Barnes's Shostakovich appears weak and fragile, suffering from self-deflation with ideals thrown into winds, reduced to slave status. Art lacks influence while state power can crush it anytime:

A spirit of active, constructive criticism existed, so that a composer might be warned if he was slipping into errors of petty subjectivity and

introspective individualism, of formalism or cosmopolitanism; if - in short - he was losing touch with the People. He himself had not been without fault in this matter. He had departed from the true path of a Soviet composer, from big themes and contemporary images he had lost contact with the masses. (100)

Despite compromises, he remains faithful to himself. The first section covers boyhood and youth periods, the second addresses middle life years, and the final section examines elder years. *The Noise of Time* examines his music passion and how passion led to fame rising. During early career, musical innovations and compositions made him a government enemy. Government considers Shostakovich's music too bourgeois, labeling it anti-social:

If it all began elsewhere, and in the minds of others, then perhaps he could blame Shakespeare, for having written Macbeth. Or Leskov for Russifying it into Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk. No, none of that. It was, self-evidently, his own fault for having written the piece that offended. It was his opera's fault for being such a success - at home and abroad. (18)

Therefore, government condemns Shostakovich's early career musical compositions, interpreting them as empowering common masses. "Kabalevsky, seeking to ingratiate, had said to him, 'Mitya, why the hurry? The time for your opera has not yet come.' Nor, it seemed to him, would it ever now come" (137). The novel opens with Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich standing by his apartment building elevator, thinking about people, events, and music from past life.

Among remembered people appears a priest who christened him Dmitri instead of Yaroslav, the original parental choice. He recalls Jurgensen, the farm manager employing his father. Jurgenson was the same person Dmitri lived with after threatening parents at age seven or eight. His mother responded by escorting Dmitri to Jurgensen's cottage, permitting his stay. Such cordial maternal effort left Dmitri in tears, rejoining parents instead of fulfilling threats.

Dmitri recalls time spent with girlfriend Tatyana "Tanya" Glivenko in Caucasus Mountains. Both nineteen at the time, they fell in love:

94

Such virtual synchronicity endorsed their relationship; or, to put it another way, they were made for one another. Taryana Glivenko, with her short-cropped hair, as eager for life as he was. It was first love, in all its apparent simplicity, and in all its destiny. His sister Marusya, who was chaperoning him, had blabbed to their mother. By return of post Sofya Vailyevna warned her son against this unknown girl, against this relationship - indeed, any relationship. (17)

Dmitri recalls that time with great fondness using idyllic language, describing it as a period of great freedom and happiness. However, idyllic description becomes tempered by uncertainty on Dmitri's part as Tanya marries someone else, ending their relationship. Dmitri realizes he loved her more than she loved him. He recollects a Guy de Maupassant short story describing his love ideal while a young boy: love "without fear, without barriers, without thought for the morrow" (34).

In 1948, the next Section shows Dmitri Shostakovich flying from New York City toward Russia, accompanied by other Russian artists sent to New York City as part of a Russian government cultural delegation:

When truth-speaking became impossible because it led to immediate death; it had to be disguised. In Jewish Folk music, despair is disguised as the dance. And so, truth's disguise was irony because the tyrant's ear is rarely turned to hear it. The previous generation-those Old Bolsheviks who had made the Revolution-hadn't understood this, which was partly why so many of them perished. His generation had grasped it more instinctively. And so, the day after he had agreed to go to New York, he wrote the following letter. (85)

This passage provides heartrending pictures of Dmitri's distressed life as he became victim of destructive forces, having no choice but submitting to State Power dictates. Art sacrifice became necessary for survival and family protection. Barnes alludes to Jewish Holocaust when Nazis mercilessly killed Jews, forced to live in terror while sent to concentration camps for decimation. Barnes depicts similar terror scenes describing oppressive and terrifying Stalin Rule environments. While other artists celebrated the New York trip, Dmitri suffered mental anguish:

When he returned from the humiliation of the composers' congress, it was Nita who had dealt with him. But it was not just her moral strength that saved him; it was also the realization on his part of exactly what he was doing. This time, he wasn't threatening Tanya or Nita of his mother with Suicide; he was saying to the Union of Composers, to the cats who sharpened their claws on his soul, to Tikhon Nikolayevich Khrennikow, and to Stalin himself: Look what you have reduced me to, soon you will have my death on your hands and on your conscience. (97)

He compares trip hopes with reality experiences, describing American press as omniscient and brazenly rude while admitting positive visit aspects. He acquired many cigarettes and classical music gramophone records, which he greatly appreciated. During the next Section, Dmitri Shostakovich sits in his car as his chauffeur drives. Nikita Khrushchev now leads the Soviet Union, succeeding Stalin who died in 1952. During the drive, Dmitri reflects upon Soviet government no longer killing many citizens but still killing in less literal senses:

He was proud of his facility-but that was not what was being asked of him. They didn't want you to fake adherence to their banal taste and meaningless critical slogans-they wanted you actually to believe in them. They wanted your complicity, your compliance, your corruption. And Sergei Sergeyevich had never really understood this. (128)

The story describes musical tribute to Stalin that Dmitri wrote after returning from New York, expressing no appreciation for previous government regard for his work.

Nowadays, in the most advanced society on earth, the parents might pay for the sins of the child, along with uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, colleagues, friends, and even the man who unthinkingly smiled at you as he came out of the lift at three in the morning, the system of retribution had been greatly improved, and was so much more inclusive than it used to be. (21)

The novel functions as Shostakovich's life biography, with Barnes surrounding the central figure with characters drawn from music and politics worlds, including glimpses of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Stalin.

> The names of Prokifiev and Shostakovich would always be linked. But though manacled together, they were never friends. They - mostly - admired one another's music, but the West had penetrated too deeply into Sergei Sergeyevich. He had left Russia in 1918, and, apart from brief returns - as with a pair of puzzling pyjamas - had stayed away until 1936. (127)

The book offers personal integrity insights, beginning with fearful nights after his opera Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk receives Pravada banning by (possibly) Joseph Stalin himself. Barnes depicts frightening pictures of Stalin rule, where death sentences proved very common.

> Dmitri is an acclaimed composer of Russia. It was expected from him that his music would increase his output as a coal miner in the state. It was expected that his music would inspire the youth and wouldn't bred and inspire the spirit of revolt. Bureaucrats alleged that he was violating the norm and his art was a threat in the state. (26)

Dmitri tells friends and followers he never willingly joined the Communist Party, taken from bed and forced to follow Party commands. His New York trip represented physical presence but truthful exile. He suffered mental anguish similarly to Jews transported to concentration camps.

He reveals actual facts:

> If it all begun elsewhere and in the minds of others, then perhaps he could blame Shakespeare for having written Macbeth. Or Leskov for Russifying into Lady Macbeth of Mtensk. No, none of that. It was, self-evidently, his own fault for having written the piece that offended. It was his opera's fault for being such a success-at home and abroad-it had aroused the curiosity of the Kremlin (18).

Dmitri reveals self-dissolution processes in heart-rending language, discussing trauma experienced while describing pain suffered by wife and children.

He describes waiting with packed luggage at night wearing morning dress, waiting for fate head-on. He repeated this act nightly without relief, feeling restless while gripped by anxiety. Such terror proves brutal to imagine, but he experienced it. He remained "a committed artist who believed that art is the whisper of history; he heard over the noise of time" (78). Shostakovich embedded irony in music, giving Russian society the most original and best musical compositions. He remains sure that generations will remember him after death, with his music inspiring posterity.

Barnes tells readers how difficult it becomes for artists to strive for maintaining individualistic identity while collaborating with collective social set-up instincts: "From youth to old age when his mind no longer skittered but limped carefully from one anxiety to the next Shostakovich because more alive than an account of the sum of his experiences" (87). Barnes's aging Shostakovich exemplifies self-dissolution, reflecting on deflation processes while discussing helplessness.

He possesses broken and shattered personality, looking at happy days in dreams while experiencing wretched reality. He disregarded conventions, with everyone in his home free to articulate feelings. However, things changed when he became acclaimed Russian artist receiving name and fame. He possessed family, lovable wife, and small children to feed, but political events transformed his life. Compelled to surrender to state power, he became reduced to slavery.

Barnes portrays his lost world:

> Dmitri was put in front of a key board like his sister when he was a nine years old boy. For the first time the mystery of the world reveled to him. He determined to remain honest and got strength to sustain in life. He started learning piano and gave himself to music. He became a hard worker and devoted himself to the learning of music religiously. He had found the way to escape the cruel destiny. His love for music brought him happiness and material prosperity. He was able to feed his family Music had proved miraculous in his life. Though at other times, even after he had left home, married and fathered a child, he could still feel like a lost boy. (22)

Barnes describes Dmitri as an angry man who suddenly lost control, lacking control over emotions and passions. He "had lost his individuality as he was crushed to pieces. He was a victim of internal and external forces. He was old, and now he realised the loss of his self" (135). He silently waited for destiny, eagerly believing it remained tough to compromise with life principles.

His mother provided strength in marriage, just as Nina Vasilievna provided strength in theirs. His father, "Dmitri Boleslavovich, had been a gentle, unworldly man who worked hard and handed his salary to his wife, keeping back just a small amount of tobacco money" (21). Barnes depicts Dmitri's anxious and alienated life:

> He had strong emotions and was quite immature to articulate them. He was a neurotic personality and suffered from multiple disorders. He was short of temper and believed he could get what he required. But he was a victim of fate and whenever he got popularity in the masses the trouble with him started. He was a mother's boy and indulged in the trivial things of life. He had an artistic temperament but he was vain and arrogant. But his underlying condition was one of high anxiety. (28)

Barnes depicts artist inner tortured souls in touching lyrical language, employing postmodern techniques including fragmentation, pastiche, irony, and magic realism. Dmitri's tortured soul receives description: "The composer had written not an opera but an anti-opera, with music deliberately turned inside out. He had drunk from the same poisoned source which produced leftist distortion in painting, poetry, teaching and science" (123). In case "it needed spelling out and it always did - leftism was contrasted with real art, real science and real literature. Those that have ears will hear, he always liked to say" (27).

The novel builds around three central episodes similar to concern moments, each moment portraying fragmentary paragraph expressions of different lengths. Barnes narrates Dmitri's self-dissolution process:

> Sometimes he was drunk, and sometimes he hadn't really known what was happening until he got home, or went to the apartment of the friend, where he might collapse in pairs and sobs and cries of self-

loathing. He had got to the point where he despised being the person

he was, on an almost daily basis. He should have died years ago. (136)

Those in power continuously drift between glorifying and criticizing

Shostakovich:

They voted unanimously not to recommend the opera's revival because

of it's glaring artistic and ideological faults. Kabalevsky, seeking to

ingratiate, had sent to him, Mitya, why the hurry? The time for your

opera has not yet come. Nor, it seemed to him, would it ever now come.

(137)

They misinterpret his persona while Shostakovich remains convinced his music will

survive after death.

Moving to the second novel, *The Only Story* presents a tale of love revealing

that love matters more and can change or transform life's course. The narrator, while

in retrospection, relates the only significant relationship of his life that finds meaning

in his existence. In the novel's first part, Barnes uses first person to describe Paul and

Susan's relationship. In following parts, he switches to second and finally third person

when lovers realize love doesn't always lead to happiness. While in relationships, one

cannot escape identity, as personal history occupies central positions in relationships.

Paul, the novel's narrator, falls in love with Susan McLeod, who is much

older. His passion for her threatens his life, leading to expulsion from home.

However, he remains true to feelings for Susan. He possesses a notebook of maxims,

crossing out those no longer serving him, but holding onto one maxim: "Every love

happy or unhappy, is a true disaster once you give yourself over to it" (34). He learns

this fact young when falling in love with Susan McLeod.

The novel concerns 19-year-old Paul's unusual relationship with older woman

Susan and disastrous consequences affecting both lives. *The Only Story*, by Julian

Barnes, occurs in 1960s suburban English town, dealing with Paul Roberts, his love

affair with Veronica, and eventual disaster. Both play tennis as partners, soon falling

in love and developing secret romantic relationships. Susan introduces Paul to close

friend Joan. Paul becomes impressed by Joan's frank speaking manner while meeting

Susan's husband, Gordon. He attempts developing friendly relationships with Gordon, who is drunkard and sometimes misanthropic.

Paul and Susan maintain secret relationships as their love grows passionate. Paul realizes love opposes all practical life concerns but doesn't care, as devotion to Susan continues growing. Paul eventually discovers Gordon is alcoholic who often beats Susan. Therefore, Paul graduates from college, and he and Susan move to London for cohabitation. Paul explains situations to parents through written notes.

Susan and Paul decide moving into London rented accommodation together. Paul wants Susan to divorce Gordon, but Susan proves unable. Ultimately, Paul discovers Susan has become alcohol addicted. Paul advises Susan stopping drinking, but Susan can't abandon drinking habits. Paul finds himself unable to help her effectively. Susan's mental state begins declining, apparently due to excessive alcohol intake.

When Susan's mental health starts deteriorating, Paul attempts helping by arranging psychiatrist hospital visits. Unfortunately, none of his efforts prove effective. As Susan begins suffering significant delusions, her mental faculties become severely affected. Paul records her neurotic condition:

> What makes it unbearable, what makes you so exhausted and depressed after twenty minutes in her presence that you want to run outside and howl, is this: though she can't name you, never asks you any questions or answers any of yours, she still, at one level, registers your presence and responds to it. She doesn't know who the fuck you are, or what you do, or even your fucking name, but at the same time, she recognizes you and judges you morally and finds you waiting. (156)

Paul also lost everything: youth and dreams became shattered as love relationships collapsed. He knew Susan headed toward death while worrying about his health. He recollected golden days enjoyed at village tennis courts, but all had disappeared. Old memories constantly haunted him. One day, he took Susan to visit the village, having requested her daughters to care for their sick mother, as she needed

company. They consented as nobody could resist. Their father had died, leaving them alone.

Paul looked at tennis courts and became mentally disturbed, describing change scenes:

> He imagined the village tennis courts replaced by a spread of the finest modern boxes, or perhaps a more lucrative clump of low-rise flats. He wondered if anyone, anywhere, had ever looked at a housing development and thought. Why don't we knock them all down and build a nice tennis club, one with the latest all-weather courts? Or maybe-yes, why don't we go further and lay some proper old-fashioned gross courts, for tennis as it once used to be? But no one would ever do, or even think, that, would they? Things once gone, can't be put back: he knew that now. A punch once delivered can't be withdrawn. Words, once spoken, can't ne unsaid. We may go on as if nothing had been lost, nothing done, nothing said, we may claim to forget it all, but our innermost core doesn't forget because we have been changed forever. (162)

Paul decides moving out of houses where he stayed with Susan, engaging friends to care for Susan. Paul then dates another woman for several months, but relationships don't last long and eventually fail. Paul again moves back to stay with Susan for caregiving. Several years later, Susan's daughter Martha agrees taking over Susan care responsibility. In later years, he settles into quiet routine life, contemplating love's many contradictions, including both fulfillment and suffering presentations.

The Only Story functions as love tale revealing that love matters more and can change or transform life's course. The narrator, while in retrospection, recalls the only life relationship finding significance in his existence. Paul reflects on his life story, which transformed love ideas due to positive love effects on personality. He reflects on love-story with lady named Susan, who was married and much older.

The novel's first part uses first person for describing Paul and Susan's relationship. Soon, lovers realize love doesn't always lead to happiness. While in

relationships, one cannot escape identity, as personal history occupies central relationship positions. Paul, the novel's narrator, falls in love with Susan McLeod, who is much older. His passion threatens his life, leading to home expulsion, but he remains true to Susan feelings.

He possesses maxim notebooks, crossing out those no longer serving him, but holding onto one maxim related to love leading to disaster. He learns this fact young when falling in love with Susan McLeod. Paul recollects past life attempting to review decisions making him his current person. The novel examines how protagonists attempt living by deviating from typical society norms, eventually leading to life game defeats.

The novel functions as thoughtful disappointment history in love, common trait of almost every human being's experiences. Paul is young boy falling in love with mature 48-year-old woman Susan. He is just 19 years old, with conspicuous age gaps in Paul and Susan relationships. Susan is already married with growing daughters.

The novel's first part receives Paul first-person narration, outlining how Susan relationships begin and how he falls in love with her. The next part switches narration to both first and second persons while Paul accounts for relationship graduation to real-life maturity next levels, but situations start falling apart and slowly degenerating. Part three narration becomes indifferent with narrator becoming detached, shifting narration to third person, as both Paul and Susan can no longer relate to each other through love and friendship terms. Still, they only relate as two people knowing each other very deeply.

Three different person usage reasons receive Barnes explanations in different ways. While in Part one, Paul exclaims: "And first love always happens in overwhelming first person. How can it not? Also, in the overwhelming present tense. It takes us time to realize that there are other persons, and other tenses" (89). Barnes comments: "Paul believes that he is leading a life in the third person and had no choice of his own. His self was lost and he felt like a lost soul groping in the darkness. Love relationship didn't give him any satisfaction or happiness but made him a neurotic wreck" (89).

He starts stories as decisions to project all feelings and emotions experienced by assigning sentences to them. Susan is confused and bewildered woman with harrowing pasts. She is weak character and poor at maintaining solid relationships. Paul is like son to her but she becomes sexually involved with him. Her past is horrible; she had illicit relationships with Gerald before marriage. She deserts abusive husbands and develops relationships with Paul.

She experiences stress as psyche pressures prove unbearable though she takes alcohol to overcome life tensions. She hides old love stories from Paul while carrying emotional baggage. This emotional volcano eventually leads to her self-dissolution. Paul begins journeys as teenager and soon his life becomes scandalous and frivolous. His relationships with middle-aged women prove tragic and violate cultural norms. He commits moral transgression sins in blind love intimacy. In fact it isn't love but lust expression. He fails understanding real marriage meaning and attacks marriage institutions.

Susan and Paul suffer self-deflation as their love proves chaotic and degrading. Thus the novel seems fine relationship analysis wherein protagonist Paul, very young 19-year-old boy, university student falls in love with very intriguing but older lady already married with two grown daughters. She had been in unsuccessful relationships which she couldn't identify as loveless, but for Paul, she proves life-shaping story waiting to happen.

