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Editor's Preface

Mustafa Kırca
Editor-in-Chief
Çankaya University, Turkey

We have been striving to cope with the stress and the frustration from the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic amidst the turmoil and the global loss of many lives caused by Covid-19. However, we have maintained our efforts in adhering to and reaching the goals of academic discussion in these difficult times, and as of December 2020, we are honored to present the 14/2 issue of *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. As in our earlier issues, in this issue of the volume too, we continue to cover interdisciplinary studies at the intersection of different areas of the human sciences that fall within the scope of the Journal and to share new perspectives in the humanities. To this end, the present issue, consisting of articles originally presented as papers at the 24th METU British Novelists International Conference, is devoted to Julian Barnes's work. This conference series, organized by the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University, receives the interest of international scholars and welcomes fruitful discussions on a single British author each year. In 2018, the theme of the conference was "Julian Barnes and His Work," and the keynote speaker was Prof. Dr. Vanessa Guignery from École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France. We are honoured to give place to her stimulating study in this volume along with the work of the other authors whose research on Barnes is well-known. Guignery's study "uncovers the intricate palimpsest of Barnes's work" through the author's archives, and it shows in an astonishing way the novelist's careful character construction with specific traits and voices, particularly in the diptych *Talking It Over* (1991) and *Love, etc.* (2000). The articles in the present issue cover a wide variety of Barnes's novels, short stories, the author's personal notes and sketches, and also the film adaptation of his 2011 novel, *The Sense of an Ending*.

We, as the editorial board, would like to thank all the authors wholeheartedly for their scholarly contributions and the team of referees for their reviews. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nil Korkut-Naykı and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Öztabak-Avcı from Middle East Technical University for their valuable contributions as the guest editors for this issue and as the organizers of the 24th METU British Novelists International Conference. We also thank the Board of Trustees and the Presidency of Çankaya University, and the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for their continuous support.

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Reading the Archives: The Construction of Character in Julian Barnes's *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*

Arşivi Okumak: Julian Barnes'ın *Seni Sevmiyorum* ve *Aşk, Vesaire* Adlı Eserlerinde Karakter İnşası

Vanessa Guignery
École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France

Abstract
The aim of this article is to examine the meticulous way in which Julian Barnes created his characters in the diptych *Talking It Over* (1991) and *Love, etc.* (2000) through an exploration of his archives, more specifically his preliminary notes, sketches and drafts. These archival documents shed light on the protagonists' main characteristics and functions which Barnes sketched from the start. They also reveal the writer's great care in devising idiosyncratic languages for each character, which are reflective of their personalities. The paper comments in particular on the linguistic choices made by Barnes to ensure that each voice was singular. The writer was also attentive to the balance of power between the characters and the genetic dossier for the two novels reveals that he devised the female character in the trio as the "prime mover". By casting light on the living process of literary creation, this article uncovers the intricate palimpsest of Barnes's work and helps understand the writer's unique approach to characterisation.
Keywords: Julian Barnes, archives, genetic criticism, characterisation

Öz
Bu çalışma, Julian Barnes'ın iki kanatlı tabloyu andıran *Seni Sevmiyorum* (1991) ve *Aşk, Vesaire* (2000) adlı eserlerinde karakter yaratım sürecini yazarın kendi arşivi üzerinden ve özellikle yazarın notları, eskizleri ve karalamalarına odaklanarak inceler. Arşiv niteliği taşıyan bu türden dokümanlar, roman başkahramanlarının karakter özellikleri ve işlevlerinin yazar tarafından en başından itibaren nasıl oluşturulduğuna dair bilgi verir. Ayrıca, böylesi dokümanlar, yazarın her bir karakter için o karaktere özgü kişilik özelliklerini yansıtacak bir dil oluşturmada gösterdiği özeni de gözler önüne serer. Bu çalışma, Barnes'ın her bir karakterine ayrı bir ses verebilmek için yaptığı dilsel seçimlerin üzerinde özellikle durur. Ek olarak, Barnes, karakterler arasındaki güç dengesine de dikkat etmiştir ve çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan iki romanın genetik eleştirisinin açık ettiği üzere, romanlardaki ana kadın karakteri aşk üçgeninin oluşturulmasında başı çeken kişi olarak tasarlamıştır. Edebi yaratım süreçleri üzerine ışık tutan bu makale, Barnes'ın metinlerinin "palimpsest" vari özelliklerini ortaya çıkarmayı ve yazarın karakter inşası konusunda kendine özgü yaklaşımının anlaşılmasına yardımcı olmayı hedeflemektedir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, arşiv, genetik eleştiri, karakter inşası

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In June 1989, as Julian Barnes's fifth novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* was being published in Britain, the author was contemplating his next book whose main topic was still undecided:

> I have a novel out this week, and am disguising anxiety by fretting about the next book instead. It's a toss-up between the Obsessive Love novel and the London novel – unless it turns out that one fits inside the other, as with those recipes where you stuff a duck into a goose and cook them together. (Barnes 1989)

Published two years later, *Talking It Over* is mostly set in London and its central theme was described by Barnes as the struggle between obsessive love and reasonable love (1996, 114). When asked what comes first when he starts thinking of a book, Barnes answered that the situation precedes any consideration of the characters: "I never start by making up a bunch of characters and then wonder what might happen to them. I think of a situation, an impossible dilemma, a moral or emotional quandary, and then wonder to whom it might happen and when and where" (in Cooke). The main situation of *Talking It Over* was inspired by a piece of gossip about two best friends in school, one of whom got married, but during the wedding his best friend fell in love with his wife and wooed her away. Barnes was told this piece of news five or six years before he started writing *Talking It Over* but "didn't think of it as an idea for a story, let alone a novel": "this germ of a story about wife theft […] only became a possibility of a novel when I thought of the formal device that I then employed" (in McInerney). It is thus only after the novelist imagined the narrative strategy of juxtaposed dramatic monologues addressed to a silent interlocutor that he could start developing the story. These remarks are extremely valuable for what they reveal about the writer's creative process and the order in which composition occurs, elements which can be further analysed by perusing Barnes's papers which are stored at the Harry Ransom Humanities Center at the University of Texas in Austin.

The aim of this paper is to draw on Barnes's archives relating to *Talking It Over* (1991) and its sequel *Love, etc.* (2000) – consisting in what Jean Bellemin-Noël and other specialists of genetic criticism have called the "avant-texte" or "foretext,"[1] which includes preliminary notes, sketches and drafts – in order to explore more specifically the meticulous way in which he created his characters. The authors of monographs on Barnes's work who examined the diptych *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.* analysed his treatment of the conventional topos of the love triangle as well as the narrative strategy of monologues without any mediating narratorial voice, which accounts for the coexistence of competing versions of events and the active role granted to the

[1] In 1972, the French critic Jean Bellemin-Noël coined the term "avant-texte" to designate "the documents that come before a work when it is considered a *text*". Although the concept is not uniformly employed by geneticists, it "carries with it the assumption that the material of textual genetics is not a given but rather a critical construction elaborated in relation to a postulated terminal – so-called definitive – state of the work" (Depmann, Ferrer and Groden 8).

addressee-reader (Moseley 1997, 125-144; Pateman 2002, 54-62; Guignery 2006, 73-84; Holmes 2008, 112-121; Childs 2011, 84-97). Other critics chose more specific approaches in individual papers, for example Kathleen A. Kelly who showed how the characters are controlled by "humors" and subject to neuroses which prevent them from engaging in love relations as autonomous persons, Eduardo José Valera Bravo who drew from linguistics and pragmatics to analyze the form of Oliver's "Argumentation against affairs" (Barnes 1991a, 150-51), or Merritt Moseley who explored the representations of France in *Talking It Over* (2011) and the poetics of the sequel (2019). This paper will adopt a different methodology based on an examination of the diptych's genetic dossier in order to shed light on the choices made by Barnes in relation to characterisation, concentrating on what he deemed essential from the start but also what he later deleted, modified or enhanced.

After examining the main characteristics and functions of the protagonists delineated in Barnes's preliminary notes, two specific aspects will be considered. First, special attention will be paid to the way the voices and personalities of the main characters were created through the use of idiosyncratic languages for each of them, with a special emphasis on Oliver. Then, the analysis will focus on the balance of power between the protagonists and show to what extent the writer's notes highlight his decision to make Gillian the prime mover in the novels.

A Trio of Lovers

In the notes jotted down during the composition of *Talking It Over*, Barnes described the book as an "intimate novel" (14.5),[2] thus marking a difference with the wide historical and geographical range of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989) and the historical focus on the fall of a communist leader in his next novel, *The Porcupine* (1992). The intimate and domestic dimension of *Talking It Over* can be gauged from a page of notes with the indication "Plot" at the top (14.5), on which Barnes wrote down all the essential components of the first book (marriage, pursuit, decision time, she leaves, the false rumour, 1st husband returns) and some of the major episodes (the second falling-in-love, the accidental meeting, on the ferry, flat opposite, her mother, 2nd marriage, 1st husband expatriates, 1st husband's reflections, 2nd marriage expatriates, the hotel room opposite). On another page, Barnes meticulously listed the particulars of "TIME – AGES – HABITATION" for each of the three main characters and summed up the book's "moral dimension" as "love overwhelms friendship" (14.5). This "love triangle" novel was therefore carefully sketched, planned and structured, as Barnes pointed out in an interview: "In *Talking It Over* […] which involved a lot of intricate interweaving of voices, I tried to plan

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[2] Julian Barnes's papers were acquired by the Harry Ransom Center in 2002, 2006 and 2015. The archives relating to *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.* are placed in the first acquisition identified as "Papers. 1971-2000" in the library's catalogue. Each quotation from Barnes's papers will be followed by a reference to the box and folder in which it appears. For further analysis of the archives, see Guignery 2020.

100 per cent of the action. As I went on, it was coming out differently, so I ended up having only planned about 80-85 per cent of it" (in Guignery and Roberts 29-30). Ten years later, for *Love, etc.*, whose first draft was written in longhand in a red notebook, Barnes covered eight pages with notes that detail with great precision what the novel should include and give helpful information about the characters (9.5). The genetic dossier for these two novels thus testifies to a method of composition that corresponds to what Louis Hay has called "écriture à programme" (programme writing) which relies on a pre-established plan of writing, rather than "écriture à processus" (process writing) when a writer proceeds without an entirely preconceived destination (2002, 74-5).

When focusing on the specifics of characterisation in the diptych, one should first point to the tension between the realist mode and a tendency to expose the fictional frame in a postmodernist vein. One may argue indeed that the direct address of the protagonists to the reader is a "defamiliarizing, metafictional device" which, by "pretending to collapse the ontological barrier between readers and characters," alerts us to its existence and therefore to the constructed and fictional nature of the characters (Holmes 115). On the other hand, it also clearly appears that the diptych enhances realism through the creation of verisimilar characters, what Vincent Jouve named "the illusion of person" (11): "the character, although given by the text, is always perceived in relation to a referent beyond the text" (10, my translation). This referential illusion is furthered in the diptych by the absence of a mediating narrator, thus creating what Jouve called "the illusion of autonomy": "the author, for example, refuses to keep some extra meaning for himself so as to give the illusion that he is not the creator of his characters but a mere observer" (116, my translation). Barnes readily acknowledged that he was aiming for these realistic effects: "Because the membrane between readers and characters is so thinned, [it feels] like meeting real people" (in Guignery and Roberts 86). The archives reveal further that the verisimilitude of the characters and their behaviour was a recurrent concern during composition as will be shown below.

When asked how he creates his characters, Barnes answered:

> Creation of character is, like much of fiction writing, a mixture of subjective feel and objective control. Nabokov boasted that he whipped his characters like galley slaves; popular novelists sometimes boast (as if it proved them artists) that such-and-such a character 'ran away with them' or 'took on a life of his/her own.' I'm of neither school: I keep my characters on a loose rein, but a rein nonetheless. (in Guignery and Roberts 78)

The degree of looseness of the rein can be gauged from the amount of information about the characters present in the preliminary notes to *Talking It Over*. For each protagonist, Barnes wrote down a series of detailed functional characteristics, a relatively rare case in the archives. In an essay on his composition of *Arthur & George* (2005), Barnes wrote the following:

> Novelists vary in how much, and how soon, they need to 'see' their characters. Some work 'outside in', unable to begin without a full physical presence; others (like me) tend to work 'inside out', starting from functional or moral significance. In the latter case, a character may be active in a novel without yet having a settled outline; then, at some point – even, with a minor figure, fairly late in the writing – the question of appearance needs attending to. Hair colour? Eyes? Stooping or erect of carriage? And so on. (Barnes 2007, 289)

This process is substantiated by the archives on *Talking It Over* as Barnes's early notes contain indications of the characters' functional significance but none about their physical appearance. Thus, he saw Gillian as "at first quiet, someone who knows her own mind but doesn't impose it, sensible, a mediator; as book goes on, becomes stronger, the organiser, etc." and added: "What if she doesn't say much at first? Then later starts talking" (14.5). The evolution suggested here is confirmed in *Talking It Over*, where Gillian's monologues cover half a page to a little more than a page in the first three chapters while Stuart's and Oliver's each occupy six to eight pages. From Chapter Six however, speech is more evenly balanced with Gillian talking more and confiding more in the reader.

Twice in his notes, Barnes refers to how Stuart and Oliver see Gillian:

> ? S&O listing their views of G's qualities
> 1) practical reliable punctual
> 2) artistic romantic impulsive (14.5)

These two different interpretations probably reveal as much about the two men as they do about Gillian who may therefore wonder who she really is: "if two such different people as Stuart and Oliver can both fall in love with me, what sort of me is it? And what sort of me falls in love first with Stuart and then with Oliver? The same one, a different one?" (1991a, 174). In an early draft, these interrogations were followed by a paragraph which included the adjectives found in Barnes's notes:

> Stuart liked my practical side. He liked me being efficient and punctual. I think that what he most admired about my restoration work was that I sent out my invoices on time. Whereas Oliver goes for what he calls my 'artistic, romantic and impulsive' nature, which is perhaps not too surprising as without it I wouldn't have fallen in love with him.
> But the point is, I'm not going to swap one interpretation of me for another. (14.5)

This passage was removed from the final typescript, maybe because these external interpretations of Gillian run counter to her self-definition as an autonomous being. While Gillian's qualifications as "artistic, romantic and impulsive" do not appear in *Talking It Over*,[3] these adjectives are employed by

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[3] In *Love, etc.*, Gillian's assistant Ellie describes Gillian as "Human as well as artistic" (2000, 43).

Oliver to describe himself as a "classical humanist of artistic bent and romantic nature" (1991a, 159). Stuart, for his part, uses two of the adjectives that appeared in Barnes's notes and early draft to qualify Gillian at the end of the novel: "Basically, she's a very practical, efficient person" (1991a, 262). The first adjective is one Gillian herself frequently uses, especially in conjunction with happiness: "You've got to be practical in these matters" (1991a, 173), "You have to be happy and practical" (1991a, 248), "I said you can be happy but you have to be practical as well" (1991a, 249), "I was just trying to be practical" (1991a, 254). In Barnes's notes for *Love, etc.*, he wrote about Gillian: "Living w[ith] Ol[iver] has of necessity emphasized her practical side, wh.[ich] she at first is contented with, but increasingly resents". He also noted that she was "pragmatic" and "practical about love" (9.5), which is confirmed by her definition of love: "True love is solid love, day-to-day love, reliable love" (2000, 172). Barnes finally wrote down how Gillian should feel at the end of *Love, etc.*: "Gillian settling for a practical solution (for her children), half-deceiving herself that it's all a sort of love story, but at the same time thinking her emotional life is now over" (9.5). An early draft included sentences reflecting this pragmatism, which were removed from the final version: "I live for my children. I'm in my early forties and believe that most of my life is over. That's not self-pity, it's practical thinking" (9.6).

While Gillian was thus thought of from the start as a practical woman and Barnes made sure to use that adjective regularly in the novels to pithily encapsulate her temperament, Stuart and Oliver were given divergent personalities as well as names that were relatively ordinary but reflected their respective natures. In *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt points out that eighteenth-century novelists chose to give their protagonists ordinary realistic names (rather than "characteristic" names) which "sound authentic and are yet suited to the personalities of the bearers" (19) so as to make their existence credible. In his early notes, Barnes listed Donald and Gordon as other possible names for Stuart, but these probably evoked an older generation (Gordon was eventually used as the name of Stuart's father-in-law). The three names are nevertheless all fairly common and in *Talking It Over*, Oliver notes that he finds the name Stuart "really boring" (1991a, 12). In preliminary notes, Barnes thought of Martin as a possible name for Oliver whose first name is actually Nigel (1991a, 5, 13).[4] The name Martin may have evoked Barnes's friend Martin Amis whose third novel *Success* (1978) presents the dramatic monologues of two male characters of contrasting personalities whose roles and situations are gradually reversed, which led several critics to underline thematic and narrative parallels with *Talking It Over* (Buchan 25-26, Hateley, Holmes 113).

When planning *Talking It Over*, Barnes listed the following characteristics for Stuart: "literal, foursquare, prosaic – undervalues self – dogged – medium-flier/banker can only get from A to B via a1 a2 a3 and a4, and tells you about

[4] Oliver got rid of Nigel because he judged the name inappropriate: "you can't go through the whole of your life being called Nigel, can you? You can't even go through a whole book being called Nigel" (1991a, 13).

it"; "Stolid, English, pinstriped in mind, decent, thinks in near-clichés"; "he must be a brooder, a wanting-to-get-it-straight-er" (14.5). These specificities of a placid and unimaginative but also essentially vulnerable protagonist are indeed to be found in *Talking It Over*, but in the sequel, *Love, etc.*, Stuart is "coming back for revenge," as indicated in Barnes's notes, and is therefore "much more Machiavellian / less innocent this time" (9.5).

Stuart's characterisation gains strength from his opposition to Oliver. This is emblematized by a contrast between doing and being, action and essence, which Barnes included in his notebook for *Love, etc.* (but not in the final book): "Stuart: People either decide to do something or be something. Oliver's happy just to be something / Oliver: You only decide to do something (as S puts it) if you haven't got anything to be" (9.5). The two men's opposing views on this are reflected in their relation to love and money, one of the central metaphors in both books which has been examined by several critics (Moseley 1997, 132-33; Pateman 55-58; Childs 93) and which Barnes developed extensively in his preliminary notes. For instance, he wrote about Stuart: "He's the Thatcherite / - something in city / - but in love is idealistic, uncapitalistic," and about Oliver: "He's the liberal / green / artistic / - but in love, Thatcherite" (14.5).

Oliver is the most flamboyant and loquacious character. Hermione Lee, who has been reading and commenting on the drafts of all of Barnes's books since *Before She Met Me* (1982), remarked, after reading one quarter of a draft of *Talking It Over*: "By this page I 'suddenly' feel I can't bear to listen to O. any more" and then "Everything about O. is completely insufferable. But I suppose by now I'm supposed to be cross" (14.5). Oliver is indeed meant to exasperate the reader and in a letter to a friend of 24 June 1999 as he was writing *Love, etc.*, Barnes described him as "[h]ighly-strung, intelligent, irritating," speaking in "irritatingly grand words" (9.6). When planning *Talking It Over*, the novelist summed up Oliver's characteristics as "extravagant – overvalues self – no money – baroque, macaronic language," "hyper, […] intense, moody, pretentious". He also wrote:

> his psychology:
> Only knows what he wants when someone else has it
> Falls in love as she comes out of the wedding (14.5)

This psychology corresponds to René Girard's concept of mimetic desire, according to which one subject (Oliver) reaches for the same object of desire (Gillian) as another (Stuart) who becomes the "mediator" or "model" whose desires are imitated, and is therefore a rival. Eric Berlatsky, drawing from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's analysis of male homosocial desire, offers a different and interesting interpretation of the triangle when, based on Val's claim that "Oliver is queer for Stuart" (1991a, 183), he argues that "because Oliver's 'queer' desire for Stuart cannot be expressed, Gillian serves as a mediator, an object through which inappropriate same-sex desire may be triangulated" (179). Oliver's suspected homosexuality occupied more space in the early drafts of *Talking It Over* and was first voiced by Stuart: "I've had another thought. It's a bit silly, especially after I've known him all these years. But I

wonder … I wonder if Oliver's by any chance homosexual" (14.6). This and a further embarrassed elaboration by Stuart[5] were removed maybe because, as noted by Berlatsky, Oliver's repressed homosexuality (also referred to in 1991a, 187-190, 217) was so obvious that it did not "require hermeneutic inquiry" (Berlatsky 180).

Barnes's extensive notes on the protagonists' psychology, taken before and after drafting *Talking It Over*, exceed indications on plot, thereby pointing to the great care with which he drew his characters. He was also particularly attentive to the creation of an idiosyncratic style for each character, which would mirror and reveal their personality.

Character Construction through Their Idiolect

Barnes's "selection and balance of three dissimilar styles of disclosure" has been repeatedly praised by reviewers (Imlah 19). Several critics referred to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of polyphony to point to the plurality of voices and the way in which each voice becomes readily recognizable thanks to a specific vocabulary, syntax and rhythm (Hamilton; Guignery 2006, 75-76). These different styles also signal distinct perspectives on the world as noted by Bakhtin for whom the hybridized languages used by speakers offer "forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values" (1981, 191).

One may take as an example of the diversity of styles and world views present in *Talking It Over* the episode when Oliver greets Stuart and Gillian at the airport after their return from a vacation in Crete. As recounted by Stuart, Gillian fetched a defective trolley: "when she tried to push she found out she'd got a trolley with a wonky wheel. It wouldn't go in a straight line and kept squeaking" (1991a, 68). This ominous metaphor acts as an efficient proleptic hint of the derailing of Gillian and Stuart's marriage, and the way in which the incident is told by the three characters points to differences in style which are revealing of their personalities. In his monologue, Stuart notes that he offered to take hold of the trolley: "I'd joined in trying to control the thing by now as Gillian found she couldn't manage curves on her own" (1991a, 68).[6] Oliver, who has not seen Gillian picking the trolley but only Stuart pushing it, holds his pitiful friend responsible for the irregular trajectory of the vehicle (and metaphorically of the marriage): "Stuart had typically picked a trolley with one

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[5] "Don't misunderstand me. I wouldn't disapprove if Oliver turned out to be gay. If that's the case, then that's the case. I haven't any 'evidence' as they say, but then what is evidence? A dominant mother, a weak father? A dominant father, a weak mother? Two normal parents? There simply aren't any patterns, from how I understand it. You just are one. Do you think that makes it harder or easier? At least in the old days when it was your parents' fault you had someone to blame, if you wanted to. I'm getting confused. I suppose I just mean you are what you are, you can't help who it is you love. Not, as I say, that I've any 'evidence', and not, as I say, that I'd mind if I had" (14.5).

[6] An earlier draft showed Stuart as more assertive and dominating in his efforts at controlling the situation: "I'd taken over the pushing" (14.6) was later replaced by the softer "joined" and "trying".

locked wheel, and he emerged from the tender scrutiny of the *douaniers* in a comic curve, his uncertain course hymned by Gillian's indulgent laughter and his trolley's maundering squeak" (1991a, 65). Gillian does not mention the incident of the trolley but innocently refers to her and Stuart's cheerfulness: "the two of us are having a laugh because we're safely back" (1991a, 76).

Such differing accounts are not only emblematic of the narrative mode Barnes chose for the novel, which allows each character to give their own version of what happened, but they also reveal each speaker's distinct style. Stuart uses bland and unspecific vocabulary ("the thing") and remains unaware of the double meaning of what he is describing; Oliver indulges in a flurry of adjectives and the pedantic use of a foreign word; Gillian's language is straightforward and without flourish. At the time of composition of *Talking It Over*, Barnes was aware of the necessity to give Gillian a specific voice in spite of her initial reticence and her insistence on being "an ordinary, private person" (1991a, 7). He was also careful not to let her take on the characteristics of other voices. For instance, in an early draft, when Gillian reports her mother's outrage at her daughter's decision to get married twice in the same dress, she numbers the various reasons why her mother finds the idea offensive: "It offended against 1. Good taste. 2. Good manners. 3. Good dress sense. 4. The Church. 5. Everyone present at both ceremonies (though mainly her). 6. Fate. 7. Luck. 8. World history. And so on" (14.6). Barnes wrote in the margin: "would G use numbers?" and realizing that this did not correspond to her type of voice but to Oliver's,[7] he deleted the numbers (and the capital letters), replacing the full stops with commas (1991a, 197-98).

In a similar way, Barnes paid attention to the consistency of Stuart's monologues, in which short, simple and stable sentences reflect his attachment to clear facts and his disinclination for pretentious embellishments. When Martin Amis read the proofs of *Talking It Over*, he wondered about the use of a French word in one of Stuart's monologues: "wd S use French?" (15.1). For the published version, Barnes replaced "Find a little *auberge*" by "Find a little hotel" (1991a, 100) as foreign words are reserved for Oliver while Stuart is more typically English and monolingual, favouring commonplace words. Similarly, Hermione Lee drew attention to a passage when Stuart reports a conversation with Oliver who told him: "Well, at least he dealt you a *tranche de bonheur*" (1991a, 20). In the original draft, the conversation stopped there and Stuart simply resumed his monologue. Lee commented: "Surely Stu wouldn't 'get' 'tranche de bonheur'?" (14.5). Barnes took her remark into account as he added: "'A wotsit?' I asked, playing Dumb Stu. He smiled his smile, playing Sophisticated Ollie" (1991a, 20). Stuart's awareness of the distribution of roles,

[7] Oliver uses numbers in his "Argumentation against affairs" (1991a, 150-51) and when referring to erroneous interpretations of his meeting with Val (1991a, 186), and letters when he gives the reasons why Stuart always buys a return ticket to the airport (1991a, 78). Gordon (Mme Wyatt's husband) also includes numbers to convey "Points to make *re* the case of Gordon Wyatt" (1991a, 235-36). In *Love, etc.*, Oliver uses numbers again in his "Argumentation, *per et contra*" contraceptive methods (2000, 108-09).

underlined by the use of capital letters, reveals that he is less "dumb" than he pretends to be, as *Love, etc.* will confirm.

The voice which required the greatest virtuosity was Oliver's with its highly-coloured vocabulary and convoluted syntax, and its fondness for similes, metaphors, foreign words, parody, irony and cultural references.[8] Oliver's voice is idiosyncratic and not, contrary to what James Wood suggested, "recognisably Barnes's voice" (26).[9] In his notes on *Talking It Over*, the author singled out a word and asked: "is it Ollieish?" (14.5). He also wrote down some of the rare adjectives Oliver was supposed to use as part of his idiolect:

> Oliver's vocabulary
> inspissated oleaginous crepuscular
> steatapigeous [*sic*] / callipygous (14.5)

The adjectives "inspissated" (1991a, 193)[10] – a medical term for a substance which has become thick and is here applied to Oliver after he has fallen in love with Gillian – and "oleaginous" (1991a, 11) – a reference to the unctuous registrar at the wedding – appear only once in *Talking It Over*. On the other hand, "crepuscular" is used nine times (1991a, 11, 26, 40, 65, 101, 193, 194, 208, 251) and variously applies to the registrar at the wedding, literal or metaphorical places – as for instance, Stuart bursting out of "his crepuscular *oubliette* of unnoticeability" (1991a, 26) – or Olivier's spirit or mood. When Martin Amis read the proofs of Barnes's books, he sometimes pointed out repetitions of the same word close to each other, which led Barnes to look for a synonym. After the third occurrence of "crepuscular" in *Talking It Over* (1991a, 40), Amis wrote in the margin: "Ol is keen on this word" and after the fourth (1991a, 65): "ok" (15.1). When Oliver shows his awareness of his linguistic mannerism – "I also hate the word crepuscular, I think I'll stop using it for a bit" (1991a, 101) – Amis wrote "aha!" (15.1). However, ninety pages later, Oliver falls back on his old habit and comments on his lapse: "And yes, I do know I've just said *crepuscular* again" (1991a, 194). This latest comment was only added at a later stage on the printer's typescript with final corrections (15.3) and offers a humorous moment of self-reflexivity.

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[8] Moseley disagrees with reviewers who find Oliver's use of language "sophisticated" and prefers the term "[c]amp" (2011, 76). He describes his voice as "foppish, learned, showy, precious" (1997, 141).

[9] Like Wood, Michael Levenson believes that Oliver's habit to "scatter *bons mots* like sunflower seed" (1991a, 239) is "Barnes's own verbal reflex" (Levenson 44) and Zoë Heller notes that "Oliver is the most obvious inheritor of the author's linguistic manners" (28). Moseley, for his part, insists that Barnes does not write the way Oliver speaks: Barnes "is neither so determined to show off his French nor so effortful in his own cleverness" (2011, 76).

[10] In his unpublished *Literary Guide to Oxford* written in the 1970s, Barnes records an anecdote involving T.E. Lawrence: "Returning from London one evening, he was met at the gate of the college by Professor Edgeworth, a Fellow renowned for his avoidance of normal conversational English, and his reliance, wherever possible, on a pedantic turn of phrase. 'Was it,' enquired Edgeworth, 'very caliginous in the Metropolis?' 'Somewhat caliginous,' replied Lawrence brightly, 'but not altogether inspissated'" (8.6, 3).

In 1991 (the year *Talking It Over* was published), Barnes contributed a short text for the letter "U" in *Hockney's Alphabet*, in which he and some friends look for "the most sinister word in the English language" and the adjectives Barnes selected were "*crepuscular, curdled, inspissated, fetid*" (Barnes 1991b). In November 1994, when writing the preface to his collection of essays, *Letters from London*, Barnes referred to the meticulous editing work of Charles McGrath (nicknamed Chip) at the *New Yorker*: "Chip picked on an adjective I'd used, one of those words like, say, *crepuscular* or *inspissated*, which don't form part of your core vocabulary but which you reach for from time to time. 'You've used *crepuscular* before,' said Chip" (1995, xiii). While Barnes adamantly protested he had not used it before, "Chip" pointed out that the word had appeared in a piece nine months previously and therefore had to be excised.

In *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*, these polysyllabic and rare words need to be repeated as they form part of Oliver's flamboyant characterisation and verbal pyrotechnics. Next to "crepuscular," his other favourite word is "steatopygous," which appears six times in *Talking It Over* to refer to Stuart's voluminous buttocks (1991a, 23, 44, 59, 135, 202, 247) and has thus been preferred to "callipygous," a term which, unlike "steatopygous," evokes shapely and attractive curves. In *Love, etc.*, the adjectives "steatopygous" and "crepuscular" – the most emblematic of Oliver's style – recur as early as Oliver's second monologue: "O narcoleptic and steatopygous Stuart, he of the crepuscular understanding" (2000, 12) and again close to each other in Chapter Nine to refer to Stuart: "Steatopygous One" (2000, 93), "back to his crepuscular wankpit" (2000, 94).[11] At a later stage of composition of *Talking It Over* (probably after completing the first draft), Barnes wrote on other pages of notes:

> Oliver words crepuscular, febrifuge, mogadonic
> mean person - major nickelfucker
> reuse mogadonic / poo-scared
> febrifuge 81, + 269 - & somewhere else? (14.5)

The adjective "mogadonic" – Mogadon is the trademark for a sleeping pill – appears twice, first to refer to Stuart's self-satisfaction at his wedding (1991a, 11) – the adjective was only added fairly late on the printer's typescript (15.2) – and then to Oliver's lethargic mood when having his friends over for dinner (1991a, 115). In a similar way, "poo-scared" is used four times in *Talking It Over* (1991a, 47, 89, 115, 251) – the first three referring to Oliver himself – but only appeared once in the first drafts (1991a, 115) while the three other occurrences were added at a later stage (15.2), probably because Barnes reminded himself to "reuse" the adjective so as to make Oliver's mannerisms (even for colloquial terms) more systematic. The word is included twice in echoing hyperbolic lists of adjectives when Oliver realizes he is in love with Gillian – "I'm amazed, I'm overawed, I'm poo-scared, I'm mega-fuckstruck" (1991a, 47) – and when he first tells Gillian he loves her: "I'm joyed, I'm awed,

[11] The adjective "crepuscular" is used twice more to refer to places (2000, 137, 151).

I'm poo-scared, I'm mega-fuckstruck" (1991a, 89). The repetition of the same adjectives and syntactical construction within only forty pages draws the reader's attention to a conspicuous trait of Oliver's idiosyncratic voice which can cover the whole spectrum from pedantic, florid and exotic to crude and unrefined.

As for the noun "febrifuge" (1991a, 79, 87, 264) – a medicine meant to reduce fever – and the expression "major nickelfucker" (1991a, 78, 122, 146) – to refer to a stingy person – they both appear three times in *Talking It Over*, and the latest expression recurs twice in *Love, etc.* (2000, 137, 178), but the first and third occurrences of "febrifuge" and all occurrences of "major nickelfucker" were only added on the printer's copy (15.3). Barnes's notes about Oliver's vocabulary and his late additions reveal how meticulous he was in the creation of his character's polymorphous voice and how carefully he gauged the number of times Oliver would have to repeat the same words. On the typescript for the printer (therefore at a late stage), Barnes added in red pen two other memorable expressions to be repeated by Oliver – "rumpy pumpy" (1991a, 28, 111, 185, 217) and "mucker"/ "ex-mucker" (1991a, 26, 28, 202) – which did not appear on the first drafts. These late additions suggest that Barnes wished to make Oliver's linguistic mannerisms an even more prominent trait of his character.

Such repetitions within *Talking It Over* (as well as in *Love, etc.*) seem to indicate that Oliver is stagnating as he is sticking to the sparky role he has assumed for himself, without any hint of a major evolution despite his change of marital situation.[12] In his notes for the first novel, Barnes wrote: "Ollie doesn't change – the other 2 do," and he gave more detail about these changes:

> S changes – disillusionment
> G changes – stronger
> O remains the same (14.5)

When writing down notes on the sequel, *Love, etc.*, ten years later, Barnes wondered: "So what has happened in the last 10 yrs, morally/character-wise?". He noted that Oliver had gone downwards "a) economically b) professionally c) emotionally d) parentally":

> a career of failure – some hard luck – now more or less supported by Gillian – reaching the 'last-chance' stage. In his early 30s, he was passing for being a 20s flamboyant chancer. Now cracks showing: can you still be this at 40? Is he not so verbally flash as he used to be? […] Also, he's stopped flirtatious affairs, so feels virtuous: why doesn't he get a better reward? (9.5)

Oliver's transformation in the sequel leads to his collapse but he does not seem to be less "verbally flash". Stuart has become stronger and is more "cut & dried": "knows self better – or is more hardened – doesn't seek to please others

[12] In *Talking It Over*, Oliver nevertheless evolves in certain areas as he gives up smoking, reduces his alcohol consumption and stops having affairs.

so much. Successful in business – freed up by U.S. in this regard" (9.5). Gillian's position in the trio remains ambivalent and her last interaction with Stuart, which she relates in varying ways as analysed by Hamilton (186-88) – "I'm fucking Stuart" (2000, 216), "he fucked me" (2000, 228), "When we were making love – no, when he was raping me – no, let's say when we were having sex" (2000, 242) – echoes the ambiguity of her staging a quarrel with Oliver at the end of *Talking It Over*. While several critics found fault with Barnes's characterisation of Gillian as an object of exchange between the two male protagonists, his archives reveal that he considered Gillian as the "prime mover".

Gillian as a Passive Object or the "Prime Mover"?

Several critics who analysed *Talking It Over* challenged the patriarchal discourse and the reduction of women to passive objects. Richard Todd draws attention to the way Stuart's ex-girlfriend Val is expelled from the story (1991a, 218-19) so that "one particular feminine voice or discourse is effectively silenced," and he wonders whether Gillian, though able to talk, is not "becoming an object of desire and nothing more, incapable of sustaining the politics of her gender" (Todd 276). Erica Hateley argues that the triangulated affair illustrates "the subordination of female autonomy to male authoritarianism," reasserting "traditional patriarchal ideals of feminine silence, passivity and objectification" and adds that Gillian has been "reduced to an object of competitive ownership," a marketable item, an interpretation shared by Pateman (57) and based on Sedgwick's theory about the patriarchal reliance of women as "objects of exchange" (Sedgwick 26). Merritt Moseley offers a more nuanced interpretation as he argues that Gillian, for all her reticence and quietness, may be the most cunning of the three and the real manipulator: "if readers 'sympathize' with Gillian, Val is right: she *has* worked her trick on them" (1997, 139). Charles Nicholl also argues that Gillian's cautious voice proves to be "the most powerful, even the most exploitative" (19) and John Bayley wonders whether Gillian is "the strong one and the two men her pets and instruments" or "their victim" (26). Such differing viewpoints suggest that the distribution of power in the triangular relationship may be more complex than it appears at first reading, all the more as it depends on the degree of reliability the reader grants each speaker. An examination of the writer's archives reveals that Barnes gave due consideration to Gillian's role and weight in the trio.