Their love affairs ring disapproval alarms from local people leading to local and tennis club expulsion. However, all these things cannot hamper their spirit of loving each other. No doubt he faced action adversity but doesn't regret love and shares stories in cheerful manners as reflected when saying: "It seemed to have landed on exactly the relationship of which my parents would most in the novel, Paul disapprove" (123).

Despite Susan's frequent appeals to Paul choosing better love partners, Paul doesn't leave her and continues staying with her no doubt, leading to catastrophic life situations when Susan turns out drinking since, to stay with Paul, Susan had to split families but chooses relationship being. The story being realistic still contains lots of pain apparent in bonds wherein one finds young men seducing older married women.

She offers him childhood escape ways causing later self-interrogation and self-introspection and regrets, plot types seeming parallel to other Barnes works such as Flaubert's Parrot whose protagonist could very well fit such situations but Paul refuses:

> You might think of French novels, older woman teaching the arts of love to younger man, ohh la la. But there was nothing French about our relationship, or about us. We were English, and so had only those morally laden English words to deal with: words like scarlet woman, and adulteress. (90)

Paul narrates stories in first person and soon switches over to second and then third person. He recollects all horrible past relationship events to explore fissures and cracks that ruined his love for Veronica and Margaret. Ultimately Paul becomes detached. Paul is detached in final life phases since he has explored real love mysteries. For him love is like philosophical questions than emotions he experienced. He becomes influenced by love emotions but only observes it rather than experiencing it.

He observes:

> He was at ease with the world, watching other people's lives develop. No, that was too grand a way of putting it: he was observing the young get cheerfully drunk and turn their minds to sex, romance, and something more. But though he was indulgent-even sentimental-about the young, and protective of their hopes, there was one scene he was superstitious about, and preferred not to witness: the moment when they flung away their lives because it just felt so right-when, for instance, a smiling waiter delivered a mound of mango sorbet with an engagement ring glittering in it's domed apex, and a bright-eyed proposer fell to bended knee in the sand[…]The fear of such a scene would often lead him to an early night. (145)

While shifting focus to Susan from Paul's role, her part also appears same to Paul's. As her shy, suburban frustrated nature goes well in making novel stories. She acts like bridges between wartime generation freer young generation. Although not at

all happy with alcoholic husbands, but in efforts finding happiness, escapes with young lovers also don't succeed much. Eventually her ways and witticism aren't understood and become rejected by both ex and current partners.

After making all attempts keeping Susan away from drinking habits, Paul doesn't succeed and when finding efforts bearing no fruit pulling her away from depression, it makes him set on journeys searching his own soul as he thinks himself responsible for taking away families and leading her to alcoholism. Paul knows he is responsible for his own catastrophe but expresses sincerity till life ends. He continues loving Susan though she has become dead statue. He never lost hope in love dreams. He never felt sorry for love making to older women.

He observes:

> But he certainly never regretted his love for Susan. What he did regret was that he had been too young, too ignorant, too absolutist, too confidant of what he imagined love's nature and workings to be. Would it have been better-in the sense of less catastrophe-for him, for her, for them both, if they had indeed had some French relationship" The older woman teaching the younger man the arts of love, and then, concealing an elegant tear, passing him out into the world-the world of younger, more marriageable women? (169)

After fifty-year gaps, he still blames himself for making first love as the only life story and how the same didn't allow him creating any other life stories by giving any further opportunities to himself. Paul is guilty of holding onto his only story for longer than is healthy. The novel thus examines and analyses how individuals while in relationships with others cannot retain their individualism despite doing many efforts. As while associating with others one naturally gets involved into others' personalities.

Individuals definitely aren't able staying in distinct identities if they get related to other people due to thought and idea interchanges. One's identity certainly gets dissolved while in relationships. Hence it becomes little contradictory to aim at discovering individualistic identity aspects while one gets related and interacts with others and leads to collective people identity.

Lucas (1951) provides final insight into this psychological condition:

> We are prisoners –inside ourselves. We are all irremediably alone. All the paradises whose gates real life seems to throw wide before the feet of youth are merely dreams, the only real paradises are the paradises we lost, the paradises of memory. For we can never imaginatively anything we already possesses. (Lucas 349)

To conclude, Barnes's novels deal with postmodern themes of self-dissolution and identity loss. Characters live in imagination worlds as they develop relationships on flimsy grounds. Paul falls in love with older married woman who is inconstant and carries emotional burden baggage. Their behavior is unconventional and actions are unjustified. Barnes has excavated character internal landscapes who live with void.

They struggle surviving in harsh environments as their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions are postmodern. They run away from life reality and imagine their own flimsy worlds seeking transient happiness trapped in darkness and uncertainty bogs. Their emotional breakdown is reality as Adrian commits suicide being burdened with guilt. The characters confront uncertainties and obstacles daily, leading to self-disintegration through discarding old values and relying on falsehood and duplicity to survive and flourish in society. These themes demonstrate how Barnes contributes to contemporary understanding of identity formation and dissolution in postmodern literary contexts.

Chapter IV

Dialects of Human Relationships and Cultural Behaviour in *Talking it Over* and

Love , Etc.

The present chapter explores the dialects of human relations depicted by Julian Barnes in his novels. It is admitted that self is socially constructed. Man lives in society and comes in contact with ''others'' while establishing many relations with the others. The chapter explores the development of self while negotiating relationships with others in the postmodern world as depicted in the works of Julian Barnes. Julian Barnes started writing when the world was passing from the transitional phase and obviously the trend is towards postmodernism. The critics and reviewers of Barnes examined his texts.

Vanessa Guignary's approach is to explore the Pm elements of Barnes. Merritt Moseley in her book Understanding Julian Barnes discusses the meta-fictional elements in his novels. It has generally been observed that society is a social network where everyone is related to others. The chapter aims to explore how people struggle to discover and develop themselves while negotiating various relations in their lives and how these relationships help these characters to realize and explore their concept of "Self''. The critics of Barnes have investigated the binary of the concept self and how it relates to others

Niklas Luhmann (2000) has explored the intricacies of human relations, developing a comprehensive social systems theory that illuminates the complex mechanisms underlying human communication and relationship formation. According to Luhmann, "in order to be able to enter into communication, individuals have to assume that there are similarities of experiences between them and others in spite of their systems of consciousness operating in fully individualized, idiosyncratic ways" (81). Central to his theory is the concept of double consciousness, where he maintains that self contains "a repertoire of relational selves" (81). Luhmann's social systems theory posits that relationships are not merely interactions between individuals but emergent social systems that develop their own communication patterns, boundaries, and operational logic. His framework suggests that social systems are autopoietic— self-creating and self-maintaining—operating through communication rather than

through individual consciousness. This theoretical foundation becomes crucial for understanding how Barnes's characters navigate the complex terrain of interpersonal relationships, where the boundaries between self and other become increasingly blurred in postmodern contexts.

Self-other understanding forms the core of human relationship. Progress in the study of relationships depends partly on the recognition that relations are not exactly similar to interaction or the behaviour of individuals and so, it requires to be explained by emphasizing the relationships as linking individuals. The theory of Self and its relation with the "Other" forms the core of Barnes's novels. The relationship between persons depends much on the variations arising out of the various cultures they belong to and various relations people build during their lifetime. The dialects of relationship of self with the other has been described by William.W. Wilmot (1995) in his three paradigmatic views about relationships.

Paradigm I view of relationships asserts individual selves loosely connected to other people. This Paradigm holds "Self" and "Other" as separate units loosely connected to each other as there is no thick emotional attachment or involvement in human life, According to Wilmot (1995), Paradigm II view ''emphasizes the dissolution of self and its multidimensional phases" Paradigm II view of relationships refers to the interconnections and interdependencies that develop human relations. Paradigm II view of relationship shifts the focus from Self to the recognition of Others. The recognition of the Other leads to the Paradigm III view of relationships in which Self, Other and Relationships are seen as closely connected to each other suggesting that people are constructed in their transaction with others and one comes into being by means of one's transactions with the Others. Hence Self, Other and Relationship are inseparable. This theory also conceptualizes that all parties in a relationship undergo significant changes in their personality while participating and expressing in a relationship.

In another work by W.W Wilmot, the concept of relational tendencies has been emphasized wherein, William W.Wilmot used the metaphor of dance to depict the intricacies of human relationships. Each relationship is like a dance. The two partners dance well they are in agreement but when they are feeling uncomfortable

they break apart. In life each individual has to confront challenges, trials and tribulations. An individual has to face disruptions and doubts and despair. With relationship partners in synchrony, the flow and synergistic energy elevated both. Wilmot argues thus:

> Whether it is someone across the aisle, in a theatre, or having coffee with a best friend, the individual becomes aware of being in a relationship when communication processing is reciprocal. Relationship awareness occurs over and above the specific cues being sent and received-you treat the relationship as having a past, present and future. (Wilmot 35)

As Leathem and Duck (1990) observe: "You have a relationship when partners believe in the future of it." (Leathem and Duck 21). When one enters into a relational world, it is no longer exclusively one's own- the other person is considered in the acts one does; there is no such thing as individual behaviour not affected by the relational context from which it springs. Perceptions of each person impact relationships because each individual has their opinions, beliefs and perceptions. The relationship is always a symbol of mutual understanding. Longer relationships cannot run if there are cracks and the partners are aggressive and dominating. As Humphreys (1951) states, "There is no such thing as two, for no two things can be conceived without their relationship, and this makes three" (Humphreys 121).

Understanding at level II, people speak of relationships as "declining", "improving", and "being flat" – clearly, relationships are conceptual realities. Relationship processing, however, is much more complex because our interpretation of ongoing events affects how we respond and how others respond to us. The perceived realities of relationships build over time for the participants. In a true sense, each relationship is unique. Morton & Douglas (1981) remark, "Relationship is a mutual agreement of two partners who are willing to participate together recognizing and honoring their perceptions relationships are more than the sum of the individual parts. Each relationship reflects a mini culture" (Douglas 81). In all pairings, such as teachers- students, mothers- son, friend- friend, or doctors - patient, the participants have their own conceptions of the relationships, their own "relational mini-culture"

that encompasses what they do and who they are to one another. Sometimes, a continual disagreement about the nature of a relationship may be a central feature of a relationship.

The foundation of a stable and cemented relationship is the faith in each other and the understanding of two partners. Often two individuals belong to different backgrounds and may belong to different religions but form a union and compromise in several ways to run the union. A Relationship is a social construct. Each individual has to accommodate and adjust despite many extreme ideas and thoughts of the partners.

Relationships are sustained when partners are sincere and honest and relate to each other, forgetting their interests. Greed, jealousy, self - interest are the factors that break the relationship. Communication plays a vital role in building sound relationships. Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery (1988) investigated the tensions and contradictions in human relationships. Mikhail Bakhtin gave the idea that life is an open and accessible monologue and that all human beings are free to come in contact with others. The relationship collapses when the partners grow selfish and aggressive. Baxter explored a list of dialectical tensions that lead to the collisions of relationships. Bakhtin believed in the monologue of people as it is always healthy and a way to bring harmony to the state. Heraclitus contended that the world constantly changes as creative and destructive forces continually operate. Bakhtin believed that tensions exist in the human structure; there is unity and diversity in the world. The foundation of a stable society is the harmonious relationships of the individuals. Bakhtin identified that tensions exist between unity and diversity. Bakhtin investigated the role of centripetal and centrifugal forces operating in the world. Centripetal forces are emotional forces leading to disintegration, and centrifugal forces are emotional forces leading to unity and strength. Bakhtin argues that relationships are not linear; change is the law of nature; contradiction exists in each relationship, and communication is the central organising factor.

Relational dialectics relies on the idea that each relationship results from the mutual agreement between two partners. Each relationship exists in a fixed place and has fixed goals. The lovers enter into a relationship with the goal of marriage and the

happiness of the domestic life. The partners discard favouritism and put faith in the values of openness, frankness, honesty, and sincerity. They love autonomy and promote connections with others. Postmodernism is considered a cultural revolution, a turning point to change modern values. The relational dialect changes in the postmodern society. It is an expression of the cultural mood of the free people opting for change and revolution, discarding modernity and traditionalism. Postmodernists like Barnes, John Barth and Thomas Pynchon believe that the world is in flux and meta-narratives are considered misleading. There is no fixed and absolute truth, as everything is temporary and changeable. Life is meaningless; love and happiness are illusions. Postmodern thinkers like Jameson discard Western metaphysics. They have evolved their new ideas about language, identity and mind working. The rapid growth of computers, mass media, science and technology has generated new ideas impacting human relations. Barnes's conspicuous feature in fiction is his love for fragmentation and indeterminacy. He is interested in depicting his characters' inner turbulent life, describing the process of dissolution of self. Barnes employs the postmodern techniques of paranoia and irony in his plots to illustrate the protagonists' disintegration of the self. Linda Hutcheon propounded the theory of historiographic meta-fiction. Barnes argues that the old events of history can be employed to depict contemporary reality. The British novelist Sarah Waters is another postmodern British novelist who employs historical events to project the loss of self of the characters. The other important feature of postmodern fiction is the dominance of self-reflexivity. Barnes clearly states that his fiction is written to depict the British people's displacement and cultural disruption. Truth, Love, and life are figments of imagination, as his characters are shifters. He has employed the postmodern strategies of resistance and subversion in his plots. His irony can dig out the inner turmoil of his characters. Barnes observes, "Irony is an effective tool in postmodern fiction, and it destroys the meaning of messages and adds variety, leading to fragmentation and dissonance" (Barnes, *Talking* 97). His novels don't portray reality. In several novels, such as The Sense of Ending, The *Metroland*, *Before She Met Me*, and *The Noise of Time*, Barnes created a galaxy of characters who suffer from psychological ailments.

The psychic pressures lead to their disintegration. They fail to maintain a stable and solid relationship.

The plots reflect the images of decay, dissonance, and dissolution of self. The critics of Barnes, such as Merrit Moseley, Bruce Sesto and Vanessa Guigrery, observe that the conspicuous characteristic of their novels of Barnes is the pervasive decline and disintegration of relationships. In The *Metroland*, Chris and Toni are teenagers. Frank Kermod (1985) argues that "Barnes is not interested in narrating the expected and traditional history but his focus is to narrate the personal history of Chris. All events of his love-making adventure, his sexuality and the loss of virginity, and his affairs with Veronica and Margaret and the American girl are dramatised in true and realistic language" (Kermod 36). Chris and Tony begin their journey and develop a relationship to enjoy love and sex. The sentimental journey of two teenagers is caught in the web of irony and cynicism; Barnes brings his characters to the point of fabulation in the novel as they are in quest of absolute truth. Barnes has expressed his vision of literature thus:

> Literature is dedicated from daily existence and doesn't arise from nowhere, and the distinction between life and literature is always blurred. However, the majority of his novels try to uncover the hidden human temperaments such as romance, sex and insanity, as well as to understand human behavior, real life explanation, and the reasons for people's strange behavior. Precisely, the plots are about people trying to figure out who they are. (Barnes, *Talking* 123)

Barnes narrates an amusing picture of youth embarking on a journey of growth and development, coming in contact with the various people of the metropolis of London and Paris. Barnes uses a postmodern view of human nature. Like Sarah Waters, Barnes employs the events of history in the novel to describe the relevance of the historical events. Chris and Toni are "fired with the thoughts and revolutionary ideas of Voltaire who brought French Revolution in 1789 and launched their crusade against the Church and its old conventions" (Barnes, *Metroland* 9). Barnes uses the material of historical events to structure the plot following the tradition of historiographic metafiction of Linda Hutcheon. There are many references to

113

"Rimbaud, Gautier and Mallarme and Zola"; notably, Chris and Toni come under the influence of the poet Charles Baudelaire. No wonder Chris becomes "famous as Chris Baudelaire in his family and friends" (70). Chris is a displaced character who remains rootless, a shifter in life. His displacement and mobility are the root cause of the dissolution of self. He fails to maintain a solid relationship in life. Barnes depicts Chris's fractured identity realistically; he despises the bourgeois mentality. In his revolutionary style, Chris expresses his revolt against traditional society and continues to make love to various women.

Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) depicts the self-reflective journey of the protagonist Tony Webster. He is presented as an older adult of sixty leading a lonely life because of his fractured identity and harrowing experiences. Barnes has depicted the triangular relationship between Toni Webster, Adrian and Veronica. All were best friends, but Adrian developed sexual relations with the girl-friend of Toni.

Barnes narrates the main cause of disruption in human relations in postmodern society. A relationship is a union of two partners who want to enjoy life and the bliss of life. Adrian is very clever; he joins the group of Toni's friends and expresses his strange behaviour. Toni got a letter from Veronica that revealed that Adrian had committed suicide because he had betrayed both Veronica and Toni. The plot of the novel narrates the disruption of human relationships. Barnes argues that in postmodern society, people are incompetent in maintaining healthy relationships. Toni investigates the leading cause of the breakup, exploring the disintegrated self of Adrian thus:

> Not least, I had a swathe of my past to re-evaluate with nothing but remo company. And after rethinking Veronica's life and character, I would have to go back into my past and deal with Adrian. My philosopher friend, who gazed on life and decided that any responsible, thinking individual should have the right to reject this gift had never been asked for-and whose noble gesture re-emphasized with each passing decade the compromise and littleness that most lives consist of: my Life. (Barnes, *Ending* 133)

114

Toni exposes Adrian's selfish nature and talks about his littleness and self-centred philosophy of life. Relationship relies on the basis of compromise, but Adrian lacks a sense of responsibility. The Luhmannian framework discussed earlier becomes particularly relevant here, as Toni's struggle reflects the breakdown of the communication systems that sustain relationships. In postmodern society, achieving cemented relationships becomes increasingly difficult when partners exhibit selfish, greedy, self-centred and individualistic tendencies—precisely the individualized and idiosyncratic approach that challenges effective relational communication. Toni investigates the causes that brought about psychological ailments in her life. He talks of her "sense of failure and guilt." The following comments of Toni are a significance critique of Veronica's character and behaviour:

> And, then, presumably, he had bigger and harder to manage, and eventually the terrible struggle became too much, and she allowed him to be taken into care. Imagine what that must have felt like, imagine the loss, the sense of failure, the guilt. And there was I, complaining to myself when my daughter occasionally forgot to send me an email. I also remembered the meaningful thoughts I'd had since first meeting Veronica again on the Wobbly Bridge. I thought she looked a bit shabby an unkempt. I thought she was difficult, unfriendly, charmless. In fact, I was lucky she gave me the time of the day. (133)

Toni firmly believes that Veronica suffers because of her guilty consciousness. Her double standards were the main cause of her loss of self. Toni talks of her "unfriendly, charmless" character. In the beginning of his relationship, Veronica impressed him with her class consciousness and superiority complex. She dominated him because of her aesthetic and cultural tastes. He writes about her thus: "Veronica, My girl- friend was a girl of aesthetic tastes as she loved poetry and had deep interest n reading Spanish literature. reading Spanish, She was the daughter of a British civil servant and had had better musical taste" (20). But all her ideals collapsed, and the chief cause was her sexuality, betrayal, and guilty consciousness. As Leathem and Duck observed earlier, when two partners enter into a relationship, they believe in their bright future. In a relational world, an individual approach is unacceptable.