The first item on a handwritten page with the title "Things to decide / get right" is "Gillian's voice – is she being squeezed by the other voices?" (14.5). Barnes was well aware of this risk as he pointed out in an interview: "at a certain point I was worried that the woman's voice was being drowned out". To make sure this would not happen, he deliberately deconstructed his careful alternation of monologues: "I simply took all the pages out and read her story as her story all the way through," a process which was facilitated by his using "an old-fashioned typewriter": "it's good to feel the novel physically coming

apart like that and then laying it back in place" (in Guignery and Roberts 29-30). The novelist adopted the same technique of deconstruction and reconstruction of his own text when he read through the parts of Geoffrey Braithwaite's story disseminated in *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) and extracted the sections dealing with Martha Cochrane's personal life in *England, England* (1998), to see, in both cases, if they made a narrative.

An essential dimension of Gillian's character, which is recurrently recorded in Barnes's notes, is the fact that although she may appear unassuming and diffident at first, she is actually the (invisible) prime mover and organiser as suggested by the last scene of *Talking It Over*, which shows Oliver hit her in the street and which she staged to make sure Stuart would leave them alone (1991a, 267-68). Ten years later in *Love, etc.*, Gillian confesses: "I engineered a scene which I thought would set Stuart free," "I arranged this scene in the street" (2000, 246), and Barnes wrote in his notes for the sequel: "<u>G</u> must be *visible* mover – unlike in TIO" (9.5, my emphasis). For *Talking It Over*, his handwritten notes on different pages included many indications of Gillian's manipulating skills:

> her theory of managing the sitch [situation] as far as that's possible […]
> happiness strikes, & then it has to be managed
> she's an organiser
> She organises the divorce / remarriage – vicar problem
> Both S& O are in a way handled by her / managed / undone
> The alternative theory must be put clearly – that G has organised it all managed it all – that she isn't a girl who's given in to 2 different men & is acted upon but is herself the/a prime mover
> G could show proof of her talent to manipulate a sitch [situation] as at end e.g. she fixes church wedding by getting round vicar
> G: some things happen, the rest you have to arrange/manage (14.5)

It is interesting to note the choice of the verbs "manage," "arrange," "fix," "manipulate" and "organise," which are also used by Gillian in the novel. Although Stuart remarks that when pushing the defective trolley at the airport, Gillian "couldn't manage curves on her own" (1991a, 68) and, when she falls in love with Oliver, she protests "I didn't choose what happened, I didn't manipulate things" (1991a, 177), she actually proves to be very much in charge, maybe because she remembers the advice of a friend's mother to her daughter just before the wedding: "Mothers telling daughters how to manage their husbands" (1991a, 99). When married to Oliver, Gillian echoes Barnes's notes when she forcefully declares: "You can't just 'be happy'; you have to manage happiness" (1991a, 253), even if she has to confess only two pages later: "I hadn't succeeded in managing happiness" (1991a, 255). At the end of the novel, when she needs to make Stuart leave their village, she takes charge, as suggested by the choice of verbs, and by the steady determination of the ternary rhythm and the italics for the first-person personal pronoun in the first quotation: "*I*'ve got to do it, arrange it, fix it" (1991a, 265), "I just have to get on with it. Arrange things for Stuart" (1991a, 266). "I can manage things, that's

what I'm good at" (1991a, 268).[13] Stuart and Oliver's former friend Val had told the reader she could see through Gillian's "trick[s]" (1991a, 188): "The quiet sensible ones who claim that things 'just happen' to them are the real manipulators" (1991a, 187). In his notes during the composition of *Love, etc.*, Barnes summed up the content of one of Gillian's monologues as "The answers to her question about 'managing' Oliver" (9.5) and in an early draft for the first chapter of the sequel, Barnes had Oliver declare: "You know, I always believed, deep down, that it was Gill who ran the whole show," and Stuart was "inclined to agree with Oliver" (9.6). These cues were deleted but in the published novel, Oliver becomes aware of Gillian's powerful role – "Certainly been manipulating *me* all these years" – and includes the narratee as one of the potential victims of such behaviour: "Point is – question is – how much has she been manipulating you as well?" (2000, 239).

In order to reinforce the sense of Gillian being the prime mover, Barnes modified a passage when she protests: "I didn't choose what happened. […] It just happened" (1991a, 177). The original draft added a self-reflexive comment by Gillian on that formulation: "No, that's too feeble, too passive. It doesn't feel passive when you fall in love, especially with someone like Oliver" (14.6). Hermione Lee was not convinced by Gillian's self-correction and noted: "But all the same she does feel feeble and passive to me. (I know she won't be eventually)," which led Barnes to wonder about the relevance of this passage: "G on her love – 'feeble & passive'?" (14.5). He decided to delete the comment, thus making sure the two disparaging adjectives would not be associated with Gillian. Such indications from the archives do not discredit the validity of critics' remarks about the patriarchal bias of the diptych but offer an insight into the author's meticulous creative process and the extent to which specific words were meant to encapsulate the specificities of a character's personality and functional significance.

In 1992, the French critic Louis Hay wrote: "Manuscripts have something new to tell us: it is high time we learned to make them speak" (1992, 207). Barnes's archives relating to *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.* reveal to what extent the writer carefully constructed his characters both individually and in relation to each other. Although each protagonist was given specific traits and voices, they were also portrayed as complex individuals with room for evolution and transformation. The open endings of two novels (partly due to the absence of any authorial arbitration among the different accounts) point to the author's wish not to impose a unique and final interpretation, thereby also leaving open the possibility for a sequel to the sequel. In a notebook which includes the

[13] Gillian echoes this formulation at the beginning of *Love, etc.* – "My other calculation was that Oliver and I would get through it, that I could manage things. That's what I'm good at, after all." (2000, 19) – but admits that things went wrong. Later on, she declares: "You could say I'm managing love. You organise a marriage, you protect your children, you manage love, you run your life" (2000, 159), but the stability and certainty of such anaphoric statements are immediately undermined by her doubts as to their exactitude. Kathleen Kelly argues that "Gillian's compulsion to 'manage' love […] seems to require her to sabotage what she so carefully managed, perhaps in order to escape being trapped by her own management" (189).

handwritten draft for *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), Barnes wrote down a list of ideas for future books, which includes "TIO 3".[14] No doubt this third volume, if it ever gets written, will further demonstrate Barnes's attentiveness to the intricacies of characterisation.

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[14] This notebook is included in the as-yet-uncatalogued third acquisition of Barnes's papers.

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Mourning and Melancholy in Julian Barnes's *Levels of Life* and *The Only Story*

Julian Barnes'ın *Hayatın Düzeyleri* ve *Biricik Hikaye* Adlı Eserlerinde Yas ve Melankoli

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Abstract
The loss of the beloved, the fear or experience of it, either because of death or other reasons has been a repeatedly occurring theme in the work of Julian Barnes. In *Before She Met Me,* the fear of loss forms the subconscious of a humorous and meticulous examination of obsessive jealousy, in *Talking It Over* and *Love etc.*, it is analysed through deception, revenge and resentment. Even behind the apparent postmodernist strategies and playful tone of *Flaubert's Parrot,* there resides the story of a retired, bereaving narrator who is trying to overcome the recent death of his once infidel wife. Irony and humour have always been the main traits of Barnes, no matter how serious the issues he represented. However, since the publication of *The Sense of an Ending* in 2011, Barnes's novels have grown to be more melancholic and lyrical in tone and less humorous and playful in style. Barnes's latest novels – *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), *Levels of Life* (2013), *The Noise of Time* (2016) and *The Only Story* (2018) – all develop around an aged protagonist or narrator whose story unfolds in an ironically self-aware lyrical tone, which detaches Barnes from postmodernism. The writing style of Julian Barnes, as a mature novelist, gets plainer as his mood becomes more sentimental and melancholic. This paper examines Barnes's representation of mourning and melancholy in *Levels of Life* where he dedicates the last section to his bereavement process after the loss of his wife, Pat Kavanagh, and *The Only Story* where he offers the piercing and grim love story of Susan (48) and Paul (19). The concepts of mourning and melancholy will be analysed by reference to Freud's and Derrida's views to illustrate how Barnes subtly probes them in the two novels as an artist.
Keywords: Mourning, melancholy, Julian Barnes, Jacques Derrida, *Levels of Life*, *The Only Story*

Öz
Sevgiliyi kaybetme, ölüm veya başka sebeplerle sevileni yitirme korkusu ve deneyimi, Julian Barnes eserlerinde sıklıkla tekrarlanan bir temadır. Kaybetme korkusu, *Benimle Tanışmadan Önce*'de son derece mizahi bir tutum ve incelikli biçimde alınmış olan saplantılı bir kıskançlık öyküsünün bilinçaltını oluştururken, *Seni Sevmiyorum* ve *Aşk Vesaire*'de aldatma, intikam ve içerleme duygularıyla birlikte ele alınmıştır. *Flaubert'in Papağanı* gibi, görünürde postmodern ve oyunbaz anlatı teknikleri ile yazılmış bir romanda bile biz aslında sadakatsiz karısının ölümüyle alt üst olmuş emekli kahramanın yas süreciyle baş ediş biçimlerini okuruz. İroni ve mizah, Barnes'ın ele aldığı konular ne kadar ciddi olursa olsun asla vazgeçmediği iki ana tavırdır. Ancak 2011'de yayınlanan *Bir Son Duygusu*'ndan itibaren, Barnes

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romanlarının tonu daha melankolik ve lirik olurken üslubu daha az mizahi ve oyunbaz olmaya meyletmiştir. Barnes'ın son dönem romanları – *Bir Son Duygusu* (2011), *Hayatın Düzeyleri* (2013), *Zamanın Gürültüsü* (2016) ve *Biricik Hikaye* (2018) – odağına ironik biçimde lirik olduğunun farkında olan yaşlı bir karakter veya anlatıcı koyarak postmodernizmle arasına mesafe koymuştur. Artık olgun bir yazar olan Julian Barnes'ın üslubu daha sadeleşirken anlatı modu gitgide daha melankolik ve duygusal olmaya başlamıştır. Bu makalede, Julian Barnes'ın son bölümünü ölen karısı Pat Kavanagh'ın ardından yaşadığı kişisel yas sürecine ayırdığı *Hayatın Düzeyleri* ve Susan (48) ile Paul (19)'ün kalp burkan ve iç karartan aşkının anlatıldığı *Biricik Hikaye* adlı eserlerinde yas ve melankoli temaları incelenmiştir. Yas ve melankoli kavramları Sigmund Freud ve Jacques Derrida bağlamında açıklanıp Julian Barnes'ın bu kavramların sanatsal temsilini nasıl yaptığı gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Yas, melankoli, Julian Barnes, Jacques Derrida, *Hayatın Düzeyleri*, *Biricik Hikaye*

As readers of Julian Barnes, we notice that recently his work has been more lyrical and elegiac, and less humorous and playful in tone, albeit maintaining irony as the Barnesian trait. He has assumed a more intimate and direct voice while concentrating on concepts such as aging, memory, time, friendship and love. As a mature writer, he sounds more contemplative and melancholic in his books which stand as meditative studies on certain emotions. After the death of his wife, Pat Kavanagh (1940-2008) whom he addresses as "the heart of my life and life of my heart," (*Levels of Life*, 68) the uxorious Barnes is now 74, an aged novelist trying to get used to living alone after thirty years of married life. The process of getting old, yet remaining ignorant of the meaning of life at a late age, becomes a central theme in his recent novels namely, *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), *Levels of Life* (2013), *The Noise of Time* (2016), and *The Only Story* (2018). These books are all formed of three parts, designed as verbal triptychs which represent the focus of concern in triangular form. They all illustrate aged and desolate men undergoing a trauma of loss, angst or desperation in a way similar to the expressionist triptychs of Francis Bacon, the painter who used the technique to isolate images from each other in order to avoid traditional story-telling. Barnes has repeatedly probed love, jealousy and passion in various forms since *Metroland*, *Love, etc.*, *Before She Met Me*, and *Talking it Over*. He also wrote deadly serious and masterfully playful stories and meditative essays on death or loss in *The Lemon Table* (2004), *Nothing to be Frightened of* (2008) and *Pulse* (2011).

Even in his postmodernist, playful narratives such as *Flaubert's Parrot* or *History of the World in 10/5 Chapters,* there was, at the centre, the sensibilities of a uxorious man who either lost or cherished his wife. *Levels of Life* and *The Only Story* are no exceptions, yet sadder and more heart-breaking in tone. We can read Barnes's *oeuvre* as the extended versions of the half chapter, the "Parenthesis" section of *History of the World in 10/5 Chapters* (1989) as they all study various aspects of love, devotion and loss; a "parenthesis" which seals all writings of Barnes. He closes the "Parenthesis" in *History of the World in 10/5*

Chapters with a friendly warning: "We must believe in [love], or we're lost. We may not obtain it, or we may obtain it and find it renders us unhappy; we must still believe in it. If we don't, then we merely surrender to the history of the world and to someone else's truth" (1989: 246). This remote echo of Barnes from 1989 is rephrased as the core question of his 2018 novel *The Only Story*: "Would you rather love the more, and suffer the more; or love the less and suffer the less?" (3). Barnes asserts that it is: "finally, the only real question" (3).

Levels of Life (2013) and *The Only Story* (2018) are exquisite and subtle novels of Barnes as a mature writer who believes now to know more about love and loss, and ironically, less about life. They focus on the psychology of aged and grieving men; elaborate on time and memory; and study love as the only thing that matters in one's life.

Levels of Life brings history, fictionalized biography and memoir together in three parts. It begins with the chapter named "The Sins of Height" and focuses on the history of ballooning, aeronautics, and aerial photography to illustrate the euphoria of flight, soaring up, challenging gravity, and tasting freedom as the metaphors of love which elevates us once we fall in it. Ballooning, tasting the sins of height and its risks are used as foils to describe the experience of love and loss in the form of ascending and descending. The second part, "On the Level," which is a fictional love story between two historical characters, Fred Barnaby and Sara Bernhardt, illustrates how unrequited love can be felt as being smashed down from the high altitudes of romantic euphoria to the firm ground of reality. And the third part "The Loss of Depth" shows that the first two parts were only the metaphoric introductions to Barnes's main aim at writing the book, i.e. expressing his personal bereavement. The title, "The Loss of Depth" refers to the loss of love that renders life its depth, its meaning, which, once lost, causes void, agony and grief. This part, as an anatomy of grief, studies the writer's mourning as a process, and melancholy as a state after his wife's death, and considers grief not only as a moral duty, or a state which reconfigures time ("one day means no more than the next") and space ("you enter a new geography, a new-found-land formed of pain" 84), but also as "the negative image of love" (89).

All three parts of *Levels of Life* begin with the same sentence, "You put two things [or people] together that have not been put together before," (3, 31, 67) and analyse different outcomes of it: "The Sins of Height" puts aeronautics and photography together and shows how it can change our perception of the world by presenting to humanity the bird's-eye view photographed for the first time; "On the Level" puts Fred and Sara together and shows that "Love may not be evenly matched; perhaps it rarely is" (32); sometimes it doesn't work, and a wrong match may simply burn and crash; "The Loss of Depth" puts Pat and Julian together to show how sometimes it works. This part also examines how Julian's bereavement after thirty years of marriage dissolves the world of the survivor into pain and grief:

> You put together two people who have not been put together before. […] sometimes it works, and something new is made, and the world is changed. Then, at some point, sooner or later, for this reason or that, one of them is taken away. And what is taken away is greater than the sum of what was there. This may not be mathematically possible; but it is emotionally possible. (67)

If "The Loss of Depth" is about the love of a normal couple, who, in their marriage, have been perfectly matched, had a healthy, balanced and socially approved relationship; *The Only Story*, is about a marginal couple where Julian Barnes puts together two characters: a 19-year-old university student, Paul Roberts with Susan Macleod, a 48-year-old housewife (with two daughters both older than Paul), and examines the consequences of love and loss. In many ways, the story of Paul and Susan reminds us of Adrian and Sarah (from *The Sense of an Ending*) whose love was kept as a secret, cut short, and where the depressed and self-destructive party was just the reverse. *The Only Story* illustrates a different version of Adrian/Sarah where the alternative choice – the road not taken by Adrian and Sarah – is scrutinized; Paul and Susan choose to live together despite everything and face the painful consequences.

The parts of *The Only Story* have no titles, they are numbered as One, Two and Three; but it would not look absurd if these parts were re-titled as "The Sins of Height," "On the Level" and "The Loss of Depth" after the chapter titles of *Levels of Life*. They perfectly match in meaning and content with the parts of *The Only Story*. The first part visits the first two years of Paul and Susan as lovers. They soar up with love, enjoy "the sins of height," feeling blessed, adventurous and free. They use the age difference as camouflage when they publicly appear, play tennis regularly, and use the local club as their safe heaven until they are noticed and expelled from it like Adam and Eve. At the end of Part One, Paul writes a goodbye note to his parents and, with Susan, moves to London to start a new and free life together. Part Two describes "the next ten years or so" of their relationship under the same roof. They live together, but still hide their relationship from Paul's school friends, from neighbours, from everyone else, as "there was always a question of shame at the bottom of their relationship: both personal and social shame" (107). The fact that Susan is old enough to be Paul's mother does not go well with anyone around them (50). From "the sins of height" they fall "on the level," of reality. Their love is now exposed and they endure the consequences. Susan, locked up in the house, succumbs to depression, self-reproach, and alcoholism. We see how they suffer, yet remain innocent in their love, no matter how grim it looked from the outside. As they are "on the level," they grow more disenchanted, desperate and disappointed with life. After living under the same roof for ten years or more, Susan becomes totally estranged to their relationship, does not respond to Paul's efforts for healing her from alcoholism, and is eventually sent by Paul to her daughter's care. Unlike the first two parts narrated in the first person (second part especially revolving around the internal dialogues of "I" addressing itself as "You"), part Three is a narrative in the third person. This shift of the narrative – from *I/You* to *He* – creates an objective sense, a look at Paul's story from the

outside. Thirty years or more have passed: Paul is now older, in his fifties, and he feels stilled. Life, for him, has been a mortal coil to shuffle off, yet he is still content with this. He makes it his life's task, "his final duty to both of them to remember and hold her as she had been when they were first together, happy and innocent of the future" (163). He wants "to keep the memory of the lost sight of the first person – the only person – he had loved" (164). He evaluates his whole life as sealed with the love of Susan and thinks that "he fell in love like a man committing suicide" (166). The third part covers the subsequent wreckage of their life, their "loss of depth". Paul's heart is cauterized and Susan is a hospitalized, elderly woman who has Alzheimer's. In the end, he couldn't save her, but he tries to save their story. When she turns sixty as a demented, and alcoholic woman, Paul walks away from her; knowing that he would always walk in life as a wounded man. He keeps on visiting her even if she does not remember anything, anymore. From this love, he learns to keep himself to himself, remains single and never regrets it. The third part reveals the intention of Paul to tell their story, the story of their love, his only story. This part ends with the death of Susan, when Paul is in his sixties and Susan in her nineties and totally senile.

The story of Julian and Pat in the third part of *Levels of Life* involves a healthy relationship and a socially acceptable love story (Pat Kavanagh is only six years older than Julian Barnes, and they are a perfectly matched couple as we understand from Barnes's narrative). This fact creates a difference in Julian Barnes's analysis of love and loss in two novels. If we use an analogy, we may say that the love between Julian and Pat was like a baby or a flower seed attentively and mutually cherished, grown to become in time what it is, i.e. a lifelong, exemplary and ideal love or a beautiful, precious flower. Contrary to it, the love between Paul and Susan was a dead seed from the start, a still born, meant to be buried, not to be cherished or nourished to grow to assume a public identity due to the scandalous nature and impossible temporal aspect of it. Paul and Susan had no purpose other than remaining loyal to their love since their relationship "proved as offensive to the new norms as to the old ones" (49). This love was deprived of chronicity, victimized by time, threatened by reality, devoured all possibilities, cauterised the heart, but still remained unique and precious. The love, for which Susan sacrificed her long past, and Paul his long future, always stood outside of time, yet time somehow played a greater role in it than expected.

Levels of Life and *The Only Story* can be read as twin stories in disguise, examining love and loss in different apparels, the questions raised by the former, find their answers in the latter. The difference, one might say, is that in *The Only Story*, the lovers could experience either "the sins of height" or "the loss of depth," whereas being "on the level" is doomed, from the start, to be destructive. The shameful nature of the relationship and the generation gap deprived the lovers of the possibility of a real life and public approval. Nevertheless, both novels ask, through the voice of an old, grieving man, "whether it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" and both choose "love" at all costs. The answer would not be otherwise for Barnes

who contends toward the end of *Levels of Life* that "There are two essential kinds of loneliness: that of not having found someone to love and that of having been deprived by the one you did love. The first kind is worse" (111).

Barnes offers different views of mourning and melancholy in the two novels, and shapes his narratives as elaborations on grief (as the negative image of love) and loss in ways much deeper than Sigmund Freud's propositions. It wouldn't be wrong to suggest that Barnes's analyses of mourning and melancholy are more persuasive in theory, and wider in scope compared to Freud's examination of them, and closer to Jacques Derrida's in terms of perceiving melancholy not as a pathological state; approaching the process of mourning not necessarily as a work that starts with the death of the loved one, but as a lifelong work which involves the knowledge that "one must always go before the other. One must always die first. In the *Politics of Friendship*, Jacques Derrida demonstrates this as the law of friendship – thus of mourning" (Brault and Naas, 2001: 1). Nearly thirty years ago, long before Pat's death, Barnes asks what it would be like for a man in his sixties to be widowed and writes: "When she dies, you are not at first surprised. Part of love is preparing for death. You feel confirmed in your love when she dies" (*Levels of Life,* 114). Barnes already knows that in every relationship there is a mental and emotional preparation for death or loss that is to come. As he asserts in *Levels of Life*: "Every love story is a potential grief story. If not at first, then later. If not for one, then for the other. Sometimes for both" (36-37).

Freud's essay, *Mourning and Melancholy* (1917), defines mourning as "a work which starts with a normal reaction to the loss of a loved person, or the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal and so on" (1957: 243). Mourning, for him, is a healthy process and a conscious, deliberate work of introjections, whereas melancholia is a work of incorporation, not a process with telos; and therefore, for Freud, melancholy is a pathology, a complex which behaves like open wound, whereas mourning is the process of healing the wound: "In mourning, it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246). As Woodward states, "mourning, for Freud, is a normal and finite process. As a psychic work, mourning aims to heal the ego from the loss. It is a work with a precise purpose and goal: to free ourselves from the emotional bonds which have tied us to the person we loved so that we may invest that energy elsewhere, to detach ourselves so that we may be uninhibited" (1991: 94). Feber similarly illustrates the Freudian distinction between the two as follows:

> But soon enough, the mourner, who is reacting in a nonpathological manner, recognizes and responds to the *call of reality*, to let go of the lost-loved object and liberate libidinal desire. This is the point of divergence with the melancholic who remains sunken in his loss, unable to acknowledge and accept the need to cleave and in a self-destructive loyalty to the lost object, internalizes it into his ego, thus furthermore circumscribing the conflict related to the loss. The lost object continues to exist, but as part of the dejected subject, who can no

> longer clearly define the borders between his own subjectivity and the existence of the lost object within it. (2006: 66)

Barnes, by focusing on the self-destructive loyalty of the dejected subject, shows how this subject endures and embraces melancholy in *Levels of Life* and *The Only Story*. In each story, Barnes puts at the centre a character who loyally internalizes, and incorporates the memories of the loved one. The lost one becomes an integral part of the narrator: *Levels of Life* illustrates it in a balanced and 'normal' relationship, whereas *The Only Story*, in a lame, 'shameful', and unbalanced relationship. In both novels, Barnes presents an ego which strives to ease itself by visiting the memories, tracking the traces of the past to overcome the feeling of loss. For Freud, going through memories is healthy insofar as they unbound the ties with the deceased; for Barnes it is quite the contrary, because, unlike Freud, he considers melancholy and incorporation as a moral duty, not as a complex that weakens the ego and causes self-denigration but as a state that enriches and matures the self. As a result, for Barnes, curing the ego does not necessarily entail detachment; rather it is an altruistic effort which aims to strengthen the tie between the dead and the living. In *Levels of Life* Barnes says: "Grief is a human, not medical, condition, and while there are pills to help us forget it – and everything else – there are no pills to cure it. The griefstruck are not depressed, just properly, appropriately, mathematically sad" (71).

A successful mourning, for Freud, is a process of introjection and internalization, and by silencing the voice of the deceased, it aims to assimilate the other into the self. By introjection Freud means the work of elaborating tactfully on the memories of the loved one in order to detach our being from the deceased, and move on with our lives with a secure ego. In a successful mourning we, in the end of the process, obey the behest of reality (245). Mourning is a memory work; every memory must be tested, remembered, contemplated, and meditated for the purpose of overcoming the grief. For a mourning to be normal and healthy, the condition is that it must come to an end; the voice of the other must be silenced. "Melancholy, on the other hand, is ultimately failed or unsuccessful mourning, a pathological state which needs treatment for it ignores the behest of reality and tends to resume dialogues with the deceased" (Woodward, 95).

Derrida contests Freud by proposing an alternative understanding of mourning and melancholy which, as Kirkby imparts,

> depends neither on a refusal to mourn nor on abandoning the dead. It offers a respect for the dead Other as other; it allows agency to the mourner in the possibility of an ongoing creative encounter with the other in an externalizing, productive, future oriented memory; it emphasizes the importance of acting out the entrusted responsibility, which is their legacy to us; it upholds the idea of community and reminds us our interconnectedness with our dead. (2006: 469-470)

With regard to mourning, Derrida privileges incorporation over introjection essentially because incorporation acknowledges the other as other, not totally assimilating the other and therefore preserving a difference and heterogeneity being more respectful of the other person's alterity. Introjection, unlike incorporation, assimilates the other into the self in a kind of psychic plagiarism. Derrida states that the only successful and loyal way to mourn is to be unable to do so. "Success fails and failure succeeds, for this is the law of mourning, it would have to fail in order to succeed" (1989: 34). In that respect, Freud's successful mourning actually fails – or at least it is an unfaithful fidelity – because the other person becomes a part of us, and in this introjection, their genuine alterity is no longer respected. On the other hand, failure to mourn the other's death paradoxically appears to succeed because the presence of the other person in their exteriority is prolonged; the memory of the dead is incorporated to the memory of the living. For both Freud and Derrida, mourning is a work consciously done. Yet Derrida, unlike Freud, perceives this 'work' as a lifelong process where the one who mourns for the deceased is tested by his loyalty. In Derrida's perspective, if mourning aims at killing the dead, melancholy aims at keeping it alive (1989: 34-36).

Freud apparently treats mourning and melancholy as clear-cut binaries; however, Barnes, like Derrida, is sceptical of this treatment:

> There is the question of grief versus mourning. You can try to differentiate them by saying that grief is a state while mourning is a process; yet they inevitably overlap. Is the state diminishing? Is the process progressing? […] Grief is vertical – and vertiginous – while mourning is horizontal. Grief makes your stomach turn, snatches the breath from you, cuts off the blood supply to the brain; mourning blows you in a new direction. (*Levels of Life,* 87-88)

In *Levels of Life,* he examines the traditional approach by giving examples from his friends and their reactions to his bereavement and prefers to remain sceptic of the Freudian attitude because he knows that

> You come out of your pain of loss in time. But you don't come out of it like a train coming out of a tunnel, bursting through the Downs into sunshine and that swift, rattling descent to the Channel; you come out of it as a gull comes out of an oil slick; you are tarred and feathered for life. (115)

For Barnes, the final tormenting comes to the mourner with the unanswerable question of success: "What is success in mourning? Does it lie in remembering or in forgetting? A staying still or moving on? Or some combination of both? The ability to hold the lost love powerfully in mind, remembering without distorting?" (116). Or, one might achieve it "when grief becomes 'just' the memory of grief – if it ever does" (117). "Is success at grief, at mourning, at sorrow an achievement or merely a new given condition?" (116-117). Barnes also scrutinizes whether mourning and melancholy have anything to do with free will. In that he disagrees with Freud's rational and pragmatic approach.

For Freud, success in mourning lies in its finitude and our ability to answer the call of reality. Thinking as such, we may say that mourning is an egotistic, subject-oriented process which attempts at killing the dead so that ego could regain its strength. Melancholy, on the other hand, can be perceived as an altruistic, object-oriented process which attempts at keeping the dead alive by way of giving a voice, a spectral presence to it to be able to save it. Accordingly, Julian gives voice to Pat in resuming his conversations with her even long after her death; and Paul narrates his only story, his love of Susan as a tribute to keep their legacy safe. Barnes, by combining mourning and melancholy in the word "grief," confirms Woodward's interpretation of Derrida in that "someone can be in between mourning and melancholy, living in grief in such a way that one is still in mourning but no longer exclusively devoted to mourning" (Woodward, 90). In *Levels of Life,* he subtly underlines the paradox of grief:

> The fact that someone is dead may mean that they are not alive, but does not mean that they do not exist. I externalize her easily and naturally because by now I have internalized her. The paradox of grief: If I have survived what is now four years of her absence, it is because I have had four years of her presence. (102-103)

Julian mourns for Pat after her death "uncomplicatedly, and absolutely, [missing] her in every action and in every inaction" (81). Paul mourns for Susan absolutely but complicatedly, and not only posthumously. *Levels of Life* studies grief as a feeling that comes after love and loss, whereas *The Only Story* studies grief as the accompanying emotion in an ongoing relationship, coexisting with love, becoming its perpetual present. Julian has to get used to the singular pronoun "I" after Pat, whereas, for Paul and Susan becoming "we" was socially doomed from the start. Theirs is, sadly, a love lived in the form of grief. In the end, this love fixes Paul's life, and becomes his "only story". Only by telling their story, enclosing all their sadness and happiness, Paul believes that he can finally justify and give voice to the silenced plural pronoun "we" in the way as it privately and truly meant to them against its condemned moral and temporal aspect.

Both novels approach the concept of love as having its private morality, codes of honour which do not necessarily have to conform to public morality. This moral dimension of love is the very ground of grief felt after the loss of the loved one and as Barnes asserts: "If it is not moral in its effect – than love is no more than an exaggerated form of pleasure" (*Levels of Life*, 82).

Barnes, like Derrida perceives melancholy as a mood or disposition towards the world. Derrida states that "it is only in us that the dead may speak, that is only by speaking of and as the dead that we can keep them alive and this is a sign of fidelity" (1993: 36). Barnes, in *Levels of Life,* confirms Derrida, as he explains why he withdraws from his plans of committing suicide: "I was her principal rememberer. If she was anywhere she was within me, internalised. This was normal. And it was equally normal – and irrefutable – that I could not kill myself because then I would also be killing her. She would die a second time" (90). The grief-stricken melancholic is destructively satisfied by this split

tormented interiority, this unbearable paradox of fidelity which becomes an expression of his endless loyalty and moral duty. In *The Only Story*, Paul similarly lives his life in the form of melancholy in the presence and absence of Susan, and turns his failure in giving up Susan to a true sign of fidelity. His life, which could otherwise be seen as a waste, marks his success in love which he never regrets. *Levels of Life* and *The Only Story* are stories of grief which illustrate unsuccessful and therefore successful mourning. As Derrida states:

> I pretend to keep the dead alive, intact, *safe (save) inside me*, but it is only in order to refuse, in a necessarily equivocal way, to love the dead as a living part of me, dead *save in me*, through the process of introjection, as happens in so-called 'normal' mourning. […] Faced with the impotence of the process of introjection (gradual, slow, laborious, mediated, effective), incorporation is the only choice: fantasmatic, unmediated, instantaneous, magical, sometimes hallucinatory. (qtd in Woodward, 99)

Here we may examine melancholy as a state which embodies *différance*: on one hand, melancholy saves the difference and alterity of the deceased, on the other, it defers the absence of the dead by keeping his/her memory present: "The dead one resumes an ongoing conversation with us being both within us [present] and beyond us [absent], continuing to look at us with a look that is a call to responsibility and transformation" (2001: 161).

Mourning does not necessarily have to be posthumous, it is the "gift of death" which renders friendships and relations their meaning and value. As Kirkby states, for Derrida: "All our relationships are from the beginning tinged with mourning, for the unspoken truth of every friendship is that one of us will have to see the other die –there is no friendship without this knowledge of finitude. We are also who we are because of the memory of those we have loved" (2007: 464). We come into being in dialogue with the dead and can only think of ourselves in "bereaved allegory" (Derrida, 1989: 28). "For Derrida," then, "it is the memory of the future death of the other that constitutes our interiority" (Kirkby, 464).

In *The Only Story*, Paul and Susan, from the beginning of their relationship, were aware that Susan would normally get old, senile, wrinkled, unattractive, and die before Paul, as she was much older than him. This consciousness, which functioned as a constant "behest of reality," always shaded their joy. Paul's love has been a lifelong, life shaping grief to which he gladly submitted himself; a burden he faithfully carried:

> Whenever he thought of her, Paul felt as he was holding her out of the window by her wrists, unable to pull her in or let her drop, both their lives in agonizing stasis… But they were locked together like trapeze artists: He wasn't just holding her, she was holding him. And in the end his strength gave way, and he let her go. And although her fall was cushioned, it was still very grievous because, as she had told him once, she had heavy bones. (*The Only Story*, 165)

Levels of Life and *The Only Story* can be read as two gifts of death, two eulogies that are designed as examples of "faithful failure" in mourning. Barnes adds another dimension to Freud's and Derrida's theories by turning grief into art. He challenges time and its effects on memory and emotions by placing love and grief outside of time; he shows that art can express one's grief not for the sake of overcoming it but for keeping it alive, by ex-corporating/extracting most aesthetically what has been incorporated/introjected. In both cases Barnes gives voice to ego which strives to cure itself from a loss not by assimilating, transforming, killing the dead but by securing the memories of love and grief with the help of fiction, against the destructive power of time. Mourning, for Derrida, does not mean loss, it is rather a form of desire which affirms. Barnes obviously shares the same sentiment with Derrida in representing the two stories of love/loss by underlining the sense of fidelity not only to the lost one but also to the life of the one who outlives the other. Moreover, for Barnes, grief absolutely functions as a moral space where one can be deprived of the loved one, of time and memory. But once he is strongly willed, no one takes from him his only story, his grief story, his love story and therefore his life story. He knows that "pain shows that you have not forgotten; pain enhances the flavour of memory; pain is proof of love. If it didn't matter, it wouldn't matter" (*Levels of Life*, 113). "Grief," he says "is like death, banal and unique" (70) and, "banal as it is, grief is a human, not medical condition" (71). Like Derrida, Barnes supports a new understanding of mourning, one that depathologizes melancholy and finds in it a gift of death. By honouring the otherness of the dead and our attachment to them; we do not abandon them and substitute another in their place, because "the dead are irreplaceable, and death is that which is irreplaceably mine" (Derrida, 1995: 41).

Susan exists in Paul, and Pat exists in Julian in their alterity; Paul and Julian become who they are through relating to their internalised others. Barnes knows that "Love could never be captured in a definition; it could only be captured in a story" (*The Only Story*, 206). The same thing is true for grief, as the negative image of love. He shows how time doesn't necessarily diminish sorrow, and offers a way that eases the pain by projecting melancholy/grief into fiction. *Levels of Life* and *The Only Story* translate (or sublimate) grief into aesthetic expression, capture it in a story. They are erudite and profound meditations on death where Barnes offers literature as the recuperative medium for bereavement. By filling the void in the soul with meaning and art; by writing with the other and for the other, he counterbalances the love and loss of the other with a fully aesthetic image that is fixed in immortality.

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Julian Barnes's *England, England*: A Literary Portrayal of Individual and Collective Psychosis

İngiltere İngiltere'ye Karşı: Bireysel ve Kolektif Psikozun Edebi Bir Portresi

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Abstract
Julian Barnes's *England, England* (1998) has been widely studied in relation to the concept of Englishness within its social, historical, political, and cultural implications regarding England of the late 20th century. As is foregrounded in this study, the novel places interwoven narratives of the individual and the national self to the centre in order to question their interrelated lack of authenticity. Focusing on the issue of authenticity from the Lacanian psychoanalytic model, this paper specifically seeks to analyse how individual and collective psychosis operate within the novel.
Keywords: Julian Barnes, *England, England,* Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Psychosis

Öz
Julian Barnes'ın *İngiltere İngiltere'ye Karşı* (1998) romanında İngilizlik kavramı, 20. yüzyılın sonlarındaki İngiltere'ye ilişkin sosyal, tarihsel, politik ve kültürel çıkarımları ile birlikte geniş çapta çalışılmıştır. Bu çalışmada üzerinde durulan nokta ise romanın iç içe geçmiş bireysel ve milli benlikleri merkeze alarak bu benliklerin karşılıklı olarak gerçeklikten yoksun oluşlarını sorunsallaştırmasıdır. Romandaki gerçeklik sorununu Lacancı psikanalitik yöntem ile ele alan bu çalışma, bireysel ve kolektif psikozun romanda nasıl işlendiğini incelemeyi amaçlar.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, *İngiltere İngiltere'ye Karşı,* Lacancı Psikanaliz, Psikoz

Introduction

Julian Barnes's *England, England* opening with the authentic question of "What's your first memory?" (*EE* 3)[1] brings the importance of memory into the fore. However, the notion of memory quickly takes the reader into the realm of unconscious with the statement that "There's always a memory just behind your first memory, and you can't quite get at it" (*EE* 3). The inability to grasp the unconscious reality that is each subject's buried "*the Thing*," in Lacanian terms, leads the characters of the novel to an infinite *search* for fictional realities which is the main trope in the novel. While Barnes problematizes the

[1] Julian Barnes. *England, England*. Vintage Books, 1999.

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relationship between memory and reality from the very beginning of the novel, he knits them with childhood that is the main stage of psychic development of a subject. At the opening scene of the novel, Martha's denial of her first memories stating that she *does not remember* them (*EE* 3) manifests clearly the subject's defence mechanism not to descend into the unconscious. Though Martha thinks it is a lie and she mistrusts "its source and its intent" (*EE* 3), before long the reader is introduced to her first memory that pictures her childhood listening to her mother's singing and sitting on the kitchen floor with her "Counties of England jigsaw puzzle" spread out on the matting (*EE* 4). Martha's lifelong search for psychic wholeness represented with her obsessive anger about the missing puzzle piece, Nottinghamshire, forgotten in the pocket of his runaway father having left her jigsaw uncompleted reflects Lacan's lacking subject. Within this context, the search of Lacan's *manqua a etre subject* – the subject that is identified with a permanent lack, in other words a lack-of-being – for wholeness initiates with Martha, who has a life-long questioning for "why Daddy had gone off" and "*she* had lost Nottinghamshire" (*EE* 5), and it diffuses into the novel via other characters. However, Barnes's main focus operates not in terms of successful psychic formations but psychologically defected subjects of the unconscious who experience individual psychosis constituting a collective one that will be the main focus of this study.

England, England, both on individual and collective levels, makes the reader familiar with the notion of psychosis engraved in the characters' lives primarily those of Sir Jack Pitman and Martha, two anti-heroes annihilating each other whenever they have the opportunity and operating as father and mother substitutes for each other within the domains of their psychic worlds. Secondarily, the novel's hyperreal theme park (the replica of England) with its employees and visitors survives on the collective psychosis of people who contribute voluntarily to make this theme park named "England, England" more real than real. Taking for the main principle of psychosis that it lives not on fantasy but on "hyperreality" (Flieger 398), almost all of the characters suffer from psychosis even though they are blind to it. At that point, the novel's critical attention based on Baudrillard's theory of simulation, which reproduces the images, subjects or personas as the real and gives them precedence over the real (hyperreality), should be reconsidered in relation to the similar mechanism of the psychotic disorders. The hyperreality that is created by the simulation of England via the theme park is highly identified both by Pitman and the visitors, which puts them into the realm of psychosis. In this sense, Lacanian psychosis which operates with three main systems that are identification, foreclosure and language, going through with Lacanian three orders, would explain individual and collective psychosis in *England, England*.

In the novel, Pitman's infantile sexuality is related to his regression to the imaginary order where the self experiences an imaginary unification with the *big Other* by equating it with Englishness as a master-signifier. Identifying himself with this master-signifier to fill out his permanent lack, which Lacan insistently designates to the subject of the unconscious, Pitman creates the Theme Park – an *object petit a* both for him and the visitors. In this manner, Sir

Jack Pitman's individual psychosis is reflected on the society that submerges into the imaginary order just like him by making the Imaginary more real than the Real, in other words hyperreal. In this context, by paying attention to the production of Englishness in hyperreality – which is a psychosis in psychoanalytical terms – this paper aims to elaborate on the novel's portrayal of individual and collective psychosis induced by *foreclosure* of the master signifier.

Individual and Collective Psychosis

In Lacanian theory of the unconscious, the subject's passing through imaginary order to the symbolic is the vital step that would create I/Thou dialectic; thus, would help the "ego" to become the "subject". To Lacan, the subject should come through the imaginary order which includes the mirror stage and should step into the realm of the symbolic, or in other words the realm of the language, resulting in the experience of separation and alienation. If the subject is able to separate from *the big Other*, which is mostly the care-giver s/he identifies with in infancy, it would result in being a "subject" in spite of the experience of alienation. This is the way for the formation of the subject of the unconscious. However, in the realm of psychosis, the subject is stuck in the imaginary order with an imaginary identification: "[T]he ego is captured by an ideal image, from which it is not well differentiated. This results in confusion and suspicion" (Ribolsi, Feyaerts and Vanheule 2015). As the ongoing identification with an ideal image – let it be the care-giver or another ideal subject – precedes a welcomed separation, the ego strongly identifies with *the big Other* which disguises itself in various ideal images. In the novel, the ideal image many characters identify with is maternal both on an individual and collective level; especially in the case of Sir Jack Pitman, who is both the project-coordinator of the theme park which makes the phantasies of the visitors real and an "adult baby" performing his own phantasies at *Auntie May's*, a paid phantasy house. While Sir Pitman's obsessive identification with Englishness and England, as *the big Other* – which has been a matriarchy more than a patriarchy throughout history, the motherland[2] – keeps him in an illusionary world which he projects onto the theme park, his identification with the "mother image" manifesting itself at *Auntie May's* as an adult baby designates him a real psychotic. In that respect, the inability of Sir Jack, or "Baby Victor [who] took being a Baby seriously" at *Auntie May's* (*EE* 160), to separate himself from the imaginary order hanging on the maternal essentially results from a false identification. Suffering from adult baby syndrome, he situates himself unconsciously within the realm of the Imaginary. In accordance with his inability to get rid of the identification with the maternal image as an adult baby, he cannot separate from the idea of England and Englishness either. Sir Jack wears only "made in England" items and he "is a

[2] Pitman openly and persistently defines England as a "she" in his statements such as: "'So England comes to me, and what do I say to her? I say, 'Listen, baby, face facts. We're in the third millennium and your tits have dropped. The solution is not a push-up bra"' (*EE* 38).

patriot in his private moments too," in his "deerstalker, hunter's jacket, cavalry twills, gaiters, hand-crafted doe-skin boots, and fell-walker's stave" (*EE* 43). Moreover, "the pram's hood (of Baby Victor) [which] was fringed with Union Jack bunting" at *Auntie May's*, is the obvious signifier for his colluded maternal and national identification (*EE* 158). As the founder of the theme park, his motive in this business cannot be explained only in terms of his will for economic growth. His passionate will to make "England, England" more real than real for both himself and other people can be comprehended better in terms of Lacanian theory of psychosis which is fuelled by false imaginary identifications.

Lacanian psychosis sheds light on a signifying mechanism in which *point-de-capiton* (*nodal point*), namely the central signifier constructing the meaning with temporary fixations, functions as the main signifier. The nodal point forms the meaning for the subject of the unconscious such as in the example of Englishness. Namely, Englishness functions as the nodal point of English nationalism and English nationalist discourses, and it requires identifying with the country England in the novel. As Stavrakakis emphasizes, identifying with socio-political objects is inevitable for Lacanian incomplete, lacking subjects because this socio-political object covenants to fulfil the lack in the subject ("Interview by Y. Keskin and V. Çelebi" 743).[3] In this identification mechanism that requires nodal points of signification, the place of *jouissance* is also vital. The ideal object that is identified with gives the subject a pledge of an imaginary opportunity to follow *jouissance*. Thus, the discourses on Englishness and England capture the *manque a étre* subjects who have the illusion to get *jouissance* by identifying with those semiotic nodal points. As the semi-anti-hero of the novel searching for *jouissance* by identifying with England as a semiotic nodal point, Sir Jack tells the consultant Jerry, "I bow to no-one in my love of this country. It's a question of placing the product correctly, that's all" (*EE* 41), which discloses his desire to build on this nodal point by maximizing a collective identification with it. Bentley, pointing out the construction of Englishness as an *imagined community*,[4] focuses on "imaginative representations of the nation" (485) by which Englishness is constructed. To Bentley, Englishness and England do not exist in reality but in "fantasy space," "an imaginary body onto which individuals can project their desires of wholeness, completeness and belonging; a space that *momentarily* [emphasize added] removes the lack with which individuals are burdened by their move into the symbolic world of adulthood" (486). In this sense, all of the subjects in the theme park – the employers, employees and visitors, in other

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[3] This interview with Stavrakakis was conducted by Y. Keskin and V. Çelebi in English. However, the English version could not be accessed. The references to this work have been taken from the Turkish version of the interview and translated into English by the article writers.

[4] "Imagined Community" is a concept theorized by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983). While Anderson does not build his concept on the Lacanian Imaginary order, Bentley reformulates it in relation to the Lacanian Imaginary.

words actors and spectators – become the actants of a false identification experiencing Lacanian imaginary order (fantasy space) which operates with established nodal points in the semiotic chain and within the search for *jouissance* or desire of wholeness, all of which support their psychosis.

As *jouissance* (and wholeness) is an ideal that is pursued but not achieved, the participants of the theme park revolve around desire and pleasure temporarily satisfied with *object petit a*'s. In the novel, not only Sir Jack and Martha but also the other subjects who follow the idea of "England, England" as a replica are explicitly the followers of *jouissance*. The satisfaction that is achieved with the idea of replica rather than the authentic is explained in the novel being "like the discovery that masturbation with pornographic material is more fun than sex" (*EE* 55). Thus, their desire turns around the *jouissance* within this theme park though this fun does not present a total satisfaction. This idea is supported by the ongoing novelties continuously added to the theme park. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator states that "you know what children are like with jigsaws, they just pick up any old piece and try to force it into a hole" (*EE* 4). This expression is interpreted by Peter Childs by taking the jigsaw as a metonym in Part Two of the book, in which the pieces of England are assembled and forced into place to provide a potted toytown version of the country" (110). In this sense, just like the toys (the replicas of the real world) in childhood, this "toytown version of the country" (the replica of England) functions as a pleasure-giver, or more precisely *jouissance*-promiser, for the adult-children of the novel.

This imaginary-hyperreality and the imaginary *jouissance* it proposes is apparent in the relationship between Paul and Martha as well as among the theme park visitors. Their relationship is mostly hyperreal as they search for unattainable *jouissance*; their "words, gestures, ideas, are largely mimicry" as much as their sexuality is constructed "out of replicas and imitations" in John Carey's words (qtd. in Guignery, *The Fiction* 113). To further elaborate on this point, Guignery's following comment is noteworthy:

> Paul discovered 'girls in magazines' (p. 98) and, rather than having sex with real girls, found it 'much easier to be alone with magazine women' (p. 99). Martha, while making love, prefers concentrating on her dream of an ideal man to thinking of her real partner: 'The reality of that dream. Another might be there and helping, his own contingent presence adding to a supposedly shared reality. But you detached yourself from his reality' (p. 50). (*The Fiction* 113)

In this sense, the function of "England, England" to promise *jouissance* for the visitors resembles to the function of the toys in childhood as well sexuality in adult life. The problematic point is that neither of those replicas could ensure *jouissance* for the subjects according to Lacanian theory.

At that point, the main question comes from the novel itself. While the necessity and the validity of the theme park is discussed among the project members, they try to answer why the replica is preferred to the real by asking

"Why does it give us the greater *frisson*?" (*EE* 56) Though Barnes uses the word, "frisson" by italicizing, it is not hard to replace it with *jouissance* when the context is reconsidered. In this context, the French intellectual answers this question with a totally Lacanian tone as follows: "We must demand the replica, since the reality, the truth, the authenticity of the replica is the one we can possess, colonize, reorder, find *jouissance* in, and finally, if and when we decide, it is the reality which, since it is our destiny, we may meet, confront, and destroy" (*EE* 57). In this regard, Barnes clearly gets closer to a Lacanian reading of imaginary and real orders, signifying the Real with the authentic and the Imaginary with the replica with which they aim to "offer far more than words such as Entertainment can possibly imply; even the phrase Quality Leisure […] falls short" as they are "offering *the thing itself*. *Der Ding an sich*" (*EE* 61). In this respect, the French intellectual or the implied author, the voice behind the following passage, designates the Lacanian *manque a étre* subject as lacking and insecure but still looking for *jouissance*:

> To understand this, we must understand and confront our insecurity, our existential indecision, the profound atavistic fear we experience when we are face to face with the original. We have nowhere to hide when we are presented with an alternative reality to our own, a reality which appears more powerful and therefore threatens us. (*EE* 56)

The French intellectual focuses on how "existential indecision" leads the subjects to search for alternative realities when a more powerful one is faced. That is the mechanism of psychosis which constructs a hyperreality by rejecting the existing one. The psychotic subject who is defined with her/his own hyperreality is embodied within the characters of the theme park visitors as well as its founder Jack Pitman. In this sense, they want to destroy reality by identifying with an imaginary reality, "out of existential terror and the human instinct for self-preservation" (*EE* 56). Thus, trapped in the Imaginary, in Lacanian mirror stage, the "psychotic characters" in the novel identify with the reflection of England, which is constructed as "England, England". This theme park with its fictional characters, spaces, and even narrations becomes the hyperreality of the visitors who disregard England as real.

However, "England, England" is a pseudo reflection of England in which the collective subject tries to identify with and form its lost wholeness. It is stated in the novel that "the number of visitor minutes spent in front of the replica exceeds by any manner of calculation the number of visitor minutes spent in front of the original" (*EE* 55). On the psychoanalytical level, the visitors try to identify with the replica in the imaginary order. However, in Lacanian theory, it is a futile effort because any identification in the imaginary order would involve the subject in psychosis. As it is revealed in the novel, the ideal England and Englishness is nowhere; not in "England," or in "England, England," or even in "Anglia". The psychosis starts when the team presents "England, England" as "the thing in itself," *das Ding* or Lacanian Real, since the Real is not possible to be signified and symbolized. When they try to signify Englishness within fifty quintessences, – none of which fully evokes the wholeness of Englishness

(Bentley 486) – by limiting it into the signifying chain, they create their own Englishness, not the Real one. Moreover, there is not such a thing as "real" Englishness because any symbolic representation is not possible to grasp the Real in Lacanian theory. That's why, identification with the created image of Englishness as self-sufficient "the thing in itself" results in individual and collective psychosis in the novel.

Foreclosure and Individual Psychosis

Whilst false identification with an ideal image operates in the imaginary order, it works with the mechanism of *foreclosure* in Lacanian psychoanalytical theory. Lacan rereads Freud putting the Freudian term *Verwerfung* into the centre of psychosis – firstly in his 1955-1956 seminar *The Psychoses* – and he states that he takes "*Verwerfung* to be 'foreclosure' of the signifier" (465). As a different mechanism from repression, which is accepted as the main core in neurosis, Lacan designates *Verwerfung* as "the defect that gives psychosis its essential condition" (479) – when something is not accepted in the symbolic order and rejected unconsciously. While repression tries to keep an image, a memory, a signifier, or thought within the realm of unconscious, foreclosure attempts to put it out of the unconscious; thus, it rejects symbolization strictly and results inevitably in psychosis (Bowie 106). Foreclosure, to Lacan, is a function of the unconscious, different from repression. In that respect, *the Thing* that resists being symbolized and leaving a hole in the unconscious is the main determiner of psychosis. As the authentic signifier is foreclosed, the subject of the unconscious cannot step into the symbolic order and faces the unbearable burden of the Real; thus, s/he prefers to create her/his own reality in the imaginary order. This is the mechanism that results in creating hyperrealities going through with individual and collective psychosis in the novel. While Sir Jack Pitman moves on as an adult baby creating his own reality and keeping the master signifier out of his unconscious, the icon he creates operates not in symbolic but in a hyperreal imaginary order for the other characters.

Lacan defines the master signifier that is foreclosed from the symbolic order as the Name-of-the-Father. Namely, the exclusion of the symbolic father captures the subject in the imaginary order where identification with the mother image is inevitable. As the paternal signifier is foreclosed, the subject is attached to the Imaginary with an image of the Real. In that situation, when identification with the mother image does not permit the subject the opportunity for a healing separation (even though it creates alienation), the Borromean knot which unifies the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real (all create a consequential symbolization process) is undone and the subject suffers from psychosis. On the individual level, Sir Jack pretending to be a baby at *Auntie May's* house clearly forecloses the master signifier, the Name-of-the-Father. In Lacanian theory, the lack of the Name-of-the-Father shows itself in proposing the body in terms of imaginary corporeality. By creating his own real, which is not real in itself but rather imaginary, Sir Jack gets pleasure propounding his

body infantilised by the nurses who function as substitute mothers. Under the pram surrounded with the flag of England, "Baby Victor was a true Baby" (*EE* 162) putting a diaper on, enjoying being breastfed and pooping. The impossibility of achieving Lacanian Real is parallel to the impossibility of achieving *jouissance*. That's why the hyperreal world of *Auntie May's* service where *jouissance* is followed but not fully grasped gives the opportunity to Sir Jack to disclose his individual psychosis. Sir Jack, an actor of paraphilic infantilism, who is unable to adapt to the rules of the symbolic cannot exchange his maternal commitment and desire with the Name-of-the Father; thus, he remains foreclosed in the novel both literally and symbolically.

Throughout the novel, the reader is not given any clue about the parental background of Sir Jack Pitman. After he returns as the governor of the island following Martha's withdrawal, Houses of Parliament "creates him first Baron Pitman of Fortuibus" and Dr Max elaborates "a plausible family tree for the new baron whose mansion beg[ins] to rival Buckingham Palace in both splendour and Visitor throughput" (*EE* 256-257). The fictional family tree and the title of *Baron* bestowed upon Pitman are clear attempts to place him into the symbolic order by establishing a bond with the Name-of-the-Father. However, this attempt is fallacious as his title and family background are not inherited but fictionally created, just like everything in the theme park, and Sir Pitman cannot embrace it. To Lacan, when the subject is unable to embrace the Name-of-the-Father, the psychosis going through hallucinations and/or delusions appears as a result of the clash between the subject and the master signifier, namely the Name-of-the-father. In the case of Sir Pitman, after taking the title, his delusion continues within the realm of the theme park where he organizes his own pseudo funeral testifying the reader to his psychosis once again. The foreclosed Name-of-the-Father shows itself in Sir Pitman's struggle to find a name for himself. Thus, "bestowing upon Sir Jack Pitman the title of Island Governor" makes his position "purely honorific, even if technically endowed with the residual authority" (*EE* 176). In the case of the subject's inability to accept the Name-of-the-Father psychologically, the subject tries to create her/his own name with extraordinary achievements. "Creating a name for oneself has a narcissistic and grandiose dimension" (Ver Eecke 86), and Sir Pitman's lifelong effort to entitle himself is a kind of reflection of that motive.

Not only Sir Jack but also Martha clearly shows the symptoms of foreclosing the father signifier and living with a hole, "a pure and simple hole" (Lacan 465), which she can never compensate. In the case of Sir Jack and Martha, both literally and symbolically the Name-of-the-Father is non-existent. Whilst Martha's childhood memoires take the reader to her unconscious, it is openly stated that "Damage is a normal part of childhood" (*EE* 24). Her damage, the ambivalent feelings towards her father, shows itself in terms of her feeling of hatred projected to herself – she thinks "she was the cause of her father's disappearance and her mother's misery" (*EE* 15) – as well as projected to her father having left them. When Martha is over twenty-five, she meets her father, whose name appears to be Phil having made his second marriage and got a son. In this meeting, Martha's focus is on the missing part of the jigsaw and she says

to her father he took Nottinghamshire with him when he left (*EE* 26). However, to her surprise, Phil does not even remember that Martha was doing jigsaws when she was a kid. Frustrated with her father's ignorance, Martha realizes 'his inexistence' in her life which is represented with the missing part and which has created the feeling of "lack" for Martha. Thus, her blame on the father survives on his inability to remember the missing part of the jigsaw: "She was over twenty-five, and she would go on getting older than twenty-five, older and older and older than twenty-five, and she would be on her own; but she would always blame him for that" (*EE* 26). At that point, while the wholeness of her jigsaw represents her own hypothetic wholeness, the missing part represents the "pure and simple" Lacanian hole in the unconscious. In this sense, Martha's many attempts should be evaluated in terms of her being a lacking subject as she cannot place the Name-of-the-Father in the symbolic order.

In "A BRIEF HISTORY of sexuality in the case of Martha Cochrane," the sixth entry states "Pursuit of the Ideal" (*EE* 50-51), which sounds mostly Lacanian. This entry proposes "[t]he assumption that completeness was possible, desirable, essential – and attainable only in the presence and with the assistance of Another" (*EE* 51). This "Another" is the Lacanian *big Other* that sets up the symbolic chain. However, the absence of the *big Other* puts Martha in an infinite search for the master signifier that is the Name-of-the Father again. Her motive for her ambitious rise to take the place of Sir Jack by becoming the CEO and governing the working of the Island is defined as parricide's guilt by Paul in the novel (*EE* 209). After taking his place, Sir Jack is only "allowed his uniform, his title, and certain ritual appearances. That was enough in her view" (*EE* 196). Martha is clearly punishing Jack, "a substitute for a lost father" (*EE* 92), and unconsciously her own father whom she cannot place in the symbolic order. Throughout the novel she is designated with a lack, something missing which places her as Lacanian *manque a étre* subject "seeking happiness as best she could" without understanding why it did not come (*EE* 198). However, the missing part, the Lacanian hole, the Name-of-the Father, or the foreclosed ring in the signifying chain is manifested at the end of the novel. Martha, at last, confesses herself that there is "an old man" she fell in love with: "I won't tell you his name, you'd laugh. It's ridiculous in a way, but no more ridiculous than some of the men I've tried to love. The problem is, you see, that he doesn't exist. Or he did, but he died a couple of centuries ago" (*EE* 227). Her ambiguous statements about the unnamed "he" shows Martha's struggle to place the Name-of-the-Father in the symbolic order; thus, her inability to found a well-balanced psychic operation.

Foreclosure and Collective Psychosis

While Sir Pitman's and Martha's psychic attitudes on the individual level work with the mechanism of foreclosure, in a similar way, on the collective level the identification with England as the maternal substitute captures the characters in the borders of the "imaginary" which is ascribed to the Island Project by

many critics[5] of the novel such as Patrick Parrinder, Richard Eder, and Valentine Cunningham. In this "imaginary world," without adapting to the rules of the symbolic, in other words to the Name-of-the-Father, the characters foreclose the legislator and authoritative signifier. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Name-of-the-Father represents all agents that castrate the desire of the child for the maternal (Bowie 107). This figurative mother shows itself as England, and Englishness promises people a pleasure undisturbed by the Name-of-the-Father. In this sense, although the collective psychosis of actors and spectators of the island seems like operating in "a pure market state," (*EE* 187) which is "destabilized […] by the shifting sands of the neoliberal market" (Nitsch 47), the unconscious mechanism lying underneath is *desire*, mostly, the desire for the mother signifier; in other words, desiring the unlimited pleasure which is not put aside by the Name-of-the-Father.

The novel ascertains this fact, the motive behind the people's attachment, first to England then to the Island as a replica, with the following statement by Richard Poborsky, the so-called analyst for the United Bank of Switzerland in the novel, who explains why all those Hippie communes were not successful as they failed to understand two things; first human nature, second how the market works: "What's happening on the Island is a recognition that man is a market-driven animal, that he swims in the market like a fish in the sea" (*EE* 188). This market-driven animal should be conceived as desire-driven at the same time. Stavrakakis, who comments on the relationship of *jouissance* with politics and globalized consumerism, states that the superego "can control us better not by forbidding but by conditioning and channeling our desire, by commanding our enjoyment" ("Psychoanalysis and Politics" 24). In this sense, the desire of the theme park visitors is challenged with a commandment of enjoyment that is supported with *object petit a*'s. Jerry, who is aware of the mechanism behind consumerism, explains to Pitman enthusiastically how their clients will be driven to the theme park with England's national *object petit a*'s:

> 'You – we – England – my client – is – are – a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated wisdom. Social and cultural history – stacks of it, reams of it – eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate. Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, Industrial Revolution, gardening, that sort of thing. If I may coin, no, copyright, a phrase, *We are already what others may hope to become*. […] this is […] our product placement. […] We must sell our past to other nations as their future!' (*EE* 41)

Stavrakakis, in "Symbolic Authority, Fantasmatic Enjoyment and the Spirits of Capitalism" explains that the reliance on consumerism of late capitalism is not only related to economics, and it cannot be separated from desire since unconscious symptomatic *jouissance* is behind the collective behaviours of a society:

[5] For further reference to the critics, see Guignery, *The Fiction* 108.

> In late capitalist consumer society this is how a symbolic command and a fantasy regulating/manipulating the pursuit of our lacking enjoyment [jouissance] attempt to construct us as social subjects, a process revealing – once more – the extricable dialectic between symbolic authority and fantasmatic enjoyment [jouissance]. (76-77)

In this sense, the capitalist authority that uses Englishness as a tool for desire and enjoyment proposes a permanent *jouissance* for the visitors, which is not possible; and thus, leads them into psychosis. As is seen, the human nature as a desiring machine works not only in terms of Sir Pitman's adult baby syndrome, but also on the collective level, in relation to the people trying to consume England and Englishness following their appetite for a hypothetic *jouissance* by using *object petit a's* and annihilating any limit and law.

Based on the idea that Lacan relates psychosis to the full dependence on the maternal, the collective psychosis in the novel shows itself as a full dependence on England and Englishness negating the father signifier which "prohibits, forbids, thwarts, and protects" (Fink 80). In this respect, Sir Jack Pitman's status in "England, England," upon whom the parliament bestows the title of Island Governor at the beginning of its foundation and makes it stronger with the title of "first Baron Pitman of Fortuibus" later on, works on imaginary level and designates him as an *imaginary* father signifier. He is not only "endowed with the residual authority [...] to suspend Parliament and the constitution in case of national emergency and rule in his own person" (*EE* 176), but also, following his death a new Pitman is found to substitute for him. It is not surprising that "[t]he replacement Sir Jack swiftly became a popular figure: descending from his landau to plunge into the crowds, lecturing on the history of the Island, and showing key leisure-industry executives round his mansion" (*EE* 258). In this sense, the replica of Pitman who "was as good as new" (*EE* 258) appears as another *imaginary father signifier*, and to most people he gives "dubious taste to smile at a man in the morning and attend his grave in the afternoon" (*EE* 258). While the visitors spend time with the replica of Sir Jack in the morning, they come "to pay their homage at the mausoleum, to read [original] Sir Jack's wall-wisdom, and depart thoughtfully [...] to tour the Pitman mansion at the end of the Mall" in the afternoon (*EE* 258). It is clear, the attachment to the father signifier who establishes itself not as symbolic but as imaginary fortifies the collective psychosis. Based on "the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father in the place of the Other" (Lacan 479); in particular, the subject (Sir Pitman and Martha) is taken out of symbolic chain by placing the father signifier in the Imaginary; and in general, the subjects (the theme park visitors) are trapped in their hyperreal worlds.

In Lacanian theory, related to the imaginary or hyperreal status of psychosis supported with foreclosure of the master signifier, the absence of the metaphorization mechanism should be considered as well. Whilst Lacan mostly focuses on the importance of the symbolic after 1950s, he supports the idea that the subject of the unconscious is formed by language and especially by metaphorization. In his seminar on psychosis, Lacan relates psychosis to

"the lack of the metaphoric effect" (465-466). Similar to Freud's idea that psychosis takes literal what is figurative – thus metaphorization is left out, Lacan places psychosis in the context of disorder of the symbolic which preferably requires a semiotic order (Ribolsi, Feyaerts and Vanheule 2015). Especially the collective psychosis in the novel operates with that kind of semiotic disorder. First of all, Englishness is accepted not as a metaphor or symbolization, but as Real, *the thing in itself* by the collective. While the duplication of the word of England in the name of the Isle tries to announce the victory of "England, England" over "England," it tries to place itself into the realm of the Real order, which is a hypothetical achievement in Lacanian theory. The Isle of Wight, "[t]he little cutie. The little beauty. [...] A pure diamond. Little jewel" (*EE* 64) is expected to create an illusion, and all of the things related to England are presented as much more real than the real to strengthen this illusion. It is claimed that "after you've visited [them], you don't need to see Old England" (*EE* 184).

It is apparent that the fuelling mechanism behind the theme park is mostly based on psychotic delusions and hallucinations as the subjects cannot make a distinction between the symbolic and the real. Since no symbolic acknowledgement is adopted, the non-literal meaning of metaphoric discourse escapes in the signifying chain. In Lacanian theory of psychosis, "the understanding of metaphor requires the ability to symbolize, i.e., to use and understand figurative speech" (Ribolsi, Feyaerts and Vanheule 2015). However, the attitude of the employees and spectators in the novel works in opposition to metaphorization. Whilst the visitors pursue to take pleasure from the hyperreality of "England, England," the employees start to "over-identify with the characters they were engaged to represent" (*EE* 256), which blurs the borders between identification and representation:

> Groups of threshers and shepherds – and even some lobstermen – became increasingly reluctant to use company accommodation. They said they preferred to sleep in their tumbledown cottages, despite the absence of modern facilities available at the converted prisons. Some were even asking to be paid in Island currency, having apparently grown attached to the heavy copper coins they played with all day.
> [...] 'Johnnie' Johnson and his Battle of Britain squadron more problematic. They claimed that since the Tannoy might honk at any moment and the cry of 'Scramble!' go up, it made sense for them to bunk down in Nissen huts beside the runway. (*EE* 203)

The chaotic atmosphere clearly announces itself in which the smugglers start smuggling, threshers and shepherds want to have "the real" life of "the real" threshers and shepherds, Robin Hood and his gang steal in rebellion, the troop of the Battle of Britain is prepared for any attack, the actor playing Dr Johnson changes his original name to Samuel Johnson. Not surprisingly, the result of this hyperreality had been predicted long before in the novel by "the pseudonymous author of Nature Notes," who states,

> R–eality is r–ather like a r–abbit […]. The great public – our distant, happily distant paymasters – want reality to be like a pet bunny. They want it to lollop along and thump its foot picturesquely in its home-made hutch and eat lettuce out of their hand. If you gave them the real thing, something wild that bit, and, if you'll pardon me, shat, they wouldn't know what to do with it. Except strangle it and cook it. (*EE* 136)

In this respect, the employees do not know what to do with this hyperreality and they live in a kind of psychosis which does not refer to the loss of reality but to the acceptance of their made-up story much more Real than reality. At that point, their delusion springs from the inability to accept their must-be symbolic status.

In Lacanian psychosis, as Jirgens states, when the Borromean knot unifying the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary unwinds, the psychotic is captured by the language (34). Unable to place itself in the symbolization, the psychotic subject embraces language and representation in literal meaning such as in the example of the collective psychosis of the employees in the theme park who accept their fictional roles, names, and titles literally. Žižek explains the defect of symbolization mechanism in psychosis with the metaphor of aquarium:

> It would be difficult to invent a better metaphor for psychosis: in contrast to the "normal" state of things in which the real is a lack, a hole in the midst of the symbolic order (like the central black spot in Rothko's paintings), we have here the "aquarium" of the real surrounding isolated islands of the symbolic. (40)

In this sense, the aquarium of the real corresponds to each individual's delusion that reality could be created by her/his own reality. However, the operating mechanism is totally imaginary because "paternal metaphor fails to function and the structure of language (allowing for the possibility of metaphorical substitution) is not assimilated" in psychosis (Fink 94).

Towards the Consensus

Julian Barnes's *England, England*, from the beginning to the end, problematizes the place of the subject in a symbolical chain just like the Lacanian subject of the unconscious who is expected to construct herself/himself within the presence of the other – in Lacanian terms "the locus from which the question of his [the subject's] existence may arise" (Lacan 459). In that sense, to make a bond with the other on the symbolic level, not to get stuck in the Imaginary, and not to establish her/his own imaginary reality as the Real are crucial; and the opposite of those tendencies would inevitably place the subject in psychosis. In psychosis, when reality is foreclosed and the position of the symbolic other crushes, it is not possible to talk about a real subject. At the end of the novel, the significant place of the symbolic other is apprehended by Martha, contrary to Sir Jack, and her coming of age is given in a kind of epiphany. Her statement that "you were finally no more than what *others*

[emphasis added] saw you as. That was your nature, whether you liked it or not" (*EE* 268) sounds mostly Lacanian in terms of the subject's formation within the discourse of the other. Thus, the novel clearly gives the idea that, not only the royal family that is defined to be what others decide and whose "existential reality" depends on the whole mythmaking (*EE* 222), but also each subject is constructed by the existence of the other. Acknowledging that Martha, no more running after Lacanian *object petit a*'s, such as "career, money, sex, heart-trouble, appearance, anxiety, fear, yearning" (*EE* 270), takes a step toward a new spirit that "should divide itself, between the entirely local and the nearly eternal" (*EE* 270), in her own words at the end of the novel.

This new spirit is parallel to Old England's declaration of its "separateness from the rest of the globe and from the Third Millennium by changing its name to Anglia" (*EE* 262). It is like a new beginning because "[a]ll the inhabitants of Anglia have changed their names, professions and location in an attempt to start anew" (Guignery, *The Fiction* 113) in a society which has an interaction among its members. In that sense, Martha and some other residents of the village Fête perceive that the reality of the subject depends on the presence of *the other*. Towards the end, it is mentioned as follows: "Some said you were real only if someone had seen you; some that you were real only if you were in a book; some that you were real if enough people believed in you. Opinions were offered at length, fuelled by scrumpy and ignorant certainty" (*EE* 273). One certain thing is that all of those opinions require the testimony of the other even though it is in vision, in discourse, or in belief. Martha's descent into her unconscious realizing that she has always kept in her unconscious the existence of the other, the unnamed *big Other*, brings her to an ascent which is symbolized with her climbing to Gibbet Hill "with a patience discovered late in life" (*EE* 267).

In contrast to the ongoing psychosis of "England, England," Anglia is pictured within a subjectification process when it abandons its "long-agreed goals," "economic growth, political influence, military capacity, and moral superiority" (*EE* 261). England's stripping away its imaginary representation as "England, England," and becoming Anglia – or at least its intention to do it – reflects the Lacanian subject which experiences the separation from the imaginary order at the cost of alienation. The end of the book, which is claimed by Miracky to be "positioned somewhere between homage and parody of the dominance of the 'hyperreal'" (qtd. in Guignery, *The Fiction* 112), negates both England and "England, England" but still does not propose Anglia as the absolute victor or the Real. Nünning affirms that Anglia is not "an idealized version of authentic rural Englishness" (70); however, it is not an imaginary world – like "England, England" – either. At the end of the novel, Barnes's staging another "fake" and "bogus village" – in his own words (Guignery, "History in Question(s)" 63), which he calls Anglia, is mostly equivalent to Lacan's claim that neither the Imaginary nor the Real could be permanent orders for the subject. As the imaginary order is the domain of psychosis and the Real is hypothetical as well as unattainable, the safest order is the Symbolic. Thus, Anglia – as a symbolic space – is neither Real nor Imaginary, but mostly Symbolic. While the new

residents of this symbolic space including Martha are not attached to the Imaginary like the visitors of "England, England," it does not mean that their search for *jouissance* is surrendered; contrarily, what is proposed is to go after the Real with a certain awareness of its non-existent ontology. In this way, the trap of the Imaginary would be avoided by the subject, and by the residents of Anglia.

Martha's limited epiphany at the end, her new understanding about life that "happiness was dependent upon your nature," that "the problem was to find out what your nature is," that "searching for happiness was a lower form of salvation," and that "she had made so little progress towards even the lowest form of salvation" (*EE* 233) is much more understandable when we put *jouissance* in the place of *happiness*; the two concepts to explain what human beings search for according to Lacan and Freud, respectively. Human beings search for *jouissance*, but there is no such thing as a complete or ideal subject endowed with archaic *jouissance*. In this respect, the people establishing Anglia realize the incapacity and the impossibility of being an ideal country and nation, as well as an ideal subject. While the replica is a futile attempt to substitute for the Real/ideal, and people supporting it are experiencing psychosis, Anglia is a representative of the consensus between the Imaginary and the Real where people, at least, attempt to move themselves away from the earlier collective psychosis. It is stated that "[t]he village was neither idyllic nor dystopic. There were no outstanding idiots, despite the best mimicry of Jez Harris. If there was stupidity, as *The Times of London* insisted, then it was of the old kind, based on ignorance, rather than the new, based on knowledge" (*EE* 265).

Julian Barnes defines Anglia as "fabulation all over again – convincing ourselves of a coherence between things that are largely true and things that are wholly imagined" (Guignery, "History in Question(s)" 63), namely the domain of the Symbolic. This is the point where the Lacanian subject has to stand throughout her/his life, at the point where the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real intersect, realizing its lack but still struggling for ideal or *jouissance*.