Veronica violated the conventions of relationships because she was guided by her own perception of life, sex and sexuality. Toni makes the following observations about the changed and individualistic behaviour of Veronica:

> Only a few days previously I'd been entertaining a dim fantasy about Veronica. All the while admitting that I knew nothing of her life in the forty and more years since I'd seen her. And I had some answers to the question I hadn't asked. She had become pregnant by Adrian, and – Who knows?- perhaps the trauma of his suicide had affected the child in her womb. She had given birth to a son who had at some stage been diagnosed as …What? (132)

The novel *Talking It Over* also explores the intricacies of human relationships. The novel's plot is structured around the triangular relationships of Stuart Hughes, Oliver Russell and Gillian Hughes. The main action of the pot is based on the traditional love triangle found in the plays of Shakespeare. Gillian is a simple middle-class girl but sexy and individualistic. She earns money as a restorer and marries Stuart. Oliver feels passionate about Gillian and uses all possible tricks to entrap Gillian, betraying his best friend, Stuart. So, the very beginning of the love relationship is based on treachery, falsehood, betrayal and sexuality. She fails to understand the circumstances leading her to fall in love with Stuart. She recollects the situation thus "Love is natural and spontaneous; you don't know exactly when you are in love. Do you?...You don't select a girl and fall in love with her. There is no compulsion and force but it is an act of natural liking and understanding" (Barnes, *Talking* 34). Stuart goes to America, and Gillian and Oliver shift to France, and there she gives birth to a daughter. Stuart is presented as a simple lover in the beginning of the novel who begins the relationship in a traditional manner. He says: "My name is Stuart, and I remember everything" (1). In the novel Love etc, he repeats the same dialogue to impress Gillian: "I remember you, I remember You" (Barnes, Love 1). Gillian also expresses her innocence and says: "I know and remember my business; I love and that is what I know" (Barnes, *Talking* 8). Stuart also responds in a positive manner to woo Gillian: "I remember all the positive things" (9). This relationship is on a flimsy ground as the cracks appear in the very start of the relationship. Gillian

says: "Just stop it. This isn't working…If we're getting into this again, we have to play by the rules. No talking among ourselves" (7). Stuart is jealous of Oliver as he expresses his resentment: "I can't reproduce the way he talks-You'll have to listen him for yourself" (2). Gillian is selfish and a shifter; she is unsatisfied with one relationship. She expresses her dominating personality thus: "I fell in love with him that is what I know. I don't have any other answer. I fell in love with him because I feel it is a social compulsion and an act of necessity" (31). Barnes describes the collapse of relationships, which are built around individuality, sexuality and selfishness. Gillian begins the quarrel with Stuart in the street in a public place to break the relationship with Stuart, alleging that he spied on her from his room in the hotel. This fake quarrel excites fears in the mind of Gillian, who is threatened by loneliness. She says: "I am sorry to admit Stuart, the real fear will come in the limelight and see the fear is real" (269).

Barnes has described Gillian and Stuart's ambivalent love relationship in simple language. It is difficult to decide whether the basis of their relationship was real love or sexual lust. It is not clear whether Stuart raped Gillian or not. But Gillian gives a new version when she says: "I was the one who moved towards him, and in this venture, he was not at fault" (216). She further changed her statement and said: "Yes, I do consider it to have been rape" (229). In Barnes' novels, love is not a high love of the traditional type found in the plays of Shakespeare. Traditional values such as love, friendship, and sacrifice are irrelevant in postmodern society. No wonder Gillian admits thus: "When we were making love-no when he was raping me-no, let's say when we were having sex" (242). Gillian later on uses the word "fucking", and according to Craig Hamilton, Gillian's approach to love is typically postmodern. For "her love means several things, making love, raping and having sex" (Hamilton 39). Gillian is a neurotic woman; she is suspicious and sentimental and not rational. Such a partner is unfit for a solid relationship. She expresses her neurotic behaviour thus:

> Just because I don't have a confessional nature doesn't mean that I
> forger things. I remember my wedding ring sitting on a fat burgundy
> cushion. Oliver leafing through the telephone directory looking for

people with silly names how I felt. But these things aren't for public

consumption. What I remember is my business. (10)

The characters of Barnes suffer because they create a world of falsehood, illusion and sexuality. They are far away from truth since they are lost in their own dream world. They fail to confront the existential realities and Gillian is not an exception. She is a restorer but she fails to restore her own life. Oliver exposes her hypocrisy and incompetency thus:

It is, oh it is. Isn't it wonderful? Oh! Effulgent relativity! There is no real picture under there waiting to be revealed. What I've always said about life itself. We scrap and spit and dab and rub, until the point when we declare that the truth stands plain before us, thanks to xylene and proanol and acetone. Look, no fly-shit!.But it isn't so! It isn't so! It's just my word against everybody else's. (122)

The images of "scrap, spit and dab" are very effective in describing the postmodern view of absolute truth in the novel. The characters of Barnes suffer because they are too fragile to comprehend the intricacies of life and love relationships. They are pitted against the circumstances and are made to suffer alienation and loneliness as they can sustain relationships. Gillian is not satisfied with one relationship; she breaks away from her husband and takes Oliver.

The Only Story of Barnes is a study of human relationships. Barnes depicts the theme of postmodern love presenting the unconventional story of Paul and Susan Macleod love affair. Susan is a married old woman of thirty years/ She has two grown up daughters living in the middle class society of a province. The local people call this a remote village as the people are orthodox and the society is dominated by ole values and strict moral code. Paul is just 19 years young boy; a university student who fails to understand the backward and orthodox mentality of the people where Susan lives His love affair with Susan is regarded scandalous and unnatural and this love relationship is bound to collapse. Susan falls in love with Paul because she is sick of her sexless marriage with her husband. She expresses the agony because she leads a loveless life:

For instance, I remember lying in bed one night,being kept awake by one of those stomach-slapping erections which, when you are young, you carelessly-or care freely-imagine will last you the rest of your life. But this one was different. You see, it was a kind of generalized erection, unconnected to any person, or dream or fantasy. (Barnes, *Story* 18)

Paul Susan relationship is not based on true love but on the lust and sexuality. They meet at the tennis club and begin relationship. Paul starts going to her home in the village and he is often haunted by his guilty consciousness. He knows the reality that his parents wouldn't approve of this unnatural relationship. Paul knows the reality of this relationship in the very beginning as he admits:

My relationship with Susan was per-planned and fixed. During all these years I had thought about Susan but this is all an illusion as all lovers have this illusion. I have no words to explain our relationship but we continued making love in spite of every thing. (16)

The journey of Paul-Susan love affair is very interesting and sensational. Paul knows about the reality of his unnatural relationship but in his emotional volcano, he break away all conventions and blindly follows the music of heart. He feels uncountable passion for Susan and hides from his parents, friends and relatives but keeps on dating with her. He has determined to resist all temptations of the restrain imposed by the traditional society and has made up his mind to woo and to win Susan. Barnes has projected him as the pioneer of sex revolution of 1960s. He makes many attempts like the traditional lovers to woo Susan and after two years of secret love affair they move to London. Susan divorces her husband falls in the arms of Paul to satisfy her lust. Barnes argues that in the postmodern society of England women abuse sexual liberty and love to take young boys as husbands. In London things change as the bitter realty is troublesome to Susan and Paul. Susan suffers from guilty consciousness because she confronts reality in London. She realizes that she lost her lovely home and garden. She recollects the golden days that she spent in the village enjoying the company of her friends and daughters. The old sweet memories haunt her day and night and she feels sick and in order to escape the boredom of her life, she

119

gives herself to alcohol. She remembers how she hated her husband when he used to drink but now she is taking regular drinks to overcome the psychic pressures. Her daughters took the side of her husband and stopped talking to her. Her animalistic sexuality is exposed and she becomes a neurotic woman.

She realizes that the future is gloomy for her and she committed the blunder in her life being a slave of crude sexuality. Paul remarks thus:

That sex for her meant something different? That she was only going to bed with me for therapeutic reasons, because I might explode like a hot-water cylinder or car radiator if I didn't have this necessary release? And was there no equivalent of this in female sexual psychology. (56)

Susan is virtually ruined physically and mentally and becomes a neurotic wreck. She entrapped Paul to satisfy her sexual lust but her sex therapy is short lived. The other matters put heavy pressure on her and the guilt consciousness doesn't allow her sleep and rest. Paul too suffers as he spends most of the time in earning money to feed her. Susan suffers as the lengthy court mattes of property virtually shattered her mind and spirit. She was forced to live with fractured identity in London. Paul continues to live in the world of illusions tells false stories of his happiness to his friends but in realty he is broken up and is burdened by responsibility. Paul fails to confront the reality of life as he feels helpless and guilty. He has no choice but to believe the false excuse and pretences of Susan; he listens to her lies about drinking everyday and he gets enjoyment in his self- deception. There was a time when Susan was a free spirit of the village but now in London she has become a damaged spirit"

You realize that, even if she is the free spirit you imagined her to be, she is also a damaged free spirit. You understand that there is a question of shame at the bottom of it. Personal shame; and social shame. She may not mind being thrown out of the tennis club for being a Scarlet Woman, but she cannot admit to the true nature of her marriage. (90)

Susan was drinking not take revenge from Paul but to punish herself for her unnatural choice and sexuality. Barnes has depicted the loss of self of a beautiful Scarlet Woman in the hear-rending lyrical language. She is in the grip of multiple

psychological ailments. In the last section, she even stops drinking and becomes a borderline personality. The world of dreams is shattered and everything is lost. Paul writes thus:

> She seems to know that you are, or were, something in her life, but not that she once loved you, and loved her in return. Her brain is ragged, but her mood is strangely stable. The panic and pandemonium have drained out of her. She is alarmed by neither your arrival nor your departure. Her manner is satirical at times, disapproving at others, but always a little superior, as if you aren't a person of much consequence. You find all this agonising, and try to resist the temptation to believe that you deserve what you are getting. (156)

In the last section of the novel, the climax comes and Susan becomes a neurotic wreck losing her sensibility as she is disintegrated and her identity is fractured. Paul keeps struggling to save the relationship but he is forced at the end to accept the failure of his love project. He is ruined and Susan too is punished for her moral transgression. He comes to the conclusion that Susan is on the road to destruction and no power can save her but he must save himself from the inevitable ruin and destruction. He requests the daughters of Susan to take back her mother. Susan goes to her old home in the village and behaves like a stranger. She doesn't recognize anyone and her daughters pity their mother. She had become a living statue heading towards death. Paul too was an abnormal person who had lost his memory. Barnes describes his dismal situation thus:

> From a distance he realized that he had forgotten about the body of Susan because of stress and guilty consciousness. He remembered her face, her lovely eyes, her mouth and elegant ears. He couldn't forget the impressive face of Susan and her dashing posture in the tennis courts. There were photographs of her old dress when she was a tennis star; the scarlet women of the village" He couldn't remember her breasts, their shape their fall, their firmness or otherwise. He couldn't remember her legs, what form they look, and how she parted them and what she did with them when they made love. (164)

Briefly stated this love relationship ends in despair as both Paul and Susan suffer from endless trauma. Barnes gives the message of loyalty and sincerity in love affair; sexuality, lust and greed don't make a solid relationship. Paul Susan relationship was unnatural so it resulted into trauma and neurosis.

Barnes depicts the journey of each character allowing him full freedom; their choices, belief and faith in the values decide their sorrows and happiness. He holds a standard view of human nature. Memory plays great role in their lives and loss of memory is the chief cause of their sufferings. Susan forgets everything in the last phase of life when she returns her old home and is under the care of her daughters. Paul too suffers from dementia because he is too fragile to endure the traumatic experiences of love. Barnes says that "Past memory reveals the knowledge of the past" (89). The characters narrate their traumatic experiences; discuss their personal matters freely and readers are made as confidante. Each plot of the novel is loaded with new experiences and details of the lives of characters. They come in contact with many people and develop relations of their choice; good or bad and their character is determined by their encounters. It is interesting to note that each character of Barnes has his own philosophy of life and he strives to gain social awareness striving fidelity to the truth. The plots describe many events as we find in the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer there is variety and diversity of experiences. The analysis of their experience determines the strength and weakness of his characters. Toni, Chris, Paul, Stuart, Dmitri have their own independent view of life. Barnes protagonists give comments on the role of memory and the significance of history. Gillian has her unique perception of love, as discussed previously. She justifies her love making adventure claiming that it is her personal experience and choice. It is her social necessity. Barnes has narrated multiple events that are subjective leading to an interesting and entertaining solution of life. Each event narrated is full of excitement and is narrated as a source of instruction and entertainment. Bakhtin propounded the theory of a dialogue but Barnes employs the technique of monologue in the portrayal of his characters. The beliefs, perceptions and opinions of the characters are revealed through the way they speak. He has faithfully described the choices, whims and idiosyncrasies of the characters in dealing with the relationships. Mick Imah praises

the art of characterization of Barnes observing that his characters real portrayal belonging to the postmodern society" (89). Bakhtin's theory of polyphony manifests in Barnes's novels where multiple voices discuss various social and political issues freely. Each voice is conspicuous owing to a special use of their words, syntax and images. Stuart in the novel *Talking It Over* is introduced with his first important monologue saying: "My name is Stuart, and I remember everything" (2). He emerges as a smart guy who has exceptional confidence in making love relationship with Gillian. On the contrary, Gillian is a shy and a reticent girl who shows her reluctance to enter into conversation with Stuart. She simply remarks: "I haven't got anything to say" (3). But Oliver is a man of confidence; he talks in a natural manner: "I'm Oliver Russell, Cigarette?" (3). He is very smart to outwit Stuart and say with confidence: "I could tell you remembered me" (3). Barnes has portrayed the whims and sentiments of the characters relying on the theories of Surrealism and Postmodern. Love themes and love relationships form the basis of most of the plots of Barnes. He has a definite vision of love; he expresses his philosophy of love thus:

> As I move and start to nestle my shin against a calf whose muscles are loosened by sleep, she creates what I'm doing, and without walking reaches up with her left hand and pulls the hair off her shoulders on to the top of her head, leaving me her bare nap to nestle in. Each times she does this I feel a shudder of love at the exactness of this sleeping courtesy…At that moment, unconsciously, she's touched some secret fulcrum of my feelings for her. (224)

Oliver later observes that it is not certain what action will take place in the future. It is not easy to judge or predict the character's course of action. Linda Hutcheon argues that "Even the statement of an eye witness can be different and liable to be rejected. There cannot be one limited interpretation of what happened, another could be different" (Hutcheon 89). Each character in the novel gives his own statement about truth and describes events according to his own choice. This is done to win the sympathy of others: "We had different arguments and ideas and Oliver and Gillian and me differed with each other. Let me try and set down the opposing part of view" (3). Tim Adams argues thus:

All the three main characters of the novel are defense counsels as they provide their own version of truth and reality. They lead a misty life; they live together and at the same time live apart. They express their own selfish motives in their adventures of love making and sexual ventures. They are typical postmodern characters appealing to the emotions of other people and often they grow volcanic and disrupt the relationships. The repeated episodes of divorces separation and break ups intensify the theme of dissolution of self. (Adams 89)

Gillian is a restorer. Barnes employs the metaphor to dig out the hidden truth in the novel. Gillian explains the nature of her work in *Talking* it Over in a subjective manner: "You take off over paint and discover something underneath" (Barnes, *Talking* 59). But soon, Gillian clears the doubts, admitting that it is not easy to dig out the truth in life. "You're bound to go a little it too far or not quite far enough" (120). Oliver responds with his perspective on subjective truth: "Oh! Effulgent relativity! There's no real picture under there waiting to be revealed. What I've always said about life itself…It's just my word against everybody else's." (120). The characters begin their journey of life to dig out history of their experiences and struggle to explore the real meaning of life and truth. Often they discover that it is not easy to explore history as Barnes writes:

What we are left with, in the cases where we can know things at all, are rough estimate of what life with, in the cases where we can know things at all, are rough estimate of what life in another time must have been like history in this way becomes an artistic rather than an empirical endeavor. (123)

In life and the journey of life, experiences teach the real meaning of life; certainties become challenging as life becomes complex and taxing. John Bayley thinks that Barnes doesn't give the whole truth but depicts the relative truth. The characters have their own version of relationship, good or bad. Ironically, no character of Barnes feels satisfied with the love relationship because they fail to arrive at a certain understanding. In Paul and Susan's case, even close understanding gives them happiness. Paul dares to defy the traditional norms of society by falling in love with a

forty-year-old married woman. Susan, too, risks becoming scandalous in the village; she invites the wrath of her husband, who drags her into the courts on the property issue. He even intimidates Susan and keeps compelling her to return to him. He is a drunkard, and Susan hates him. Barnes employs the tools of irony and parody to depict Paul and Susan's love relationship. Paul sacrifices his parents' happiness and decides to marry Susan after two years of dating.

Susan marries Paul, who is an impressive young boy. She divorces her husband, who failed to give her sexual satisfaction. She married Paul to get sex therapy. But all the efforts proved counter-productive. She develops alcoholism and starts telling lies to Paul about her drinking habits. She dreams of happiness, but she gets neurosis and trauma. A love relationship collapses forever as the ripeness is all. Paul leaves with his last kiss to her daughters, and she becomes a borderline waiting for her death. Gillian remains inconsistent with Oliver and Stuart. She plans a fake quarrel in the street just to betray Stuart. But a nemesis falls on her, and she never finds peace and happiness. Her lover's relationship proves disastrous; what she plans is a real episode of her life. Barnes discussed this issue of uncertainty in an interview thus: "I like the kind of novel which deals with the real relationships and which leaves some things unresolved" (78).

The end of *Talking* it Over is uncertain and unresolved. Barnes argues that "In life, every ending is just the beginning of a new story" (93). Barnes' characters insist on the elusive nature of truth and are not very concerned about the relationship's collapse. Things happen to them naturally and spontaneously. The imagery of failure is repeated as the characters are conscious of their failures, but they accept it as if it is the creation of their imagination. Paul knows right from the beginning that he is on the wrong track. His love and intimacy with Susan is unnatural and unacceptable. He takes all decagons from his heart and never applies his brain and intellect. Paul can be excused because he is young and immature. He is just passionate and sexual. But it is tough to excuse the guilt of a married woman of forty years. The guilt of Susan is colossal; she should have thought about her grown-up daughters and the name, fame, and reputation of her husband, as well as the future of her two marriageable daughters. Susan took a drastic, unconventional step, and she suffered. For her, truth

is fragile, and life is meaningless. The institution of marriage is a sham. Barnes goes to the old scriptures to discuss the philosophy of love thus:

> We must be precise with love, its language and its gestures. If it is to save us, we must look at it as clearly as we should learn to look at death. Should love be taught in school? First term: friendship, second term: tenderness: third term: passion. Why not? Should love be taught in school? First term: friendship; second term: tenderness; third term: passion. Why not? They teach kids how to cook and mend cars and fuck one another without getting pregnant;and the kids are, we assume, much you don't know about love? They are expected to muddle through by themselves. Nature is supposed to take over. Like the automatic pilot on an aero-plane. Yet nature, on which we pitch responsibility for all cannot understand, isn't very good when set to automatic. Trusting virgins drafted into marriage never found Nature had all the answers when they turned out the light.
>
> Trusting virgins were told that love was the Promised Land, an ark on which two might escape the Flood. It may be an ark, but one on which anthropology is rife; an ark skippered by some crazy greybeard who beats you round the head with his gopher-wood stove and might pitch and might pitch you overboard at any moment. (229)

The relationship dialects of Barnes are rooted in the love philosophy of Barnes. He employs traditional and spiritual imagery and metaphor to describe the spiritual and transcendental power of love. It is a high type of love that has been the source of domestic felicity and an eternal source of happiness since the dawn of civilisation. Barnes's characters suffer because they revolt against the traditional mode of love- making. They switch over to the values of postmodern society and express their individualism. Barnes argues that love is as imperfect as reality in the postmodern culture. It isn't easy to understand the complexities of love. The history of the world is not linear, and people often fail to understand the real meaning of love, which is why they suffer the loss of self and alienation. In the "history of mankind,

there are numerous stories of love as love relationship is old and an enduring experience of human beings" (234). Barnes argues that love is a way of life and a source of eternal happiness. It is unfortunate that in the postmodern society, people have flouted the traditional norms of lovemaking and have reduced it to a source of sexual pleasure and a profession. Women characters in Barnes' novels divorce their husbands on petty issues and suffer. Barnes further explores the power of love thus:

> So where does love come in? Is it a useful mutation that helps the race survive? I can't see it. Was love implanted, for instance, so that warriors would fight harder for their lives, bearing deep inside the candlelit memory of the domestic hearth? Hardly; the history of the world teaches us that it is the new form of arrowed, the canny general, the full stomach and the prospect of plunder that are the decisive factors in war, rather than the sentimental minds drooling about home. (233)

Barnes gives the example of the great heroines of Shakespeare to illustrate the power of love. Men have always been after beautiful and charming women. No one control the passions of men as it is difficult to control the fire of love. Paul couldn't control the fire of love and fell in love with Susan who was like his mother. Barnes further argues thus:

> Our random mutation is essential because it is necessary. Love won't change the history of the world (that nonsense about Cleopatra's nose is strictly for sentimentalists) but it will do something much more important teach us to stand up to history, to argue its chin-out strut. I don't accept your terms, love says, sorry, you don't impress, and the way with a silly uniform, yet this is one of love's surer effects. (238)

Barnes argues that the history of the world is a source of inspiration for lovers to make love and establish healthy relationships. There are brutal episodes also in history when the warmongers robbed and raped women. He called these historical episodes examples of perversion and degradation of warmongers. For Barnes, love is a personal belief leading them to explore the truth of life. It is too late when Paul realises the real power of holy love. Susan, too, realizes the holy status of marriage in

London when she loses everything: her home, daughters, husband and the village and garden. Barnes states: "Love and truth, that's the vital connection, love and truth" (238). This punch line is the core of the plots of all his novels, and each character of Barnes realises this connection in his adventure of love-making. His love relationship collapses, and each character suffers psychological anguish because they fail to conform to the value and truth about love.

Barnes argues, "Dates don't tell the truth" (239). He argues that lovemaking is a serious affair, but postmodern people regard it as a passing time and only a source of seeking pleasure. Love is not a game; it is a way of life that leads an individual to understand the true meaning of truth. Barnes establishes his central thesis: "Only love provides the belief that we can obtain truth, even if we can't" (239). Ironically, Barnes's characters fail to achieve the ideal love but indulge in superfluous experimentation. Adrian experimented using cleverness and falsehood to hook the beloved Veronica of Toni Webster, who was his fast friend and impregnated her. The love relationship collapses, and Veronica has to pay the heavy price of her moral degradation. In the postmodern society, values are fast declining, and that is why people are suffering trauma. Barnes has investigated and researched the nature of love thus:

> The history of the world? Just voices echoing in the dark; images that burn for a few centuries and then fade, stories, old stories that sometimes seen to overlap: strange links, important connections. We lie here in out hospital bed of the present with a bubble of daily news drip-fed into our arm. We think we know who we are, though we don't quite why we are here, or how long we shall be forced to stay. And while we fret and writhe in bandaged uncertainty are we a voluntary patient? We fabulate. We make a story to cover the facts we don't know or can't accept; we keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them. Our panic and our pain are only eased by soothing fabulation; we call it history. (240)

Barnes uses the hospital metaphor to describe the sickness of postmodern human beings who fail to make a solid relationship. In all the stories of Barnes, the

characters explore the truth of love and true relationships. Unfortunately, people today don't know the real meaning of life and existence. They are living, and it is enough for them; they have grown sceptical, and each time, they create a false story to hide the facts of life and truth. They are like "voluntary patients lying in the bed in the hospitals" as they only fabulate. History, art, religion and all storytelling are just an interpretation of life, not about the truth of life. The fiction is written to investigate the real meaning of love and how to get authentic relationships. He argues that "love beats all." He concludes thus: "It's our only hope even if it fails us, although it fails us because it fails us. Am I losing precision? What I'm searching for is the right companion. Love and truth, yes, that's the prime connection" (243).

Barnes consistently argues that history will not teach the fundamental nature of love and that love cannot be obtainable through history. In the postmodern world, absolute truth is elusive. Jameson and Linda Hutcheon, and even Kierkegaard have contended that in the postmodern world, absolute truth is unattainable. Barnes develops this argument further:

> We all know objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs we shall have a multiplicity of subjective truth which we assess and then fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what really happened. The God-eyed version is a fake-a charming, impossible fake, like those medieval paintings which show all the stages of Christ's Passion happening simultaneously in different parts of the picture. But while we know this, we must still believe that objective truth is obtainable; or we must believe that is is 99 percent obtainable; or if we can't believe this we must believe that 43 percent objective truth is better than 42 percent. (244)

The real purpose of life is to know the absolute truth of love; this realisation alone can bring happiness and survival in society. He has discussed in detail the futility of human history and emphasised the understanding of the actual value of love. Each novel by Barnes is written to explore the real meaning of love. His characters make several experiments and enter into many love relations to find out the real meaning of love at the end of each novel. Love gives a real purpose in life, and

we must believe in it the way people read history to find the truth of life. Barnes concludes:

> And so it is with love. We must believe in it, or we're lost. We may not obtain it, or we may obtain it and find that it renders us happy; still we must believe in it. If we don't, then we merely surrender to the history of the world and to someone else's truth. (244)

For Barnes, love teaches hope in man's life; love expresses the individuality of human beings. Love is not pessimistic but inspires optimism in the life of man. Love empowers an individual to fight with the forces of chaos and disorder. Dmitri, in the novel *The Noise of Time*, gets inspiration from his wife Nita and fights with the oppressive forces of Stalin. He is on the rack and is threatened, but he finally submits to save his family. Dmitri doesn't betray anyone like Adrian but is true to his love and children. Love is comforting to him even in an oppressive and threatening environment. Barnes conveys hope in the novel, inspiring lovers to confront the forces of oppression boldly.

Love is hope and a source to explore the truth. Barnes says: "Yes, that's right, we can face history down" (244). History is oppressive, but love is dependable and constant; it expresses belief as it inspires human beings to explore truth and the real purpose of life. In daily life, an individual is involved in many activities such as sports, business and sexual functions, but all these worldly activities bring weariness and boredom. Love has the power to sustain life and to overcome exhaustion and boredom of life. "I dreamt that I woke up as the final line of the novel. It's the oldest dream of all human beings" (307).

The main problem is the interpretation and analysis of human experiences. In Barnes' novels, heaven is described as a dead object. Death, Meaning of life and Truth are anything that an individual wants. Barnes argues that death is fabulation like history. His characters in Dream don't struggle to find any meaning of heaven:

> "Does God exist for them? I asked.
>
> "Oh Surely,. But not for me?"

"It doesn't seem so. Unless you want to change your requirements of Heaven. I can't deal with that myself. I could refer you" (Barnes, Dream 300)

The novel's plot clearly states that truth is beyond man's reach. He can struggle to understand and explore truth, but real truth is beyond his reach. It is just an idea and Barnes develops this theme in the novels Flaubert's Parrot and A History of the World in 10/2 chapters. *Talking It Over* by Barnes depicts the triangular love relationship of three characters. Their monologues reveal their beliefs, obsession and attitude towards love- making adventure. The beginning of the story is simple and unconventional. Barnes employs effective postmodern strategies to depict the inner turbulent world of the characters. The three protagonists control and direct the plot. Oliver's fast friend Stuart marries Gillian. But on the wedding day, Oliver is excited and falls in love with Gillian. The love complications begin as there are two lovers and one woman. Barnes talks of memory at the beginning of the plot, and it becomes clear that the plot is a memory novel. The epigraph of the novel, too, lays stress on the memory: "He lies like an eyewitness, and this is a strange paradox. His attitude reveals his cunning nature as he relies on falsehood as he lies like an eye witness" (21).

The characters are presented as having faith in their memory. Stuart's introductory remark is repeated in the novel *Love, Etc*., after three years. He says: "Well we had met already and it has just happened; it is alright and under this situation you don't have to pretend the point is I remember you; I remember you very well" (3). Barnes has discussed in detail the role of memory in an individual's life and in building relationships. Toni Webster is a retired person leading a simple life at sixty-six. He recollects and reviews his experiences of life, contemplating his relationship with Veronica and the betrayal and suicide of his philosopher friend Adrian. In his memory, he recollects all the crucial events of his life and relations as he narrates his heart-rending sufferings caused by Adrian and his girlfriend Veronica, who betrayed him and got impregnated by Adrian. Barnes comments on the nature of memory:

The point about memory is this. I've noticed that most people over the age of forty winds like a chainsaw about their memory not being as good as it used to be, or not being as good as they wish it were. Frankly, I'm not surprised: look at the amount of garbage they choose to store. Picture to yourself a monstrous skip crammed with trivia: Strangely un-unique childhood memories, billion sports result, faces of people they don't plots of television soap operas, tips concerning how to clean red wine off a carpet, the name of their MP, that sort of things. What monstrous vanity makes them conclude that the memory wants to be clogged up with this sort of rubbish? Imagine the organ of reflection as a left-luggage clerk at some thrumming terminus who looks after you picayune possessions until you next need them. Now consider what you're asking him to take care of. And for so little money! And for so little thanks! It's no wonder the counter isn't manned half the time. (11)

The memories of Oliver and Stuart are fictional, and human beings can't have this kind of transcendental memory. Barnes suggests that memory has no limits, and Oliver's metaphor justifies the inexplicable depth of memory. Truth and reality are relative things. Gillian's introduction highlights this perspective, as discussed previously. The monologues of Oliver, Gillian and Stuart open new dimensions of truth. Barnes successfully describes the objective view of truth through the dialogues of his characters. Oliver argues, "Memory is an act of will, and is forgetting" (16). Many secrets about the depth of memory are revealed as the plot progresses. The trivial events narrated in the novel illuminate the multi-dimensional layers of memory. Barnes's characters demonstrate the real nature of truth and memory. In an interview, Barnes investigates the nature of memory and truth:

You don't have a choice. You're stuck with the sort of memory you've got, which is usually very precise in some areas and hopeless in other areas and constantly-as I increasingly begin to realize-constantly interfered with by your own rewriting of your own past. (53)

Barnes has put faith in the transcendental power of memory linked with the pursuit of the truth of life. Barnes has narrated the exact role of memory in the plots of his novels. Barnes comments thus:

> Human beings claim that they are the real arbiters of truth, and for a writer like me the truth is a relative term. As a writer you help in constructing the record of human experience and then you think your memory is the true one than those of other people change. (53)

The novels *Talking* It Over, and *Love, Etc*. investigates the problems of memory and truth through various relationships. The novel *Love, Etc* is a sequel to the novel *Talking It Over* by Julian Barnes. The novel was review by many critics and the reviewers. Peter Craven commented thus: "The ending of the novel is formidable ad the glitter of its lightness conceals depths, as much as it alludes to them, and there is magic, some of it murky, in this black comedy that seems familiar as one's own past" (Craven 2). Ron Charles in Christian Science Monitor commented thus: "The most enjoyable aspect of this initially entertaining and ultimately disturbing novel is the interplay of their voices" (Charles 31). Susannah Herbert reviewed the novel in the Daily Telegraph. She said: "The wonder of this book is its apparent simplicity, its apparent slowness, the exactness and delicacy of its observations, the absolute fitness of the form for the story" (34). Elaine Showalter commented thus in The Guardian thus:

> *Love, Etc* is the gothic version of *Talking* It Over, in which romantic comedy has turned into madness and horror, in life, of course, there are depressives, sadists and masochists, but I found it difficult to believe in the psychological evolution of these particular characters much less to care about them. (Showalter 76)

The plot of the novel deals with the problems of love, sex, and truth. Valentine Cunningham observed in The Independent thus: "What is especially good about Love Etc is the way that its essayistic inclinations are buckled on to more common fictional urges, such as telling stories about people in and out of love, getting on or not and getting (Cunningham 23). Dale Peck of The New Republic stated thus: "I once heard the novel defined as "everything not mentioned in the jacket copy" and by that

yardstick, there is not much book here at all. If anything, there is less inside than on the covers" (Peck 2). Hugo Barnacle of New Statesman observed that "the novel is readable and intelligent, yet ultimately quite depressing and its tone of primal gloom seems heartfelt, an attribute not only of the characters, but of the work itself" (Barnacle 11). Interestingly, the novel *Love, Etc.* plot feels a bit forced as it doesn't diminish the sinister power of this twice-told morality tale. No reader remains unscathed by the dangers of narrative seduction. Indeed, the novel is perfect, penetrating and subtle; it is a specimen of Barnes's skill and wit. The close study of the plot reveals that it is darker, a meandering saga of middle-age disappointment and bitterness and regret hidden in the disguised tale of revenge. Barnes has recognised that love is one hell of a problem. The concept of love is noble, but often lovers are involved in harrying, heckling, niggling and smothering activities to hit at each other in revenge. The plot gives a darker vision of love and life in this novel. The beauty of the plot is his insights with his penetrating wit and verbal virtuosity. Julian Barnes published his novel *Talking* it Over in 1991, presenting the love triangle of Oliver, Stuart and Gillian. Oliver gives the typical theory of love thus, which forms the core of the plot: "The world divides into people for whom love is everything, and the rest of life is a mere etc. and people who don't value love enough and find the most exciting part of life is the etc." (Barnes, *Talking* 23).

Stuart migrated to America, where he was successful; he opened restaurants and soon became an organic food supplier. He married, but his marriage was not a resounding success. His wife Terri gives the running commentary of Stuart's life and achievements in the novel, which appear in the plot like a shadow. She describes his transformation in the plot. Gillian and Oliver had two daughters, and they left France and returned to England. Gillian becomes a successful art restorer, but Oliver is still a failure in life. Stuart also returns to England and insinuates himself in the lives of Oliver and Gillian. Stuart recollects the past and gets involved once again with Gillian. Time is turned back again as he installs them in his old house. Stuart is now a man of action; on the contrary, Oliver is weak and indecisive. Ellie is an assistant to Gillian, who acts as a pawn for Gillian, Oliver, and Stuart. Ellie is satisfied with her empty relationship with Stuart. Oliver allows Stuart in his old house to cook and fix it.

He even takes the job from him. The novel is not a happy romance as it depicts the postmodern concept of love and life in surreal, witty language. His older daughter Sophie is also surprised at her father's uncanny behaviour.

Hyperreality of Julian Barnes

The conspicuous feature of the fiction of Julian Barnes is his passion for depicting hyperreality. Baudrillard (1994) gave insight into how the simulation of reality could be depicted in art and fiction. The process of simulation distorts the distinction between reality and illusion. The process "threatens the difference between the true and the false, the real and the imaginary" (Baudrillard 4). Often, the images and signs become the representation of reality. It is a stage where imitation is seen as real. A simulacrum imitates things that exist in reality, such as a person, a location or an object. Simulation is the process of replacing reality and creating hyper reality. Baudrillard has given the four stages of its development:

1. It is the reflection of a profound reality
2. It masks a profound reality
3. It masks the absence of a profound reality
4. It has no relation to any reality

The fiction of Julian Barnes gives us his concept and application of postmodern hyper reality. In his novel The Sense of Ending, Barnes gives his hyper reality of memory. Tony recalls events from his high school history classes. He explores his responsibility and the chain of responsibility, referring to his memory. He says;

> We like a game that ended in a win and loss, not a draw. And so for some, the Serbian gunman, whose name is long gone from my memory, had one hundred percent individual responsibility: take him out of the equation, and the war would never have happened" (Barnes, *Ending* 11).