At that point, Lacan's concept of the *sinthome*, which he introduces after his revision of the three orders and his inclusion of it as the fourth ring to the triple Borromean Knot, is similar to the function of Anglia when its status is considered at the end of the novel. Lacan designates the *sinthome* as the fourth ring that ties the three orders which constitute the psychic knot but constantly hang by a thread of being untied. The function of *sinthome* is to allow the subject, a psychotic, "to cohere," "to live": When the subject loses touch with reality or regresses to the Imaginary, *sinthome* offers a coping mechanism, "a supplementary cord" (Evans 191-192). In this sense, though it is still not the Real, Anglia functions as the *sinthome* of people who are aware of the imaginary status of "England, England". Those people realizing that neither national nor religious identity could propose the feeling of an absolute wholeness still constitute a new society including a "religious" entity. "But

when they came to church on Sunday it was more from a need for regular society and a taste for tuneful hymns than in order to receive spiritual advice and the promise of eternal life from the pulpit" (*EE* 271). In this respect, Anglia is the *sinthome* of this society; namely, it is a solution – though temporary – which ties all of the other rings of the psychic structure together. Anglia is a way to construct a temporary social structure with *the other* for the subject of the unconscious who knows the search for *jouissance* is an endless process. In this sense, Barnes's call reminds the call for the Lacanian subject: Search for your *jouissance*, but do not think you will attain it; follow the ideal, but do not fall into the hole of the Imaginary; beware that "Once a psychotic, always a psychotic" (Fink 82).

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Julian Barnes's *The Lemon Table* as a Collection of Stories of Absence

Julian Barnes'ın Öykü Derlemesi *Limon Masası*'nda Yokluk

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Abstract

In his collection of short stories, Julian Barnes mainly focuses on the themes of loss and death. Through their stories, Barnes's characters are depicted in glimpses in their long journey which is from their early life to their very old age. Starting from the very first story titled "A Short History of Hairdressing," the main character's kind of metamorphosis into an old man is narrated with ruptures and gaps which seem to be loopholes to be completed for the reader. That the narrator leaves these means of evasion can be evaluated in light of Derrida's reversal of the traditional ordered pairs like presence/absence. While the first term is viewed as primary and original, the second one is derivative in the Western epistemology. Yet, for Derrida this priority is not intact and can easily be reversed as both the primary and the secondary terms are dependent on each other while bearing the traces of one another. In this axis of binary oppositions, man is associated with either presence or primary; on the contrary, woman is absent or subordinate. In the stories under scrutiny here, male protagonists are fully depicted and most of their actions are mostly legitimized. However, female characters are not allowed to contribute to the flow of the fiction; that is, they are accessories and almost show no presence. In this hierarchical space, women are naturally degraded, which in turn prevents men from achieving any kind of intersubjectivity with anyone. Thus, the course of events including even some of the most intimate details about the characters acts as a screen for absence; that is, they fail to give any worthy information about them. The so-called presence of incidents is indeed absence. In this light, it can be concluded that what goes on or what does not go on in Barnes's stories can be discovered amidst the slippery ground where the primary and the secondary terms are reversed and intermingled.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, short stories, deconstructive reading, presence/absence, patriarchal discourse, objectification of women

Öz

Julian Barnes *Limon Masası* isimli öykü derlemesinde ağırlıklı olarak kayıp ve ölüm temasına odaklanmış ve karakterlerini genelde çok genç yaşlarından yaşlılıklarına uzanan yolculuklarında ele almaya çalışmıştır. Derlemedeki "Kuaförlüğün Kısa Hikayesi" isimli ilk öyküden başlayarak, ana karakterin yaşlı bir adama dönüşümü okuyucu tarafından doldurulmayı bekleyen boşluklarla anlatılmıştır. Anlatıcının bu tip kaçış noktaları bırakması Derrida'nın geleneksel olarak eşleştirilmiş varlık/yokluk gibi ikililerin tersine çevrilmesi ışığında değerlendirilebilir. Batı epistemolojisinde, bu ikilinin ilk ayağı birincil ve orijinal olarak görülürken, ikincisi genellikle ikincil veya türev olarak görülür. Fakat, Derrida için birincilin önceliğinin dokunulmazlığı yoktur

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ve bu ikili zıtlık tersine çevrilebilir. Böyle ikili zıtlıklar ekseninde, öykülerde incelenen erkek karakterler varlık ya da birincillikle, kadın karakterler ise tabi veya yoklukla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Erkek karakterlerin hareketleri ve motivasyonları açıklanıp mazur gösterilirken, kadın karakterlerin olay akışına etki etmesine izin verilmemiş aksine kadınlar basit bir aksesuar olarak konumlandırılıp hemen hemen hiç varlık göstermemişlerdir. Kadının hor görüldüğü bu hiyerarşik uzamda, erkek de hiçbir bağlamda öznelerarasılı bir ilişkiyi başaramaz. Bu teorik açıklamalar ışığında, Barnes'in öykülerinde gerçekleşen ya da gerçekleşmeyenler birincil ve ikincil terimlerin tersine çevrildiği ya da iç içe geçirildiği kaygan bir zeminde incelenecektir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, kısa hikayeler, yapıbozumcu okuma, varlık/yokluk, ataerkil söylem, kadının nesneleştirilmesi

Julian Barnes's *The Lemon Table* is a collection of eleven short stories all dealing with old age, demise and painful feelings accompanied to death. As the stories lay it bare, protagonists, mostly old men, suffer from not being able to fulfil their potentials in their job, social life or sexual performances with their partners anymore. During their journeys of aging, they feel regretful for their past follies and at times criticize themselves. The characters here all turn old with some sneaking feelings; some with profound regret, some with a mass of stoicism and yet some still with raving defiance. All these bitter feelings are complemented by the recognition of a growing inability to pursue the passions of a younger self. For Stephanie Merritt, in her review of the collection in *The Guardian*, the most "forceful among these is regret" but what is more tragic is that "Barnes's characters bring an awareness of their own folly for refusing to relinquish the pleasures and passions of the younger self, and a concurrent awareness of a growing inability to pursue those passions with consistent vigour" (Merritt). Rather than the presence of several emotions, it can be noted that these stories are expected to be built on the absence of some prospects or abilities parallel with the theme of the collection. Dealing with the dichotomy of presence and absence, this paper aims to put double entendre on the concept of absence. One leg of the word play refers to the taken-for-granted emotions co-existing with death like the absence of a possibility of active involvement in any sphere of life, be it in social or domestic roles. Especially, the male protagonists are portrayed as angry old men who cannot now appreciate their former mobile and potent ways of taking part in public and private spaces as once they did in their youth. The second leg in the double entendre refers to the absence of a free thirdspace which would have made it possible for the women characters to be depicted in depth and from a multidimensional perspective and it would have welcomed an interplay between binary oppositions. Yet, in this case, with the lack of thirdspace, women characters in the stories are all enslaved into the roles that are assigned by the patriarchal perspective. Those women are, in other words, depicted in the absence of an indulgent thirdspace where they can be stripped of their traditionally attributed roles. This absence can yet be recognized as the presence of a troubled masculine way of looking at women. This reflection of

troubled masculine and patriarchal identification with the status quo in looking at women will be analysed in this paper by making use of the idea of how the traditionally ordered pair of presence/absence are mutually interrelated and how they exist with the presence and absence of each other.

Absence and presence, these seemingly opposing terms, are indeed taken to be perceived together. Before focusing on how absence is situated as the binary opposition of presence, one may cast an eye on how present entity or presence of meaning is configured in dualistic logic. Logocentric tradition, according to Vincent Leitch, the General Editor of *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, "always assigned the origin of truth to the logos – to the spoken word, to the voice of reason, to the word of God" and that voice or that word delegates items which were already "determined as presence: the 'object' of science and metaphysics was characteristically the 'present entity,'" as he gauges Derrida (25). Criticising logocentric thought, deconstructive way of thinking presents an alternative which would be to deny the metaphysics of self-presence and acknowledge that signifieds function as signifers, which argues that meaning is never self-present but it should be traced. So, to Derrida this "present entity" and "determinate and decidable meaning" are an illusion and thus he paves the way for a new way of thinking about language and reality. In Derrida's view, Christopher Norris reports in a nutshell as follows: "meaning is nowhere punctually present in language" (15). In order to track meaning then, the readers should "operate a kind of strategic reversal, seizing on precisely those unregarded details (causal metaphors, footnotes, incidental turns of argument)" which might have been bypassed by a more orthodox look (19). For this kind of a reading, Norris suggests that Derrida's deconstructive move will offer "the dismantling of conceptual oppositions, the taking apart of hierarchical systems of thought which can then be reinscribed within a different order of textual signification" (19). In this kind of an action, Derrida detects the conventionally structured pairs; such as presence/absence, nature/culture, man/woman, speech/writing or philosophy/literature. In this doubling, as Michael P. Spikes infers, while "the first term is viewed as primary and original" the second term is "secondary and derivative" (337). Derrida's reading reverses the priority, "making the second term primary and original and the first term secondary and derivative" (337). Such a reading will then reveal how these two terms are "mutually implicated" and that "each bears the traces of the other within itself" (337). It can be concluded that both the first and the secondary terms are dependent on one another and thus each is a prerequisite for the other to make sense.

From all these theoretical propositions one thing is much clearer than anything else; that is, meaning is never self-present. All signifieds dissolve into strings of ever deferring and differing signifiers. Todd May reads what Derrida concludes about deconstructive analysis as follows: "the operation of language is such that there is always a play between presence and absence" (79). Any intention of signifying then is to be exposed to deferral for good. Thus, it can be suggested that Derrida identifies a level of meaning grounded in non-present

absence and that the referent is the absence of just bare particularness and properties. Going back to the stories, the characters' metamorphosis into old people are narrated with ruptures and gaps as loopholes that require the reader's involvement in the text to be in pursuit of a deferred meaning.

In each story line, the women characters are somehow not depicted as fully developed characters but rather portrayed as stereotypes complying with the dictations of the patriarchal discourse. To be more specific, these women are there only to serve men for any kind of purpose. In the case of love affairs, they seem to be partners of men; however, they are either devoid of any meaningful contribution to these relationships or they are totally cast out from any performative act that would grant them recognition as spiritual beings as well as with their corporeal appetites. Thus, in Derridean terms, one can assert that they are settled onto an absent-present kind of state. In the first story of the collection titled "A Short History of Hairdressing," Allie is depicted as a kind of commodity or an object who is there only to serve or satisfy Gregory's needs. Allie, Gregory's girlfriend in the second part of the story, then his wife in the third part, is tailored from the vantage of the patriarchal discourse. In this three-part story, we learn that Gregory was happy on those days when Allie used to cut his hair and satisfied his sexual needs at the same time. That is because he did not want to visit the barbershop. Starting with the first part of the story, it is revealed that even as a child, when he visited the barbershop with his mother, he was not at peace with the atmosphere there. In this suburban Barnet shop, Gregory likened the experience to a torture and the barber to "torturer in chief" justifying himself with more details as follows: "Everything else seemed the same; the torture chair, the surgical smells, the strap and the folded razor – folded not in safety but in threat" (3). Feeling insulted and subordinated under the dictations of his mother and the acknowledged rules in the barbershop, Gregory has never been observed to be at ease. When he is twenty-something, Allie is the one to save him from going to this uncanny place by cutting his hair. In the second part of the story, again in the barbershop, Gregory is now found out to be a college student, long-haired and resistant towards societal codes and the status quo. At the same time, it is revealed that he broke up with his girlfriend Allie and is angry with the institution of marriage as he openly supports himself by quoting from Voltaire: "Marriage is the only adventure open to cowardly" (12). The narrator explains the reason why Gregory is there at the barbershop, which is because Gregory and Allie split up, and therefore she is not cutting his hair anymore. That is why he is angry with Allie and marriage as now he is not satisfied in any way. At this point, he identifies a kind of association between sex and haircutting, remembering his previous experiences with his girlfriend, cutting his hair and satisfying his sexual needs in the bathtub, Allie portrayed in a passive light.

The level of meaning in this story is grounded in present absence. The absence of any reasonable and/or emotional explanation for Gregory's yearning for Allie or lack of signs of any intersubjectivity but his depiction of her in a sexual

scene passively trying to fulfil his partner's needs lays the perception of seeing or presenting woman as a pornographic object bare. In this story, Gregory is simply depicted as a man who "measures out his life in haircuts" as there is almost no other setting where Gregory can be observed ("Book Cover," *The Lemon Table*). Gregory's story is far from indicating or implying a deep love story and this present absence ground where Allie is situated disrupts Gregory's credibility or genuineness in yearning for a relationship with Allie. The only data granted to the reader about their relationship is that Allie broke up because "he was too possessive" and she "said she couldn't breathe, being with him was like being married" ("A Short History of Hairdressing" 13). Finally, in the third part of the story, it is disclosed that Gregory is middle-aged, married to his former girlfriend; Allie is now his wife and they have two children, which is the only information given about their marriage. On the other hand, the narrator lets Gregory give detailed information about the prices in the barbershop; that is, the haircut that started out costing one and three-pence has inflated to twenty-pounds including tips. The boy who used to look at the barber as "torturer in chief" in the first part of the story now has become a man adapted to small talks in the barber with his regular stylist as the narrator reports: "It had only taken him about twenty-five years to get the right tone" (18). The knowledge that time is almost at an end for Gregory is not enough to gear to a great change in him. What is more, the only boldness or triumph that Gregory could display in his old age is to show courage to refuse, when presented with the mirror, to inspect the back of his head as he is proud to unveil his so-called transformation as follows: "Well, I've stopped being afraid of religion and barbers" (19). The only transformation that an old man has gone through is not having the energy to care about the routines in a barber shop. As opposed to Gregory, not much is revealed about Allie; the narrator does not inform the reader about her workplace if there is any, her tastes or what kind of a transformation she has experienced with old age. In a collection, where all the stories build themselves on old men looking back to their bygone years, this kind of small change can ironically only be defined with absence. The lack of a deep change accompanied with old age runs parallel with the presence of another feeling, that is, seeing the woman and relationships from a patriarchal eye and thus not being able to achieve intersubjectivity with any woman and not having a mature character. In his own wording, his life, he admits, has been one long cowardly adventure.

Two other women who are set in the nexus of present absence are Pamela and Babs in the fourth story of the collection titled "Hygiene". These women are portrayed in light of the patriarchal discourse and neither of them is delineated to contribute emotionally or spiritually to the relationship with Jackson, the retired major. The male protagonist cannot be said to have gone through a change or a transformation with old age having been stuck in the dictations of binary logic. Pamela is Jackson's wife and Babs is a prostitute working at a brothel whom he has been seeing annually for more than twenty years. In his marriage and his extra-marital affair until Babs dies at an age when she is described as "rather elderly" (79) by one of her colleagues, Jackson has not

experienced any moment of intersubjectivity, at least not to the readers' knowledge. The retired major Jacko Jackson's life with his wife Pamela has been so tedious and boring. In line with Jacko's feelings the narrator's depiction of the woman includes humiliation and degradation as she is accused of not being able to perform several actions as men do, like driving or parking a car. She is just another incapable woman in the eyes of Jacko:

> She'd be in that car park grinding down the wheel-rims on the concrete kerbs as she tried to manoeuvre the Astra closer to the token-slot thingy. She always complained that the men who designed the barriers didn't realize that women had shorter arms than men. (69)

However, for Jacko Pamela is inferior in most of the skills, and he openly informs his wife about it: "He said that was no excuse for playing argy-bargy with the kerb, if you couldn't reach you should just get out, woman" (69). The only constructive feedback he could give about his wife is that "[s]till, she made good coffee, he's always given her that" (70). From Jacko's focalization and the narrator's wording, the impression one gets about his wife is that she is a typical inapt woman who cannot be enough on her own but needs a man's supervision. Evaluating Pamela in such a negative light that is based on dualistic logic and binary stereotypes, Jacko creates a legitimate background for his extra-marital affair with Babs. He simply cannot be happy with Pamela and thus, he needs some relief and consolation in Babs. In the story, Jacko makes his annual trip to London for a regimental dinner, yet with all his mind set on his yearly rendezvous with Babs. For years, the prospect of this meeting has kept his spirits young and energetic as opposed to the tedious life he leads with his wife Pamela.

Babs, compared to Pamela, must be promising a lot as a more competent and a better woman for Jackson; however, she is still conspicuous by her absence. Considering the length of time, more than twenty years, that Jacko has spent with Babs, one might prospect for a fuller, more detailed and multi-dimensional way of characterization for her. Yet, she is depicted as absent-present who is devoid of deep emotions, ties or attachment. At his first reference to Jacko's relationship with Babs in the story, the narrator, first of all reports what kind of a transformation he has gone into about his tastes:

> He was an orderly man, with orderly expectations and pleasures. Even if those pleasures were not as strong as they once had been. Different, let's say. As you got older, your head for the sauce wasn't what it used to be. You couldn't tie one on like in the old days. So you drank less, enjoyed it more, and ended up just as newted and owly as before. Well, that was the principle. Didn't always work, of course. (71)

The narrator would just like to express that Jacko's sexual desires or urges are still active and live though they have changed forms. When it is time to elaborate on Babs, Jacko is highly superficial and quite straightforward in sharing his sexual experiences with her. What is more, he relates his sexual

appetites with obscene analogies. He refers to Babs for the first time in the story with statistical information about their sexual intercourse:

> And the same with Babs. How he remembered that first go-round, all those years ago. Surprising he did, given his condition at the time. And that was another thing, being newted and owly didn't seem to make any difference to the honourable member then. Three times. You old dog, Jacko. Once to say hullo; once for the real business; then once more for the road. Well, why else did they sell rubber johnnies in packets of three? (71)

Obviously, he is proud of his sexual performance in a place, a brothel, where woman is a mere commodity and exploited in the most terrible way. Trying to explain his motivation about having this kind of an affair, he somehow relates it to his wife: "He didn't blame Pamela. Some women just went off it after the change. Simple matter of biology, nobody's fault. Just a question of female wiring" (72). Although he asserts that he does not blame Pamela, the single woman, what he does is imputing his cheating on his wife to all women as a category and softening his voice by putting the blame on female nature: "No surprise, given that Old Mother Nature is decidedly of the female persuasion" (72). With the help of the analogy that he draws, he tries to simplify the experience of cheating his wife and to show it as something common for all men. He contrasts man's and woman's body and their sexual practices from a dualistic perspective saying that: "All he was doing was making sure his machinery was still in working order. Old Father Nature still lubricating the parts. A matter of hygiene, really" (72). His being active and his wife being passive sexually is contrasted in the present/absent opposition; that is, the narrator categorizes man and woman in a hierarchical way. In this light, woman is grounded in present absence.

Jacko's justification for choosing and having an affair with Babs is absent of deep and legitimate explanations. Seeing this loophole, the reader will find Jackson's possible yearning for the good old days unjustifiable. Explaining the present reasons why he has chosen Babs is straightforward and does not include any depth: "Babs was a nice girl, she was there, she was blonde, and they'd rung the gong three times that night. There wasn't more to it than that" (73). This is what he can tell about Babs as she is situated in the grounds of present absence and for the next year's meeting, Jacko feels anxious if she might not remember him:

> The following year he couldn't be sure Babs remembered him, but even so she'd been pleased to see him. He'd brought her a bottle of champagne on the off-chance, and that had somehow sealed things. He'd stayed the whole afternoon, told her about himself and they'd rung the gong three times again. (74)

As it is seen from Jacko's reminiscences, twenty years have passed without any remarkable memory or anything deep in emotion. From what he says about Babs one can see the absence(s) of reasons to attach himself to her. These gaps

and ruptures reveal themselves in the presence of the dominant patriarchal discourse; that is, the troubled crude reductionist look at women.

Reducing the existence of women to stereotypical images like server, object for fun, sexual partner, Jacko observes just superficial things in the women in his life and these are doomed to change with old age. He reports how Pamela has changed as follows:

> Of course they'd changed. Everyone changed. Pamela for a start; the children going, the garden, the thing she'd developed about dogs, the way she'd cut her hair as short as the lawn, the way she was always cleaning the house. (74)

The things revealed here as indications of change with old age are absent of deep introspections and observations. He does not mention anything more than the things that everyone could observe in Pamela's life. How he observes the changes in Babs is no different with Pamela:

> he acknowledged that her hair was no longer quite the blonde it had once been. And after he'd persuaded her not to go into retirement she'd changed too. Didn't like undressing in front of him. Kept her nightie on. Got heartburn from his champagne. … Turned out the light more and more. Didn't quite make the effort she once had to get him started. Slept when he slept; sometimes before. (75)

The changes he observes occur are dull and not consequential, but at the same time, his description of Babs and their routine unveil how he is being preoccupied with himself and egotistical by not letting her retire from working at a brothel. The lack of subtle and delicate details about Babs proves that Jacko fails to achieve intersubjectivity with Babs as well. This can also be understood when he reduces her existence to an object who is there merely for having sex and feeding his pride of masculinity, as his next sentence reads as follows: "and still ring the gong three times in a row. … Choccy biccy Jacko? Yes, there was a bit of that. But also, you're a real man, you know that Jacko? There aren't that many real men around, they're dying breed, but you're one of them" (76). In this affair, although his real name is James Lewis, he becomes Jacko, which sounds either like a nickname kids would use or which can be associated with men who are preoccupied with their physical or sexual strength. This kind of image also makes it improbable for Jacko to have a symbiotic relationship with any woman and thus to yearn for shared past experiences and feelings.

Another absence or absent ground about Babs is discovered upon Jacko's annual visit to the brothel; that is, Jacko finds out that he does not even know her real name. Entering the place and learning that Babs is dead, he is surprised to find out how little he knows about Babs. His dialogue with other women there reveals that they have found it hard to recognize whom Jacko is talking about. Then, he learns that Babs is called Nora there. His dialogue with the other women seeking for Babs is worth quoting at length:

> 'Babs,' he'd repeated.

> 'I'm Babs,' the blonde replied.
> 'You're not Babs,' he said.
> 'If you say so,' she replied.
> 'You're not Babs,' he'd repeated.
> The two women looked at one another, and the blonde had said in a casual way, hard way, 'Look Grandpa, I'm whoever you want, right? (78)

Anyone can be Babs there; that is, no woman is unique. In the absence of such essential knowledge about Babs, one thing is clear; in this kind of a patriarchal space woman cannot be taken as an individual or a subject but rather depicted as a category or a stereotype. With this sense of an understanding his yearning for anything meaningful or deep in the past will be beyond reliability and credibility. The only genuine change the reader sees is that he is getting more and more impotent in sexual performance as he gets older. How terrible he feels about his helplessness is evident when he agrees to have sex with one of the other women in the brothel learning that Babs is dead: "The dark woman said 'Well, do you still want what you've come for? … He'd gone into what used to be Babs's room … She had asked him what he wanted. He hadn't replied. She'd taken some money and handed him a rubber johnny" (79-80). As Thomas Mallon asserts in his review in *The New York Times*, this collection of stories "has plenty of sharp, even cruel, comic pleasures" (Mallon). Jacko's quest for pleasure, however, ends in fiasco. Upon his failure, he feels furious, gets out of the room, and walks in the street repeating the same things he keeps using in remembering Babs: "How it used to be. Once to say hullo, once the real business, once more for the road. You were a tiger in those days, Jacko" (82). For this very moment, Merritt's observation rings true when she asserts as follows: "In *The Lemon Table*, love and sex are to be preserved reverently in memory by the old but are seen as a foolish indulgence if pursued into the present" (Merritt). Jacko perceives the world and the others from a solipsistic mind; the things he recollects are all about himself and have almost nothing to do with the others.

Another image the narrator creates for the women in the stories is passive, silent or incapable of achieving anything worthy in the eyes of men. With these kinds of women, male protagonists not having established a sense of meaningful belonging, deep emotions or attachment, Barnes can be said to use sex as a screen or means to conceal this absence. When sex is removed from the scene, one will find it hard to see any ground for a yearning for the past or for any experience. Thus, it is difficult to trace any genuine transformation with old age, in the stories. Ruth Franklin, who occasionally contributes to *The New Yorker* as a book critic, refers to this absence in a sarcastic way: "Sex in Barnes is all loins, no fire" (41). The "fire" that Franklin refers to may well be the absent intense feeling that is expected to be between partners who claim to love one another deeply. In the second story of the collection, the most curious one at the same time, titled "The Story of Mats Israelson," this absence is much more revealed with an unconsummated love affair between two married

people. Barnes's story and the legendary story of Mats Israelson are expected to run parallel in themes or at least to flourish within the similar framework. However, neither of the stories achieves to arouse the atmosphere for platonic love which is generally characterized by persistence and diligence. Among many reasons for this absence, not being able to portray fully developed women characters stands out the most.

In Barnes's story, which takes place in Sweden in 1898, Anders Boden, a married sawmill manager, meets his married neighbour Barbro Lindwall every week on the boat up the lake. The narrator portrays another silent and a shallow character with Barbro Lindwall, which makes a platonic love story to have an enchanting effect on the reader difficult. While the reader is provided with many details about Anders Boden as he is the one who always talks to Barbro about whatever comes to his mind, about Barbro Lindwall there are just a few clues presented as she is the one who simply listens. Even in description, while the narrator creates a vivid picture for Anders Boden like: "a short, flaxen-haired man" and that "he would run to fat," the narrator's wording for Barbro Lindwall is rather obscure: "Mrs Lindwall was less remarked upon, being neither menacingly pretty nor contemptibly plain, neither vulgar nor soignée in dress, neither pushy nor reclusive in manner" (27). There is nothing specific and/or special about her; "[s]he was just a new wife" in that small town (27). What is more, she is referred to in a ridiculous light as her intelligence keeps being humiliated. When Axel Lindwall is about to propose to Barbro her reply can be taken as funny, even stupid: "Gossip said when Axel first handed Barbro into the rowing boat they acquired that summer, she had asked him, anxiously, 'You are sure, Axel, that there are no sharks in the lake?'" (27-8). She is far from answering the marriage proposal. In contrast to Barbro Lindwall's tactlessness, Anders Boden is an informative man with a high degree of expertise in his field – "the general manager of the sawmill" - and ready to share with her (25). His range of expert knowledge is even diverse: "He told her how once, at Bergrsforsen, where an iron bridge spans the rapids, he had watched four hundred men at work, catching the logs as they emerged from the river" (30). More than that "[h]e explained to her, like a man of the world, the different systems of marking" enlightening her with the details about timbers of various origins like Swedish, Norwegian or Prussian (30). Barbro is just another silent woman who cannot forward the communication and thus the story fails to kindle any emotions associated with platonic love.

The story of Mats Israelson, the local legend where the story takes its title from, cannot achieve to be a parallel resonance for Anders and Barbro's love story. This platonic love story is the story of a man whose body fell into a copper mine and was discovered, perfectly preserved, forty-nine years later, identified by an old woman who had been betrothed when he disappeared. Knowing that Barbro likes "a man to tell … [her] what he knows," Anders is quite enthusiastic to share the story of Mats Israelson with her (42). Anders Boden recounts this story to Barbro Lindwall on the boat in such a bland

fashion that it takes neither Barbro's nor the readers' attention. Anders notices her lack of interest talking to himself: "Embarrassed, he told her the story of Mats Israelson, but he told it in the wrong order, and too quickly, and she did not appear interested" (31). He has attempted to narrate the story again without success: "He went about his work and in free moments thought about how she had not attended to the story of Mats Israelson" (33). In all their meetings, Barbro is depicted as a silent, passive or mysterious one who does not have the courage to announce her love for him. She openly reveals her being shallow with some apologies: "'I'm sorry,' … 'I have little imagination. I am only interested in what really happens. Legends seem to me … silly" (31). She is like a false female character in a short story which revolves around a legend. In other words, Barnes's story cannot flourish either depending on the local legend or the platonic love story between Anders and Barbro. The absence of a genuine love to feel nostalgic about the past is an indication of a troubled look at women as a stereotype who is ready to obey the dictations of men and to be passive and silent. Anders's depiction of Barbro is still so dull and from such a strong patriarchal viewpoint that it is almost impossible to appreciate and acknowledge such kind of a love or obsession. Anders's first time talk about how he falls in love with Barbro is cold and remote:

> He thought: of course, now I see, the fact is, I have been in love with her since we first met on the steamboat. I would have not have come to it so soon had not Gertrud helped me there. I never imagined her sarcasm had any use; but this time it did. (32-33)

His way of falling in love seems not to have anything to do with Barbro but his wife's sarcastic remarks push him towards Barbro. Barbro also similarly "was not convinced of her feelings for Anders Boden until she recognized that she would now spend the rest of her life with her husband. First there was little Ulf and then a year later, Karin" (35). Soon, Anders finds out that Barbro is pregnant and they stop seeing each other. Anders proves not to enchant Barbro in any of their meetings when Barbro is generally quiet and not contributing to the spirit of a relationship.

The only opportunity for Anders and Barbro to reveal their so-called love is wasted due to lack of communication and not being able to speak to one another from the depth of their heart. The probable love scene once again results in disillusionment and disenchantment. Barbro Lindwall receives a letter after twenty-three years from Anders asking for her immediately to a hospital as follows: "Dear Mrs Lindwall, I am in hospital here. There is a matter I would very much like to discuss with you. Would it be possible for you to visit me one Wednesday?" (39). He has acted courageously by writing a letter to her on his deathbed and decides to talk about his undying love for her. Receiving the letter in her old age, she thinks it is life/death situation and that she has to attend the invitation asking her husband's permission. However, Anders decides not to share with Barbro that he is about to die thinking that "it was important not to tell her that he was dying" as that might "put an unjust burden on her" (40). In order to disguise the truth he creates a scenario which is as

follows: “He told the nursing staff that a dear cousin was coming to visit him, but because of a fragility of the heart must on no account be told of his condition” (40). What is more “[h]e asked them to trim his beard and comb his hair. When they had gone, he rubbed a little tooth-powder into his gums, and slid his damaged hand beneath the bedclothes” (40). Once Barbro arrives at the hospital, Anders starts impersonating a healthy and a cheerful man, which makes Barbro feel furious and cheated upon. All her questions are replied in a negligent way:

> ‘I thought you were ill.’
> ‘No, no,’ he replied cheerfully. […]
> ‘I thought you were dying.’
> ‘I’ll last as long as any fir tree on the Hökberg.’ (42)

The responses he gives to Barbro are not congruent with his tone in his letter. His attitude makes Barbro feel like she has been dumped and humiliated as he denies his dying and angers her by appearing to be a mere seducer. Her inner voice is as follows:

> The vanity of the man. What a false picture she had carried of him all these years, as a person of discretion, tact, of an almost blameworthy inability to put his case. In truth, he was just another man, behaving as men did in books, and she was just another woman for believing otherwise. (43)

The narrator’s quite straightforward depiction of the roles of genders is revealed with Barbro’s inner voice. Counting on ready-made formulas about traditional gender roles dictated by patriarchal discourse makes couples experience anything genuine and legendary difficult. The stereotypical images behind the characters generate a kind of absence in having unforgettable shared experiences. This absence creates a rupture or a loophole in characters’ look at the past with nostalgic eye. Yet, this absence is indeed the presence of a masculine way of seeing the image of woman, that is, man is the active story teller and woman is the passive listener and taking orders. Thus, even a story of love loses its effect on this short story.

In this collection of stories speaking mostly on behalf of men, another image Barnes creates for women is a comic figure embellished with grotesque nuances. As opposed to male characters, whose deeds, actions and motives are fully explained and legitimized, the women are absent by providing the readers with so little access to their characters, objectified or ridiculed in a grotesque mood and context. Seeing these women in such a distorted light, one may find it difficult to feel nostalgic for a relationship with this kind of a woman or for the past days with her. In the story titled “Bark,” the protagonist is sixty-one-year-old Jean-Etienne Delacour and the story gives wide coverage to how his routines and way of living have changed in course of time. He used to be a gambler and an obese; however, at the outset of the story, it is revealed that he has been into a strict diet, given up gambling and taken up exercise. About his

old habit of gambling, the narrator reports that he used to be a compulsive gambler:

> Wherever dice were thrown or cards turned, wherever two or more beasts could be induced to race against one another for the gratification of spectators, Delacour was to be found. He had won and lost at faro and hazard, backgammon and dominoes, roulet and rouge et noir. He would play pitch-and-toss with an infant, bet his horse on a cockfight, play two-pack patience with Mme V-, and solitaire when he could find no rival or companion. (124)

It is reckoned that he has made a big change for the better and "his gourmandism had put an end to his gambling. Certainly, there was not room in such a man for both these passions fully to express themselves" (124). About his being fond of eating and drinking, again he has been extremist: "[h]e ate meals fit for a cardinal, … [h]e would discourse on the point of esculence of every foodstuff, … [h]e was also a familiar of the bottle. If grapes were offered as a dessert, he would push them away with the words, 'I am not in the habit of making wine in the form of pills'" (124). Yet, this kind of person proves to have such strong will that he quits eating too much in his old age. The narrator gives detailed information about what food he rejects, what he prefers to eat and his new eating style. The reader is informed about how determined he can be when he is surrounded by "bouillon," "a grilled-hare," "a pigeon-casserole," "vegetables," "cheese and fruit jellies" (123). Instead, he prefers "a single pear and a slice of bark cut from a tree" (123). It can be said that with all these details presented he has been proven to be present in the text.

Contrary to Delacour, Mme Delacour is almost absent in the story. That she has been revealed to be dead at the very beginning does not give her any chance to assert herself; thus, she is absent by not contributing to any part of the story. Her first name is not mentioned and she is either Delacour's wife or Mme Delacour. How she evaluates her husband's bad habits is very much shaped in line with the conventional gender roles: she is another woman who is preoccupied with keeping her husband at home: "Delacour's wife had approved his choice of vice, since gourmandism is more likely to keep a man at home than gambling" (124-5). Apart from this, the only information about her is that she has adopted the same bad habit with her husband: "The years passed, and her silhouette began to ape that of her husband. They lived plumply and easily until one day, fortifying herself in mid-afternoon while her husband was absent, Mme Delacour choked to death on a chicken bone" (125). Her physical appearance is depicted with repulsive wording and the way she dies can be regarded as grotesque. How this event is narrated from Delacour's viewpoint manifests how she is ridiculed and portrayed as a comic figure: "Jean-Etienne cursed himself for having left his wife unattended; he cursed his gourmandism, […] for having lodged the chicken bone at just such a murderous angle in her throat" (125). The register and the tone here are satirical and degrading; Delacour obviously makes fun of her way of eating and dying of choking on a chicken bone.

Two women related to Delacour in the story are present for reasons like, serving for his well-being and health or facilitating his life. Starting with his wife, Mme Delacour's death is of use for Delacour as the "death of his wife had brought a small legacy" (126). Though said to be small, with this bequest, Delacour can devise a scheme and be a part of great investment in building municipal baths. Soon, with this amount of money and chance, Delacour becomes the only owner of the baths and a beneficiary of the services offered there. In order to be healthy Delacour adopts a certain pattern in his daily routines: "He would rise early, eat a single fruit, drink two glasses of water, and walk for three hours. Then he would visit the baths" (128). After having been an obese and a gambler for so long, getting older and older he takes his lesson and starts to take care of himself: "Twenty minutes before supper he would cut himself a fresh slice of tree bark. While others ate their life-shortening concoctions, he would expatiate upon general threats to health and the lamentable impediments to human immortality" (129). Paying that much attention on his health and well-being and benefitting from his privileged position in the baths, Delacour also claims that "a reliable mark of health in the human male was the frequency with which he engaged in sexual connection" (129). Thus, for all health related reasons, Delacour "entered into an arrangement with a maid at the baths, whom he visited once a week" (129). Jeanne, a maid in the baths, is again just another woman who is there to serve for his well-being. To be able to live longer apart from following a strict diet, Delacour starts to have sex with Jeanne regularly. The way he talks about women in her life is quite patriarchal and sexist: "He began to visit Jeanne more frequently. She did not question this, and listened as he talked of legal matters she rarely understood" (133). Upon her informing him that she is with child, his answer is totally emotionless:

> One day she informed him that she was with child. 'Twenty-five francs,' he replied automatically. She protested that she was not asking for money. He apologized – his mind had been elsewhere – and asked as if she was confident the child was his. (134)

The way he talks to her can be taken as a symptom of his troubled viewpoint towards women.

Delacour reveals his problematic look towards the nature of women and affairs to his close friend Lagrange, who is another beneficiary and investor of the baths. The women he refers to are portrayed and gauged in degrading and pitiful positions:

> When I was a young man, in my army years, before meeting my late wife, I naturally accommodated myself with the sort of women who made themselves available. Nothing in those experiences of my youth advised me of the possibility that carnal delight might lead to feelings of love. I imagined – no, I was sure – that it was always the other way round. (131)

Visiting Jeanne frequently and being served only in every way, Delacour thinks that he is in love with her; the "carnal delight" as he refers to his affair with Jeanne makes him fall in love with her. While unburdening himself to his close friend about his feeling of love which is instigated by the carnal delight, he still confirms ages old stereotypes about genders and hierarchies in between genders. His introspections about love make it clear that he associates men with presence and the primary, while women are secondary and absent. Here is the analogy he draws between the sexual practices of people and animals, like rabbits and bees. He spices and consolidates his argument with the help of some local laws as follows: "So long as the owner follows his bees as they swarm, he has the right to reclaim and take possession of them again. But if he has failed to follow them, then the proprietor of the ground on which they alight has legal title to them" (131). Obviously, he refers to Jeanne and his affair, which he evaluates in light of master and a commodity dichotomy. His anthropocentric look at nature and animals is another hint for the absence of free space where beings other than men may have the chance to claim for a better living.

To conclude, first of all, as Frank Kermode in his review in *The Guardian* suggests "[t]his is a book about old age and disappointment, among other things" (Kermode). Barnes tries to lighten this grave tone by intermingling sex and old age yet his fiction provides little access to the deeper questions within. This paper aims to carry this observation one step further by claiming that the absence of such deep feelings makes the idea of yearning and having a nostalgic look towards the past problematic. Franklin in a similar line asserts that Barnes "dreams up some nicely unconventional figures and puts them in provocative scenarios, but he fails to discover any emotion richer than a condescending pathos" (40). This absence is, what is more, a reflection of the presence of another feeling, that is perceiving love within the patriarchal framework by either objectifying or seeing the woman as passive, unintelligent, dull, trivial or as a commodity. In this light, Merritt's observation that "love rarely works according to anyone's hopes and expectations" rings true (Merritt). That is why, the stories under focus of this study cannot serve the purpose of clinging to the past which involves deep love and mutual sharing between couples. We, as readers having to deal with these loopholes, may well be embarrassed or feel pity on behalf of these old men only if they might have spoken to us in a deeper way in a collection aiming to gear to profound changes with old age.

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Deconstruction of the Phallogocentric View in Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*

Julian Barnes'in *Flaubert'in Papağanı* Adlı Romanında
Fallogosantrik Görüşün Yapı-Söküme Uğratılması

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Abstract
Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) deals mainly with the problematic nature of truth, but it also questions the dichotomy between the self and the other. Barnes depicts the struggle of the male narrator to integrate his self through his deceased wife Ellen, who appears as the "other". The narrator feels incomplete due to the absence of his wife through whom he defines his self. Hence, he tries to regain his integrity by associating himself with Flaubert, an eminent male writer. Even so, however, he needs his wife, the "other," to confirm his manliness. Accordingly, the narrator tries to testify his presence by negating Ellen's body, femininity, and sexual power in his fiction, but he cannot restore his self thoroughly as his wife's memories continue to overwhelm his mind and narrative. The present study examines the ambiguous relationship between Geoffrey Braithwaite and his wife Ellen through referring to deconstructive and feminist views about phallogocentrism. In so doing, the article seeks to show that the male narrator's interest about Flaubert and his parrot conceals his obsession to find out the female "other" whose absence damages the cohesion of his male self.
Keywords: Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*, phallogocentrism, deconstruction, feminism

Öz
Julian Barnes'in *Flaubert'in Papağanı* (1984) adlı romanı, esasen hakikatin problemli doğası ile ilgilense de ben ve öteki kavramları arasındaki ikilemi de sorgular. Barnes, erkek anlatıcının benliğini "öteki" olarak görünen ölmüş karısı Ellen aracılığıyla bütünleştirme mücadelesini gösterir. Anlatıcı, benliğini tanımlamasını sağlayan eşinin yokluğundan dolayı kendisini eksik hisseder. Bu nedenle, kendisini önemli bir erkek yazar olan Flaubert ile ilişkilendirerek benlik bütünlüğünü tekrar kazanmaya çalışır. Ancak yine de eril benliğini teyit etmesi için "öteki" olan karısına ihtiyaç duyar. Bu yüzden, anlatıcı, varlığını Ellen'in vücudunu, kadınlığını ve cinsel gücünü kurmaca yazınında yadsıyarak kanıtlamaya çalışır; fakat karısının anıları zihnini ve anlatılarını kontrol etmeye devam ettiğinden benliğini bütünüyle eski haline kavuşturamaz. Bu çalışma, Geoffrey Braithwaite ve karısı Ellen arasındaki muğlak ilişkiyi, fallogosantrizm hakkındaki yapısökümcü ve feminist düşüncelere değinerek incelemektedir. Böylelikle, makale, erkek anlatıcının Flaubert'e ve papağanına olan ilgisinin, yokluğu eril benliğinin bütünlüğüne zarar veren "öteki" kadın figürünü bulma konusundaki saplantısını gizlediğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, *Flaubert'in Papağanı*, fallogosantrizm, yapısökümcülük, feminizm

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Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) is a quasi-biography of Gustave Flaubert, and it reveals the ambiguous relationship between the male self and the female "other". The male narrator, whose perspective dominates the whole narrative, struggles to define his self through his dead wife, who appears as the "other". His desire to assert power as the dominant sex over his wife, the "inferior" sex, is amalgamated with his feeling of insecurity about his position due to his wife's infidelity. Although the narrator tries to exclude his wife from his mind and narrative to testify his presence, he cannot detach himself from his deceased wife whose memories continue to haunt his mind. The present study examines the ambiguous relationship between the male self and the female "other" from a deconstructive feminist perspective to show that the male narrator's fascination with Flaubert and his parrot conceals his unconscious need to compensate for the absence of the female "other" that threatens the integrity of his male self.

Phallogocentrism is a term coined by Jacques Derrida to criticise binary thinking imposed by patriarchal culture. The term is derived from logocentrism, which aims to "establish a self-sufficient foundation or transcendental signified" and phallocentrism which advocates phallic primacy (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 11). Derrida argues that phallogocentrism forces people to think in binaries as it supports the idea that "the sign always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified" (*Of Grammatology* 11). He also maintains that phallogocentric discourse privileges one term in each opposition, thus the stratified relationship between binaries is not natural but "organized and hierarchized" (*Of Grammatology* 13). Undermining the dominance of one category within the dichotomy, Derrida questions the validity of binary thinking: "At the point where the concept of *différance* intervenes […] all the conceptual oppositions of metaphysics […] (signifier/ signified; sensible/intelligible; writing/speech; speech [parole]/language [langue]; diachrony/synchrony; space/time; passivity/activity etc.) become non-pertinent" (*Positions* 29). Since he believes in the arbitrariness of dichotomies, he questions the binary relationship between man and woman. According to Derrida, male supremacy is a legend created by patriarchal society in which men dominate women and "positive values are ascribed to male identity, while negative values are often associated with female identity" (Richards 101). Therefore, he concludes that "[t]he natural woman (nature, mother, or if one wishes, sister), is a represented or a signified replaced and supplanted, in desire, that is to say in social passion, beyond need" (*Of Grammatology* 266).

Derrida challenges the phallogocentric view that ascribes a passive role to the female subject by claiming that binaries depend on one another to be defined: "We could […] take up all the coupled oppositions […] not in order to see opposition vanish but to see the emergence of a necessity such that one of the terms appears as the differance of the other, the other as 'differed' within the systematic ordering of the same" ("Différance" 290). Thus, he maintains that the phallogocentric community needs a female "other" to define itself: "The displacing of the relationship with the mother, with nature, with being as the

fundamental signified, such indeed is the origin of society and languages" (*Of Grammatology* 266). Asserting that the presence of a female "other" is crucial for the definition of masculine self, Derrida deconstructs phallogocentric discourse that supports hierarchical divisions between the male self and the female "other". The relation of dependence between the self and the "other" is also discussed by Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler. Beauvoir, like Derrida, notes that the self is identified through the "other" for "[n]o group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself" (26). Therefore, she does not regard male and female sexes as two independent groups but believes that man and woman form a couple that is "a fundamental unit with the two halves riveted to each other" (29). Similarly, Butler contends that one needs the "other" to be identified: "[O]ne is one's gender to the extent that one is not the other gender, a formulation that presupposes and enforces the restriction of gender within that binary pair" (30). She assumes that man needs woman who lacks the phallus to define his identity: "For women to 'be' the Phallus means […] to signify the Phallus through 'being' its Other, its absence, its lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity" (59).

Beauvoir also questions also the validity of phallogocentric discourse. She maintains that human beings think in binaries and the binary relationship between the One and the Other is arbitrary for "the Other is posited as Other by the One positing itself as One" (27). Since binaries are random and invalid, the opposition between man/woman is not authentic but "superficial" (Beauvoir 24). Beauvoir thinks that in the binary system man is represented as "the positive," and woman "the negative," but this representation is inauthentic because in male-dominated world it is man who makes woman "assume herself as the Other," and "constitutes her as inessential" (25, 37). Similarly, Butler asserts that the relationship between the self and the "other" is casual: "[W]hat the person 'is,' and, indeed, what gender 'is,' is always relative to the constructed relations in which it is determined. As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations" (14). Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement are the other feminists who question phallogocentric thought. They believe that "[t]hought has always worked through opposition," and it is phallogocentric discourse that has enforced male superiority through "dual, hierarchical oppositions" (63, 64). They explain that hierarchy between the sexes is created by the patriarchal thought system in which man is associated with activity, and "woman is always associated with passivity" (64).

In "The Laugh of the Medusa," Cixous maintains that phallogocentric discourse has suppressed woman's energy and reduced her to a passive creature (356). She criticizes the fact that woman is forced to be inactive being "kept in the dark about herself, led into self-disdain by the great arm of parental-conjugal phallocentrism" (348). Cixous believes that phallogocentric discourse sets "the opposition activity/passivity" to justify man's right "to invade, [and] to

colonize" woman, the inferior, passive being that is viewed as "a 'dark continent' to penetrate and to 'pacify'" (362). Luce Irigaray, like Cixous, attacks phallogocentric view which degrades woman as the "other" that feels "resentment at lacking a sex organ" (51). Irigaray claims that patriarchal society forces women to give "a special status to the penis as the instrument of her sexual pleasure," but she challenges the phallogocentric view by arguing that man's desire to view himself superior to woman is an attempt to hide his "castration anxiety" (51). Furthermore, she thinks that men who have "only *one* sex organ" are envious of women who have many sex organs, including vagina, vulva, and uterus (52).

Deconstructive and feminist inquiries are concerned not only with the hierarchy between the self and the "other" but also the ambiguous relationship between the two. According to Derrida, the ambiguity between the self and the "other" is originated by the fact that although the self is viewed as the powerful, the "other" is feared for its difference: "[T]he other is first encountered at a distance, separation and fear must be overcome so that he may be approached as a fellow-being. From a distance, he is immense, like a master and a threatening force" (*Of Grammatology* 278). On the other hand, Butler explains the ambiguity between the self and the "other" through referring to Freud's theory about mourning and melancholia.[1] She argues that the self tries to overcome the loss of the "other" that is loved and desired by identifying itself with the "other," thus the loss of the "other" creates "an ambivalent relationship" between the self and the "other" "in which the role of the other is now occupied and directed by the ego itself" (78). Kristeva, like Butler, explores the obscure relationship between the self and the "other" from a psychological perspective. She maintains that the self regards the "other" as "a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate" (6). Therefore, the self refuses to accept the "other" as "its kin," which causes disintegration of the ego (5, 7). Kristeva claims that the self which is considered "[t]he clean and the proper" struggles to be separated from the abject, which evokes "aversion," and "repugnance" to reclaim its integrity (8). Cixous, on the other hand, explains the problematic and complicated relationship between the self and the "other" in terms of gender. She claims that man has an ambiguous relationship with woman, the "other" sex, because "man, confusing himself with his penis and rushing in for the attack, might feel resentment and fear of being 'taken' by the woman, of being lost in her, absorbed, or alone" (362).

In the light of deconstructive feminist theories, Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* can be read as a text that reveals the dichotomy between the male self and the female "other". The novel basically revolves around the story of Geoffrey

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[1] Freud makes a distinction between mourning and melancholia. He defines mourning as a process in which the mourner accepts the loss of the loved object, and he/she decides "that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object" (20). Freud claims that mourning turns into melancholia when the mourner cannot overcome the loss. In this case, the free libido cannot be attached to another object, but it is "withdrawn into ego," thus the ego is identified with the lost object (21, 25).

Braithwaite, a widowed English doctor who is obsessed with Flaubert and the parrot he borrowed from a museum for an inspiration for his novella *A Simple Heart*. However, a deconstructive feminist reading helps the reader to notice the male narrator's frustrated attempts to define his self through his dead wife Ellen, who appears as the female "other," to assert his identity as a male subject associated with fulfilment, order, unity, logos, and presence. The narrator defines himself basically as "60+ widowed doctor, children grown up, active, cheerful if inclined to melancholy, kindly, non-smoker, amateur Flaubert scholar, likes reading, food, travel to familiar places, old films, has friends" (Barnes 95), but he feels incomplete since he suffers from the absence of his wife whose presence would foster the integrity of his male self: "Sometimes, weary of loving her [Ellen] dead, [I] imagine her back to life again, for conversation, for approval" (Barnes 161). The relationship between Geoffrey and Ellen signifies the ambiguous relationship between the male ego and the female "other". The male narrator wants to be released from his dead wife whom he accuses of adultery. Therefore, he emphasizes her negative qualities to create a distinction between himself and his wife Ellen. He claims that unlike himself, Ellen was not pious and refused to remain "impassive" against destiny and blames her for "selfishness" (Barnes 166). He also explains that his wife was frivolous and indulged in trivial affairs to avoid the idea of death and after life: "[I]f you understand that gazing down into the black pit [grave] engenders calm, then you don't jump into it. Perhaps this was Ellen's weakness: an inability to gaze into the black pit. [...] One glance would make her despair, and despair would make her seek distraction" (Barnes 181). Geoffrey emphasizes Ellen's weakness by mentioning the fact that she committed suicide. Since he regards Ellen as a weak, fragile person, he believes her suicide was "impulsive" rather than deliberate or organized (Barnes168). As such, the narrator declares his superiority against his wife who "was not sensible" (Barnes 102). He distinguishes himself from Ellen, whom he blames for their unhappiness, and associates his self with wisdom and the female "other" with imprudence: "In life, we make a decision—or a decision makes us—and we go one way; had we made a different decision (as I once told my wife; though I don't think she was in a condition to appreciate my wisdom), we would have been elsewhere" (Barnes 89). Regarding his wife as the opposite of his "positive" ego, he tries to detach himself from the female "other" that is associated with negativity.

Geoffrey aims to create a distinction between himself and Ellen by attributing negative qualities to his deceased wife, but, paradoxically, he negates the negativity of the female "other" by depicting her in a positive light. The narrator admits that he still feels love and respect for Ellen, his "much-loved only wife," although she deceived him (Barnes 162). He claims that Ellen was indulged in adultery, but still "[s]he wasn't corrupted" and "her spirit didn't coarsen" since "she never ran up bills" and "she was honourable: she only ever lied to [him] about her secret life" (Barnes 164). He also praises Ellen for not "display[ing] the cowardly docility which Flaubert describes as characteristic

of the adulterous woman" or considering adultery "a most conventional way to rise above the conventional" (Barnes 164). Since Geoffrey remembers Ellen, his lost alter ego, as "a good wife," and "miss[es] her," his attempts to separate himself from the female "other" prove futile (Barnes 163). This fact, in turn, exemplifies the ambivalent relationship between the self and the "other". Geoffrey needs to be detached from Ellen, the female "other," to restore the integrity of his self which has been damaged due to her infidelity. However, since he still loves and misses Ellen and needs her to define his self, he is unable to achieve a complete detachment from the female "other". The narrator's ambiguous relationship with Ellen, in turn, deconstructs the hegemony of male self. Struggling to overcome the loss of the female "other," the narrator identifies himself with his wife, whom he associates with weakness. He takes the role of the "other" by claiming himself responsible for Ellen's weakness and infidelity: "She wasn't a defier, a conscious free spirit; she was a rusher, a lunger, a bolter, a bunker. Perhaps I made her worse; perhaps those who forgive and dote are more irritating than they ever suspect" (Barnes 164). Moreover, Geoffrey admits that he, like Ellen, was "disloyal" as he pretended to be ignorant about Ellen's extramarital affairs to deny the fact that "[he's] no longer loved" (Barnes 165). His inability to face reality and his attempts to exonerate Ellen from all charges of adultery prove his weakness. As such, the male self is merged with the female other that is stigmatized as a weak creature. The ambiguity between the two, in turn, deconstructs the phallogocentric discourse that creates and maintains a hierarchy between self and "other".

Derrida argues that logocentric discourse creates presence-non-presence and speech-writing dichotomies which are based on a hierarchy. He claims that logocentric discourse values presence against absence, or "non-self-presence" since "the meaning of being" and "[t]he formal essence of the signified" are associated with presence (*Of Grammatology* 17, 70, 18). As speech enables a face-to-face relation, it is associated with "reality," and "presence" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 33). Writing, on the other hand, is related to non-presence since it is considered to be an "image" and a "representation" of language, or speech rather than reality, or presence, thus it is viewed as inferior to speech, associated with presence (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 33). According to Derrida, logocentric thinkers, like Rousseau, also argue that since speech directly signifies thoughts, it is superior to writing that is just "an image or representation" (*Of Grammatology* 144). Hence, they conclude that writing is connected with "emptiness" for it is a substitute for conveying thoughts (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 145). As writing is related to non-presence by logocentric discourse, Geoffrey Braithwaite's strategy to emphasize his presence through writing is futile. The male narrator tries to deal with the ambiguity between his self and the female "other" through writing to negate the presence of his wife. While Geoffrey tires to confirm his self and emphasize the absence of his wife through writing, he finds himself in a logocentric position. He aims to assume his presence and regain his self-respect and self-confidence by being a writer but feels inhibited by the (non)presence of his

wife: "Three stories contend within me. One about Flaubert, one about Ellen, one about myself. My own is the simplest of the three—it hardly amounts to more than a convincing proof of my existence—and yet I find it the hardest to begin. My wife's is more complicated" (Barnes 85-86). As the narrator does not have thorough knowledge about his wife, who appears as an absent, ambiguous, and uncanny figure, he feels impotent and constrained while telling her story: "I am telling you a pure story. She was born in 1920, married in 1940, gave birth in 1942 and 1946, died in 1975. I'll start again. Small people are meant to be neat, aren't they; but Ellen wasn't. She was just over five feet tall, yet moved awkwardly … I'll start again" (Barnes 162). His inability to finish his narrative about the female "other" disturbs his plan to restore the significance of his self through becoming a writer like Flaubert.

Suffering from his damaged male ego in real life, Geoffrey wants to control his wife Ellen on a fictional level; therefore, he tries to dominate the whole narrative by rewriting Ellen's and his own story. His attempt to create his version of Ellen's life is related to his desire to control the narrative. Although he claims to reveal the truth, his endeavour to shape the truth about his wife is obvious: "I have to hypothesise a little. I have to fictionalise (though that's not what I meant when I called this a pure story). We never talked about her secret life. So I have to invent my way to the truth" (Barnes 165). Being aware of the fictionality of his fiction, he believes that writing does not present external reality because "words give birth to things as much as things give birth to words" (Barnes 88). Geoffrey argues that language creates its own truth, and he does not agree that "language and reality 'match up' so congruently" (Barnes 88). In this way, he implies that his writing cannot verify Ellen's non-existence, or confirm his authority in reality for it is a mere representative of his wife's life and cannot disclose the "pure" truth about her. He also understands that although he can assert power over his wife on a fictional level through distorting the reality in his writing, he is helpless and powerless in the real world since he cannot "make any difference" about it (Barnes 169). That is the reason why he prefers to tell the fictional story of Flaubert, which gives him a false sense of mastery and integrity, instead of Ellen's "true story," which makes him feel disintegrated (Barnes 86). Accordingly, although the narrator tries to prove his presence through writing to assert superiority over his absent wife, he ironically emphasizes his insecurity about his own presence and significance.

Cixous asserts that men refuse to represent women as active, energetic beings, so they do not write "about their sexuality, that is, its infinite and mobile complexity, about their eroticization, sudden turn-ons of a certain miniscule-immense area of their bodies" (355). Trying to secure his position as a powerful patriarchal figure, Geoffrey disregards the existence of his wife, who reminds him of his insufficiency and weakness, by suppressing her body and sexual drives in his writing. Hence, he avoids talking about Ellen's physicality and sexuality in detail; instead he just gives a basic description of her bodily

features: “She was just over five feet; she had a broad, smooth face, with an easy pink in her cheeks; she never blushed; her eyes—as I have told you—were greeny-blue” (Barnes 164). He also refrains from dwelling on his wife’s physical and sexual experiences because he wants to be detached from her body that was “made lustrous by adultery” (Barnes 164). The idea of his wife’s impurity makes Geoffrey anxious about his manliness. Therefore, he continuously questions whether his wife was faithful, or gets uneasy by the thoughts of men who “told [obscene] jokes about her,” and envies the pharmacist who examined her bruised foot “with the tenderness of a foot-fetishist” (Barnes 163, 84). In this way, the wife’s body appears as a site of sexual energy, which makes her the “other” that challenges the conventional image of woman as a passive, castrated and frigid figure. Feeling a threat on the integrity of his male self, the narrator stigmatizes the defiled female body as “the Body of Sin,” and assumes moral superiority over Ellen (Barnes 85). He also annihilates his wife’s physical presence through refusing to accept her as a physical being that has a real presence. Therefore, the wife appears in the novel like a spectre whose presence is justified only through her occasional appearances as a part of the narrator’s memories. Geoffrey tries to prevent his wife’s metaphorical resurrection through digressions which enable him to forget her presence momentarily: “Nowadays, when I remember Ellen, I try to think of a hailstorm that berated Rouen in 1853” (Barnes 161). Dismissing Ellen’s memory by moving to another subject, the narrator tries to escape from the annoying presence of the “other” that reminds him of his dismantled male self: “I never thought my wife was perfect. I loved her, but I never deceived myself. I remember … But I’ll keep that for another time. I’ll remember instead another lecture I once attended” (Barnes 76). Since his wife’s disloyalty makes him feel insignificant and degraded, he prefers to repress his memories through creating diversions. In this way, he negates the presence of the female “other” whose body is buried metaphorically under his digressive narrative.

Braithwaite erases the presence of his wife not only on a narrative level but also in reality. He literally terminates the corporeal presence of Ellen in an attempt to confirm his virility and to destroy the body of the female subject which embodies the power of feminine sexuality. His desire to see the female “other” as a non-present being can be explained through phallogocentric discourse. Phallogocentrism assumes that a woman does not exist as a corporeal entity for she is “castrated,” and lacks “a full, present, apparent phallus,” thus she is viewed as the “other” who “has nothing to be seen, and who therefore represents absence needing to be recuperated” (Feder and Zakin 47). Therefore, a woman is hardly visible in patriarchal society that expects females to be passive and submissive: “It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold” (Beauvoir 23). Cixous and Clement, on the other hand, contend that “[d]eath is always at work” in binary relations as each couple aims to destroy one another to gain power or authority (64). If a woman challenges phallogocentric discourse which ascribes passivity and inferiority to the female sex, and refuses to “enter

into the oppositions," and "does not make a couple with the father," she is simply dismissed as a non-being, therefore "[e]ither woman is passive or she does not exist" (64). Cixous also underlines men's desire to deny the existence of women who challenge male authority and asserts that "horrifying myths" of patriarchy function as means to ostracize such powerful female figures as Medusa through associating them with "dark" and "death" (354). She further argues that "the ebullient, infinite woman" who rejects to be destroyed as a passive, weak figure in patriarchal society is reproached for "her shameful sickness," which is "that she resists death, that she makes trouble" (348). Cixious concludes that since men want ultimate power over women, they need to relate femininity to death, thus disregarding women's existence by viewing death and females as "two unrepresentable things" (355).

In accordance with the phallogocentric discourse that associates woman with death and non-presence, Geoffrey Braithwaite reveals his repressed urge to terminate his wife's presence. He makes his yearning explicit through referring to Alexandre Dumas, who argues that disloyal women should be punished with death: "Should a husband punish her [adulterous woman], or forgive her? Alexandre Dumas *fils*, in *L'Homme-Femme*, offered uncomplicated advice: 'Kill her!'" (Barnes 163). Since Geoffrey wants to regain his male power, he struggles to pacify his adulterous wife associated with sexuality. Hence, he "need[s] a corpse as proof of [his] virility" to restore his self-esteem and vigour (Barnes 140). The depiction of the wife, who has committed suicide, in her death bed is a manoeuvre developed by the narrator to disempower the female "other": "Ellen lay with a tube in her throat and a tube in her padded forearm. The ventilator in its white oblong box provided regular spurts of life, and the monitor confirmed them … Her condition was stable, but hopeless" (Barnes 168). As a healthy man, Geoffrey depicts Ellen from a superior position, and his superiority is two-folded: he has a presence as a living being, and he is a doctor while Ellen is a patient who is about to lose her corporeal presence and female sexuality. In both cases, he reduces Ellen to an inferior position to affirm his self.

Geoffrey's final scheme to put an end to Ellen's life, on the other hand, is a direct attack against female presence. He says that he decided to switch his wife off when her situation became hopeless: "I looked down at Ellen. … I switched her off. They asked if I wanted them to do it; but I think she would have preferred me to" (Barnes 168). Although he tries to justify his decision, he cannot manage to hide his sense of guilt: "No, I didn't kill my wife. I might have known you'd think that. First you find out that she's dead; then, a while later, I say that I never killed a single patient. Aha, who did you kill, then?" (Barnes 97). Geoffrey denies that he deliberately killed his wife, but his act unveils his wish to get rid of the presence of a female figure associated with vitality and sexual power. He himself admits that he ravaged his wife's presence by his own decision: "So you could say … that I killed her. You could just. I switched her off. I stopped her living. Yes" (Barnes 168). In this way, the narrator tries to

annihilate female sexuality and deny the sexual female body through exposing his wife to harassment and persecution. However, his wife's death does not offer a resolution to restore his damaged ego since he is still unable to confirm his self. As he cannot solve the ambiguous relationship between his self and the female "other," the destruction of Ellen "was an answer and not an answer; it was an ending and not an ending" (Barnes 189).

Geoffrey Braithwaite encloses his obscure conjunction with Ellen and his frustration and anxiety over the absence of the female "other" within his narrative about Flaubert and his parrot. Since the death of his wife, who is construed as the "other," damages the coherence of his self, and leaves him just as an old, bereaved husband, Geoffrey searches for a means to restore his identity. Believing that "[he] can't define [himself] directly, just by looking face-on into the mirror," the narrator seeks to hold on to something/somebody that will give him "a false sense of [his] own worth" (Barnes 95, 165). He tries to compensate for the absence of the female "other" through inventing a purpose for himself: "[I]f one dies before the other, the survivor has a corpse to lug around. Pride makes us long for a solution to things—a solution, a purpose, a final cause" (Barnes 169). Hence, he decides to author the life of Flaubert, a prominent male writer, to posit himself as a subject that tries to gain his self-importance and to "make sense of life" on the fictional level (Barnes 168). Geoffrey, as a writer, claims kinship to the dead author, who is distinguished with his "courtly manner, intelligence and fame" so that he can transcend his ordinary self and impair his male ego by ascribing himself an active and eminent role (Barnes 24). Denominating himself as the writer of the life of Flaubert, Geoffrey tries to recover his damaged virility and feel himself able, potent, and integrated enough to discuss such complicated, intellectual issues as "the assumed divinity of the nineteenth-century novelist" (Barnes 89). However, his ambition for authorship is accompanied by hesitation about his artistic potency. He excuses his own hesitation by claiming that his ambition to be a writer like Flaubert has been hampered by marriage life: "I thought of writing books myself once. I had the ideas; I even made notes. But I was a doctor, married with children" (Barnes 13). Believing that he has the intellectual power and capacity to be a writer, the narrator attempts to transcend his passive identity as a conventional married man having a dull life with children and wife.

Although Geoffrey emphasizes his tendency to become a writer, his fear of being unable to finish his book is explicit: "Is it better not to have the dreams, the work, and then the desolation of uncompleted work? Perhaps, like Frédéric and Deslauriers, we should prefer the consolation of non-fulfilment" (Barnes 22). Geoffrey's dread about leaving his work incomplete reveals his insecurity about his literary and linguistic competence. Therefore, he cannot overcome the absence of the female "other" through associating himself with Flaubert, who has both "literary success" and "social success," and reflects his insecurity on the dead author (Barnes 25). According to him although Flaubert was good with words, he felt impotent to convey meaning through language: "Words came easily to Flaubert; but he also saw the underlying inadequacy of the

Word" (Barnes 19). He justifies his claim by referring to Sartreans, who relate Flaubert to Loulou, his parrot, and believe Flaubert was unable to move beyond the imitation and repetition of already existing words: "Loulou's inability to do more than repeat at second hand the phrases he hears is an indirect confession of the novelist's own failure. The parrot/writer feebly accepts language as something received, imitative and inert" (Barnes 19). Ironically enough, the narrator negates his power as a writer through reducing Flaubert into a mere imitator of words. Therefore, he fails to regain the coherence of his ego by defining himself through another male subject.

While associating himself with Flaubert, Geoffrey unconsciously associates his dead wife Ellen with Loulou, Flaubert's stuffed parrot, which represents death and absence. The analogy between the parrot and the dead wife gets explicit when Geoffrey visits the Museum of Natural History, where Flaubert is said to choose Loulou out of fifty parrots. Parrots which are kept in a dark, small room signify the ambiguous position of the female "other": "It was a small room … Despite a few ceiling lights, it remained quite dark, this burial vault on the top floor. Though it wasn't, I suppose, altogether a tomb … So it was an ambivalent room, half-morgue and half-purgatory" (Barnes 189-190). The animals are on the boundary between life and death like Ellen, who is dead but alive in the narrator's mind. The parrots are dead in that they are "covered in a sprinkling of white pesticide," and their "colouring had been dimmed by the dusting of pesticide which lay over them," but they give the impression that they "would be taken out again into the daylight" (Barnes 190, 189). This queer encounter, similar to his encounter with Ellen's memories, makes him feel uneasy: "They gazed at me like three quizzical, sharp-eyed, dandruff-ridden, dishonourable old men. They did look—I had to admit it—a little cranky" (Barnes 190). Geoffrey's uneasiness and confusion on seeing the parrots and his inability to find the authentic bird enact his failure to come to terms with Ellen's death and to compensate for the absence of the female "other" that he needs to assert his self.

It is also interesting that Geoffrey's ambiguous feelings towards Ellen, considered a pleasant wife but a selfish, impractical woman, appear to have been directed towards Loulou. In one instance, Geoffrey expresses his amazement and happiness on seeing the parrot at the Hôtel-Dieu, where Flaubert spent his early years. He feels "moved and cheered" as the parrot belongs to Flaubert, about whom he wants to write (Barnes 16). Furthermore, the narrator admires Loulou as "the articulate beast, a rare creature that makes human sounds," and says that it represents "the Holy Ghost, the giver of tongues" (Barnes 18). He also feels "affection, even reverence" for the animal (Barnes 19). However, Geoffrey does not want Loulou to be superior to Flaubert, who represents the male ego. Therefore, he undermines its ability to imitate human sounds through arguing that the parrot "represent[s] clever vocalisation without much brain power" (Barnes 18). Pointing to the mechanical intelligence of the parrot, the narrator degrades it as "a fluttering,

elusive emblem of the writer's voice" (Barnes 182-183). As such, he attenuates Loulou's intellectual capacity to substantiate the superiority of the writer, standing for the male self, against the parrot, associated with the female "other". On the other hand, the parrot he encounters at the Flaubert museum in Croisset is distinguished from the parrot at the Hôtel-Dieu in that "its expression was less irritating" and it "looked the calmer company" (Barnes 21). These conflicting images of the parrots confuse Geoffrey's mind in much the same manner as the contradictory portraits of his dead wife leave him in perplexity: "[T]he duplicate parrots continued to flutter in my mind: one of them amiable and straightforward, the other cocky and interrogatory. I wrote letters to various academics who might know if either of the parrots had been properly authenticated" (Barnes 22). In this case, though the narrator bears complicated feelings for Loulou, he does not give up his search for it, which replicates his unceasing enterprises to find the female "other" that can substantiate his virility.

In *Flaubert's Parrot* the ambiguous relationship between Geoffrey Braithwaite and his wife Ellen negates the validity of phallogocentric discourse that creates a hierarchical relationship between male and female sexes based on the supremacy of the former. Although Geoffrey assumes the role of a writer to feel important and self-contained, he cannot prove his superiority to Ellen, whose infidelity has impaired his manliness. The male narrator tries to detach himself from his dead wife by repressing her memories in his story about Flaubert and his parrot, but he is unable to achieve a complete detachment since he wants to be united with his negative self, namely his wife, to have an integrated self. Accordingly, the narrator prefers to remember Ellen as a fragile, insensible, and non-present figure to assert his identity as a vigorous, dominant, sensible, and animate being. However, Ellen's sexual power makes him feel impotent and castrated; therefore, he renounces her sexuality and femininity through emphasizing her absence. Consequently, the female "other" appears both as a negative figure that is related to lust, sexual power, and heresy, and a pacified, devitalized female figure that emerges in a spectral form that has hardly any presence or power. Hence, Geoffrey's search for the truth about Flaubert and his parrot is in fact is a search for his lost other self that he needs to define his masculinity.

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The Sense of a Never-Ending Delusion

Bitmeyen Bir Aldanma Duygusu

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Abstract

Julian Barnes in his novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) depicts an old man who is confronting some instances of his young age. In the process of remembering, he is dealing with the unreliability of his memory. This is both because of the nature of memories and some buried realities of his narrative. The film adaptation of the novel released with the same title *The Sense of an Ending* (2017), directed by Ritesh Batra and written by Nick Payne, represents sections from the past and the present of this man, Tony Webster, who tries to revalue his life by telling his life story. The film adaptation of the novel presents the subjective narrative of Tony through certain flashbacks, which carry significant traces of some annoying memories. The film adaptation keeps the novel's concerns about old age including some deviations within the plotline, yet it also contributes to the evaluation process of the slippery recollection of the memories that are shaping the present self of the mature individual. In this article, the film *The Sense of an Ending* adapted from Julian Barnes's novel that visualises the traces of a traumatic incident causing the old protagonist to re-evaluate his life will be elaborated on.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, memory, film adaptation, old age, *The Sense of an Ending*

Öz

Julian Barnes *Bir Son Duygusu* (2011) isimli romanında gençliğinin bazı olaylarıyla yüzleşen yaşlı bir adamı anlatır. Bu adam hatırlama sürecinde, hafızasının güvenilmezliğiyle uğraşmaktadır. Bu, hem hatıraların doğasından hem de onun kişisel hikâyesinin bazı gömülü gerçekliklerinden ötürüdür. Romanın *Bir Son Duygusu* (2017) olarak aynı adla gösterime giren, Ritesh Batra'nın yönetip, Nick Payne'in senaryolaştırdığı film adaptasyonu, kendi hayat hikâyesini anlatarak hayatına yeniden değer biçmeye çalışan bu Tony Webster isimli adamın geçmiş ve şu anından kesitler betimlemektedir. Romanın film adaptasyonu, Tony'nin bazı rahatsız edici hatıralardan önemli izler taşıyan sübjektif anlatısını çeşitli geriye dönüşlerle (flashback) sunar. Film adaptasyonu, romanın yaşlılık hakkındaki kaygılarını olay örgüsü çizgisinden bazı sapmalar içererek korur. Nihayet bu adaptasyon, olgun bireyin şimdiki benliğini şekillendiren hatıraların güvenilmez şekilde hatırlanmasının değerlendirme sürecine katkıda bulunur. Bu makalede, yaşlı başkarakterin kendi hayatını yeniden değerlendirmesine neden olan travmatik olayın izlerini görselleştiren Julian Barnes'ın romanından adapte edilmiş olan *Bir Son Duygusu* adlı film ayrıntılı olarak incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, hafıza, film adaptasyonu, yaşlılık, *Bir Son Duygusu*

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Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) that deals with issues such as the passage of time, old age, giving meaning to one's own life specifically forms a narrative which is a subjective journey to a personal past. In the novel, as a theme, people's evaluation of their life when they reach their old age is questioned since it is meaningful to re-evaluate the personal position when they come to the ultimate end: death. In that sense, the limitedness of time, personal time, the constructed story of the individual, and old age including many materials about the past are the interrelated topics that Barnes discusses in his novel. Barnes traces the individual's lifelong struggle to live, forget, and remember certain instances in their lives. Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) shares Frank Kermode's book's title *The Sense of an Ending* (1967) that focuses on how in several "ways we try to make sense of our lives" (Kermode 3). Barnes deals with the idea that the way you remember certain things in your life including notions that are perhaps a part of your regressions (which you want to forget) is the sum of your life, as in the case of the protagonist Tony. In the novel, Tony's newly remembered version of the repressed memories that are traumatic finally leads him to the unavoidable evaluations of his present self. Having these issues in mind, the director Ritesh Batra and the screenwriter Nick Payne produced the film adaptation *The Sense of an Ending* (2017) that presents certain issues reflecting the ambiguities and dilemmas of old Tony, who struggles to find a way out of these annoying memories. Yet, the film version, despite carrying the spirit of these issues involved in the novel, through editing, flashbacks, and juxtaposed mise en scènes, deviates from the original work in tracing trauma.