Tony recalls the faces. The occupation and other characteristic features and even names to evoke the familiar effect through his memory. He says: "Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange" (18). Toni talks of a possible sin of bias, a ubiquitous theme in Barnes' novels. He

applies the current knowledge, feelings and opinions on past events to explore the depth of hyperreality. He says:

> But of course, my desire ascribe responsibility might be more a reflection of my own cast of mind than a fair analysis of what happened. That's one of the central problems of history, isn't it, Sir? The question of subjective versus objective interpretation, the fact that we need to know the history of the historian in order to understand the version that is being put in front of us. (12)

Barnes explores the hyperreality of history through Toni's memory in this novel. He concludes that history seeks objectivity, and this principle leads to the distortion of reality and personal memories of life. He uses the phrase "factual memory", observing that this is the only thing he remembers and the rest is distorted. He says: "I was so ill at ease that I spent the entire weekend constipated: this is my principal factual memory. The rest consists of impressions and half-memories which may therefore be self-serving" (27).

Toni is under social distress as he explores the depth of his memories to know the truth, reality, and its connection with hyperreality. He believes that his physical condition would undoubtedly affect his experiences. He wants to have the hard evidence of his memory, but despite his hard work, the original image is lost. He says:

> Yes, why her, and why then; furthermore, why ask? Actually, to be true to my own memory, as far as that's ever possible, what he said was that he and Veronica were already going out together, a state of affairs that would doubtless come to my attention sooner or later; and so it seemed better that I heard about it from him. (40)

Tony is an ambivalent character who is not sure of his memory and of the experiences of the past. His confrontation with the real and the surreal world is chaotic and disorderly. He confesses thus: "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" (41). Toni argues that the memories might be true, but often, when we recollect them, they get distorted. They appear in the form of

images and fragments, and the truth is lost. Tony struggles to understand the situation thus:

> But our lives were already going in different directions and the shared
> memory of Adrian was not enough to hold us altogether. Perhaps the
> lack of mystery about his death meant that case was more easily closed
> We should remember him all our lives of course. (52)

Barnes effectively uses the metaphor of shared memory in the novel to depict the illusion of memory in his life. People may naturally remember the same things from the past but tend to place them in their own specific way. Barnes also points to the idea that missing facts, incompleteness of information, and mystery add to one's curiosity.

Schacter contends that everyday experience, as well as laboratory studies, show that a heightened level of emotion increases a person's ability to remember" (Schacter 162). Tony says:

> We live with such easy assumptions, don't we? For instance, that
> memory equals events plus time. But it's is all much older than this.
> Who was it said that memory is what we thought we'd forgotten? And
> it ought to be obvious to us that time doesn't act as a fixative, rather as
> a solvent. But it's not convenient-it's useful-to believe this; it helps us
> get on with our lives, so we ignore it. (Barnes, *Ending* 59)

Tony had been struggling in his life to discover the nature of memory in the novel. He claims that "memory equals events plus time," but he fails to recognize that memory refers to events which he had forgotten and could refer to an incident in his life of which he has no concrete information. Plhakova argues that Tony is a confused and bewildered character as he fails to explore the real nature of his memory; his memory recollection process could refer to the fact that long-term memory stores the information for a very long time" (203). Memory for Toni had become a mechanism reiterating apparently truthful data with little variation. He says: "I stared into the past, I waited, I tried to trick my memory into a different course. But it was no good" (60). Barnes had laid emphasis on the words "variation" and apparently" and described the turbulent and depressed mind of Tony. His efforts of recollection of the

past is transient and disgusting as he doesn't find the solution to problems in his life. He struggles to form a compelling image of himself. He says:

> I recognized at that moment another reason for my determination. The diary was the 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. (72)

Tony's diary is the main point in the novel as it brings a turning point in the story. His diary serves as the retrieval and the beginning of his guilt consciousness. He recollects how he had been very cruel to his friend, who had committed suicide. He says:

> And now I began to elaborate a different life for Veronica's brother, one in which his student years glowed in his memory as filled with happiness and hop. Indeed, as the one period when his life had briefly achieved that sense of harmony we all aspire to. (74)

Veronica's brother made a particular impression on Tony that grew into Tony's idea of what the brother's future life must look like over the years. Tony's memories are affected by his current opinions and attitudes. A complex cycle of hopes and fears begins in Tony's life. He admits thus:

> But I've been turning over in my mind the question of nostalgia, and whether I suffer from it. I certainly don't get soggy at the memory of some childhood knickknack; 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 in. 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. (76)

Tony corrected his self-image and reassessed his role in the past events accordingly.

> I didn't know why I wanted to know. But as I say, I had no sense of urgency. It was like not pressing on the brain to summon a memory. If I didn't press on—what?—time, then something, perhaps even a solution, might come to the surface. (127)

Barnes argues that truth is not a theoretical issue, but it becomes a practical problem affecting the happiness of the partners involved in a love relationship. Three individuals from different backgrounds join a love partnership to enjoy happiness in life, but their greed, selfishness, and the spirit of manipulation ruin the spirit of the relationship. Barnes indicates that obsession with memory and truth has been predominant when he wrote novels. His characters express this burden in their interaction. There are recurrent references to this burden as the characters are confronted with malign and destructive forces to discover the truth's real meaning. The oppressive power of Stalin haunts Dmitri, and he has sleepless nights. He would keep his suitcase ready at night, fearing the attack of the soldiers at any time carrying the guns. He was always worried about the safety and security of his wife, Nita, and children. Barnes's insecurity is reflected in his plots. The forces of love and friendship defeat Toni Webster; he couldn't believe someone could stoop so low to impregnate his beloved Veronica.

The novels of Barnes demonstrate the conflict between art and fiction and truth and the existential challenges. The imagery of doom and disorder recur in *The Only Story* of Barnes. Paul tries to depict the mystery of his love relationship thus:

> I realized that this was probably the last in the history of the world that I wanted or could ever want. Perhaps you've understood a little too quickly; I can hardly blame you. We tend to slot any new relationship we come across into a pre-existing category. We see what is general or common about it; whereas the participants see feel-only what is understood. (Barnes, *Story* 16)

In the novel's third section, Paul recollects his harrowing past like Toni Webster; it is a time when he has lost everything. Being guilty and remorseful, he creates a scene and imagines himself sitting near the seashore in his old age. Barnes effectively uses the imagery of seawater and old age to describe the cyclical nature of life and the transient nature of life. Paul is passing through the worst period of his life; his wife has become a neurotic wreck; he has lost his reputation in society because of his scandalous affair; the bitter reality of life is biting him. Paul comments on memory and truth thus:

Some people when they grow old, decide to live by sea. They watch the tides approach and recede, foam bubbling on the beach, further out the breakers, and perhaps, beyond all this, they hear the oceanic waves of time, and in such hinted outer vastness, find some consolation for their own minor lives and impending morality. He preferred a different liquid, with its own movements and its own destination. But now nothing eternal in it; just milk turning into cheese. He was suspicious of the grander view of things and wary of indefinable yearnings. (134)

Gillian also uses the images of excavation as a restorer. She struggles to uncover the real picture beneath the paint on the wall:

Your job is very exciting; when you rub the paint you discover something exciting underneath. This doesn't happen always but your venture is very exciting and natural. You discover something new and its result is quite satisfying. You have discovered how in the nineteenth century a painter painted an awful lot of breasts. You are cleaning an old portrait of an Italian noble woman and there you discovered a suckling baby. And this woman happens to be a Madonna of the Renaissance. (Barnes, *Talking* 61)

Barnes employs the techniques of modern restoration to describe the significance of truth. Gillian is engaged in her job without knowing that she is doing the job of Barnes and is exploring the depth of truth. The metaphor is effectively employed in the dialogue between Stuart and Gillian:

You discovered something new; the portrait of a woman with baby suckling. Yes you have discovered truth can when you're hosed off all. But there must be a point…you know that what you see before you is what the chap would have to the point seen before him when he stopped painting all those centuries ago. (22)

Oliver concludes that no objective truth is available in the postmodern world. Man's quest is a sham because he has no power to cope with the external forces. All human relations collapse because of the incompetency of the partners. It is very difficult today to put faith in others like the Greeks did. Oliver doesn't express his

surprise because he is also such a character, and he admits, "That's what I'm like. I spend days cleaning the gook off pictures, so naturally I do with him too-Spit and rub, he says-No harsh solvents necessary, just spit and rub, and soon you're down to the real Oliver" (183).

Barnes' characters frequently ponder whether life is like a novel's storyline. They fail to comprehend the objective truth in their life. They struggle, grapple, and design new love relationships, believing it is a social necessity. Ironically, each tie leads to the awareness of truth. Their struggles lead to enlightenment about life and truth, and art becomes an important medium to explore realty. Oliver believes that life is a narrative of a tale packed with events. He uses communication to begin his relationship with Gillian, hoping to enjoy the fruits of love and happiness. He believes that love alone can give satisfaction to people in the harsh environment of the world. Paul breaks away from all traditional conventions in *The Only Story* as he falls in love with a middle-aged woman. He meets Susan on the tennis court, and the image of the tennis ball is very effective.

Paul is tossed over like a ball and falls into Susan's net willingly and with the impulse of passionate love. He tries to get away from Susan, but he feels helpless as the passion and fire of love blinds his sensibility and clouds his reason:

> He tried to get his mind to catch her on the wing. To remember her gaiety, her laughter, her subversiveness and her love for him, before everything became occluded. His dashingness, and her gallant attempt to make happiness when the odds were always against he, always against them. Yes, this was what he was after: Susan happy, Susan optimistic, despite not having much of a clue what the future held. That was a talent, a lucky slice of her character. He himself tended to look at the future and decide from an assessment of probabilities whether optimism or pessimism; she brought her temperament to life. It was more risky, of course; it brought more joy, but it left no safety net. Still, he thought, at least they hadn't been defeated by practicality. (Barnes, *Story* 136).

Barnes believes that art alone can help man to dig out the truth. Paul explores the real truth about life when he comes in contact with Susan on the tennis court. His love relationship opens new vistas of knowledge about the harsh realities of life and the world. He learns that life cannot be ruled by passion and animalistic sexuality. It is tough to escape social taboos as they are more potent than bombshells. Barnes argues thus:

> The story of our life is never an autobiography, always a novel-that's the first mistake people make. Our memories are just another artifice, go on, admit it. And second mistake is to assume that the plodding commemoration of previously feted detail, enlivening through it might be in a novel" (54).

Talking It Over (1991) is written by Julian Barnes. Barnes deals with a number of themes in this present novel. However, the dominant theme of this novel is the 'theme of love'. According to Julian Barnes.com: "The ostentatious Oliver falls in love with quite Gillian and wants to marry her - The problem? Gillian has already married Oliver's best and oldest friend, the somewhat stale but stable Stuart" (1). This novel was published in 1991 and presents a fairly conventional triangular relationship but applies an original narrative technique. In this novel, Julian Barnes shows that Stuart and Oliver are good friends. By nature, Stuart is dull and an investment banker, and his friend Oliver, a pedantic and unfulfilled soul, is a teacher of English to foreigners, Gillian, who is trained in social work and later a picture restorer. Stuart meets Gillian and marries her. Later on, Oliver is also attracted to Gillian and falls in love with her. Gillian takes a divorce from Stuart and marries Oliver. Now, Stuart has become desperate and left for the United States. Here, he has become a successful businessman and has found a new partner. Meanwhile, Oliver, who has successfully won the hand of fair Gillian, has started his family but luckily has fallen on hard times. But Stuart has become successful in earning money. When he returns to London on holiday, he hires a room in the hotel near their house. So that he could watch their movements from the hotel windows. At the story's beginning, Gillian is impressed by Stuart's peace but later gets carried away by Oliver's tricky charm. Lastly, she again tries to restore Stuart's peace of mind. According to Merritt

Moseley, "One of the three lovers in '*Talking* it Over (1991) concludes that love - "or what people call love - is just a system for getting people to call you Darling after sex."(Moseley 257). Thus, Barnes tells the story of the three interrelated relationships - the unlikely but lasting friendship between Stuart and Oliver and the changing relationships between Gillian and the two men. The novel tells the story of three friends: Stuart, Oliver and Gillian. In the novel, Gillian expresses her inner self and feelings about love: "Of course I liked him - you can't not like Oliver once you get to know him - but he did tend to monopolies things. I'm not complaining. I'm just making a small correction. That's the trouble with talking it over like this. It never seems quite right to the person being talked about. I met Stuart. I fell in love. I married. What's the story?" (Barnes, *Talking* 39) Here is a very straightforward expression about love made by Gillian. Really, she loves Stuart, but she is always aware of her own identity. She criticises in a normal way the monopoly of Oliver. No doubt, Oliver's style of speech and personality impressed her so much, but her inner self is not ready to put away her own identity by accepting Oliver's monopoly. Though Gillian is in love with Stuart and Oliver, she is very much aware of her identity. Matthew Pateman states, "If the notion of love is constructed from the discourses that seemingly describe it, then so are individual identities. Identity in the novel is seen as being constructed in two ways. This is either a case of self-representation or a case of other-presentation (that is, being talked about or to by another" (Pateman 7). All these descriptions indicate that she loves Stuart as her husband but is very aware of her identity. She also loves Oliver but rejects and protests the nature of his monopoly (Barnes, *Talking* 263). Romantic Love is generally accepted as, "It distinguishes moments and situations within intimate relationships to an individual as contributing to a significant relationship connection" (8). Later on, Julian Barnes expresses his worldview in this novel. His characters are based on Freud's principle of psychology. When Gillian was fourteen or fifteen years old, her father decamped her, making her lose her mental and physical security. This indicates that she depended on her father, Gordon, before her marriage. This natural connection between daughter and father forms the basis of 'Freudian Psychology.' This theory is also called the Oedipus complex. Here, the relationship between

Oedipus and his daughter, Electra, in Greek Mythology is explained using complex. In this novel, Gillian has this concept. According to Oliver's point of view, Gillian sought a substitute in Stuart, whom she married after her father left Mrs Wyatt, her mother. Now, Oliver observes Gillian as, "What the girl is doing is seeking a replacement for the security that was roughly torn from her; she is looking for a father who won't desert her" (43). Though it is a Freudian Psychology applied to the character of Gillian it is her love about Stuart. She has found the qualities within his personality that grows in her mind. It might be a replacement, but Gillian accepts it as her sheer love for Stuart. With the entry of Gillian into their life of, Stuart has transformed everything that occurs in his life. Because his conscience and inner voice now changed, it means he loves the word now in the company of Gillian, and he expresses it as, "I love that word. Now. It's now; it's not then any more. "Then has gone away. It doesn't matter that I disappointed my parents. It doesn't matter that I disappointed myself. It doesn't matter that I couldn't ever myself across to other people. That was then, and then's gone. It's now now" (52). No doubt, there is a transformation in the nature and behaviours of Stuart's life in the company of Gillian. It's a greatness of Gillian's mind that she has accepted Stuart as he is, and he expresses,

> No, what's happened is this. I've stayed the same as I was before but now it's all right to be what I was before. The princess kissed the frog and he didn't turn into a handsome prince but that was all right because she liked him as a frog. And if I had turned into a handsome prince Gillian would probably have shown me-him-the door. She doesn't go for princess, Gillian. (53)

It means that the entry of Gillian is very significant, valuable and appreciative in the life of Stuart. Oliver asserts that life is a novel that helps the readers dig out the truth of life. Art is the real medium through which we can understand life's and the universe's mysteries. He constructs a world with Gillian and creates real fiction about his life. All characters in the novel fictionalise their experiences to discover life's truth. Oliver makes a historical statement asserting firmly that a book is not the autobiography of a man's life. The book is fiction, but the reading of it gives an

experience to dig out the truth. Art is essential in life, and for Stuart, life and fiction are interconnected: He admits," I read more than I used to" (80). In the novel Love Etc. he makes the following observation:

> Non-fiction, History, science, biography. I like to know that what I'm being told is true. From time to time I'll read a novel, if there's one people are going on about. But stories aren't enough like life for me. In stories, someone gets married and that's the ending-well, I can tell you from my own personals experience that this isn't the case. In life, ending is just the start of another story. Except when you die-that's an ending that's really an ending. I suppose of novels were true to life, they'd all end with all the characters dying, but if they did, we wouldn't want to read them, would they? (Barnes, Love 57)

Barnes has depicted the real relationship between art and life and the importance of struggles in life. Art is a continuous journey, and each love relationship is based on certain compulsions and choices. Each relationship is an important journey of life revealing characters' dispositions, beliefs, and perceptions. Barnes argues thus: "History and biography, we have seen, hardly follow with Stuart's assessment that what I'm being told is true" (57). The final observations of Gillian are remarkable:

> I've got an idea. It's scarcely a plan, but not yet. But the main thing is that I can't, I mustn't tell Oliver. There are two reasons for this. The first is that I can't, I mustn't tell Oliver. There are two reasons for this. The first is that I can't trust him to do the right thing unless it's real. If I ask him to do something, he 'll mess it up, he'll turn it into a performance and it's got to be real. (267)

The cracks in the relationship between Gillian and Oliver appear because the problem with them is the lack of mutual understanding and trust. Gillian is very clever as she has no faith in Stuart or Oliver. Her love relationship is a sham; it is a convenient contrast to promote her manipulations. She wants to stage an artificial scene, and the role of irony and wit is very effective. She is never serious about life and relationships. She believes in art based on falsehood. She creates a false truth to

outwit her lovers. She is conscious of the power of truth but still relies on deception and manipulation. Paul knows he is doing something wrong in making a love relationship with a married woman, but he listens to the heart and neglects the arguments of his brain. Gillian is fear-ridden as she admits: "I feel fear-ridden; I am fearful thinking that what I am showing may not come true" (271). Gillian wants to rely on falsehood to be accurate and believable. She fears that the truth of her manipulation may not lead to violence. She is staging a drama based on falsehood to betray Oliver and entrap Stuart. Oliver reacts in the way she had feared. The tables are turned on her, and the relationship is broken like a house of cards:

> So I just hit her, hit her across the face with the keys in my hand and her face got cut, and I thought I was going to break and looked at her as if to stay, surely this isn't real, is it? Stop the film. Punch the rewind button, it's only a tape, isn't it? (273)

This is the novel's climax; it is a point that illustrates the power of truth in life. Falsehood is short living, and it often leads to violence. As the relationships break, Gillian's true fears surface and she is forced to confront reality unwillingly. Her pretensions are exposed, giving comfort to Stuart and Oliver. Barnes has given many interpretations and reactions to a minor episode of the characters, but there is no confusion about art or the depth of truth. When Stuart returns, a series of changing views and the emotional volcano subsides. Stuart enjoys sex with Gillian, and Oliver relaxes upstairs. No one knows who loves whom and whose observation about truth is correct. Lovemaking begins in a typical style, forgetting the violent scene of fraud and betrayal.