In the film adaptation, Barnes's novel is used as the basis and the script remains loyal to Barnes's text including some changes and digressions. The film adaptation presents Barnes's old protagonist Tony Webster who tackles his memory that leads him to make a journey to his youth. At present, Tony gets a letter from his university girlfriend Veronica's mother Sarah. She has left him money and a diary. He then learns that Veronica keeps the diary. Retrospectively, the director shows Tony's classmate Adrian Finn who speculated about a student's suicide implying that it is impossible to know the real reason for his death (which is a foreshadowing). After Tony met Veronica, and she became his girlfriend, her mother Sarah dubiously flirted with him. Veronica and Tony's relationship finished and then he received a letter from Adrian who demanded Tony's acceptance of their relationship. He had written a letter to him and he heard nothing about them afterward. Then his friends told him that Adrian had committed suicide. Through the editing of the director, the film jumps to the present, at which Tony is telling the details of these past events to his ex-wife Margaret. Then, he meets Veronica but learns that she burned the diary (which may be an explanation for Adrian's suicide). Instead, she gives him the letter that he wrote to her and Adrian. After seeing Veronica with a disabled man whose name is Adrian, Tony learns that this young Adrian is Veronica's brother (whom he assumes to be the son of Adrian and Veronica). At the end of the film, Tony apologises to Veronica in a letter for his past deeds and continues his life.

Barnes's novel focuses on old age evaluations of life by tracing certain memories evoked by an inheritance issue leading Tony to remember and reposition specific past events that are traumatic. It is interesting to see how the film adaptation represents that subjective voyage of Tony in his handling the lost reality. In the novel, like a lacework, Barnes knits issues such as time, life, death, memory, accumulation, remorse, and responsibility. In the film, the juxtaposition of past and present as an editing tool reinforces the idea that a traumatic past may disturb the individual and without a "sense of an ending," it is impossible for the mature individual to continue his life. How the novel and the film present these issues is different. The novel has two chapters: the first chapter focuses on Tony's past and the second chapter mainly presents old Tony re-evaluating his past, whereas the film intertwines the past and the present, especially by using the present situation of Tony as the frame narrative. In this way, the film's plot revolves around the ideas, speculations, and deductions of Tony that lead the audience to follow the personal story of the protagonist that includes delusive traces of his memory. In this article, the film adaptation of Barnes's novel will be analysed for its handling of Barnes's notions presented in his novel faithfully and its presenting memory and traumatic incidents related to old age by paving the way to capture the aura of the original text. In the film, it is intriguing to see how the visualised scenes will follow the traces of the subjective memories of Tony in different versions.

In the novel, the plot begins with some fragments from Tony's past: "– a shiny inner wrist; steam rising from a wet sink as a hot frying pan is laughingly tossed into it; … – bathwater long gone cold behind a locked door. This last isn't something I actually saw, but what you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed" (Barnes, *The Sense* 3). Even at the beginning of the novel, the narrator emphasises the unreliability of his memory path and his narration. In contrast, the film starts with the voice-over of Tony asserting that he "feel[s] no special nostalgia for [his] school days" (*The Sense* 00:50-00:55). The voice-over of old Tony comments about the shots that are showing young Tony. The remembered memories begin with a long shot mise en scene; male students are shown at school and then, Tony in the middle with the medium shot is shown. Tony as the narrator utters that his sole aim is not specifically remembering this period of his past. Still, he explains youthfulness as including the notions of being inexperienced and unknowing about the future consequences of life:

> In those days we imagined ourselves as being in a holding pen, waiting to be released into our lives. And when that moment would come, we would be at university. How were we to know that our lives had already begun, and our release would only be into a larger holding pen? And in time, a larger holding pen. (*The Sense* 01:09-01:42)

Tony begins the story by asking questions about people's being the writers of their life narratives as expressed in the novel. The film adaptation, in the beginning, situates the audience to follow Tony's reminiscences about the younger Tony with a mature perspective. By using the voice over of old Tony,

the spectators have a chance to follow his life story retrospectively. Likewise, after speculating about the passage of time, Barnes's narrator signifies the importance of certain events related to his school days and he focuses on these memories in the first chapter.

The scenes about young Tony and Veronica at a university party depicted with yellow colours present Tony with a medium shot with his back passing a tunnel-like corridor in the party. After passing the door, facing the camera, looking at Veronica, we hear the voice-over of the mature Tony who speculates about the younger Tony: "When you are young you want your emotions to be like the ones that you read about in books. You want them to overturn your life and to create a new reality but there is a second hand insisting on speeding up and time delivers us all took middle age and old age and you want something milder. Don't you?" (*The Sense* 01:48-02:11). With this question, the film is divided into two in presenting mise en scènes: with warm colours/ lights and music reminding one of the 60s, his school days are shown as times of joy, and hopeful instances; with cold colours/ lights and silences, his present ordinariness is shown. Mostly in these shots, there is no excitement, surprise, and expectancy; instead, the monotony of life continues for Tony. In these mise en scènes, we see old Tony mostly alone in his ordinary life, whereas, he is accompanied in his memories. As a digression, there is a camera shop in the film. His relation to cameras is shown in the shot with Veronica in which she is dealing with a camera so this place as a setting may indicate Tony's buried feelings about Veronica. These daily routines of Tony and the position of his daughter Susie are different in the film and some details about his family in his past are told only in the novel. Yet, the main issues about remembering one's past are the same.

Both in the novel and the film, some gaps including some misperceptions about feelings among Tony, his ex-wife Margaret and Susie are hinted at. Once he can reach the source of his trauma and name it, Tony finds a reconciliation within his relationship with Margaret and Susie as well. When he gets a letter from Sarah Ford, which is about her inheritance of some money to Tony, and an attached document which is a diary (soon revealed to be Adrian's diary), Tony immediately remembers Sarah putting a burning pan into the washbasin and his feelings accompanying this specific moment are remembered.[1] While this issue of two documents (including the missed diary) prepossesses his mind, the first important present part that helps him to remember the details of the chain of memories starts. In the film, Tony's remembrances are not established when he is alone; instead, when he is with his wife and telling her about the details of these past incidents, he delves into memory. These conversations with his ex-wife Margaret and then, his efforts to find people who have

[1] As Tony reimagines "a specific episode from his own life story, he reflects on the deceitfulness of memory driven by human beings' need to go on with their lives despite having gone through negative episodes. However, as memory is revisited and revised in his last life stage, the protagonist also rediscovers a remorse that was hidden deep inside himself and that he had managed to ignore by modifying what he remembered from that episode of his life" (Piqueras 89).

experienced those events together with him maintain a frame for the audience to follow the memories.

Some recurring moments are shown as significant mise en scènes in the film. Tony's having lunch with Margaret to tell her about the inheritance issue (Margaret and Tony are situated in different shots alone signifying their separation) starts this flow of memories. The university party including the first sight of Veronica who deals with a camera, the bridge where Tony and Veronica are together (but not presented in the same shots), the watch positioned inside of his wrist, their flirtation without sexual intercourse in the car, Veronica's playing with Tony's fingers are shown via the editing of the director. These past instances are depicted with warm colours signifying the youth of the characters and reflecting the style of the 60s and the present time shot with cold colours reinforcing the detachment of Tony to his own emotions. The joyful atmosphere is maintained by the music used in these scenes as well. The names of the songs are "There Was a Time," "Time Has Told Me" and "Time is on My Side," etc. helping both to create the soul of 60s energy and used as reminders of the significance of "time." Margaret's questions lead Tony to remember these scenes but it is evoked that something is disturbing him about Veronica and the memories related to her. Even Margaret realises that there is something mysterious about these reminiscences, and tells Tony both in the novel and the film, "Tony, you're on your own now" (Barnes, *The Sense* 106).

When the film passes to the scenes of the "humiliating weekend" (Barnes, *The Sense* 63) for Tony at Veronica's family's house with her father, brother Jack and her mysterious mother, the source of his traumatic recollection of certain events begin to be revealed. In the novel, Tony asserts about memory: "… my memory has increasingly become a mechanism which reiterates truthful data with little variation. I stared into the past, I waited, I tried to trick my memory into a different course. But it was no good" (Barnes, *The Sense* 64). Tony fails to understand the reason for Sarah's leaving him these documents since he remembers only Veronica's coldness, the father and brother's mocking him and the mother's intriguingly being interested in him by warning him: "Don't let Veronica get away with too much" (Barnes, *The Sense* 28). These words of the mother used in the novel and the film indicate that there is something weird about the weekend. When Tony begins associating these memories one by one, Tony and Sarah's dialogue about poets, the burning pan, Sarah's warning him about Veronica, her flirtatious behaviours, Veronica's coldness, and the horizontal gesture of Sarah,[2] the memories continue to disturb him more as haunting figures. Even at one instant, he imagines Sarah on the escalator at the present time.

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[2] "This picture is symbolic in that it looks more like a young girl seeing off her lover than a mother her daughter's. This illusion is intensified by the next detail … This specific gesture reinforces the 'young girl' illusion, resulting in a vivid image of a middle-age woman trapped in a desperate marriage pining for the romantic love and freedom she had been denied" (Wenquan 93).

Tony's encounter with these details of an annoying period of his life with a mature vision is significant since in old age, some of the trivial and significant past issues may be forgotten, but some of the faded memories revalue their present existence. By daring to face the past realities, choices, and mistakes, the mature individual may reach a state of completion/ reconciliation with his younger self: "Researchers who focus on the personal past generally embrace a view of adulthood, particularly late life, as a rich phase for remembering and re-evaluating one's personal past" (Bluck, Alea and Ali 290). Likewise, Tony encounters his buried memories and secrets of his past life. As Henry Krystal asserts: "In old age … we come to the point where our past lies unfolded before us, and the question is, what should be done with it? The answer is that it must be accepted or one must keep waging an internal war against the ghosts of one's past" (78). In both the novel and the film, Tony struggles in accepting or rejecting some aspects of his younger self. This personal journey is a promising source for the film adaptation of Barnes's novel since the deviations of a normal mind in its struggling to reach the authentic version are traced via the sequential scenes. As the screenwriter, Nick Payne asserts, "I think the bit that really appealed was that it was about memory but not in a way that film normally is; in a sort of, someone with a memory disorder or someone with amnesia. It is a really everyday kind of memory".[3]

Tony remembers the uniqueness of these events when he meets Margaret a second time at her house and this time, he dares to encounter the harsh realities. He revisits those instances, and each time, he remembers more details. When he remembers more details, he begins feeling the density of the awareness of the remoteness of his young age. At the beginning of the film, only a larger prospection of the school full of young boys is shown, whereas when he remembers it for a second time, he re-imagines his classroom and Adrian who speculates about both personal and public history: "We may never find the truth!" (*The Sense* 42:10-42:12) and "History is the certainty in Dawson's suicide" (*The Sense* 42:19-42:22). He remembers Adrian with these utterances of him about a fictionalised past. What Tony mostly remembers is his friend Adrian's committing suicide at his bathtub, Adrian's ideas about death, seeing Veronica at a party with a photo machine, and having sexual frustrations both with Veronica and then with her mother. Even in one instance, he revisits this party scene as the old Tony. He gazes at Veronica in the past. In this way, the spectators are prepared to witness Tony's mature senses inserted into his memories. Yet, these scenes also evoke a sense of turbidity because it is a painful process for Tony to confront both realities and to cope with time. Batra interweaves one shot after another respectively from present to past and achieves both to show Tony's memory path and to reveal his senses ascribed to them. When Tony becomes involved more in these memories, both he and the spectators realise that these interrelated events disturbing him may be called traumatic instances. As Judith Herman explains:

[3] "Nick Payne: The Sense of an Ending." *Youtube*, uploaded by The Movie Times. 4 March 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=bypVZ9C67oU. Accessed 1 November 2020.

"The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma" (1). Tony experiences this dilemma while he is telling these events to Margaret in the film.

As it is followed in the film, the associated reminiscences about Veronica, Sarah and Adrian form a traumatic instance on Tony's mind. By telling the renewed version of his life story, these instances lead Tony's mind to reveal the source of his trauma. Although there are different explanations about trauma (even in Sigmund Freud's theory), Freud describes it as, "any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli" (Freud 23). All these interrelated past events affect Tony's "shield," and he begins remembering a significant reality that he forgets. Margaret's questions about Veronica and her comments about Veronica implying that she is Tony's first love lead Tony to realise some of his own buried realities even not confessed to himself. Both he and the audience become shocked in noticing the truth and the significance level of certain people and events in his life. As Cathy Caruth introduces the arguments about trauma:

> Psychic trauma involves intense personal suffering, but it also involves the recognition of realities … To cure oneself – whether by drugs or the telling of one's story or both – seems to many [people] to imply the giving-up of an important reality, or the dilution of a special truth … [For Freud] the possibility of integrating the lost event into a series of associative memories, as part of the cure, was seen precisely as a way to permit the event to be forgotten. (vii)

Barnes's protagonist Tony, both in the novel and the film, needs to tell his life story to himself, to the others, (especially in the film) to his wife Margaret because of the need to secure his present self which is the outcome of his assumed past. Yet, when he finds out the possibility of a forgotten version, he begins recalling the associative memories. Barnes in his book *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008) emphasises the notions of remembering and giving meaning to one's own life: "Adulthood brings approximation, fluidity and doubt; and we keep the doubt at bay by retelling that familiar story, with pauses and periods of calculated effect, pretending that the solidity of narrative is a proof of truth" (37). Old Tony's narrative that includes "pauses" and "periods of calculated effect" paves the way to the audience to witness the delusiveness of the memories. Yet, he is still willing to reposition these gaps in his life. As Zekiye Antakyalıoğlu explains: "Tony is conscious of the imaginative and subjective aspect of memories" and "he needs the corroboration of a witness for the truth value of his version of the past. He decides to get in touch with Veronica who might help him find answers to his questions" (329).

At first by telling his past to Margaret, Tony tries to capture the past, and then he is in search of a real witness to understand the enigma behind Sarah's will, Veronica's feelings, Adrian's suicide. Although Tony is in search of a witness to

prove his reminiscences as the true versions, Veronica mostly does not contribute to his present evaluations since her remembrance about the reality is very different from Tony's version. When he meets old Veronica at the bridge, they do not exist in the same shot which indicates their distance. In the cafe scene, for instance, Tony is on the left and Veronica on the right side of the shot and we see them from their profile, and the crowd's noise interrupts them. She is very cold and distanced; the setting is also devised in cold lights. At first, it is indicated that Veronica is an aloof woman. We see his back, her back, she leaves, and there are loneliness and silence for Tony once more. By following the traces of his memory path, certain "associative" memories lead Tony to change, even delete the real event he experienced. Yet, "the versions of the same story" (vii) lead Tony to the difficulty of the process of remembering the traumatic past. In the novel, the narrator explains this as:

> [T]he brain doesn't like being typecast. Just when you think everything is a matter of decrease, of subtraction and division, your brain, your memory may surprise you. As if it's saying: Don't imagine you can rely on some comforting process of gradual decline – life's much more complicated than that. (Barnes, *The Sense* 112)

In one way or another, while remembering the lost but real event throughout the traumatic suffering, these different versions continue to disturb the subject and this distortion is painful.

Tony's suffering from some interrelated past events – the graduation scene, Veronica at the party, Veronica's mother waving him, Adrian's death, etc. – are repeatedly represented in the film. Especially after Veronica handles the harsh letter that Tony has sent to Adrian and Veronica, he explicitly remembers the real version. As M. Horowitz explains: "Years after its creation it remains unassimilated, a self-renewing presence, perpetually relieving the moment of its origin" (Horowitz 1976).[4] Every time Tony repeatedly remembers certain instances, he loses his path in reaching reality: "The traumatic reexperiencing of the event thus carries with it … the 'collapse of witnessing,' the impossibility of knowing that first constituted it. And by carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenges us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing, precisely, of impossibility" (Caruth 10). In other words, old Tony remembering his traumatic memories is crucial since this new attempt is just another version, a new kind of reshaping and representing those events that will be witnessed by both Tony and the spectators. This version that includes Tony's present deductions will not correspond to the exact reality. Yet, as a different work, the film sometimes fails to correspond to the enigmatic structure of the novel.

> I know this much: that there is objective time, but also subjective time, the kind that you wear on the side of your wrist, next to where the

[4] "Ordinary memories fade and belong to the past. They are eventually confused and conflated with other ordinary memories and assimilated into webs of remembrance. When they penetrate into the present, it is as nostalgia, regret, and a desire for things new gone" (Horowitz 1976).

> pulse lies. And this personal time, which is the true time, is your relationship to memory. So when this strange thing happened – when these new memories suddenly came upon me – it was as if, for that moment, time had been placed in reverse. As if for that moment, the river ran upstream. (Barnes, *The Sense* 122)

As Tony explains in the novel, after these realisations of his darker side when he was young, Tony loses himself in his subjective time. At that point, the audience has questions in their minds about the innocence of Veronica. Tony, after meeting with his school friends and speculating about Adrian's death, is once more entrapped in his memory which reminds him of Adrian's suicide after his cruel letter including the bad implications about love, sexuality, pregnancy, and suicide which are directly parallel to their friend Robson's death. In the novel, Tony names his feelings as "remorse" (Barnes, *The Sense* 99); in the film, he shows these emotions while he is talking to Susie at the hospital.

As Erik Erikson explains, to reach a sense of reconciliation with the outcomes of life, the mature person should accept his "own life cycle and … the people who have become significant to it as something that had to be, and that, by necessity, it accepted no substitutions" (98). In the film, both the life cycle and the versions of the past reminiscences are depicted vividly sometimes through the relations of the characters, sometimes through their behaviours. As Adrian quotes from Patrick Lagrange both in the novel and the film "History is the certainty produced at the point when the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (*The Sense* 41:28-41:34). Tony's tracing the reminiscences of his memories of Veronica is doomed to his confrontation with the gaps. This point of realisation of the authentic past is revealed after Veronica's refusal of giving him Adrian's diary, which is a historical document. Although Tony thinks that he sends an approval letter to Veronica and Adrian, actually he has sent an awful letter in which he was accusing and blaming them. That is why, when Tony realises that he has believed a lie that he has devised all through his life, all his safe construction of life falls on him. When Adrian's tutor told him in the pub that Veronica is young Adrian's sister, even his present/mature comments about Veronica and Adrian turn out to be a fallacy. As a result, Tony learns the fact that he should pay attention to the present reality more so as not to misinterpret his life once again.

Positioned as an insignificant event in distant parts of his memory, Tony did not think that his affair with Veronica, her relation with Adrian, or her mother was crucial as when later he realises them to be. When he is confronted with Sarah's letter at the age of sixty-five, he is awakened both to see how an insignificant issue would change his sense of his own life and how all these events and people are interrelated to each other. This is because of the belatedness of the traumatic past event (as in the case of the memories[5]). As

[5] "There is no perception which is not full of memories" (Bergson 33). When individuals try to make sense out of their lives, their present information and feeling inherently include the traces of experiences because in giving meaning to life, it is impossible to distinguish the

Cathy Caruth asserts, there exists an enigmatic essence of the historical past and this is paradoxical. It is an interesting fact that while a person remembers his/her trauma, even though other people are involved in that specific incident (as in the case of Tony), the subject who repositions that event is the one who should be dealing, evaluating, and naming the source of the traumatic event. Caruth exemplifies this idea concerning the concept of "witnessing": "the inability fully to witness the event as it occurs, or the ability to witness the event fully only at the cost of witnessing oneself" (7). This notion of witnessing the authentic event is not only related to the other people involved in that event but also the subject himself who should be eager and daring to witness the real reality about the source of his *trauma*tic past. The contribution of this act of revisiting this special instance of his past is now he will be able to identify himself through his memory, which redirects his sensation about his life related to the passage of time.

In the end, Tony asks, "How often do we tell our life story? It is just a story we are told about our lives, a story about our lives told to others" (while spreading his photos from the bridge), he utters, "but mainly to ourselves" (*The Sense* 01:41:11-01:41:34). Tony concludes that despite certain regressions about memories of his life, these memories are the unavoidable consequences of his identity. Tony by remembering this specific instance in his life with a new corrected version of it, changes his mature attitude to confront his reality but by still accepting the fact that our life is mostly deciphered as a devised story of our projection. As Barnes asserts: "We spend our lives only partially seeing ourselves and others, and being partially seen by them in return … But still, we long for the comfort, and the truth, of being fully seen. That would make for a good ending, wouldn't it?" (Barnes, *Nothing* 194).

In this period of his life, due to his maturity, Tony comes to terms with the love affair of his girlfriend Veronica and his best friend Adrian that was the source of his trauma. "Traumatic memory differs from ordinary memory insofar as it is timeless and unintegrated, which causes victims to remain embedded in the trauma as a contemporary experience instead of being able to accept it as something belonging to the past" (Young 56). That is why in the film all these past events are positioned within Tony's present relations with his ex-wife and daughter. He both has some misunderstandings within his present and past relations. One of the deviations of the film about Susie's life such as having a baby with the company of her father Tony and the last scene including her visit with the baby to her father's camera shop indicate positive signs devised for the rest of Tony's life. These are reached only after Tony's internal feud.

> I've been turning over in my mind the question of nostalgia, and whether I suffer from it. I suppose I am nostalgic. I think of my time with Margaret and Susie's birth and her first years. A bunch of kids in

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present feeling from its memory. If each moment inevitably includes instances of memories, it always already has a notion of "belatedness." This belatedness is necessary for the subject to evaluate the past incident: "the examination of belatedness has a symptomatic value: not as a sign of the … arbitrariness, but of what expresses it in order to conceal it" (Susen 79).

> school. A girl dancing for once in her life. A secret horizontal gesture beneath a sunlit Wisteria. I think of Adrian's definition of history. I think of everything that has happened in my life, and how little I have allowed to happen. I, who neither won nor lost. Who avoided being hurt and called it a capacity for survival? I think of how our lives got entwined and went along together for a time. And when I look back, now, on that time, however brief, I am moved more than I thought possible. Indeed, I'm sorry that I have known nothing of your life in the years since. No doubt you could have taught this old fool a thing or two. Perhaps, in a way, you have. (*The Sense* 01:42:27-01:44:02)

Tony, in the end, understands that there is no way out: he will continue living, waiting for the end to come, he will be lonely, and he will have mistakes. Yet, after confronting with the traumatic incident about his younger self, he reaches a consensus between young Tony and old Tony. These two Tonies in his inner world, for sure, will continue to question the meaning of life and death and the passage of time. In the novel, for Frederick Holmes, after facing the shock of his bad side "the structure of his autobiographical narrative" changes: "The individual parts of the story are no longer concordant in relation to the end he imagined. The new perspective on his past behaviour requires a new ending" (35). Thus, the sense of his ending is questioned. At the end of the film, Tony finds a way out to reach a consensus with his past and the present self. However, the end of the novel is quite pessimistic. "There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest" (Barnes, *The Sense* 150).

Barnes's novel is multi-layered and very deep in its concerns of the passage of time, a person's evaluations of the meanings of life and death in old age by creating stories. There is this notion of "accumulation"; for instance, Tony speculates about it in the novel: "Your winnings accumulate. But do your losses? … But in life? … Life isn't just addition and subtraction. There's also the accumulation, the multiplication, of loss, of failure" (Barnes, *The Sense* 103-4). Some details about Tony's family at that time, some differences about Susie, and some ideas of Tony are not used in the film. These deviations are necessary for the adaptations as Barnes also expresses in an interview about the film: "Part of my mind is running through the notion that actually, I didn't write that. Then I told myself to cheer up because it shouldn't be my book. It shouldn't be entirely my book. It shouldn't be loyal. The best way of being loyal for the filmmaker is being disloyal of the book."[6] Despite the structural differences between the novel and the film, the film adaptation maintains fidelity to some extent by preserving the significant questions that Barnes raises in his novel. The tricky aspect of subjective memory traced by the different embodiments, recurring scenes, juxtaposition of the past and the present, and the deviations complement the gaps of the novel that Barnes consciously creates. When being asked about the "enigma" of the novel, the director Batra explains,

[6] "Julian Barnes: The Sense of an Ending." *Youtube*, uploaded by The Movie Times. 4 March 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9avPtAAhJc8. Accessed 1 November 2020.

> [w]hen I picked up the book, which I loved, one of the first things I thought, regarding its ambiguities, is how much between the lines … I was really conscious about preserving that ambiguity … But I don't want to say that ambiguity is my forte. We live in an age when people are seeing everything. They don't want to feel things. They want to see things. When you're directing or writing something, or even editing it – editing is like rewriting – you've got to be very conscious about 'What do I want people to feel here?' Not 'What do I want people to see?'[7]

Batra with his editing maintains the gaps that include bad memories and depicts the struggles of Tony's present mature self to complete his life story.

The contribution of the film adaptation of Barnes's novel is to help the spectators to visualise the abstract notions of memory, to trace the hidden realities (which may still be elusive and untrue) by the director's explicitly presenting some of the enigmatic sensations evoked by Barnes's novel, and to think about the meaning of telling the stories of the human beings' trivial lives. Through the juxtaposition of the selected moments belonging to Tony's past presented as flashbacks, the plot of the film reinforces both the idea of the belatedness of traumatic instances and the individual's witnessing his true self. In this way, the film adaptation complements the novel in depicting the subjective evaluations of an old man's narrative full of memories that raise questions about life, past, old age, and death. Barnes's old protagonist who has a "sense of an ending" is portrayed in his struggle to find a compromise with his younger self. The effects of certain people surrounding his past and present stories are so strong that he has to find a different way, which should be more insightful to understand both his self and the others.

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Memory, Identity and Old Age: *The Sense of an Ending* as the Story of Ageing

Hafıza, Kimlik ve Yaşlılık: Yaşlanma Hikayesi Olarak *Bir Son Duygusu*

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Abstract
The Sense of an Ending (2011) by Julian Barnes touches upon many issues such as gender, class, sexuality, death, and memory. It particularly underlines how our memories can be misleading and thus create false images of ourselves as well as of the people around us. One of the subjects dealt with in the novel is the process of ageing. Barnes does not represent the period of senescence as the phase of decay and stagnancy. Rather, it is a new stage in one's life when a new sense of the self is formed and new facets of life – either positive or negative – are (re)discovered. Beginning particularly with the 1970s, old people with complex and interesting personalities have become the focus of contemporary fiction. The increase in the number of elderly people, the developments in gerontology and the theories of ageing have contributed to the emergence of new literary genres such as *midlife bildung*, *reifungsroman* and *vollendungsroman*. The aim of this paper is to focus on the complexities of later life represented in *The Sense of an Ending* and analyse the novel considering the features of *vollendungsroman*, a term suggested by Constance Rooke to define "the novel of completion" or "winding up".
Keywords: Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending*, *Vollendungsroman*, ageing, memory

Öz
Julian Barnes *Bir Son Duygusu* (2011) romanında, cinsiyet, sınıf, cinsellik, ölüm ve hafıza gibi pek çok konuya değinir. Özellikle, hafızamızın bizi nasıl yanıltabileceğine ve kendimiz ve etrafımızdaki insanlara dair nasıl sahte öz-imgeler oluşturabileceğimize dikkat çeker. Romanda ele alınan konulardan birisi de yaşlanma sürecidir. Barnes yaşlılık dönemini çürüme ve durgunluk evresi olarak değerlendirmez. Aksine bu dönemi, kişinin kendi benliğine dair yeni çıkarımlarda bulunduğu ve hayatın olumlu ya da olumsuz yeni yönlerinin keşfedildiği bir evre olarak değerlendirir. 1970'li yıllarla birlikte ilginç ve karmaşık kişiliğe sahip yaşlı karakterler çağdaş edebiyatın odak noktası olmuştur. Yaşlı nüfusun artması, gerontoloji alanındaki gelişmeler ve yaşlanmayla ilgili kuramlar *midlife bildung*, *reifungsroman* ve *vollendungsroman* gibi roman türlerinin ortaya çıkmasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, *Bir Son Duygusu* adlı eseri yaşlanma sürecine dair kuramlar çerçevesinde ele almak ve bu eserin eleştirmen Constance Rooke tarafından *vollendungsroman* (tamamlanma romanı) olarak adlandırılan roman türünün özelliklerini nasıl yansıttığını incelemektir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, *Bir Son Duygusu*, *Vollendungsroman*, yaşlanma, hafıza

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Beginning with the 1970s, old people with riveting stories and interesting personalities have been foregrounded by the writers of contemporary fiction. The growing number of elderly people, gerontological studies and new theories on ageing have been influential in the appearance of literary genres centring on old people such as *midlife bildung*, *reifungsroman* and *vollendungsroman*. The *vollendungsroman*, a term which was proposed by the literary critic Constance Rooke in 1992, is known as the novel of completion or winding up. Rooke notes that "the task of the *Vollendungsroman* is to discover for its protagonist and the reader some kind of affirmation in the face of loss" (1992:248). The old people in these texts generally experience the feelings of loss and regret and know that death is an inevitable fact, but they appreciate life despite their past mistakes and decisions. *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), by the contemporary British writer Julian Barnes, may be evaluated as an example of *vollendungsroman*. The novel narrates the story of Antony Webster, a retired old man who receives an unexpected legacy from the mother of his ex-girlfriend. While trying to solve the mystery of this strange inheritance, he journeys into the past through memories and confronts his self-image both in past and present times. Tony's journey changes his ideas about life and people. *The Sense of an Ending* is generally considered to be a novel about the disillusionment and regrets of an elderly person who feels sorry for his past life and hopeless for the future. However, it might be misleading to view the novel merely as the story of a despairing old man who is stuck in present time without the hope of change. Rather, the transformation of the protagonist together with his changing views on life suggest affirmation of life, which makes the novel an example of *vollendungsroman*. In the novel, the period of senescence is not represented as the phase of decline and stagnancy. Rather, it is rendered as a new stage in one's life when a new sense of the self is formed and new facets of life – either positive or negative – are (re)discovered. On the whole, *The Sense of an Ending* is a text in which the old protagonist transforms himself and gains new insights into life in spite of all his losses and mistakes.

The studies concerning old age often make a reference to Greek mythology narrating the story of Aurora, the goddess of the Dawn, and her mortal Trojan husband, Tithonus. According to this story, Aurora asks Zeus to make Tithonus immortal. Although Zeus grants him an eternal life, the signs of old age begin to affect the health and physical appearance of Tithonus because Aurora forgets to ask for eternal youthfulness. When he gets older, he cannot move his limbs and desires for death in despair. Aurora cannot stand it further and puts her husband in a room and leaves him, closing the door. There, in his chamber, Tithonus babbles forever using meaningless words (Hamilton 428). The myth of Tithonus corresponds with the modern ideas associating old age with "dependence, disease, failure and sin" (Kart and Kinney 2). Because of "[t]he secular, scientific, and individualist tendencies of modernity" which started in the sixteenth century, "[o]ld age was redefined as a problem to be solved by science and medicine. By mid-twentieth century, older people were moved to society's margins and defined primarily as patients or pensioners" (Cole 3). In her ground-breaking work, *The Coming of Age*, first published in 1970, French

feminist writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir points to the negative attitudes towards older people. She writes: "The myths and the clichés put out by bourgeois thought aim at holding up the elderly people as someone who is different, as *another being*" (3). They are viewed as "walking corpses" rather than "human beings, with a human life behind them" (De Beauvoir 6).

Ageism, that is, "[p]rejudice toward the elderly" (Waxman 7), has been a prevalent problem of modern societies, and the increase in the number of older population has intensified the problems stemming from ageist ideas. However, beginning with the 1930s, particularly with the development of gerontology as an independent scientific discipline, the views concerning old age have been re-evaluated, and new perspectives have been offered for the welfare of the aged citizens. In the broadest sense, gerontology is "the study of old age and ageing" (Stuart-Hamilton 1). It tries to understand "what the process of ageing is and how to make it as enjoyable as possible" (Stuart-Hamilton 5). Thus, as De Beauvoir underlines, gerontology "does not inquire into the pathology of old age but into the ageing process itself" (23). In short, gerontology studies help to maintain positive attitudes to ageing.

One of the well-known theories of ageing is psychosocial life-stage theory, which was offered by the developmental psychologist Erik Erikson. According to Erikson, beginning with birth, a person passes through eight developmental stages and has to resolve the conflicts in each phase for a healthy personality. The eighth stage starts around sixty-five and ends at death. This is the stage of life review when the conflicts of lifetime are tried to be solved. If it is achieved, "the person attains a real sense of fulfilment" (Stuart-Hamilton 13). Erikson's theory underlines that "[h]uman development and learning are lifelong processes and not restricted to childhood and adolescence" and that "[a]ging is not a one-dimensional process of decline; gains are possible even in older age" (Lipsky and Wernher 481).

Erikson's life-stage theory is in sharp contrast to the disengagement theory of Elaine Cumming and Warren Earl Henry. They argue that "a natural feature of ageing was to prepare for death by gradually withdrawing from society" (Stuart-Hamilton 14). So, they view the period of old age as the withdrawal from social interaction. For them,

> [T]he process of disengagement was both *inevitable* and *universal*. All social systems, if they were to maintain successful equilibrium, would necessarily disengage from the elderly. Disengagement was seen as a prerequisite to social stability. Older people could be released from societal expectations that they work and be productive. Presumably, they would adapt by participating in satisfying family relationships and friendships. (Kart and Kinney 215)

Thus, the disengagement theory expects the involvement of the aged people not in social but in domestic life.

The theories of ageing, developed mainly with gerontological studies, are various, and they have changed the ideas on aging and old people. The

changing attitudes towards the aged are noticeable in the field of literature as well. Contemporary authors have directed their attention to the engrossing life stories of older people. In her article "Literary Portrayals of Ageing," Diane Wallace underlines that "[t]he development of humanistic gerontology can be closely linked to the emergence in the early 1970s of a body of new fiction which self-consciously interrogated the process of ageing" (393). For her, this is a very important development because "[a]rtistic representations of older people have the potential to counter our ideas about age and ageing" (389). Many examples of contemporary fiction challenge the views associating old age with decline and loss. As the literary critic, Thomas R. Cole, argues "many contemporary writers of mid-life and late-life fiction … are not preoccupied with loss and decline. Rather, they are giving expression to growing cultural impulses to explore the experiences of aging, to move *toward* something as one grows older – a unity of understanding; loving relations with others; the return of wonder; acceptance of mortality; God" (4). Recent fiction, he writes, "feature[s] older people as complex and exciting protagonists" (4). The same point is highlighted by Constance Rooke. In her article "Old Age in Contemporary Fiction: A New Paradigm of Hope," she highlights that "old people are now regarded by the writers of fiction as interesting; increasingly; they are now assigned major roles" (243).

Beginning chiefly with the 1970s, new literary genres focusing on the elderly people such as midlife progress novel, *reifungsroman* and *vollendungsroman* emerged. The first of these genres, *midlife bildung* (midlife progress novel), deals with adult life and represents the midlife period as a time of "recovery and development" (Gullette xii) rather than a phase of decline. *Reifungsroman*, the term suggested by Barbara Frey Waxman, focuses mostly on the female experiences of aging. The examples of this genre "defy the outmoded social expectation of passive senescence by taking charge of their lives, making changes, and traveling – inward, backward, forward into fuller, more intense lives and richer, philosophical deaths" (Waxman 183). The last of these genres, also the focus of this paper, is *vollendungsroman* suggested by Constance Rooke. Rooke argues that while bildungsroman concentrates on "the first phase of the life cycle (childhood and youth) as a preparation for life in society," *vollendungsroman* brings the last phase (old age) to the foreground (1992:245). It is the period of disengagement when the elderly people leave the social stage. According to Rooke, the two genres do not contradict each other. Rather, they are complementary and can be studied together because "[b]oth are concerned with basic identity themes, with the relationship of the individual to society, with an assessment of what living well means, and with the question of what comes next" (1992: 245).

The Sense of an Ending may be considered an example of *vollendungsroman*. Rooke highlights that the mission of the protagonist in these novels is to find ways to affirm life in spite of losses. Such a discovery can be possible with the deconstruction of ego. It is emphasized that "the task of our first life phase is sometimes given as the construction of ego … The task of old age may be given as the deconstruction of ego, which may in some instances be translated as a

willingness to let go of social power" (1992: 245). Although disengagement from active life is viewed as a negative phenomenon in the contemporary world, it actually has some advantages as it helps the formation of identity from a new perspective. She writes: "it remains a possibility that disengagement will benefit the old. If we shift our gaze, to regard that singular achieved ego as … a failure … then disengagement or the deconstruction of ego will seem vital" (1992: 247). In other words, disengagement provides the re-consideration and re-construction of the previously falsely-constructed ego.[1]

The protagonist and the narrator of the novel, Tony Webster, undergoes such a change. In his sixties, he discovers that the ego he has constructed throughout his life has to be reconsidered. The letter from a solicitor informing him of an inheritance from his ex-girlfriend's mother, Sarah Ford, forces him to review his past life. He inherits from Mrs. Ford five hundred pounds and the diary of Adrian, a high-school friend from whom he separated on account of the love affair between Adrian and his ex-girlfriend, Veronica. Tony wonders why Veronica's mother wanted him to possess the diary of Adrian, who died years ago as he committed suicide. To solve the mystery, Tony contacts Veronica, and she involuntarily transmits him a letter he wrote to Adrian years ago. It is a letter in which Tony curses the relationship between Adrian and Veronica. In response to Adrian's letter asking him if he approves of this relationship, Tony thinks he wrote a postcard to congratulate the couple. However, what he really did was to spill his hatred against them. After addressing Veronica as "Bitch," Tony continues his letter as follows:

> Well you certainly deserve one another and I wish you much joy. I hope you get so involved that the mutual damage will be permanent. I hope you regret the day I introduced you. And I hope that when you break up … you are left with a lifetime of bitterness that will poison your subsequent relationships. Part of me hopes you'll have a child, because I'm a great believer in time's revenge, yea unto the next generation and the next. See Great Art. But revenge must be on the right people, i.e. you two (and you're not great art, just a cartoonist's doodle). So I don't wish you that. It would be unjust to inflict on some innocent foetus the prospect of discovering that it was the fruit of your loins, if you'll excuse the poeticism. So keep rolling the Durex onto his spindly cock, Veronica. Or perhaps you haven't let him go that far yet? (95-96)

Reading that bitter and spiteful letter makes a tremendous effect on Tony. The letter shakes the self-image of Tony as a controlled and mature person. Up to that point, he is represented as a man who is satisfied with his routine and solitary life: "[b]y now I was used to my own routines, and fond of my solitude,"

[1] To point to the positive aspects of disengagement, Rooke gives the example of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. When King Lear decides to retire and loses his kingdom to his evil daughters, he starts to understand the real essence of his existence in the universe. He grows spiritually only after he is stripped of the power stemming from his active life as a king. His metamorphosis into a humane person becomes possible through the deconstruction of ego (1992:247).