Stuart tells a different version of reality, but Gillian damages the real story. She says, "It didn't happen as I said it did. I wanted you to keep the good opinion you have of Stuart assuming you do. Perhaps I was working out the last bit of guilt I felt towards him. The way I told you is the way I have liked it to happen" (58).

The love-making relationship collapses when Stuart rapes Gillian betraying her and expressing his lust. Gillian is not serious about love as she admits: "What people want to know, whether they ask it directly or not, is how I fell in love with

Stuart and married him, then fell in love with Oliver and married him, all within at short a space as is legally possible" (15).

Gillian is not satisfied and has no moral scruples in her voluptuous love-making drama. She is a typical woman lost in her trivial love games and living the sex bouts with two, Oliver and Stuart. She admits thus:

> I genuinely loved Stuart. I fell in love with him straightforwardly, simply. We got on, the sex worked, I loved the fact that he loved me-and that was it. And then, after we were married, I fell in love with Oliver, not simply at all, but very complicatedly, and entirely against my instincts and my reason. (15)

Gillian is a typical New Woman of Julian Barnes with an independent view of love and sex. She is in a relationship with two men to explore the depth of love in life. In her case, the Self and the Other relationship had been critically examined and established by Barnes in this novel as he explored the multidimensional aspects of love and sex.

Gillian says: "Everyone knows that it was all about sex, that Stuart wasn't much good in bed, where as Oliver was terrific, and that while I might look pretty level-headed I'm a flirt and a tart and probably a bitch as well" (16).

He is not serious about love but is fired by sexual passions. The truth about real love is exposed as no loving partner is serious and worried about the future of their relationship. Oliver is Stuart's old pal, although both are contradictory characters. Stuart hates Oliver's irresponsible attitude, and Oliver always laughs at Stuart. Their mutual understanding further erodes when Gillian enters into their world. Both become rivals as Stuart becomes crazy about Gillian and her sexy body. He is after her and is determined to take her away from Oliver. "The problem was with her face which is deceptive and miraculous. There is a famous story when a man was turned into a beetle and it was the beetle who woke up and found himself transformed" (123). In the first section of the novel, Gillian is presented as a soft-spoken and reserved type of girl. She tries to understand the nature of Oliver and Stuart. She says: "I have nothing to say in this matter. I don't know why most the people insist on wasting their lives on you. I don't understand why they are doing so?

Why don't they get on with things? Why they have to discuss this matter any way?" (51). Gillian ironically exposes the passionate sentiments of her two lovers. Oliver understands the ironic remark of Gillian, but he takes it silently. He simply remarks thus: "Yes I do know it's bad for my health as a matter of fact, that's why I like it. God, we've only lust and you're coming on like some rampant nut-eater. What's it got to do with you anyway?" (89). Oliver wastes no time planning to hook Gillian, who is a thirty-year-old mature lady. She is happy in her married life, but her marriage is ruined by Oliver, who is jealous of his friend; Oliver consciously plans to betray his friend in his passionate fire of sex. It is not love that motivates him but the animalistic fire of sex.

Oliver wins and motivates Gillian to divorce Stuart. They move to a French village, but Stuart gets information from Gillian's mother and goes there to take revenge on Gillian and Oliver. He watches her lurking in the hotel room. Stuart feels frustrated in his relationships. He expresses his disappointment in his love life thus: I can see that now, it wasn't just me going through it- I used to think that I was disappointing Gillian. I thought, here we go again: I failed my parents in some way they never quite explained to me, and now I'm failing my wife in some new but equally unfathomable way. Then, a bit later, I began to realise that it wasn't me who'd disappoint her, it was they who'd disappointed me. My wife let me down, my best friend let me down, it was only my character and my bloody tendency to feel guilt that made me not see this before. They let me down. And so I formulated a principle. I don't know if you follow rugby, but some years ago there was a famous saying in the game: Get your retaliation in first. And now the way I live my life is according to this principle: Get your disappointment in first. Disappoint them before they disappoint you''(226). Gillian has a poor opinion of Oliver and Stuart's friendship. She remarks thus: "I believe that Stuart and Oliver are two opposite poles in this world. They are growing differently and in different directions. On the surface of it, to some extent, Stuart has become a sensible man, but Oliver still is buried in an abyss of unfulfilled potential" (89).

Stuart doesn't hold a good opinion about Oliver; he is a selfish and irresponsible man who cannot even save his job. He comments: " So you see, in a way I've come round to Oliver's point of view, to what he was insultingly trying to

explain to me when we were both drunk and I ended up nutting him.Love operates according to market forces, he said, as a justification for stealing my wife. Now, a bit older and a bit wiser, I'm beginning to agree: love does have many of the same properties as money''(233). In the final chapter, Gillian speaks of reality.She remarks thus: ''Love, respect, fancy. I thought I'd got all three with Stuart. I thought I 'd got all three with Oliver. But may be three's not possible. May be the best you can get is two, and the Hold button is always on the blink''(253). The approach of lovemaking of the lovers is ambiguous. They cannot distinguish between lovemaking and rape. Barnes concludes thus to clear all doubts in the lovemaking of the lovers:

> We talk of the suspension of disbelief as the mental prerequisite for enjoying fiction, theatre, film, representational painting. It's just words on a page; actors on a stage or screen, colours on a piece of canvass… Yet while we read, while our eyes explore, we believe Emma lives and dies, that Hamlet kills Laertes, that this brooding fur-trimmed man and

> his wife might step out of their portrayals by Lotto and talk to us in the
> Italian of the sixteenth century Brescia. (60)

In each novel, Barnes represents a relationship based on love and falsehood. The purpose is to explore the truth and to convey the fundamental importance of love relationships in society. The views, opinions, and beliefs of various partners of love are discussed, and many interpretations are given that are not final as suggested by Gillian's remarks about Oliver: ''He seemed terribly exotic when I first met him; now he seems less colourful. It's not just the effect of time and familiarity, either.It's that here the only English person he's got to set him off is me, and that's not really enough.He needed someone like Stuart around. It's the same as colour theory.When you put two colours side by side, that affects the way you see each of them. It's exactly the same principle''(256). The memory of the characters is analysed to arrive at the truth. Barnes insists that fiction can tell the truth and art is the accurate interpretation of life. He comments thus:

> What I mean by this is that though he doesn't write postmodern
> fiction- there is a narrative, and a story, and characters and structure,
> after all-he nonetheless believe that truth is anti-linear, anti-narrative,
> and amorphous and unobtainable. The meaning and the purpose are in
> the search, and not the end result; and this obsession appears again in
> the works. (64)

To conclude, the characters in Barnes's novels search for answers to deeply troublesome questions about human experience in the contemporary era. Sometimes, they confront very serious questions about human purpose, the politics of race, gender, and nationality, or how technology is going to affect our lives. Other times, they seem trivial but mask more profound human concerns. The final chapter, "The Dream", portrays heaven as a place where everyone gets exactly what they want heaven to be. The narrator's vision of heaven is corporeal and sybaritic: he spends his time playing golf, eating, shopping, having sex, and meeting famous people. This, too, is a transformation in genre: Barnes depicts Heaven not, as is conventional in art, as an ethereal realm of peace, serenity and spiritual grace, but one that offers activities that represent the dominant values of selfish, narcissistic, and materialistic twentieth-century society. But once the novelty of this wears off, he decides that he also needs

to be judged: "It's what we all want, isn't it? I wanted, oh, some kind of summing up;
I wanted my life looked at" (293). He gets what he wants and a "nice old gent"
reviews his history and concludes, simply: "You're OK." When the narrator expects a
little more, the old gents says, "No, really, you're OK," a summation which leaves
him feeling a "bit disappointed" (294). Even this extremely shallow narrator

conceives of heaven as a place where questions are answered, lives are validated, and the world is made sense of, but this fiction is revealed to be hollow. Not only does he learn that "getting what you want all the time is very close to not getting what you want all the time" (309), but pressing existential questions go unanswered. For Barnes, dreams of heaven and a "just God" may help some endure history's violence, universal entropy, and death, but they are ultimately a kind of self-delusive wishful thinking.

Role of Memory in the Novels of Julian Barnes

Memory plays a pivotal role in the novels of Julian Barnes. The narrators describe the experiences of their lives and recall the events of the past. Mark A. Oakes and Ira E. Hyman, Jr. in their article titled The Changing Face of Memory and Self: False Memories, False Self state that "Memory is always constructed. What people remember will be constructed from remaining materials and from general schematic knowledge structures….The fact that memory is constructed also means that history is constructed" (62). Hence, with the fallible memory, the narrative and the individual history or history in general also appears unreliable. Harmon and Holman described the expression unreliable narrator in A Handbook to Literature (2006) as a "narrator who may be in error in his understanding or report of things and who thus leaves readers without the guides needed for making judgments" (537). However, it was Wayne C. Booth who discovered and formulated the concept of unreliable narrator in The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961).

David Gallo defines memory in his article on "Associations and Errors through History" that "Memory is not simply recording of the past, but is a deliberate "piecing-together" of retrieved information and other relevant information in an effort to make sense of the past"(13). However, efforts to recollect memories can turn out to be fatal if the recollected memories prove fallible. For not all memories are authentic and genuine. They undergo changes and are often constructed by the individual consciously or unconsciously. It is best explained by Daniel L. Schacter, who formulated seven types of faulty memory, which he termed as "The Seven Sins of Memory". These seven sins of memory are transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias and persistence. Among them, it is a sin of

transience (forgetting past events), which is frequently found in the literature. Julian Barnes states that:

I wanted to write a book about time and memory, about what time does to memory, how it changes it, and what memory does to time. It's also a book about discovering at a certain point in your life that some key things that you've always believed were wrong. This is something that I started thinking about a few years ago, and it's probably one of the preoccupations that you have as you age. You have your own memories of life, you've got the story that you tell mainly to yourself about what your life has been. And every so often these certainties are not. Something happens, someone reports something from 20 or 30 years ago, and you realize that what you'd believed is not the case. So I wanted to write about that. (Barnes, Guardian 123)

Dissolution of Self

Most of the characters of Julian Barnes experience dissolution of self as their diverse experiences are traumatic. In their journey of life, they experience alienation, and often, they lead a lonely life. The characters must play a double role in their life to survive. This double role-playing results in the fragmentation of the self. The novel, *Before She Met Me* by Julian Barnes depicts the themes of jealousy and sexuality. It is to be noted that while the novel is not of the selected works, contextualizing it aids to frame Barnes' ideology and the theoretical framework of the research to further support the thesis. According to the traditional concept of realism, the story has a historical value of the absolute and irrefutable truth. In postmodern literature, part of Barnes's novel, the story loses this historical prerogative of absolute truth. It becomes one of many possible stories resulting from an interpretation of the facts by the historian who analysed it. The central theme of the novel, jealousy, 'the green-eyed monster', has been widely discussed by critics, who have frequently pointed out intertextual echoes, first among which was Othello (1604) by William Shakespeare (1564-1616). Graham is ironically and contemptuously nicknamed 'little Othello' by his friend Jack, suggesting that Graham carves out a pathetic figure compared with the larger-than-life Shakespearean hero.

Before She Met Me is written in the wake of the sexual liberation of the sixties, which did not eliminate all difficulties in relationships between men and women. David Montrose clearly delineated the novel's theme as "the problem of

jealousy in an age of sexual freedom" (Montrose 3). Barnes himself pointed to the
misconceived ideas dating back to that period of sexual liberation:

> There seems now a major flaw in the hopeful Sixties assumption that
> the more people you sleep with, the more relaxed you become about
> the whole thing: that an increase in sexual traffic produces a decrease
> in the unpleasant emotions sometimes aroused by the business"
> (Barnes, Before 22).

On the contrary, those emotions persist and Barnes qualified his novel as;

> a sort of anti-'60s book. It's against the idea that somehow the 60s
> sorted sex out….suddenly everyone started sleeping with everyone
> else, and that cured the lot… I just wanted to say it's not, like that; that
> what is constant is the human heart and human passions. (21)

This certainly explains why Higdon situated the novel in a deeply rooted
novelistic tradition, qualifying it as a "twentieth-century husband's version of the
great nineteenth-century novels of estrangement, adultery and jealousy" (21). Barnes,
however, does not merely reproduce models of the past; he transforms tradition by
making Graham's jealousy retrospective. The novel not only describes concrete
examples of this pathology but also contains metatextual pauses during which the
main protagonist ponders over his own disease, trying to dissect its causes. This is an
issue Barnes has struggled with and to which he attempted to provide provisional
answers in an article entitled Remembrance of Things Past (1983). After given a
series of example, he explains that retrospective jealousy, or 'retro-jealousy' as he
calls it, usually 'broadens out into a wider obsession. That previous affair, that earlier
lover turn out to be mere nominees for wider areas of baffled resentment: a kind of
foolish rage against the immutability of the past and a metaphysical whinge at the fact
that things can actually happen despite your absence' This obsession rage is precisely
what Graham suffers from and what turns his jealousy into a disease of the mind.
Throughout the novel, the main protagonist reflects on the mechanisms of the human
brain. If Jack tries to reassure Graham by telling him that "most people don't kill
other people. Most people have got the Sawn-offs well under their thumb" (75).
Barnes explained in an interview that he chose this quotation as an epigraph because

it "absolutely fitted the novel….which is about a civilized man who finds that the horse and the crocodile have not gone away'. Because of this persistent reptilian mind, 'things which begin optimistically can turn into complete tragedy'. As Moseley suggests, the first epigraph raises "important questions of freedom and determinism' since one wonders whether Graham will be able to keep his emotions under control or not" (Moseley 89). Matthew Pateman argues that the epigraph 'locates Hendrick within a strongly materialist conception of the self- a conception where the self is given [by] (or at least heavily determined by) biological and neuro-physiological factors'. Pateman adds that the novel keeps questioning "the degree to which the brain is controller or controlled" (Pateman 14). Bill Greenwell, in his review of the novel, draws attention to this "battle between our rational and irrational selves, the perennial and unfathomable failure to reconcile our instincts, emotions and intellect" (Greenwell 22). Eventually in the novel, the horse and the crocodile take control, and Graham is convinced that this was his predetermined fate. Pateman (2002) concludes that Graham's choice "is for a resigned acceptance of what he sees to be the natural narrative conclusion of his predicament" (Pateman 21), whereas the tragic end is actually the result of a pathological form of jealousy. French scholar Frederic Monneyron was particularly interested in the mechanism of Graham's brain as beset by jealousy, and devoted a whole chapter to Before She Met Me in his study of jealousy in literature, Offering a psychoanalytical interpretation of the novel, he applauded the way in which Barnes laid bare the foundations of jealousy, revealed the phantasms attached to it and gave access to the unconscious of the main protagonist. According to Monneryson, Barnes's main achievement in the book lies in the way he juxtaposes jealousy and its interpretation, and offers the reader means to set him/herself free from it. In his sexual dreams, he fantasizes about Ann with her past lovers, which is a way of imaginatively possessing the intimacy of his partner and his rivals.

Graham's obsession thus becomes pathological until his retrospective jealousy towards unidentified past rivals, Jack Lupton. Monneyron differentiates between the

story proper, or digenesis, in which the resolution of jealousy can only be achieved through the murder of the rival, and the narrative discourse or narration, which offers the reader elements of interpretation of Graham's pathological attitude. He concludes "from several introspective passages that Graham's jealousy originates from his infancy and is based on an idealization of the mother, a forbidding of any desire for the mother by the father, and the ensuing threat of castration" (Monneyron 123). The scholar adds that Graham's jealousy is also marked by specific phantasms that have been identified by Sigmund Freud (1956-1939) in his analysis of its pathological forms. These concern, on the one hand, phantasms of infidelity towards Ann that have been suppressed or projected onto his partner and on the other hand homosexual phantasms towards Jack, for example when he is about to murder him: 'In a funny way Graham was just as fond of Jack as he'd always been'. Another insightful essay on the mechanism of jealousy in Before She Met Me was written by Millington and Sinclair, who focused more particularly on the portrayal of the betrayed husband in works of literature that point to the organizing principle of patriarchal societies, in which men exert their sexual authority and social power over women. Millington and Sinclair suggest that there are two models, or paradigms, for such portrayals, which they trace back to the English writer Geoffrey Chaucer and the Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75): either the husband is presented as a cuckold and is mocked for being much older than his wife and sexually impotent, or he is characterized as a man of honour who responds powerfully to his fate, usually by killing the unfaithful wife and her lover. In Before She Met Me, the two paradigms are not only mixed but also sometimes subverted.