(55). He feels secure as he owns a "flat with possessions" and "a few drinking pals" and some "platonic" women friends (55). He abstains from questioning life and taking risks, and calls this "an instinct for survival, for self-preservation" (42). The letter, however, teaches him that life is uncontrollable and surprising:

> I reread this letter several times. I could scarcely deny its authorship or its ugliness. All I could plead was that I had been its author then, but was not its author now. Indeed, I didn't recognize that part of myself from which the letter came. But perhaps this was simply further self-deception … 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. (98-99)

In his memories, he was a man who maturely coped with the pain caused by the affair between Veronica and Adrian. He thought he wished them good luck and then preferred to concentrate on his own life: he got married with Margaret and had a daughter, Susie. However, upon reading that letter, he starts questioning his self-image he has created in his lifetime.

One of the common structural devices of *vollendungsroman* is life review. "The protagonist is located within a present time frame … and then through memory the character is transported into past time, often through a narrative voice that assesses past experiences in a new light. Thus, memory is important because it gives the reader (and the character) access to the past, and because it is being shaped by the character in the present" (Rooke 1992: 253). Based on the gerontologist Robert Butler's well-known article "The Life Review: An Interpretation of Reminiscence in the Aged with Psychological Dysfunction," Rooke argues that life review includes "a vital concern with the possibility of change (1988: 39). In this essay, Butler expresses his views concerning life review and memory. For him, life review accompanied by memories has some positive functions. The re-evaluation of the past experiences may give meaning to a person's present life. He writes: "As the past marches in review, it is surveyed, observed, and reflected upon by the ego. Reconsideration of previous experiences and their meanings occurs, often with concomitant revised or expanded understanding. Such reorganization of past experience may provide a more valid picture, giving new and significant meanings to one's life" (68). Thus, in the examples of *vollendungsroman*, life review helps the protagonist revise his past life and enhances his vision of the present. This is necessary for self-discovery, though this newly-discovered self is also subject to change.[2]

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[2] This point accords with Constance Rooke's views on the subject of identity in the examples of *vollendungsroman*. In most cases, she says, life is not "regarded as a finished work of art" (1992: 251). Rooke notes that "only rarely does a text conclude with a ringing endorsement of what the developmental psychologist Erik Erikson refers to as the old person's 'one and only life'" (1992: 250). The characters of *vollendungsroman* are subject to change even in the last minute, and this turns the novel into an unfinished artwork: "new meanings are constructed even as the ego or life of the individual is deconstructed" (Rooke 1992: 248).

Life review has a central place in *The Sense of an Ending*. The old Tony journeys into the past through his memories, meets young Tony there, and reevaluates him in a new light. Similarly, young Tony influences the old one. This is actually a double-edged process which continually transforms one's identity. Tony lives in the present, but gives shape to his existing identity by choosing and evaluating his past memories. The elderly protagonist in the *vollendungsroman*, according to Rooke, "is often cast as a person looking back on (or reading) the 'story' that he or she has written and continues to write in life. In selecting, shaping, and evaluating the data of memory, the protagonist … creates … a sense of identity" (1993: 209). While evaluating his memories, Tony goes on to write his own story and tries to create a sense of identity.

Tony's problematic relationship with Veronica exemplifies this double-edged process, too. He met Veronica while he was studying history at Bristol. It was the 1960s when dating meant very close friendship, mostly without sex. Tony describes it as follows:

> Back in 'my day' … this is what used to happen: you met a girl, you were attracted to her, you tried to ingratiate yourself, you would invite her to a couple of social events … then ask her out on her own, then again, and after a goodnight kiss of variable heat, you were somehow, officially, 'going out' with her. Only when you were semi-publicly committed did you discover what her sexual policy might be. And sometimes this meant her body would be as tightly guarded as a fisheries exclusion zone. (22)

Tony remembers Veronica just like the other girls of the period who took their lovers' arm in public, kissed them and pressed their breasts as long as "there were about five layers of clothing between flesh and flesh" (22). They avoided "full sex" (22). According to young Tony, the relationship between him and Veronica was not a love affair. It just made him proud to learn the details of female world: "about make-up, clothes policy, the feminine razor, and the mystery and consequences of a woman's periods" (27). When Veronica asks the prospect of their relationship, he claims that it does not "have to head somewhere" (34). They have sex only after they break up, and Tony understands that he does not want to continue this relationship anymore. Veronica accuses him of being a "selfish bastard" (37).

When Tony reviews his life to solve the mystery of Adrian's diary and tries to understand Veronica's present aloofness from him, he gets to know himself and the people around him better. Life review helps him explain his conflicts which remained unresolved in the past. Veronica, in his eyes, was a manipulative and selfish woman who started to date with Adrian as soon as they separated: "she is someone who will manipulate your inner self while holding hers back from you," (96) Tony warns Adrian in the letter. According to Tony, she was unable "to imagine anyone else's feelings or emotional life" (96). However, the ending of the novel underscores that, contrary to Tony's views, Veronica is an understanding and compassionate woman who takes care of his mentally-ill brother, the son of Adrian with her mother. Tony, on the

other hand, fails in understanding the tragedies of her life until his discovery that the mentally-ill person is the son of Adrian and Sarah Ford.[3]

In her analysis of Margaret Laurence's novel, *The Stone Angel*, Constance Rooke evaluates the recognition of mistakes in old age as one of the features of *vollendungsroman*. She writes: "In general, we honour characters for their admirable behavior … or, if they have misbehaved, for proof that they have changed or reformed. In Hagar's case, which is typical of many elderly characters in contemporary fiction, time has nearly run out; although she comes to a partial recognition of her mistakes, she cannot rectify them. Instead, she makes the gestures of atonement" (250). This is the case with Tony Webster. When he understands that the disabled man is actually the son of Adrian with Sarah Ford, rather than with Veronica, he feels really sorry. "I knew I couldn't change, or mend, anything now," (149) thinks Tony. He knows he cannot change anything now, but his vision of the self as well as of Veronica has changed with this information. In other words, the inner journey ends with the transformation of identity. Tony, at the end of the novel, is not the same person with Tony represented at the beginning of the novel. He is now a more understanding and mature person. Tony loses Veronica forever, as she rejects contacting with him due to his lack of understanding concerning the essence of the events. Yet this loss makes self-discovery possible. This loss makes him a more mature person who cares for other people's feelings. For the first time in his life, for example, he wonders what happened to the baby of Robson, a high school friend who committed suicide when he learnt the pregnancy of his girlfriend: "I found myself wanting, even at this distance, to apologise to Robson's girl for the idle way we had discussed her, without reckoning her pain and shame" (141), he thinks.

Affirmation of life despite mistakes is one of the most common themes in the examples of *Vollendungsroman*. Rooke notes that "it is sometimes too late for these characters to act or change their lives in ongoing and externally verifiable ways" (1992: 251). Yet, the characters affirm life in spite of the error of their ways. What Rooke means by affirmation is the idea that "there is value in human life and cause for celebration" (1992: 250). Affirmation of life is usually not pronounced directly. Rather, the readers sense that there is hope for future generations to fulfill their potential (Rooke 1992: 251). The aged people feel regretful for their mistakes and know that it is not easy to rectify them. Yet, the novels in general imply affirmation of life and nourish the hope that dreams are a part of life although they cannot be actualized.

On the surface, *The Sense of an Ending* does not suggest hope or a ground for celebration. At the end of the novel, for instance, Tony comments on the

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[3] The continual construction and deconstruction of the self as well as the silences in the text make it difficult to solve the mystery concerning the identity of the disabled person. Some critics argue that he is the son of Tony and Sarah Ford; therefore, Tony invents an alternative false story to avoid the pain of this traumatic experience. See "Deceptive Re-narration and Self-Justifying Narrative in Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending*" by Nazila Heidarzadegan and Ömer Tüm.

impossibility of change towards the end of life: "You get towards the end of life – no, not life itself, but of something else: the end of any likelihood of change in that life" (149). These statements suggest stagnancy and immobility rather than transformation and change. Besides, the final lines of the novel imply uneasiness and discontentment. Julian Barnes writes: "There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest" (150). According to the critic Dóra Vecsernyés, these final comments point to the hopeless situation of Tony Webster, who is stuck in present time without hope for the future. She writes: "This desperate state of feeling guilt, remorse and confusion is squeezed into the confines of the present simple tense, illustrating Tony's state of being locked up in the present without any prospect for future improvement or possibility of altering the past" (39-40). Even though the final remarks of Tony about life signify stagnancy, his character change throughout the novel contradicts this seemingly hopeless state of mind. Moreover, while musing over his feelings for Veronica, Tony himself underlines that life is full of surprises. He says: "Eventually I said to myself: Right, so you're feeling guilt towards your ex-wife, who divorced you twenty years ago, and excitement towards an old girlfriend you haven't seen in forty years. Who said there were no surprises left in life?" (118). Tony's statements underscore that life has the capacity to puzzle the elderly people because life is uncontrollable, surprising, and it cannot be estimated.

The images used in the novel also signal the value of life and its transformative power. Constance Rooke notes that there are some images commonly used in the *vollendungsroman*, and the two of them are the house and water. The house, she writes, can be viewed as

> a 'time capsule' that protects the elderly inhabitant from the judgmental, frighteningly changed outside world. And it is a shelter against the "outside" forces of nature, so in this way it becomes symbolically a barrier or a stay against death. In part because we regard ourselves as 'living in' the body, the house is essentially an image of the body; and the dilapidation or disorder of the house is often used to signal the body's decline. (Rooke 1992:255)

So, the house may be considered to be symbolizing the body of the aged person. In line with this view, Tony's efforts to keep the house in order may be evaluated as a defying act against death. His tidiness signifies his desire to keep the body healthy and alive.

> The less time there remains in your life, the less you want to waste it. That's logical, isn't it? Though how you use the saved-up hours – well, that's another thing you probably wouldn't have predicted in youth. For instance, I spend a lot of time clearing things up – and I'm not even a messy person. But it's one of the modest satisfactions of age. I aim for tidiness; I recycle; I clean and decorate my flat to keep up its value. I've made up my will; and my dealings with my daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren and ex-wife are, if less than perfect, at least settled. Or so I've persuaded myself. I've achieved a state of peacefulness. Because I

> get on with things. I don't like mess, and I don't like leaving a mess. I've opted for cremation, if you want to know. (68)

With these lines, Tony is actually affirming the value of life as an elderly person. He knows that death is inevitable, and he wants to prolong life by keeping his body healthy, which is symbolically explained by the neatness of his flat.

Another image signifying the transformative force of life is the water. Water, "in its formlessness and mobility is often opposed to the firmness of the house" (Rooke 1992:255). It "is associated with the fear of death and the hope of spiritual renewal … typically, the aged protagonist moves away from the particular house and toward the universal water" (Rooke 1993: 222). *The Sense of an Ending* begins and ends with images which are related to water. The novel opens with Tony's memories all of which are linked with water imagery: "steam rising from a wet sink," "gouts of sperm circling a plughole," "a river rushing nonsensically upstream," "another river, broad and grey," and "bathwater long gone cold behind a locked door" (3). As the plot unfolds, the connection between these images and the events of the plot is understood. The image of cold bathwater, for example, is a reference to Adrian's death as he cuts his wrists in the bath. The novel ends with the image of Tony in his house thinking of "a crescent wave of water, lit by a moon, rushing past and vanishing upstream pursued by a band of yelping students whose torchbeams criss-crossed in the dark" (150). This is the memory of a scene from his university years when he went to see the Severn Bore with his friends. The Severn Bore is a large wave moving in the opposite direction of the river. The view of the wave moving upstream may be read as Tony's desire to travel back in time to change the past. He knows that real life is moving in one direction, towards death. Yet, he desires for a renewal by travelling in time to his past years.

In conclusion, the *Vollendungsroman* as a genre about old age period has some common characteristics: the use of life review as a structural device, deconstruction of the ego, recognition of mistakes, and affirmation of life in the face of loss. In *The Sense of an Ending*, life review has a central place because Tony's journey into past time and his reconsideration of past experiences give new meanings to his present life. By reviewing his life through memories, Tony repeatedly constructs and deconstructs his own identity and self-image. Tony's travel in time through memories makes him recognize his mistakes and feel regretful, but still he affirms life in spite of his erroneous experiences. Throughout the novel, there are pessimistic passages about the unlikelihood of change in the old age period. However, Tony's transformation from a selfish man into a compassionate person points to the transformative power of life. With the character of Tony, Julian Barnes focuses on the complexities of old age and ageing. In *The Sense of an Ending*, the senescent period is not depicted as the phase of failure and immobility. Rather, it is represented as a new stage suggesting change and transformation.

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The Porcupine and the End of History

Oklukirpi ve Tarihin Sonu

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Abstract
Set in a fictional East European country in the aftermath of the collapse of communism, Julian Barnes's *The Porcupine* (1992) is a political satire where he juxtaposes two dominant ideologies; capitalist liberal democracy and communism. Although this short novel has a conventional narrative form, postmodern discussions on history can be observed, especially the discussion which has revolved around the idea of "the end of history". It was Francis Fukuyama's controversial article entitled "The End of History" (1989) that has sparked this specific debate. In 1992, he elaborated his thesis in a book titled *The End of History and the Last Man*, the same year Barnes published his novel. Fukuyama suggests that the modern Western liberal democracy is the ultimate and the most successful form of human government, the point where the Hegelian dialectic of history comes to an end. The aim of this article is to present a critical reading of the novel in the context of Fukuyama's thesis and the discussion generated by this thesis. While it is true that Fukuyama's thesis has now been outdated and negated, this reading may still provide fresh insights for the current political panorama of the world shaped by surging nationalism, increasing populism and growing conservatism.
Keywords: Julian Barnes, The Porcupine, history, Francis Fukuyama, end of history

Öz
Komünizmin çöküşü sonrası kurgusal bir doğu Avrupa ülkesinde geçen Julian Barnes'ın *Oklukirpi* (1992) adlı romanı, kapitalist liberalizm ve komünizm gibi iki başat ideolojiyi karşı karşıya getiren politik bir hicivdir. Geleneksel bir anlatı biçimine sahip olmasına rağmen bu kısa romanda tarih üzerine, özellikle de "tarihin sonu" düşüncesine odaklanan postmodern tartışmaları takip etmek mümkündür. Bu özgül tartışma Francis Fukuyama'nın "The End of History?" (1989) başlıklı tartışmalı makalesi ile başlamıştı. Barnes'ın da romanının yayınlandığı 1992 yılında Fukuyama bu tezini, *Tarihin Sonu ve Son İnsan* adlı kitabında detaylandırmıştır. Fukuyama, modern liberal Batı demokrasisinin nihai ve en başarılı yönetim şekli olduğunu, yani Hegelci diyalektik tarihin sonu olduğunu önerir. Bu makalenin amacı, Barnes'ın romanının Fukuyama'nın tezi ve bu tezin ürettiği tartışmalar bağlamında eleştirel bir okumasını yapmaktır. Fukuyama'nın tezinin güncelliğini yitirdiği doğru olsa da bu okuma, yükselen milliyetçilik, artan popülizm ve büyüyen muhafazakârlık ile şekillenen dünyanın güncel siyasi görünümü hakkında yeni fikirler verebilir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, *Oklukirpi*, tarih, Francis Fukuyama, tarihin sonu

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1989 was one of the milestones in human history as the world witnessed the collapse of Socialist regimes epitomised by the "Fall of Berlin Wall". In the same year, Fukuyama published his article entitled "The End of History?" and within this optimistic scene, he declared "an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" against all of its ideological competitors including "absolutism, then bolshevism and fascism, and finally an updated Marxism" (3). He starts his article by heralding that "something very fundamental has happened in world history" and then explains that fundamental thing as "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" ("The End of History?" 4). In other words, what Fukuyama suggests is the end of history "understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process" (*last man* xii). By history, Fukuyama does not refer to crude events, wars, conflicts, but the progressive understanding of dialectical history formulated by the philosophy of history.

In his bold assumptions, Fukuyama is indebted to Hegel and his idea of evolutionary history. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837), Hegel strongly asserts that "reason governs the world, and that therefore world history is a rational process" (87), which is also "the progress of the consciousness of Freedom" (88). The reason dictates that man is destined to live in a society in which he would relish complete freedom:

> Spirit's consciousness of its freedom (and along with it for the first time the actuality of its freedom) has been declared to be the reason of spirit in its determinacy. The latter is the destiny of the spiritual world, and (since the substantial, physical world is subordinated to the spiritual, or in the speculative sense has no truth over against it) it is the final end of the world in general. (Hegel 89)

Under the guidance of reason, human societies will eventually evolve into a form where "all" enjoy freedom, at which point the history will necessarily come to an end. Fukuyama regards Western liberal democracy as the point projected by Hegel and, therefore, he claims that history in this sense has come to an end. While Fukuyama's article could muster up support (Bloom et al. 1989), the text is obviously open to criticism as it is Eurocentric, a criticism which is also levelled at Hegel (Buchwalter 2009). For instance, Jacques Derrida directs a negative and severe criticism in *Specters of Marx* (1993):

> For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelize in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally realized itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the 'end of ideologies' and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of

> progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved or exterminated on the earth. (85)

In 1992, Fukuyama published a book titled *The End of History and the Last Man*, in which he reiterates his strong belief in the inevitable triumph of liberal democracy by referring to "the revelation of enormous weaknesses of … seemingly strong dictatorships" and the spread of "the free market" (xiii) and by insisting that "the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on" (xi). While in the article, he identifies "religion and nationalism" ("The End of History?"14) as new challenges to liberal ideology, in the book, he posits identity politics, relatedly politics of recognition, as the weakness of the system (*last man* xiii-xxiii). In order to advance his argument, Fukuyama resorts to Plato and then, again, to Hegel. In the *Republic*, Plato divides the human soul into three parts: desire, reason, and thymos. Much of human action is organized by the first two. Thymos, which Fukuyama interprets as "self-esteem," is related to a person's sense of worth, or recognition by others (*last man* xvii). Emotions of anger, pride, and shame can be aroused depending on whether thymos is satisfied or not, and Fukuyama points out that Hegel holds these emotions responsible for historical change (*last man* xvii). For Fukuyama, reason and desire can explain the industrial revolution and transformations in economic life, but thymos is the ultimate fuel for liberal democracy as it provokes "a rational desire to be recognized as equal" (*last man* xx). This democratic society requires taming of thymos and curbing all dangerous feelings of superiority. Consequently, Fukuyama suggests that "the typical citizen of a liberal democracy was a 'last man'" or '"men without chests,' composed of desire and reason but lacking thymos, clever at finding new ways to satisfy a host of petty wants through the calculation of long-term self-interest" (*last man* xxii). The emerging problem here is that without thymos, man lacks aspiration or inspiration to create or to move forward and hence, he is no longer human. It is also, therefore, the point where history ends.

Fukuyama also acknowledges that "thymos is the fundamental source of human evil" (*last man* 181). In the world, thymos will always exist, and there will always be disagreements, arguments, or competitions for domination. Fukuyama, then, introduces new categories for thymos: megalothymia as the desire to be recognized as superior and isothymia, the desire to be recognized as the equal of other people (*last man* 182). He is still optimistic that liberal democracy will always provide new channels for the megalothymia to discharge its energy. What is interesting is that, in 1992, Fukuyama cited Donald Trump as a megalothymic personality whose personal ambitions are safely channelled into business far from political life (*last man* 328). No matter how one defines it, as historical necessity or as a twist of fate, or as contingency, to the disappointment of Fukuyama, Trump has ventured forth into politics and became the president of the United States. Moreover, while Brexit in the UK and extreme nationalist and populist governments at work in different liberal countries of Europe undermine the basic foundations and

premises of liberal societies, contingent events, like the Covid-19 pandemic[1], reveal how economically and socially vulnerable these societies are.

Upon such developments, in 2018, Fukuyama published another book, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. The first sentence of his Preface is, "this book would not have been written had Donald Trump not been elected president in November 2016" (ix). He admits that he did not "suspect back then that Trump would not be satisfied with business success and celebrity, but would go into politics and get elected president" (*Identity* xiv). He also comes to the understanding of "the difficulty of developing a modern, impersonal state" and "the possibility of a modern liberal democracy decaying or going backward" (*Identity* xii). With retrospect, he points out the failure of contemporary liberal societies in solving the problem of thymos and still claims that "it is not at all inconsistent with the general argument [he] was making about potential future threats to liberal democracy" (*Identity* xiv).

In the same year Fukuyama published *The End of History and the Last Man*, Julian Barnes published *The Porcupine* (1992). Interestingly, in an interview, Barnes explains that "it is a political novel about that old but still true problem: the weakness of liberalism confronted by the certainty of a system that it believes it has all the answers. And this is still the case even when liberalism has triumphed" (*Conversations* 46). In order to take this confrontation to its utmost limit, Barnes takes an overthrown communist dictator of a fictional East European country to the court. The country resembles Bulgaria in its passage from communism to liberalism in the early 1990s, and he corresponds with Dimitrina Kondeva, the Bulgarian translator of the novel, to collect information that would serve as raw material for his fiction (Kondeva 81-91). The idea for the novel emerges in Barnes's mind "in the middle of the night" with a very simple question: "What if a communist leader came to trial – what if, instead of running away or pretending he had cancer or whatever, what if he decided to defend himself by attacking?" (*Conversations* 25). He concedes that his experience of the Cold War cannot be compared to those living in Eastern Europe. However, the question still bothers Barnes as a "normal, sentient being" and "a child of the Cold War" whose adulthood had been shaped by that war (*Conversations* 25).

The trial is set at a time when that fictional country suffers from growing tension amidst the fears of slipping into total obscurity as the new order tries to navigate the country from communism to liberalism. In this context, the trial becomes highly symbolic because it provides the new order with a golden opportunity both to reckon with the old regime and legitimize and consolidate its newly acquired power.

> Eventually, the former President sat down on the small hard chair that had been chosen for him. Behind, and therefore always in shot when

[1] Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is a pandemic which started in December, 2019 in China. The disease quickly spread to the rest of the world bringing life to a halt. Governments all over the world met with severe criticism in their handling of the disease as their policies were blamed to prioritize financial matters over human life.

> Petkanov was on camera, stood an ordinary prison officer. The prosecution had arranged this little touch of stage management, and suggested in particular that a woman guard be chosen. The military were to be kept out of the picture as far as possible. See, this is just another civilian case in which a criminal is brought to justice; and look, he is no longer the monster who terrified us, he is just an old man guarded by women. (31)

The old man to be guarded by women is Stoyo Petkanov. Many critics believe that Barnes develops this character on Bulgarian communist ex-ruler Todor Zhivkov (*Conversations* 78). Although Barnes rejects this, he nevertheless points out that "[Petkanov] often speaks [Zhivkov's] lines" (Kondeva 87). However, only three charges could be brought against Petkanov: "The first, deception involving documents, related to the receipt of undue royalties … The second, abuse of authority committed in an official capacity... The third, mismanagement, concerned a payment of undue social benefit" (39). The Special Office assigns Peter Solinsky as the prosecutor to confront Petkanov. Solinsky is well aware that mere conviction of the accused with such trivial charges like embezzlement and corruption would not be enough "for such a historic indictment" because condemning Petkanov necessarily means condemning the old order (39). The rule of the dictator should be devalued, and that can only be possible by changing how the nation perceives that regime. In other words, how the nation makes sense of its history.

Postmodern theories posit history as "a discursive construct" (Hutcheon 142). These theories emphasize that history and historiography are sites of conflict in which multiple discourses compete for power and claim to knowledge. Ideologically framed discussions in the court over the way Petkanov had ruled the country reveal the tension between the two adversary discourses in their pursuit to legitimize their versions. In "The Discourse of History," Roland Barthes indicates that the historical discourse "is in its essence a form of ideological elaboration" (16). Ideology also constitutes an important aspect in Hayden White's schematization of historiography, which conceptualizes ideology as a process

> by which different kinds of meaning are produced and reproduced by the establishment of a mental set towards the world in which certain sign systems are privileged as necessary, even natural, ways of recognizing a 'meaning' in things and others are suppressed, ignored, or hidden in the very process of representing a world to consciousness. (192)

In constructing historical discourses and realities, selection under the guidance of a certain ideology is highlighted. It is, therefore, as Hutcheon states, "the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past 'events' into present historical 'facts'" (89). As Buran claims "[h]istory is rewritten through remembering and telling the past" (379). By "incorporating the past into the present," postmodern historiography "advocates for a multiplicity of reality rejecting the standards on the past" (Buran 388). In

Barnes's fictional country, there are "past events" that are publicly negotiated in the court and attested new meanings to transform them into historical facts and to give shape to new knowledge. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault asserts that "historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves" (5). In this sense, while the liberalist new order tries to remake the history of the country, the socialist old regime resists with adherence to old historical descriptions.

Defining himself as "the helmsman" of the nation, Petkanov boasts that "the Fascists have been routed" and "under [his] guidance, this country has grown in international stature" with reduced unemployment, controlled inflation and uninterrupted peace (121). He believes that the charges levelled against him are "convenient inventions" and pleads "guilty to the real charge," which is being "a Socialist and a Communist" (126). Against corruption allegations, Petkanov, then, revisits a past event concerning the prosecutor Solinsky's official visit to Italy as a trade delegate, for which the state provided him with "hard currency". He accuses Solinsky of spending that money "on a nice Italian suit," "on whisky," and "on taking a local woman to an expensive restaurant" with whom he spends the night together in a hotel room (86). Of course, this is, in the person of Solinsky, an attack against money-driven individualist capitalist ideology. While the old and experienced Petkanov successfully manipulates the course of the trial by undermining the credibility of Solinsky, Ganin, who works for The Special Office, is worried about the outcome of the trial:

> It is important to hold this trial, for the good of the nation. It is equally important that the accused be found guilty. ... the nation expects from this trial something more than a technical verdict of guilty on a charge of minor embezzlement. Which is the direction in which you [Solinsky] are heading at the moment, with due respect. The nation expects to be shown that the defendant is the worst criminal in our entire history. (93-94)

The new order wants to change a historical category, or a historical description, existing in people's mind. To eradicate that image of Petkanov as the helmsman of the nation further efforts are required. Then, the prosecutor produces another historical document: a memorandum, "Just a half-page typed statement with two signatures attached. Not even signatures, initials" (91). The document "concerned the joint problems of internal dissent and external slander" and defines "Slander of the State" as "a form of sabotage" (91). It also reports that "the saboteurs" would be "discouraged by all necessary means" (91). Solinsky faces ethical dilemmas concerning the authenticity and accuracy of the document: "The document is true, even if it is a forgery. Even if it isn't true, it is necessary. Each excuse was weaker, yet also more brutal" (113). Overwhelmed by the great tension caused by this great historical responsibility, Solinsky feels desperate to resort to this dubious document. Referring to the document, he alleges that Petkanov has been involved in the

sudden and mysterious death of his own daughter, a moment which also serves as the climax in the novel:

> Peter Solinsky sat down to loudly unjudicial applause, to the drumming of feet, the thumping of desks, and even some raucous whistling. This was his moment, his moment for ever. He had thrust the pitchfork into the earth, one tine on either side of the neck. Look at him snarl and wriggle, spit and fret, pinned out there for all to see, exposed, witnessed, judged. This was *his* moment, his moment for ever. (111)

Even though the court declines this allegation, Solinsky considers himself and "his *coup de theatre*" successful in shifting "public perception decisively" (127). Despite the professional accomplishment, the judicial process destroys Solinsky's integrity, his wife deserts him and his daughter refuses to speak to him. On the other hand, Petkanov is sentenced to "thirty years of internal exile" and all his property is confiscated by the state. Petkanov loses everything; nevertheless, he feels himself to be "less defeated than this [Solinsky] ageing young man" (134-135).

As noted earlier, Barnes models his fictional country on Bulgaria. In 1990, he visited the country when *Flaubert's Parrot* was published in Bulgarian (Kondeva 82). Later he presented his observations on the country in an essay titled "Candles for the Living" in which he reports regular electricity cuts, ex-gymnasts' cabaret dance, rising interest in pornography, inflation, food coupons and rations, shortage of any kind, flourishing of the black market, and young people's migration even to South Africa. Particularly, his witty remarks on ex-gymnast dancers are noteworthy:

> Sport is no longer state-coddled in Eastern Europe, so here are four gymnasts, deprived of coaching and steroids, earning their corn as a Sunday night cabaret act – a living demonstration of the switch from communism to capitalism. What sort of progress is this? Hard to tell; but it looks a neat image for the strange and extreme transformation Bulgaria is currently undergoing. ("Candles")

The essay is not only a display of pessimism, and Barnes expresses that the people could hold onto life with "a sense of irony". However, he locates the problem in the country's being geographically, historically, and genetically distant and distinct from the rest of Europe; "the forgotten item in the East European unshackling" ("Candles"). Due to its relative insignificance in world history, the country has been neglected, and the population, accordingly, could not glorify what they have undergone as a revolution but hesitantly devalue it as "the Changes". For all that, what most surprises Barnes in his trip is the phrase he hears: "the death of idealism," which indicates that the nation appears to have lost all their beliefs in "second chances" and, correspondingly, in the validity of discussing "how things should be, how they might be" ("Candles"). Defending socialism, Petkanov, in the novel, asserts that "[t]hings might not have been perfect, but with Socialism people could dream that one day they might be" (69). The atmosphere stirs a sense of weariness and caution

regarding the present, and a sense of obscurity and uncertainty regarding the future, which is well reflected in the novel:

> There had been a Revolution, of that there was no doubt; but the word was never used. ... This country had the fullest sense of history, but also a great wariness of rhetoric. The high expectations of the last years refused to declare themselves in tall words. So instead of Revolution, people here spoke only of the Changes, and history was now divided into three quiet parts: before the Changes, during the Changes, after the Changes. Look what had happened throughout history: Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Revolution, Counter-Revolution, Fascism, Anti-Fascism, Communism, Anti-Communism. Great movements, as by some law of physics, seemed to provoke an equal and opposite force. So people talked cautiously of the Changes, and this slight evasion made them feel a little safer: it was difficult to imagine something called the Counter-Changes or the Anti-Changes, and therefore such a reality might be avoidable too. (42)

The prosecutor Solinsky believes that passage to the new order, fashioned with the principles of liberal democracy, will be the ultimate solution that will save the nation. In this sense, in the public view, Solinsky "represented the new order against the old, the future against the past, virtue against vice" (37). When he delivered speeches in the media, "he customarily invoked the national conscience, moral duty, his plan of easing truth like a dandelion leaf from between the teeth of lies" (37). Petkanov, on the other hand, condemns the new order accusing it of "instability and hopelessness" and exalts Socialism as giving people what they want; "stability and hope" (69). For Petkanov, what Solinsky refers to as "swift achievements" can be listed as "[a] crime wave. The black market. Pornography. Prostitution. Foolish women gibbering in front of priests again" (69). Unlike Fukuyama, Petkanov believes that this is not the ultimate victory of Capitalism over Socialism. While Solinsky "and [his] sort have had many jumps" (106), this was the first jump of Socialism and one does not "get to Heaven at the first jump" (105). This is not the end of history and Petkanov is adamant that Socialism will eventually replace Capitalism:

> What was happening was that just for a brief historical moment the old system was being allowed a last little hop in its slimy frog-pond. But then, inevitably, the spirit of Socialism will shake itself again, and in *our* next jump we shall squelch the capitalists down into the mud until they expire beneath our boots. (114-115)

Both Petkanov and Solinsky are in fact megalothymic characters defined by an obvious sense of superiority over others. For instance, Petkanov openly boasts that, as the "helmsman of [the] nation for thirty-three years" (60), he has "never asked much for [himself]" (83) and even donated "the Thracian gold" discovered on his land to a state museum (84). While he declares his life to be a sacrifice for improving the lives of workers and peasants, he asserts that he is "charged with bringing peace and prosperity and international respect to this country" (121). Fukuyama claims that "Communism humiliated ordinary

people by forcing them to make a myriad of petty, and sometimes not so petty, moral compromises with their better natures" (*Last Man* 168). Likewise, Solinsky points out that "Party was always greater than the individual" (26). By accepting the appointment, he believes that he "was embarking on his most public form of self-definition" (37). However, according to his wife, "he was indulging his vanity again" and even for one of his colleagues, he had "a secret wish for television stardom" (36). His fame spreads all over the country but at the expense of his family, his credibility, and respect.

Barnes extends the end of history discussion with a subplot in which four university students, Vera, Stefan, Dimiter and Atanas, and Stefan's grandmother feature, a characterization which is highly symbolic as while the university students represent the younger generation and future, the grandmother becomes the representative of the older generation and the past. The subplot adds an essential dimension to the novel by taking the overtly theoretical discussion from the court to the real, practical life, which offers Barnes a chance to reflect how the real individual perceives these changes. A similar tension that of between Solinsky and Petkanov is then built up between these people.

As already pointed out, the new order regards the trial as an important opportunity to legitimize its power and, therefore, the whole legal process is publicized. To this end, the trial is televised, and the four university students watch the broadcast from their televisions despite regular electricity cuts. They are also highly conscious of the importance of the trial as they hold that they "were brought up … to think that Socialism was the answer to everything, … that Socialism was right, was scientific, that all the old systems had been tried and didn't work" (70). They will be "witnesses" (19) to "the nation's sudden passage from enforced adolescence to delayed maturity" (22), to this "great moment in their country's history" (19), in which they would bid "a farewell to grim childhood and grey, fretful adolescence" (20). The trial, for them, symbolizes "the end of lies and illusions," and finally, "the truth" would be possible (20). Stefan's grandmother, on the other hand, ignores the trial placing herself in the kitchen "underneath a small framed colour print of V.I. Lenin" and remaining silent almost throughout the novel (53). Compared to the enthusiasm of Stefan and his friends, her mood can be defined as wearied, even worried. For her, they are chatterers who gabble away and squabble "like a nestful of thrushes. Brains of thrushes, too" (54). Peter Childs also points out that "their youthful idealism, which sees only a change in history, is contrasted with the older people's awareness of cycles and patterns" (104). While on the surface, the grandmother seems to be pessimist regarding the current situation and the four university students appear to be hopeful, the grandmother clings to a glimmer of hope because she is still of the opinion that this is not the point in which the history ends:

> How long would it be before the Party was banned again, forced to go underground? Before the Fascists resurfaced, and young men searched their attics for the faded green shirts of their Iron Guard grandfathers?

> Ahead she saw an inevitable return to the oppression of the working class, to unemployment and inflation being used as political weapons. But she also saw, beyond that, the moment when men and women would rise and shake themselves, recovering their rightful dignity and starting again the whole glorious cycle of revolution. She would be dead by then, of course, but she did not doubt that it would come to pass. (54-55)

Then what happens at the end of the novel and at the end of history? The novel has a powerful ending, though it does not let the reader enjoy an exact closure. As stated earlier, for Fukuyama, religion and nationalism still lurk somewhere as a threat to liberal democracy ("The End of History?" 14). At the end of the novel, the reader witnesses Solinsky's visit to the church St. Sophia, where he lights candles, "crossing himself, from right to left, in the Orthodox fashion" (137). The reader is also informed that "since the Changes, people had started coming back to the Church; not just for baptism and burial, but for worship, for unspecific consolation, for the knowledge that they were more than bees in a hive" (137). Fukuyama admits that "the end of history will be a very sad time" ("The End of History?" 18). Without thymos, there will be no place for courage, imagination or idealism and, hence, for artistic creativity and philosophic discussions, as they "will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands" ("The End of History?" 18). Purified from his thymos, man becomes Nietzsche's "the last man" or "man without chest". Without any urge for creation, life becomes silent and boring, and this boredom, Fukuyama predicts, may restart history. Likewise, in the novel, the last three paragraphs strongly suggest "silence," as all three end with this word. The last paragraph, on the other hand, shows the grandmother holding a picture of Lenin. Although every passer-by abuses or teases her, she keeps her stand remaining silent, which may also signify the resilience of the old regime.