Millington and Sinclair (1992) suggest that "Ann's sexual experience turns her into a kind of mother-figure which may create problems for Graham's sense of control over his own identity" (Millington and Sinclair 21). On the other hand, Graham, does not fit the model of the laughable cuckold as Ann seems satisfied with her sexual relations with him, and her supposed infidelity only pertains to the time before he met her. Graham thus departs from the model is exemplified by Chaucer

and Boccaccio because he never receives any public humiliation as a result of Ann's unfaithfulness and therefore cannot be made a comic figure, to other characters at least. Part of Graham's suffering is more precisely due to the fact that he can no longer differentiate his own phantasms and fears from reality, an aspect that has been analyzed by Matthew Pateman. Being a history lecturer, Graham should be adept at selecting and interpreting sources of information, but this proves impossible for him so that his version of history is deeply subjective. When reconstructing Ann's past and looking for proofs of her infidelity, Graham makes no selection among the archives: he includes the films in which Ann appeared as well as those in which her supposed lovers played a role, the reviews of these films, photographs, advertisements, coins from foreign countries Ann visited, matchboxes from places where he went. The reader may feel the irony in the following remark: "There was no point in getting jealous unless you were accurate about it' (Barnes, Before 60). However Graham's so-called "accuracy and lack of discrimination as a researcher undermine the validity of his conclusions: sometimes he wasn't sure what constituted evidence" (59). Pateman (2002) suggest that Graham's "historical narrative is a montage of disparate forms, his self is an auto-generative self-fulfilling bricolage" (Pateman 31). Graham ends up with uncovering the truth, just like any historian or detective, but inevitably becomes aware of the irretrievability of the past, a typically postmodernist topic. The flaw in his method lies in the fact that Graham, despite being a historian, confuses art and life, fiction and reality, his wife as constructed by his imagination and her real self. As John Mellors remarks, "the novel is the 'illustration of an educated rational being's disintegration when illusion takes over from reality" (Mellors 34). Graham's doubts are partly provoked by his own dreams, during which Ann's past lovers luridly describe her sexual life. Instead of vanishing in the morning, the dreams persist in the day time.

 Even though Before She Met Me may appear to revert to traditional strategies in its narration and characterization, the debate which it triggers on the blurring of ontological frontiers between fiction and reality, as epitomized by the coexistence of a history lecturer and a fiction writer is a typically postmodernist.

As Bruce Sesto wrote, "The paradox implicit in having, as central character, a historian who predicates his theoretical embodies the contemporary novel's concern with the problematical relationship between fiction and historiography [the writing of history]" (Sesto 34). This debate as to the relationships between fiction and history, art and life, already announces the main topic of Barnes's next novel, to be published two years later, Flaubert's Parrot.

Flaubert's Parrot: begins and ends with the efforts of the narrator, Geoffrey Braithwiate, to discover what had happened to a parrot Flaubert possessed while he was writing story "Un Coeur simple". On a trip to France in search of Flaubert scenes and memorabilla, Braithwiate comes across a stuffed parrot in museum, alleged to be the parrot in question; unfortunately he soon sees another one for whom the same claim is made. By the end of the novel, the two birds have multiplied into a roomful of birds, and certainty on this particular question seems every further away.

To conclude, each relationship is guided by love making in his novels; the relationship disintegrates as the partners are not serious but even in their failures they taste the truth. In the beginning of their relationship they discard reality and assert their beliefs and perceptions. Paul never believes that he is wrong in making love with Susan. He feels guilty in the beginning of his relationship as he hides the fact from his friends and parents. Toni Webster is proud of his best friend Adrian and Veronica but the real picture of life opens his eyes and tells him the reality. Oliver, Stuart and Gillian are fast friends in the beginning of their journey but they turn as their worst enemies. The novel *Talking It Over* is a fine example a common story exposing the

fissures of love relationships. Their struggle is unsuccessful as they are ruthless and uncompromising giving vent to aggression, anger and ruthless emotional volcano. They fail to maintain enduing connections. Each character in the novels of Barnes is given a chance to enter into a love relationship but with the passage of time, cracks appear in this relationship because of the frailties, uncertainties, false manipulations and lack of faith and commitment on the part of the partners. But even in their failures they are able to gain moral and spiritual awareness at the end of each novel. Thus art becomes an epitome of life and a medium to explore the truth of life.

Conclusion

The intensive research of seven years on the research project entitled *Discovering Self and negotiating Relationships in the Postmodern World: A Study of the Selected Novels of Julian Barnes* led to the following fruitful outcomes:

1. All human communities, throughout history, have been in contact with different groups they perceived as the Other. Many philosophers in the 18th century reflected on the theme of dissolution of self in developing relationships with others in the society. It is basically the awareness about one's self which is significant in defining and maintaining relationships with others. In society one can find that most of the issues occur as a result of conflict of self and other. And on the other hand many positive things emerge if there is a sound relationship between the Self and the Other.

2. In Postmodern world the term relationship assumes more significance as in the postmodern era there is found the sense of fragmentation, and decentered self. There are multiple and conflicting identities. People do not feel connected to each other. Relation has lost its meaning, making society fragmented.

3. Man lives in society and comes in contact with 'others' while living in society. All relations are the product of his interaction with others. Love, greed, religion, marriage, avarice, violence and sacrifice are the social constructs. Julian Barnes has explored the growth of human relations in his novels believing that self is a reality and human consciousness and identity of individuals are determined by the growth of self. The self of the individual thus reacts in his relationship with others.

4. In this study, it has been demonstrated that relationship processes occur in the minds of the individuals, where they hold their idiosyncratic views of the relationship as well as shared ones. The relationships are determined by the perceptions and attitudes of the characters while living in British society. The novels of Julian Barnes have been thoroughly explored relying on the theories of Erik Erikson. The concept of dissolution of self has emerged as a new research contribution exploring the dialectical

160

relationship of Self with the others. The study has successfully interpreted the major novels of Julian Barnes from the new perspective depicting the journey of each protagonist; his empirical struggle to establish relationship with the others. The theories of Erick Erickson and other psychologists have been applied to explore and investigate the concept of self and other relationship in the novels. The research has been rigorously based on textual analysis of the novels and application of the theory of Postmodernism as well.

The present study has successfully achieved its five main objectives. The first objective—to make a theoretical framework of Self-Other Relationship Theory (SORT) proposed by William W. Wilmot—has been comprehensively accomplished. In the chapter entitled: *Genesis and Development of Self-Other Relationship Theory*, the various issues relating to Self and its relationship with the Other have been thoroughly investigated and explored. The concept of self has been definitively established as the totality of our beliefs, ideas, attitudes and opinions. The idea of self has been proven to develop as a person grows old as perceptions of man are affected by environmental factors. The formation of the concept of self has been demonstrated to be a continual development in society. An individual has been shown to establish relations with others when he feels that the ideas of others are in accordance with his tastes and likes. The relations have been proven to be cemented in mutual understanding. This has confirmed that the culture and relationships of a person play an important role in developing the idea of Self. Julian Barnes has been established as a typical postmodern novelist who employs the techniques of postmodernism to depict the plight of people afflicted with absurdities and tensions of life. He has been shown to explore the role of the Self in developing human relationships. In antiquity, even Aristotle's observation that man is a social animal; he lives in society and dies in society has been validated.

Outside society, man has been proven to have no social existence. His growth has been demonstrated to be possible only in society, and all his relations with the "Other" people have been shown to be conditioned and defined while he lives in society. The theory of Self and its relation with the "Other" has been established to

form the core of Barnes's novels. In another study, Gudykunst and Kim's (1997) observation that human relationship refers to the "interconnections and interdependence that develop human relations. This view is commonly found in people who are anxious to achieve goals and so they establish contact with other people of society" (11) has been successfully applied. Charles Cooley's (1864-1929) assertion that "Understanding of self is important while constructing new relationship in society. An individual has to recognise the perceptions of others" (Cooley 21) has been validated. George Herbert Mead's (1863-1931) sociological theory of Self has been comprehensively examined. He has been shown to suggest that the Self of a person is linked with the identity which an individual forges in his venture of social interaction. Coolley has been proven to be of the firm view that relationship shifts the focus from Self to the recognition of Others. Relationship theory has been established to be based on the idea that "each individual is conscious of his interests and his understanding and recognition of the interests of others define and determine relationships in the process of interplay with the two" (Cooley 21). The recognition of the Other has been shown to lead to the view of relationships in which Self, Other and Relationships are seen as closely connected, suggesting that people are constructed in their transaction with others, and one comes into being by means of one's transactions with the Others. Hence Self, Other and Relationship have been proven to be inseparable. George Herbert Mead's (1863-1931) sociological theory of Self has been thoroughly applied. But this ability of socialising has been demonstrated to not be inborn so to engage in the process of 'Self' one has been shown to be capable of viewing himself or herself through the eyes of others. It has been proven to help the person to be self-aware (Mead 123). Erick Erikson's (1902-1994) theory of personality development has been successfully utilized. He has been shown to argue that human personality changed over time and was never finished. Erikson's view of Self-development has been demonstrated to emphasize the social aspects. The novels of Barnes have been proven to offer an interesting study of the development of these relations. Love, and money have been shown to create multiple complications in relations and this study has explored the depth of these relations. Erickson has been demonstrated to also observe that the interplay of these relations, such as loyalty,

aggression, anger and violence, determines human behaviour. Love and hatred have been proven to be revealed through the interplay of these relations. The characters in the Barnes' novels have been shown to be trapped in the abyss of ignorance, darkness and despair as they struggle to affect societal relationships. His debut novel, *Metroland* (1980), has been examined to explore 20th-century society in England and France through the story of Christopher. It has been shown to be followed by *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), and the novel has been proven to be a fine juxtaposition of biography, fiction and literary criticism. It has been demonstrated to be followed by *Before She Met Me* (1982), reflecting the dark side of the human heart. The plot of the novel has been shown to feature a man's jealousy of his wife's former lovers. Barnes's novel *Talking It Over* (1991) has been proven to be followed by a sequel, *Love, Etc.*, (2000). His memoir *Nothing to be frightened of* (2008), has been established to be a critical look at his relationship with his parents and elder brother. His other novels, like England, England and Arthur and George, have been shown to be nominated for the awards. His latest novels have been demonstrated to be *The Only Story* and *The Man in the Red Coat* (2019). In this study, the novels of Julian Barnes have been thoroughly explored, applying the theories of Self and the Other. William Peden has been shown to praise Julian Barnes in his review in the New York Times Book Review for his interest in the everyday life of people struggling to interact and form relationships with others and for the great clarity and precision of language. Richard Gileman has been demonstrated to talk of the split between the physical desires and the spiritual longings of Barnes's characters. Julian Barnes's *Talking It Over* has been proven to be mainly a comedy of errors in the beginning, gradually darkening while moving to the depth of complexities and messy situations. The novel has been shown to record the details of contemporary life in modern England in a skilful manner.

The second objective—to investigate the elements of cultural variability developing the Self and the Other—has been thoroughly achieved. In the second chapter entitled: *Formation of Self and Relationships in Metroland and The Sense of an Ending*, all the various aspects of postmodernism and the ideas of Self and the Other have been comprehensively

explored and investigated relying on the textual analysis of the novels of Barnes. Postmodernism has been proven to give a new vision of History, Time and place. The ideas of Postmodernism have been demonstrated to be characterised by refusing everything including the individual Self and considering the idea of ultimate truth. Barnes has been established to represent the pervasive vogue of identity fracture of characters living in a harsh British environment. Ihab Hassan's (1967) attempts to resolve the issues of loss of self and disruption of human relationships have been successfully applied. Hassan has been shown to propound new theories of postmodernism, laying stress on the features of "discontinuity, cruelty, violence and radicalism" (Hassan 121). In the early years of his writing career, Julian Barnes has been proven to realise that values are fast declining and man is running after money. He has been demonstrated to closely discover the oppressive and cruel nature of people trapped in the abyss of darkness and absurdity. The plays of the Theatre of Absurd have been shown to change the vision of life and the universe. Beckett has been proven to propagate the wave of nihilism and pessimism, declaring that life is meaningless and that the end of every project of man is doomed to fail. Beckett has been demonstrated to observe that human society is on the verge of total destruction. The nihilistic ideas have been shown to eventually lead to the deflation of the Self, and no wonder a new age has emerged, which has propagated the idea that Truth is an illusion. Mind and Soul have been proven to be meaningless as the soul has lost its transcendental value. Religion has been demonstrated to be sustained in the people of the Victorian Age, but man has been shown to lose his communion with Nature and God in the post-world war society.

The third objective—to analyse the quest of individual and collective identities from the vantage point of Self-Other Relationship Theory—has been successfully accomplished. The third chapter of the thesis, entitled *Quest for Identity and Communicative Tendencies in The Noise of Time and The Only Story*, has thoroughly explored the nature and role of disparate identities in human life. The quest for individualistic and collectivistic identities has been comprehensively explored in a few novels written by Julian Barnes, namely *The Noise of Time* and *The Only Story*. Both novels have been proven to be about the characters who realise that their identities and personalities

undergo major changes while dealing with the society or the people they associate with. These novels have been demonstrated to deal with the characters who face many intricacies of their relationships while interacting with each other and society. However, their interactions and experiences have been shown to help them realise their existence's deeper meaning. The characters have been proven to undergo both traumatic and pleasant situations in their relationship with others. Such experiences have been demonstrated to help them become aware of their individualistic and collective identities and their social position. Dmitri Shostakovich's life story has been shown to closely record Shostakovich's thoughts and feelings. The story has been proven to relate Shostakovich's personal life, examining his personal life, from his childhood to his first love to his marriage and family life. While the book has been demonstrated to focus more on his career and interactions with the Soviet government, it has been shown to repeatedly reflect on his personal life. It has been proven to examine how the two spheres of his life interact with each other, both literally and thematically.

In the novel *The Noise of Time*, Barnes has been shown to narrate the biography of the famous Russian composer Dimitry, who is presented as a trapped and anguished human being. *The Only Story* has been proven to be a tale of love revealing that love matters more and can change or transform the course of life. The narrator in the novel, while in retrospection, has been demonstrated to relate the only relation of his life, which finds significance in his life. In the first part of the novel, Barnes has been shown to use the first person to describe Paul and Susan's relationship. However, in the following parts, he has been proven to switch to the second and then finally to the third person when the lovers realise that love always does not lead to happiness. Moreover, while in a relationship, one has been demonstrated to not be able to escape his identity. The history of a person has been shown to occupy a central position in the relationship.

The fourth objective—to compare personal and collective experience of the characters—has been effectively achieved. In the fourth chapter, entitled: *Dialects of Human Relationships and Cultural Behaviour in Talking it Over and Love, etc.*, Julian Barnes has been shown to explore the relational tendencies existing in the life of individuals. The

chapter has thoroughly explored the development of self while negotiating relationships with others in the postmodern world, as depicted in the works of Julian Barnes. Julian Barnes has been demonstrated to start writing when the world transitioned from the transitional phase, and the shift from modernism to postmodernism was quite visible. It has been proven to be generally observed that society is a social network where everyone is related to others. The chapter has successfully explored how people struggle to discover and develop themselves while negotiating various relations in their lives and how these relationships help these characters to realise and explore their concept of "Self." Niklas Luhmann's (2000) exploration of the intricacies of human relations thus in communicating with others has been applied: "Luhmann talks of double consciousness in his theory of self. He maintains that the Self is often viewed as "interpersonal, composed of a repertoire of relational selves" (Luhmann 81). The theory of Self and its relation with the "Other" has been proven to form the core of Barnes's novels. The relationship between persons has been demonstrated to depend much on the variations arising out of the various cultures they belong to and the various relations people build during their lifetime. The scene of the street quarrel with her husband to get rid of Stuart has been shown to be a fine example of the disruption of human relations in the postmodern society In *Talking* It Over. Gillian has been proven to be fear-ridden: "the fear is this: that what I'm showing Stuart turns out to be real" (Barnes, *Talking* 269). In *Love, Etc.*, Stuart has been demonstrated to remark: "In life, every ending is just the start of another story" (Barnes, *Love* 93).

Talking it Over of Barnes has been proven to explore the subtleties of human relationships. The main characters have been shown to live in London and they are in their prime age. Gillian Wyatt has been demonstrated to be an uncertain woman, inconstantly sexual, and typically postmodern in her attitudes and perceptions. She has been proven to first marry Stuart Hughes, soon divorce and marry Oliver Russell. The journey of self-exploration of Stuart and Oliver has been shown to begin, and surprisingly, the best friends turn enemies. The main themes have been demonstrated to be the erosion of human relations and the betrayal of friends, greediness and

displacement of characters. *Talking* it Over has been proven to be a family drama, a comedy dramatising verbal dexterity and packed with comic elements.

The story of novel *Love, Etc*. has been shown to continue from Barnes' earlier work *Talking* It Over, which is a self-implicit story based on the personal life of the characters, Stuart, Gillian and Oliver, and their love triangle. The characters have been demonstrated to seem to grapple with love or hatred, desire for closeness, warmth, and meaning, or just power. The novel *Love, Etc*. has been proven to provide a farce of delightful tragicomedy of human weaknesses and needs. After spending a few years in America, Stuart has been shown to return to London in search of his ex-wife, Gillian. She has been demonstrated to be stolen away by his former best friend Oliver. However, their relationship has been proven to seem distorted due to Oliver's artistic intentions. He has been shown to be a series of monologues allowing each character to relate their secrets and their viewpoint directly to the reader of the novel.

The fifth objective—to assess behavioral and communicative tendencies of the characters in the light of SORT has been comprehensively achieved and is accomplished in the fourth chapter. The chapter has successfully analyzed the characters' experiences while they are in relationships with others. In this study, it has been demonstrated that the characters of Barnes are drawn from the different sections of society. Their identities, problems and challenges in developing relationships with Others have been thoroughly explored. Julian Barnes has been proven to be a typical Postmodern novelist who employs the techniques of Postmodernism in his novels, exploring the role of self in developing human relationships. The study has successfully explored the perceptions and vision of Julian Barnes, who deeply examines the matrix of human relationships. This chapter has traced the literary and philosophical influences on himself and on his novels, which were very helpful in building up his personality and his theory of fiction relating to the use of concepts of "Love, Truth, Friendship, Obsession, Sexual Fidelity, Adultery, and about Human Life" through his novels. Julian Barnes has been established to establish himself as one of the most powerful and leading writers of the modern era of England. Julian Barnes's first novel *Metroland* (1980) has been shown to focus on the concept of romantic love and sexual love has been introduced in the novel to focus on

the various relationships of the characters. Julian Barnes' next novel *Talking* it Over (1991) has been demonstrated to focus on a fairly conventional triangular relationship among its characters. The protagonists of the novel, Stuart and Oliver, have been proven to be best friends. Stuart has been shown to meet Gillian and marry her, but later on, Oliver is also attracted towards Gillian and falls in love. After getting divorced from Stuart, Gillian has been demonstrated to get married to Oliver. But unluckily, in their marriage, Oliver has been proven to face hard times, making his economic condition very bad. *The Sense of an Ending* of Barnes has been shown to deal with the concept of love and the relationship, revealing the inner turmoil of the characters' lives. The story has been demonstrated to be about a group of boys who are known as "book hungry, sex-hungry, and revolutionary" (12). The newcomer Adrian Finn has been proven to be one who is intelligent and smart. The group of these boys has been shown to have intellectual snobbery. Each and everything has been demonstrated to be examined through their own logical approach.

Talking It Over (1991) of Barnes has been proven to deal with a number of themes in this present novel. But the dominant theme of this novel has been shown to be the 'theme of love'. According to Julian Barnes "The ostentatious Oliver falls in love with quite Gillian and wants to marry her" (Barnes, *Talking* 2). This novel has been demonstrated to be published in 1991, depicting the theme of a triangular love relationship. In this novel, Julian Barnes has been proven to show that Stuart and Oliver are good friends. By nature, Stuart has been shown to be dull and an investment banker, and his friend Oliver, a pedantic and unfulfilled soul, is a teacher of English. Gillian has been demonstrated to be trained in social work and later a picture restorer. Stuart has been proven to meet Gillian and marry. Gillian has been shown to take a divorce from Stuart and marry Oliver. But Stuart has been demonstrated to become successful in earning money. When he returns to London on holiday, he has been proven to hire a room in the hotel near their house. So that he could watch their movements from the windows of the hotel has been shown. According to Merritt Moseley, "One of the three lovers in *Talking* it Over (1991) concludes that love - "or what people call love just a system for getting people to call you darling after sex" (257) has been demonstrated. Thus Barnes has been proven to

narrate the triangular relationships - between Stuart and Oliver and between Gillian and the two men. Gillian has been shown to express her inner self and feelings about love as: The next novel, *The Noise of Time* has been demonstrated to be about art power symbolised by Stalin and Communist bureaucracy in particular. Barnes's novel has also been proven to offer a meditation on the idea of character and integrity of man being constructed in relationship to power and his relationship with himself. While Shostakovich (the protagonist) has been shown to seem to compromise with power, he nevertheless remains faithful to himself. The novel has been demonstrated to be an elegant study of shame and cowardice; it also depicts surrender on the part of the main character, yet on his own terms. The chapter has successfully explored the various experiences of the characters of the considered novels of Julian Barnes in terms of their realisation of self in relation to the different relationships they have with one another. At the same time, this study has thoroughly analyzed how the characters seem to evolve and achieve a better understanding of their own selves while they maintain relationships with others.

Social Relevance of the Study

This study has successfully explored the significance of Self and its dialectical relationship with the Others while living in society. Julian Barnes has been proven to be greatly impacted by the wave of postmodernism and he employed the writing talent to examine and investigate the multidimensional roles of Self in understanding human relationships. This study has demonstrated social relevance because of the following validated observations:

1. Social needs have been proven to be very important, as no one in this world can live without society. Man has been demonstrated to live in society and die in society. Interdependence and interconnection have been shown to be inevitable in postmodern society. Human beings have been proven to learn and teach others and acquire multidimensional experiences, developing ties with "Others."

2. All human feelings, passions, and sentiments have been demonstrated to be the creation of human relationships. Each man has been shown to ought to

comprehend the importance of these human relationships. Good and cordial relations with "Others" have been proven to lead to happiness and comforts of life, while ignoble relationships breed contempt, hatred, and aggression. Man has been demonstrated to be judged in society by his sense of understanding and his sensitiveness about the feelings and passions of "Others."

3. Greed, Anger, Aggression, and Violence in love have been proven to result in unhappiness and bring restlessness and anxiety in life.

4. Love, Marriage, Sincerity, and fidelity have been demonstrated to be the core values of life and the pillars of human relationships.

5. The novels of Barnes have been proven to be domestic comedies written to promote love, friendship and understanding in society.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Barnes, Julian. *Talking It Over*. Vintage, 1992.

   ---. *Love, Etc*. Vintage, 2002.

   ---. *The Sense of an Ending*. Vintage Books, 2012.

   ---. *Metroland*. Jonathan Cape, 1990.

   ---. *The Only Story*. Jonathan Cape, 2018.

   ---. *The Noise of Time*. Penguin Books, 2016.

Secondary Sources

Ackerman, Courtney E. "What Is Social Concept Theory? A Psychologist Explains."

     Positive Psychology, 18 Jan. 2021.

Appleyard, Bryan. "Godlike Reader Can Choose between Partial Versions." *Literary*

Review, vol. 157, July 1991, pp. 24-25.

Ball, Magdalena. "A Review of Julian Barnes's *Love, Etc.*" *The Compulsive Reader*,

11 June 2002.

Barnes, Julian. *England, England*. Vintage, 2000.

     ---. Flaubert's Parrot. Vintage, 1990.

     ---. "Out of Place." Architectural Digest, vol. 54, no. 5, May 1997, p. 38.

     ---. Before She Met Me. Jonathan Cape, 1986.

     ---. Staring at the Sun. Jonathan Cape, 1987.

     ---. A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters. Jonathan Cape, 1989.

     ---. The Porcupine. Jonathan Cape, 1993.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Polity Press,

2007. Baxter, Leslie A. "Trajectories of Relationship Disengagement." *Journal of Social and*

Personal Relationships, vol. 1, no. 1, 1984, pp. 29-48.

Bayley, John. "Getting to Know You." *New York Review of Books*, vol. 38, no. 20, 5

Dec.

1991, pp. 25-26.

Buchan, James. "An Unsuccessful Likeness." *Spectator*, vol. 266, 20 July 1991, pp. 25

Butterworth, George. "A Developmental-Ecological Perspective on Strawson's *The Self*." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1998.

Brockmeier, Jens, and Donal Carbaugh, editors. *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*. John Benjamins, 2001.

Brown, Richard, and Tobias Wachinger. "Julian Barnes." *Contemporary Novelists*, edited by Neil Schlager and Josh Lauer, 7th ed., St. James Press, 2001, pp. 67-69.

Buxton, Jackie. "Julian Barnes's Theses on History (in 10½ Chapters)." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 41, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 56-86.

Bruce, Sesto. *Language, History, and Metanarrative in the Fiction of Julian Barnes*.

Peter Lang, 2001.

Catmur, Caroline, and Emily S. Cross. "Understanding Self and Others: From Origins to Disorders." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, vol. 371, 1980, doi:10.1098/rstb.2015.0069.

Cherry, Kendra, and Steven Gans. "What is Self-Concept? The Psychological Exploration of 'Who Am I?'." *Verywell Mind*, 8 Jan. 2020.

Cole, Jonathan. *On Being Faceless: Selfhood and Facial Embodiment*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

Connor, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*. Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Corredor, Eva. "Interview with Fredric Jameson." *Lukacs after Communism: Interviews with Contemporary Intellectuals*, Duke University Press, 1997.

Currie, Mark. *Postmodern Narrative Theory*. Macmillan Press, 1998.

Cooley, Charles Horton. "The Looking Glass Self." *Human Nature and Social Order*, Scribner's, 1992, pp. 179-185.

Deats, Sara Munson, and Lagretta Tallent Lenker, editors. *Aging and Identity: A Humanities Perspective*. Praeger Publishers, 1990.

Erikson, Erik. *The Lifecycle Completed: A Review*. Norton, 1982.

Fishman, Heidi. "Exploring the Self-in-Relation Theory: Women's Idealized Relationships-of-Choice and Psychological Relationships." *Dissertations*, Western Michigan University, 1992, scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/1931.

Kermode, Frank. "Obsessed with Obsession." *New York Review of Books*, vol. 32, no. 7, 25 Apr. 1985, p. 7.

Frijda, Nico H. *The Emotions: Studies in Emotions and Social Interactions*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Freiburg, Rudolf, and Jan Schnitker, editors. "Do You Consider Yourself a Postmodern Author?" *Interviews with Contemporary English Writers*, Transaction Publishers, 1999.

Gallagher, Shaun. "Philosophical Conceptions of the Self: Implications for Cognitive Science." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.

---. "The Self in Contextualized Action." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

---. *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Glaser, Tanya. "Review of Summary of 'Communicating With Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication' by William Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim." *Bridges Not Walls*, edited by John Stewart, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, 1995, pp. 429- 442.

Gregson, Ian. *Postmodern Literature*. Trans-Atlantic Publications, 2004. Grenander, Ulf. *General Pattern Theory*. Oxford Science Publications, 1994. Guignery, Vanessa. *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

---. "Two Aspects of a Writer." *Observer Magazine*, 7 July 1991, p. 27.

Gullette, Margaret Morganroth. *Safe at Last in the Middle Years: The Invention of the Midlife Progress Novel*. University of California Press, 1988.

Gunning, Margaret. *Love, Etc.* University Press, 2000.

Gudykunst, William B., and Young Yun Kim. *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. McGraw-Hill, 1992.

Hinde, Robert A., et al. "Relationships and the Self-Concept." *Personal Relationships*, vol. 8, no. 2, June 2001, pp. 187-204.

Hartung, Heike, and Roberta Maierhofer, editors. "Introduction." *Narratives of Life: Mediating Age*. Lit Verlag, 2009.

Hepworth, Mike. *Stories of Ageing*. Open University Press, 2000.

Hermans, Hubert J. M. *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, edited by Shaun Gallagher, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Heyes, Cecilia. "Homo Imitans? Seven Reasons Why Imitation Couldn't Possibly Be Associative." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, vol. 371, 2016, doi:10.1098/rstb.2015.0069.

Holloway, David. "Parroting On about Gillian and Oliver and Stuart." *Weekend Telegraph*, 13 July 1991, p. xx.

Hurst, Melissa. "George Herbert Mead: The Self, 'Me,' and 'I'." *Social Science Courses / Sociology 101: Intro to Sociology Course / Theories of Individual-Social Development Chapter*, 23 Sept. 2021.

Hutcheon, Linda. *Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. Routledge, 1988. Imlah, Mick. "Giving the Authorized Version." *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4606, 12 July 1991, p. 1.

Izard, Carroll E. *Patterns of Emotions: A New Analysis of Anxiety and Depression*. Academic Press, 1972.

James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. Dover, 1950.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison House of Language*. Princeton University Press, 1972.

    ---. *Fables of Aggression*. University of California Press, 1978.

    ---. *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. 1984.

    ---. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." 1986.

    ---. "Cognitive Mapping." *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988.

---. *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*. Verso, 1990.

---. *Signatures of the Visible*. Routledge, 1990.

Jani, Rinkal D. "Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* as a Postmodern Novel." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 2, 5 Apr. 2018.

Keller, Heidi. "Psychological Autonomy and Hierarchical Relatedness as Organizers of Developmental Pathways." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, vol. 371, 2016, doi:10.1098/rstb.2015.0069.

Levitas, Ruth. "Review of *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*." *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1992, p. 16.

Leitch, Vincent B. "Postmodern Culture: The Ambivalence of Fredric Jameson." *College English*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1992, pp. 111-22.

Victor, Laurie. "Naming the System: Fredric Jameson's 'Postmodernism'." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1991, pp. 131-41.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Clarendon Press, 1979.

Lohrey, Amanda. "Rhine Journey and The Political Unconscious." *Meanjin*, vol. 44, no.

1, 1985, pp. 94-99.

Mink, Louis O. *Historical Understanding*, edited by Brian Fay, Eugene O. Golob, and Richard T. Vann, Cornell University Press, 1987.

Lukács, György. *The Meaning of Contemporary*. Merlin Press, 1963.

Luhmann, Niklas. *Trust and Power*. Wiley, 1979.

Lozano, Maria. "How You Cuddle in the Dark Governs How You See the History of the World: A Note on Some Obsessions in Recent British Fiction." *Anglia*, vol. 119, no. 1, 2001, pp. 58-76.

Lyotard, Jean-François. "The Unconscious History, and Phases: Notes on *The Political Unconscious*." *New Orleans Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1984, pp. 73-79.

---. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Manchester University Press, 1987.

---. "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" *Postmodernism: A Reader*, edited by Patricia Waugh, Routledge, 1993.

Pateman, Matthew. *Julian Barnes*. Northcote House, 2002.

Bradbury, Malcolm. "Introduction to *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*." Penguin, 2000, pp. v- xvi.

Mambrol, Nasrullah. *Postmodernism: Literary Theory and Criticism*. University Press, 2013.

Millington, Mark K., and Alison S. Sinclair. "The Honorable Cuckold: Models of Masculine Defense." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1992, p. 15.

McGrath, Patrick. "Julian Barnes." *Bomb*, vol. 21, Fall 1987, p.

21. McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. Routledge, 1987.

---. *Constructing Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1992.

---. "Postmodernism, or the Anxiety of Master Narratives." *Diacritics*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1992, pp. 17-33.

Mandel, Ernest. *Late Capitalism*. Translated by J. De Bres, Verso, 1975.

Marcia, James E. *The Empirical Study of Ego Identity*. Sage Publications, 1994.

Mendoça, David. *Drawing the Person: Emotions and the Self*. Working Paper, Lisbon, 2013.

Mink, Louis O. "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument." *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Understanding*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

Mead, George H. *Mind, Self, and Society*, edited by Charles W. Morris, University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Mossoley, Merritt. *Understanding Julian Barnes*. University of South Carolina, 1997. Metzinger, Thomas. *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. MIT Press,

2003.

Montrose, David. *Contemporary Novelists*. St. James Press, 1986. Murchland, Bernard. *The Age of Alienation*. Random House, 1971.

Mykyta, Larysa. "Jameson's Utopias." *Critical Exchange*, no. 14, 1983, pp. 90-101.

Lazarus, Neil. "Fredric Jameson on Third World Literature: A Qualified Defence."

New

 Orleans Review, vol. 11, no. 1, 1984, pp. 46-51.

 Nünning, Vera. "The Invention of Cultural Traditions: The Construction and
Deconstruction of Englishness and Authenticity in Julian Barnes's *England,
England*." *Anglia*, vol. 119, no. 1, 2001, pp. 58-76.

 O'Hara, Daniel T. "The Poverty of Theory: On Society and the Sublime."
Contemporary Literature, vol. 26, no. 3, 1985, pp. 335-50.

 O'Kane, James. "Adventures in Totalisation: Jameson's Search for a Method."

 Rethinking Marxism, vol. 10, no. 4, Winter 1998, pp. 52-78.

 Olsen, Lance. *Ellipse of Uncertainty: An Introduction to Postmodern Fantasy*.

 Greenwood, 1987.

 Osborne, Peter. "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." *New German
Critique*, vol. 56, 1992, pp. 171-92.

 Owens, Craig. "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism." *The
Anti- Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster, Bay, 1983,
pp. 57-82.

 Pawling, Christopher. *Popular Fiction and Social Change*. Sage Publications, 1984.

 ---. "The American Lukacs? Fredric Jameson and Dialectical Thought." Springer,
2004. Parini, Jay. "Two Clever Lads from London." *New York Times Book Review*,
vol. 92, 3
 May 1987, p. 26.

 Perloff, Marjorie. "Introduction." *Postmodern Genres*, edited by Marjorie Perloff,
University of Oklahoma Press, 1989, pp. 3-10.

 ---. *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*. University of Chicago
Press, 1991.

 Paulin, Tom. "National Myths." *Encounter*, vol. 54, no. 6, June 1980, p. 63.

 Biley, Paul. "Settling for Suburbia." *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 3334, 5 May
1980,

p. 22.

Raval, Vilas M. *The Major Novels of Julian Barnes: A Postmodernist Study*. Verso, 2013. Röttgers, Anna. "The Postmodern Moment Has Passed?!: Postmodernism in Julian

Barnes's *The Noise of Time* and *The Only Story*." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 14 June 2019.

Ruth, Jan Erik, and Gary Kenyon. "Biography in Adult Development and Aging." *Aging and Biography: Explorations in Adult Development*, edited by James E. Birren et al., Springer Publishing Company, 1996.

Runn, Thomas. "Adorno's Aesthetic Theory and Its Relation to Social Theory."

Dissertation Abstracts International, vol. 49, no. 6, 1988, p. 1476.

Sarup, Madan. *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage, 1994.

---. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1979.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Philosophical Library, 1956.

---. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

---. *Sartre Against Stalinism*, edited by Ian H. Birchall, Berghahn Books, 2004. Schacter, Daniel L. *The Seven Sins of Memory*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Schalk, Sami. "Self, Other, and Other-Self: Going Beyond the Self-Other Binary in Contemporary Consciousness." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, Jan. 2011, pp. 123-37.

Scott, James B. "Parrot as Paradigms: Infinite Deferral of Meaning in *Flaubert's Parrot*." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 21, no. 3, July 1990,

pp. 57-68.

Shepherd, Tania. "Towards a Description of Atypical Narratives: A Study of the Underlying Organization of *Flaubert's Parrot*." *Language and Discourse*, vol. 5,

1997, pp. 71-95.

Shrimpton, Nicholas. "Bourgeois v. Bohemian." *New Statesman*, vol. 99, no. 2558, 28 Mar. 1980, p. 483.

Sincero, Sarah Mae. "Self-Concept Theory." *Explorable.com*, 25 Apr. 2012, explorable.com/self-concept-theory. Accessed 30 Mar. 2020.

"Articles on Julian Barnes." *The Guardian*, 24 July 1983.

"Curious Case of Infidelity." *Observer*, 7 Oct. 1984, p. 246.

"The Follies of Writer Worship." *New York Times Book Review*, vol. 90, 17 Feb. 1985. "Playing Chess with Arthur Koestler." *Yale Review*, vol. 77, no. 4, Summer 1988. "Candles for the Living: Julian Barnes in Bulgaria." *London Review of Books*, vol. 12, no.

22, 22 Nov. 1990.

Interviews

Brotton, Jerry. "Let's Talk about Love, etc." *Amazon.co.uk*, Sept. 2000.

Clee, Nicholas. "Windows onto the French." *Bookseller*, no. 4688, 27 Oct. 1995. Freiburg,

Rudolf. "Novel Comes out of Life, Not out of Theory: An Interview with Julian Barnes." *Do You Consider Yourself a Postmodern Author? Interviews with Contemporary English Writers*, edited by Rudolf Freiburg and Jan Schnitker, Erlanger Studien zur

Anglistik und Amerikanistik, vol. 1, 1999.

Guignery, Vanessa, and François Gallix. "Julian Barnes at the Sorbonne, 14th November 2001." *Études Britanniques Contemporaines*, Dec. 2001.