> In front of the vacant Mausoleum of the First Leader an old woman stood alone. She wore a woollen scarf wrapped round a woollen hat, and both were soaked. In outstretched fists she held a small framed print of V.I. Lenin. Rain bubbled the image, but his indelible face pursued each passer-by. Occasionally, a committed drunk or some chattering thrush of a student would shout across at the old woman, at the thin light veering off the wet glass. But whatever the words, she stood her ground, and she remained silent. (138)

As a part of the conclusion, an attempt can be offered to locate the position the novel and the novelist take in the debate. The last three paragraphs of the novel may confuse the reader who intends to spot this position. For instance, Moseley argues that the old system is portrayed to be "more balanced than one might expect, or hope; it would be possible to read the novel as suggesting a nearly moral equivalence between Bolshevism and liberalism" (150). Yet, Barnes clarifies:

> If someone reads *the Porcupine*, reads the story of Petkanov, reads my account of his political thought and political operation, and then concludes that the book ends with 'a tribute' to communism, then they are simply a very dim reader. [...] I have come across this category of reader before, who looks at the ending of a novel and decides that it consists of the novelist's final beliefs in a disguised form. (qtd. in Guignery 63)

In the novel, as Socialism loses the monopoly of knowledge, Dimiter indicates that they have now realized that "there are two sides to every question" and complains that "just *holding* a trial is giving [Petkanov] false credit, is admitting that even in this case, even in this worst of cases, there is another side to the story" (71). In this context, Childs also suggests that the novel "remains sceptical of idealism and refuses either to see events from one side or to take comfort from political or religious rhetoric" (99). Concomitantly, Barnes's voice is "uncommitted, slightly detached, and therefore seemingly well-balanced," which "detects disturbing traces of sound reason and logic in the justifications offered by Petkanov and sees Solinsky as someone with power and history, rather than morality, on his side" (99). Childs concludes that "Barnes is in no wise a simple reactionary but is predisposed to see the arguments on both sides, and put them to the reader" (99-100). On the other hand, Alberto Lázaro perceives the novel as "a committed political satire" (123), which "works through subtlety and suggestion" (127). Lázaro argues that the main conflict in the novel is not between Communist and Capitalist ideologies but "between the unacceptable corruption that often entraps politicians and the implicit honesty that should reign over the political sphere" (123). In other words, peculiar to satire tradition, the battle between good and evil is perceivable, and while the values like prudence, fairness and righteousness that the writer advocates are hidden, the evil is highlighted (Lázaro 123-124). Lázaro explains Barnes's authorial absence as "detachment," another satire technique which requires authorial disengagement from the story. "The narrators of satiric fiction are just speaking voices who do not explicitly condemn what they try to expose nor feel sympathy for their characters" (Lázaro 128). Barnes is able to mute his voice in his third-person omniscient narration by using "indirect interior monologue" in which through "self-revelation," characters exhibit their "vicious nature," which is "more dramatic and convincing way" of criticism (Lázaro 129). Therefore, the reader never feels the authorial presence of Barnes and is alone to decide whether this is the end of history or not.

What Barnes seems to emphasize in fact, is the rhetoric, no matter where it comes from exasperates the people. As the novel also strongly suggests, theoretical discussions held in upper parts of society seldom have a significant effect on the practical life of the lower parts. Names given to squares might be changed, or statues of heroes might be removed from the heart of the cities to wastelands, or once-traitors might be announced martyrs. In the novel, it is quite significant that when asked his idea about the removal of one of the

statues, the taxi driver speaks clearly that he does not "give a fuck either way" (128). That is also why Barnes makes a group of protestors ironically cry in capital letters, "GIVE US IDEOLOGY NOT BREAD" (46). That also explains why Atanas, with a hint of irony and half-mockingly, expresses that as they are free now, he wants to use his "freedom not to be serious" and "to be frivolous for the rest of [his] life" (133). This is the sense of irony, as Barnes observes in "Candles for the Living," by which the nation tries to cope with the harsh realities of life and one of the fundamental realities of life is that dominant ideologies may replace one another, but human nature remains the same, and there will always be megolathymic characters, like Trump, Petkanov or Solinsky.

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Julian Barnes: Toward a Minor History

Julian Barnes ve Minör Tarih

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Abstract
Julian Barnes is predominantly known for his radical experiment with the notion of history. He uses and abuses official accounts of history in order to register a history of the unvoiced in his novels. In his attempt to foreground what is unregistered in history, he often ends up embracing a very strong dystopian mode, depicting a world full of terrors, disasters and crises. As this article argues, he presents a "hystopia," that is, a history of dystopia or history as a dystopia. In Barnes, history is a hystopia not only in the sense that it is full of catastrophes, but also in the sense that it is subjective, unreliable and even fascistic in imposing only a single version of the past. Barnes creates alternative histories which downplay the absoluteness of the official accounts and create ruptures in the causal lines of hystopia. In this sense, these alternative accounts can be seen as "minor" history in Deleuzian terms, which is non-linear, rhizomatic and eventful. Against this background this article aims to elaborate on these new notions of "hystopia" and "minor history" in Barnes's novels, addressing the relation of his understanding of history to minoritarian politics in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy.
Keywords: Julian Barnes, historiography, minor literature, minoritarian politics, Deleuze and Guattari

Öz
Julian Barnes çoğunlukla tarih kavramı üzerinde radikal deneyler gerçekleştiren bir yazardır. Yazar, romanlarında susturulmuş olanların tarihini ön plana çıkarabilmek maksadıyla resmi tarihi üzerinde oynar. Yazarın resmi tarihe dahil edilmeyenleri gün yüzüne çıkarırken, son derece distopik bir mod yakaladığı ve dünyayı terör, felaket ve krizlerle dolu bir dünya olarak resmettiği gözlemlenir. Bu çalışma, yazarın eserlerinde tarihi bir distopya ya da bir distopyalar tarihi olarak sunduğunu savunmakta ve yazarın tarih anlayışını "hystopia" olarak adlandırmaktadır. Barnes'ın eserlerinde tarih hem felaketlerle dolu oluşu hem de geçmişin yalnızca tek bir temsilini empoze etme gayesiyle son derece öznel, güvenilmez ve faşist bir şekilde yaratılması dolayısıyla bir "hystopia"dır. Ancak Barnes bir distopya olarak tarihin keskinliğini ve kesinliğini sorunsallaştıracak ve çizgisel yapısında kırılmalar yaratacak alternatif tarihlere de yer verir. Bu çalışma bu alternatif tarihleri, Deleuzyen bir çerçevede çizgisel olmayan, rizomatik ve olaysal olarak tanımlanabilecek "minör" tarih olarak adlandırmakta ve Deleuze ve Guattari'nin felsefesi ışığında Barnes'ın tarih anlayışının minör politikalarla olan yakınlığını ortaya koyarak çalışmada öne sürülen "hystopia" ve "minör tarih" kavramlarını derinlemesine ele almayı amaçlamaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, tarih yazımı, minör edebiyat, minör politikalar, Deleuze ve Guattari

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The aim of this article is to inquire into how history is treated by Julian Barnes through the new notions of hystopia and minor history and possible political implications of his treatment of history in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. In its basic outline, this inquiry will be guided by three major questions. The first question is "What is history in the most traditional sense of the word?" and/or "How does the traditional treatment of history turn out to dystopian?". The second is "What is the actual relation between time and history?". The last one is "How do alternative histories function?", or to be more precise, "How can we relate alternative histories to the idea of revolution in a Deleuzian sense?". In answering these questions in relation to the notions of hystopia and minor history, this article will focus on a limited corpus, four novels of Barnes, *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters, Flaubert's Parrot, England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending.* These four novels will be helpful in conceptualising the new notions of hystopia and minor history while simultaneously delineating Barnes's position in minoritarian politics.

Julian Barnes has engaged with the notion of history throughout his literary career. His engagement with history has often been linked to a postmodernist tendency to subvert it as a grand narrative. Many scholars have interpreted his works as typical examples of postmodernist fiction where the process of historiography is depicted to underline the blurring boundaries between historical fact and fiction (Childs 9; Holmes 15; Guignery 46; Head 16). Despite these overwhelming attempts to relate Barnes's literary position to postmodernism, however, Barnes himself openly rejects his affiliation with postmodernist fiction (qtd. in Freiburg and Schnitker 52). This necessitates a novel insight into Barnes and his experiments with historiography. At this point, Deleuze and Guattari's theories, particularly their counter-arguments against Hegelian understanding of history, could be a guiding spirit to revisit Barnes's literary stance.

History occupies a sophisticated position in Barnes. Barnes employs two forms of history in his work, hystopia and minor history. Hystopia is a term that this article coins to define and describe what history is in the most traditional sense of the word. Hystopia is a coinage whose meaning hovers between history and dystopia, foregrounding the idea of a history of dystopia and history as dystopia. History is a hystopia in Barnes firstly because he patently considers it to be full of catastrophes, disasters, terrors and crises. Most of his works proceed through cataclysms, outrages and disheartening facts, and are governed by a strong sense of pessimism and melancholia. His iconic novel *A History of The World in 10 1/2 Chapters,* for instance, chronicles the disasters and tragic events that have taken place since the Genesis. It jaunts from human cruelty performed by Noah and his family in the first chapter to religious terrorism in the second, from religious wars in the third chapter to nuclear disaster in the fourth, from shipwreck tragedies in the fifth and the sixth to the Holocaust in the seventh chapter. It finally ends with a heaven that "becomes a cyclical living hell, an endless present" in Buxton's words (82). The entire course of history repetitively encounters endless series of disasters; thus, it suggests a circular ongoingness of dystopian events. As Barnes himself points

out in his *History of the World,* "[h]istory just burps, and we taste again that raw-onion sandwich it swallowed centuries ago" (241). The repetitiveness in the form of history signals our second query, "the problematic relation between time and history". Barnes has neither a "static view of history" nor a "linear view of history" (Guignery "History" 57). History is for Barnes repetitive, but it is not a static repetitiveness, or to put it more simply, it is not the repetition of the same. Each time it repeats, it comes along with a series of differences. That is, there is a kind of newness or a variation in each repetition in a Deleuzian sense.

The idea of newness in repetition lies in the relation between the virtual and the actual in Deleuze's philosophy of time, strongly influenced by Bergson. In his work *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Deleuze talks about three passive syntheses of time through which we could fully comprehend the intricate link between the virtual and the actual and their relation to the notion of history. The first synthesis of time suggests the idea of living, organic and polytemporal present on the grounds that the past and the future are always necessarily a part of the present. As Deleuze underlines, "[t]he past and the future do not designate instants distinct from a supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself in so far as it is a contraction of instants. The present does not have to go outside itself in order to pass from past to future" (71). On the contrary, it is a dynamic interpenetration of the past and the future. The second synthesis elaborates more on the nature of the present. In this synthesis, Deleuze puts forward the idea of a present that simultaneously passes. This is to say that we have a continuous present where it constantly falls into the past. Such an understanding of a present that is continuously passing corresponds to the simultaneity of the past and the present. The past is contemporaneous with the present as they occur at the very same time. As Deleuze himself clarifies, "[t]he present and former presents are not […] like two successive instants on the line of time; rather, the present one necessarily contains an extra dimension in which it represents the former and also represents itself" (71). Through these two syntheses, we arrive at a third synthesis of time whereby time comes "out of joint" (88). *Time out of joint* means "demented time," time freed from "its relation to movement" towards the future, "time presenting itself as an empty and pure form" (88). It is a split in the linearity of time so it is indeed "the time of what Deleuze calls 'the event'" (Bogue 41), and "the condition for actions that drive towards the new" (Williams 102). The production of the new can be explained through a new understanding of the eternal return and repetition. Affirming Nietzschean understanding of the eternal return of the same, Deleuze suggests an eternal return of difference. The past does not repeat itself in the present in the very same way it happened but it returns to the present in pure difference. The return of difference is the harbinger of the production of the new in the future, which simultaneously makes both the past and the future an inseparable part of the present.

These three syntheses resonate with the relation between the actual and the virtual: The past is not a series of events that once happened but a virtuality

that always necessarily manifests itself in the present. Similarly, the present is not purely in itself but a threshold between the past, the present and the future. On the one hand, it is the actual since it is the actualisation of the past as the virtual. On the other hand, it is the virtual since it keeps passing and promising the production of the new as a repetition of difference in the future. This is tantamount to saying that the present actualises while at the same time it virtualises.

This understanding of time would be the answer to the very question Barnes poses in *Flaubert's Parrot,* "Does the world progress? Or does it merely shuttle back and forth like a ferry?" (105). Apparently, the answer is the latter! Neither the world nor history follows a linear progression in Barnes's understanding. The history of the world is thus nothing but a repetition of the virtual past in pure difference. It continuously shuttles back and forth between the past, the present and the future. It is what Bergson calls a "cone" (162), a cone full of renewed and renewable disasters. In *A History of the World,* the repetitive oscillation between the past, the present and the future is portrayed through recurrent patterns and events in the chapters. It is not surprising to see the woodworm sneaking into Noah's ark around 3000 BC in one chapter standing trial in the 16th century in another. The return of the disasters in pure difference could best be observed in the final chapter of the novel. This last chapter entitled "The Dream" begins as a utopian promise of paradise. But the ultimate telos of the history of the world, that is, paradise, somehow turns into an endless nightmare. In other words, utopia goes wrong. This ironic inconclusion suggests that the past and the future simultaneously coexist since the residues of the virtual past are decisive of the future. In this case, the catastrophes of the past and the passing present are indeed nightmarish images of the future world since they would keep reappearing in the future only in different scenarios. This makes history literally a dystopia in the strictest sense of the word.

In Barnes's work, history is hystopia not only because it depicts a dystopian picture of the world but also because it is always controlled and manipulated by dominant discourses, which makes it utterly subjective, unreliable and even fascistic in imposing only a single version of the past. To begin with the first argument, Barnes frequently presents history as "the lies of the victors" or the lies of the "survivors" as he puts it in *The Sense of an Ending* (16). Noah's Ark, for instance, has always been a story of heroism and emancipation although it is indeed a story of tyranny in the stowaway's account as depicted in *A History of the World*. In a similar vein, the wreck of Medusa has often been portrayed as a story of miracle and the miraculous survivors although it is actually a story of cannibalism.

The disposability and malleability of history by dominant powers can be best understood through the relation between history and capitalism. Capitalism is, for Deleuze and Guattari, what "determines the conditions and the possibility for a universal history" (*Anti-Oedipus* 140). Universal history here stands for what this article calls "hystopia". History operates through the principle of

axiomatisation just like everything else captured in capitalism. This is because capitalism tends to create its own origins by fabricating history in a teleological fashion through its State apparatus, namely through its despotic force. In this sense, history is strongly tied to capitalism since the capitalist social machine creates a state history that "describes an ordered succession of regimes" (Lampert 72). In capitalism, as Claire Colebrook puts it, "it no longer matters what circulates – whether it is money, goods, information, or even the feel-good messages of feminism, multiculturalism, […] community [or history] – as long as there is constant exchange" (65). This intricate give-and-take relation of capitalism to history is perfectly depicted in Barnes's *England, England.* The Island Project in the novel sheds light upon the capitalist production of history as "an element of propaganda, of sales and marketing" (Barnes *England* 7). History and the national identity of England are first decoded from their initial positions and then reproduced and turned into a "pure market state" (187). Most critics consider this new market state as a "simulacrum" (Baudrillard 11) in Baudrillardian sense that is far removed from the reality and hence devoid of any authenticism (Guignery 108; Pateman 75). The capitalist production of history in the Island is a simulacrum not because it is an inauthentic copy of the real. Otherwise, this would mean that there is an outside actuality preceding simulation. History is a simulacrum only because it is a translation of the virtual in difference, which indeed testifies to the workings of the capitalist axiomatic.

This recalls the second argument of this article that history is subjective and unreliable. The subjectivity and unreliability of history lie primarily in the elusiveness of memory in a Bergsonian and Deleuzian sense. As Bergson argues, in each moment the present moves, history becomes bigger and bigger; and each subject shares the same bundle of history, a vast history. But each subject has a different "cone" of the past (162), that is, his own present/perception or his own duration. Duration is then memory in Bergson's view. In delineating how duration becomes memory, Deleuze relates both to "recollection-subjectivity" and "contraction-subjectivity" (*Bergsonism* 53). Recollections of the past are stored in duration and hence situated on the line of subjectivity. This means that memory is a production of the intricate relation between perception and recollection, between the past and the present. This makes memory inevitably subjective. The nature of memory is not only subjective but also elusive and fragmentary because it operates as "zigzag movements [between the past and the present], stages skipped here or there, [having] irreducible overall breaks" (Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus* 428). As the main character Martha defines it in *England, England,* memory is not "a solid, seizable thing, which time, in its plodding, humorous way, might decorate down the years with fanciful detail – a gauzy swirl of mist, a thundercloud, a coronet – but could never expunge. A memory [is] by definition not a thing, it [is] a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back then" (3). She calls it an "arranged lie" (4). Personal histories and even national histories predominantly rely on these arranged lies, which necessarily puts their

reliability at stake. The subjective and unreliable nature of memory and history is very often touched upon in Barnes's work. Apart from *England, England*, the entire narrative of *Flaubert's Parrot* is structured upon the idea that historiography is a subjective process, showing the main protagonist, Braithwaite's individual attempt to write Flaubert's biography. In this attempt, Flaubert's parrot becomes a powerful metaphor of the impossibility of reaching out a "true story" (86), solid memories and the events as they really happened. *The Sense of an Ending*, likewise, experiments with the elusiveness of memory. The novel tells the story of the main protagonist, Tony Webster, who gradually comes to realize that the entire memory of his past is based upon a misunderstanding. This is to say that his entire personal history is nothing but a deceptive re-perception of the virtual past with the present self since "remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed" (*The Sense of an Ending* 1). As such, it is not surprising to see that history is referred to as "that certainty produced when the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" in the novel (17)

If history is a hystopia, it is also because it constantly attempts to hide its unreliability and subjectivity, which is another point frequently problematised in Barnes. As he puts it in *The Sense of an Ending,* "[t]he 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," "[t]hat's one of the central problems of history" (12). What brings about this central problem is the idea of fabulation inherent to history. Fabulation, in the simplest sense of the word, is the act of making up stories. As Barnes notes in *A History of the World,* you fabulate when "[y]ou make up a story to cover the facts you don't know or can't accept. You keep a few true facts and spin a new story" (109): "[you] fabulat[e] and convince [yourself] that fabulation is as true and concrete as what [you] 'really' kno[w]" (64). This means that fabulation helps to capture the past into a smooth narrative by filling the gaps between the events by legending or inventing stories. This is an act of moving the past from its Aionic nature to Chronos. The past, as previously discussed, remains on the line of Aion, where "past, present, and future [are] not at all three parts of a single temporality, but that they rather for[m] two readings of time, each one of which is complete and excludes the other" (Deleuze *Logic of Sense* 61). Thus, the past is not purely the past but rather exists infinitely in the present and the future as well. This means that the past by its very nature cannot be fully expressed in a chronological order. When it is somehow fabulated, it yields to Chronos, which corresponds to common-sense understanding of time, that is, time in linear progression (162-163). Chronos is the form of temporality which comes into being when the multi-layered and dynamic temporalities are translated into a "succession" (Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateous* 430). This translation is indeed a despotic force that regulates the coexistence of different temporalities. Thus, it could be argued that it is simultaneously a translation into "hystopia" as well. To put it succinctly, hystopia is a "form of history which (1) proceeds in a linear-chronological fashion, (2) obeys a standard ontology of cause-effect, (3)

concerns itself with the task of representing the world [full of crises] (or its essence) and (4) is teleological" (Lundy 3).

Against hystopia, Julian Barnes comes up with an alternative form of history, namely, a minor history. Minor history is a coinage that this article offers to delineate Barnes's critical stance to linear, causal and teleological history and its manifestation in his novels. It is a term derived from Deleuze and Guattari's conception of minor literature. Minor literature, is, for Deleuze and Guattari, a kind of literature that is driven by a revolutionary goal to challenge the dominant despotic restrictions of majoritarian politics by means of literary arrangements and techniques (*Kafka* 28). Minor history is as such a form of history that is motivated by minoritarian politics to challenge the truthfulness and absoluteness of majoritarian history. Majoritarian history could be conceived as hystopia. It is majoritarian not quantitively but qualitatively. In other words, hystopia becomes majoritarian not because it fabulates the past of the masses but because its fabulation is remarkably despotic, authoritative and even fascistic in imposing that it is the one and only way of seeing the past. Likewise, minor history is minoritarian not only because it voices the unvoiced and the unheard in official histories but also because it downplays the absoluteness of hystopia by creating ruptures in its linear succession. In Eugene Holland's words, minor history could be seen as "[m]inoritarian becomings" that "strip away (or de-code) the actual determinations of the past and restore its virtual potential to become-otherwise" (26).

Barnes blatantly advocates the merits of minor history in lieu of hystopia in his works. In so doing, he employs the act of fabulation only to use it against itself. Thus, fabulation comes to function as a revolutionary tool to disrupt the linear, majoritarian and despotic nature of history. In *The Fabulation of History,* Ronald Bogue makes a useful definition of fabulation in historicization, which could be helpful to better comprehend Barnes's vocation of fabulation. For Bogue, it would be wrong to assume that "only historians and writers who subvert the forms of commonsense time could be considered fabulists, or that they engage in fabulation only at those moments when they problematise the temporal conventions of ordinary storytelling" (29-30), but rather "much of the power of their fabulation rests in their abilities as story tellers to engage with the *stories* of history" (30; emphasis added). However, it is important at this point to remember the difference between narration and story in Deleuzian terms. As Deleuze puts it in his *Cinema 2: Time-Image,* narration is a regime of laws "which determine successions, simultaneities and permanencies: it is a regime of localisable relations, actual linkages, legal, causal and logical connections" (126-127) whereas story is a regime in which "the virtual, for its part, detaches itself from its actualisations, starts to be valid for itself" (127). In narration, then, multiple temporalities that simultaneously exist yield to a linear succession whilst they retrieve back their virtual potentials in story. In Bogue's words, narration "reinforces the spatiotemporal structures of the common-sense world by subordinating time to regulated movement, whereas the story problematises those structures" (Bogue 30). In this regard, what this article calls hystopia is established and operates by the

laws of narration whereas minor history relies on the laws of story. It is then the revolutionary act of fabulation that helps Barnes to move history to the pole of story in a Deleuzian sense.

Barnes's minor history concerns itself with an Aionic understanding of time that resists subordinating to *regulated movement*. Barnes presents history not in a linear succession but in a non-linear and even rhizomatic fashion. His resistance to a teleological ontology becomes most apparent in *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters.* The title of the novel suggests that the entire book will present a "history" of the world in the conventional way. But it turns out to be rhizomatically-scattered bits and pieces of the past that could not be ordered chronologically. The rhizomatic nature of Barnes's history of the world makes itself most apparent in the recurrent motifs in the novel. The woodworm who appears as a stowaway on Noah's Ark in the first chapter reappears as a culprit in the third chapter. Noah's Ark of the first chapter becomes the very subject of the ninth chapter, where the creationist astronaut Spike Tiggler decides to find it. While animals are categorised as clean and unclean on Noah's Ark in the first chapter, people are categorised as American and non-American on the Santa Euphemia hijacked by Palestinian terrorists. Likewise, Amanda Fergusson conducts a pilgrimage to Mount Ararat in the sixth chapter. Mount Ararat appears to be the destination of another spiritual journey in the ninth chapter as well. These zigzag movements between the chapters of world history necessarily create a rupture in the causal and linear lines of history. Another violation of linear temporality in history could be observed in *Flaubert's Parrot,* where Gustave Flaubert's personal past is filtered through different people's perceptions, primarily, that of Braithwaite. Each of these perceptions is shaped by the present and given in the form of zigzag movements between different temporalities, which in return creates inconsistencies between different narratives of the same past. In *The Sense of an Ending,* in a similar fashion, time's linear and sequential divisions are transcended. This time the main protagonist Tony Webster's personal past is displayed from his own perception. The first part of the novel treats Webster's past through the filters of his present self whilst the second part deals with his present that is constantly haunted by bits and pieces of his past. His representation of the past becomes a testimony to the fact that "[m]emory isn't linear, after all. It sorts and sifts more by priority than chronology" (Barnes 'The Guardian Interview"). The rhizomatic and non-linear nature of history is detectable not only in each of Barnes's works individually but also in the organic relation between his works. Barnes enjoys rhizomatically distributing the same ideas and even the same phrases about history in different works. To exemplify a few, the idea that history burps first appears in *A History of the World* and then reappears in *The Sense of an Ending* with small variances as follows: '"History is a raw onion sandwich, sir.' 'For what reason?' 'It just repeats, sir. It burps. We've seen it again and again this year. Same old story, same old oscillation between tyranny and rebellion, war and peace, prosperity and impoverishment'" (17). Furthermore, the non-linear narrative structure of *A History of the World* is caricatured in the form of "A BRIEF HISTORY of

sexuality in the case of Martha Cochrane" in *England, England* (50). Just in the same way Barnes presents fragments of world history in ten chapters and a parenthesis, he displays a history of sexuality in eight chapters and a parenthesis. In each case, history is not presented in the form of a complete narrative but in the form of a fragmented *story*.

Barnes reinforces the fragmentariness of his *stories* by presenting them from the perspectives of the minorities in hystopia. The minorities hereby do not designate those who are marginalised due to their identity-defining marks only. The minorities rather stand for the unvoiced and the unheard in official histories. It is not the captain but the stowaway, not the human but the animal, not the doctor but the patient, not the accuser but the accused that is heard throughout *A History of the World.* In a similar vein, it is not the royals, queens and kings but pirates, bandits, folk heroes and writers that predominate the "Fifty Quintessences of Englishness" in *England, England* (86-97). This shows that Barnes writes history not with the voice of the standardised "people," but with the voice of what is missing, that is, with the voice of a "people to come" in Deleuzian sense. A people to come not only enables Barnes's work to take on a collective value but also helps it to minorise power dynamics and power relations operating in the appearance of official histories.

It is not simply these fragmented and rhizomatic stories that make Barnes's conception of history minoritarian. History in Barnes's work often draws lines of flight from hystopia and becomes minoritarian by exposing the processes of historiography and the impossibility of authentically translating the past events into a flawless narrative. To begin with the first argument, each of Barnes's novels at hand depicts all the problematic processes in which history is written, which is why each of them is described by many with Linda Hutcheon's coinage "historiographic metafiction" (105). Just as minor literature deterritorialises the inner mechanisms of a literary text, Barnes's minor history deterritorialises the inner mechanisms of historiography. Thus, just as language reaches its outside in minor literature, historiography reaches its outside in minor history. In both, the power of language and history is impoverished. In both, likewise, "expression […] break[s] forms, mark[s] new ruptures and branchings. A form being broken, reconstruct the content that will necessarily be in rupture with the order of things" (Deleuze and Guattari *Kafka* 28). As for the second argument, it would be necessary to touch upon the Deleuzian conception of "event" to comprehend how the past is untranslatable in Barnes. For Deleuze, "event" does not correspond to what plainly happens but rather it suggests a becoming, a "moment of the state as a transformation" (Stagoll 87). As he puts it, every event is a moment in which all other events are interconnected or manifest their bits and pieces (*Logic of Sense* 34); therefore, every event is always more than a past happening: "With every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualisation, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, an individual, or a person, the moment we designate by saying '*here,* the moment has come'" (151; emphasis in original). Historical event cannot be transmitted as a narrative in its entirety. This explains why each of Barnes's attempts to write history, be it a world

history or a personal history, culminates in an intentional failure: *A History of the World* fails to truthfully chronicle "a history of the world," *Flaubert's Parrot* fails to truthfully chronicle Flaubert's life, *England, England* fails to truthfully chronicle a national history and *The Sense of an Ending* fails to truthfully chronicle personal memories. However, the moments in which these novels seem to fail depicting the past truthfully and authentically as they really happen correspond to the very moments in which their representation of the past becomes most eventful and minoritarian in a Deleuzian sense.

All these are tantamount to saying that Barnes engages in an overtly political project which would characterise both his position as a writer and his work as revolutionary. His work is revolutionary not only in unfolding majoritarian practices that linearise, hierarchise, authorise and fabulate the past but also in bringing about new and alternative paths to allow the zigzag movements of the past. At times when majoritarian politics operates in historiography in Barnes's work, history attains a despotic role, yielding the past to a succession and an ideological pattern. That is, history becomes a hystopia. Insofar as minoritarian politics is at work, history liberates the past from the hold of the authorities and is no longer domesticated into chronological sequence. That is, history becomes a minor history. Throughout his work, Barnes presents a genuine encounter between these two views of history, i.e. hystopia and minor history. Yet this is not an encounter of two entirely distinct zones. Hystopia and minor history are both a part of a productive and interconnected differential in Barnes. One cannot claim that Barnes's work is entirely purged of majoritarian logic that operates in the emergence of hystopia. On the contrary, he displays how exactly majoritarian logic works in the writing of history while at the same time replacing the arborescent systems born out of this logic. These moments of replacement correspond to the emergence of minor history. What does matter for Barnes is then to show these moments of encounter that move history from hystopia to minor history.

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Irony and (Dis)Obedience to Authority in Julian Barnes's *The Noise of Time*

Julian Barnes'ın *Zamanın Gürültüsü* Romanında İroni ve Otoriteye İtaat(sizlik)

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Abstract

Julian Barnes's novel, *The Noise of Time*, a biographical fiction about the Russian composer Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich, focuses on the most critical periods of the composer's career, during which he goes through the ordeal of being forced to conform to the ideology of the Soviet regime. Drawing on the composer's biography, Barnes provides the reader with a fictionalized view of how the composer survives the oppression by the use of irony, which is a much debated issue about his artistic persona. Power measures Shostakovich's integrity and pushes him to repudiate his artistic stance. The novel especially focuses on conveying the inner conflict of the composer and depicts him feeling shame because of his submission to Power. Under the threat of the authority, he holds on to irony which helps him overcome his fear and shame by implying his dissidence. The aim of this paper is to explore the role of irony in the relationship between art and power by discussing the compromises Shostakovich is forced to make. Also, by focusing on the inner struggle of the composer, this paper will investigate how the novel presents the ways through which the protagonist copes with the challenges in his life.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, Shostakovich, irony, power, music

Öz

Julian Barnes'ın Rus besteci Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich'in biyografisinden esinlendiği biyo-kurgu romanı *Zamanın Gürültüsü,* bestecinin kariyeri boyunca Sovyet rejim ideolojisine riayet etmeye zorlandığı en kritik dönemleri ele almaktadır. Barnes, bestecinin sanatçı kişiliğinin çok tartışmalı bir yönü olan ironi sayesinde bu baskı döneminde nasıl hayatta kaldığını kurgusal bir bakış açısıyla okuyucuya sunar. Otorite, Shostakovich'i sanatından taviz vermeye zorlar. Roman, özellikle bestecinin iç dünyasına odaklanır ve sanatından taviz vermekten duyduğu utancı tasvir eder. Shostakovich, otoritenin tehdidi altında, eserlerinde ve konuşmalarında kullandığı ironi ile muhalif yönünü ima ederek korku ve utanç hislerinin üstesinden gelmeye çalışır. Bu çalışma, bestecinin içinde bulunduğu zor durum üzerinden sanat ve otorite arasındaki ilişkide ironinin rolünü tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, romanda bestecinin kendi içinde verdiği mücadeleye odaklanılarak, onun hayattaki zorluklarla baş etme yollarının nasıl ele alındığı incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, Shostakovich, ironi, otorite, müzik

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"Even if they cut off both my hands and I have to hold the pen in my teeth, I shall still go on writing music."[1]
—Shostakovich, Letter to Isaac Glikman, 1936

The Noise of Time (2016), which is a biographical fiction about the Russian composer Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906-1975), deals with the most critical periods of the composer's career, during which he goes through the ordeal of being forced to conform to the ideology of the Soviet regime under Stalin and his successors. Drawing on the composer's biography, Barnes provides the reader with a fictionalized view of how the artist survives the oppression by use of irony, which is a much debated issue about his artistic persona. The narrative voice elaborates on how the protagonist tries to find the strength to go on creating his art. Power measures Shostakovich's integrity and pushes him to repudiate his artistic stance. Forced to comply with the requests of the state, he both condemns himself for his obedience and subverts his complicity by means of irony he uses in his public speech and his compositions. With a focus on the protagonist's reliance on irony and the ironic situations he finds himself in, this paper will explore the role of irony in the relationship between art and Power under the threat of the totalitarian regime by illustrating the compromises Shostakovich is compelled to make, and how the novel presents the ways through which the composer copes with the challenges in his life.

It is not surprising that Barnes, as a novelist who employs irony in his works, is interested in the biography of Shostakovich whose compositions are allegedly encoded with various forms of irony that express his covert dissidence against the Soviet system. Unlike Barnes's previous works, *The Noise of Time* does not involve self-reflexive postmodern elements. The novel is laden with irony, but it does not draw attention to the novel's status as a cultural artifice or express disenchantment with history; it is there to expose the repetition of oppression on art in different periods and the risks that are taken by the artist. It mocks the attempts of the totalitarian regime's attacks but the tragic aspect of the situation is foregrounded, because irony is not enough to fight the real anguish of life. The ironic perspective of the novel is reflected through the point of view of the protagonist as the focalizer of the narrative and his way of dealing with the threatening presence of the political oppression in his life. "All his life he had relied on irony" (Barnes 173), states the narrator; irony is in the protagonist's words, the incidents, and the repetition of the exact encounters that he tries to evade. His life itself is ironic as he is portrayed as a non-political composer but ends up being a Communist Party member as the Head of the Music Committee. Not only the incidents in his life but also his language and his personal way of dealing with difficult situations are rendered ironic, as the narrator reflects: "[t]he natural progression of human life is from optimism to

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[1] Shostakovich, Dmitri Dmitriyevich. *Story of a Friendship: The Letters of Dmitry Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman, 1941-1975.* Translated by Anthony Phillips, Cornell University Press, 2001, xix.

pessimism; and a sense of irony helps temper pessimism, helps produce balance, harmony. But this was not an ideal world, and so irony grew in sudden and strange ways. Overnight, like a mushroom; disastrously, like a cancer" (86). Thus, the novel posits irony not as a strategy to lay bare the constructedness of grand narratives; rather irony serves as a coping strategy with the tragic aspects of life. At this point, the novel's dealing with the biography of Shostakovich is significant because he is portrayed to use irony in his music as a way of tolerating the predicaments of life and evading fascism in the novel. Thus, the use of irony in the novel runs parallel to the composer's real-life use of irony in different forms in his speech and music.

The novel is divided into three sections following the years 1936, 1948 and 1960 – titled "On the Landing", "On the Plane", and "In the Car" – each starting with a statement expressing that it was the worst time. Every time the protagonist thinks he is going through the worst, he encounters a worse experience with the authority and the novel draws attention to how ironical the situation is. It is as if all he goes through has taught him that "[a] soul could be destroyed in one of three ways: by what others did to you; by what others made you do to yourself; and by what you voluntarily chose to do to yourself" (166). Before looking into the way the novel depicts how Shostakovich continues to compose his music despite limitations, it would be wise to mention the after-note of the novel in which Barnes recommends his two main sources, Elizabeth Wilson's *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (1994) and Solomon Volkov's *Testimony: The Memoirs of Shostakovich* (1979) to the readers who are unsatisfied with his fictional account of the composer's life. Volkov's book, which claims to be reporting the composer's words, caused controversy over the intended instances of irony in his compositions. The book's authenticity and accuracy have been disputed by the authorities mainly because of its claim for Shostakovich's anti-Soviet agenda even in his works which were approved by the Party itself.[2] Shostakovich was never overtly dissident but it is claimed that he reused some musical themes in his banned works (Gerstel 44). Unlike these biographical accounts of the composer, what Barnes focuses on conveying is Shostakovich's inner struggle with Power and how he copes with "the worst" of all times in the fictionalized interrogations in the novel. The narrative shifts back and forth through the protagonist's memories of good old days and the contemporary horrors he goes through. By combining assumed facts with fiction, the novel provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the protagonist's personality. In relation to the composer's biography, Barnes says in the Author's Note, "I have treated it as I would a private diary: as appearing to give the full truth, yet usually written at the same time of day, in the same prevailing mood, with the same prejudices and forgettings" (184). As such, the novel can be categorized as an example of biographical fiction, or biofiction, a term coined by French critic Alan Buisine in his "La Biographique" published in 1991. Biofiction refers to a genre influenced

[2] There has been much debate about whether Shostakovich was a supporter of the regime or a political dissident. See Ian McDonald, *The New Shostakovic.* Fourth Estate, 1990; Malcolm Hamrick Brown, *A Shostakovich Casebook*. Indiana University Press, 2004.

by postmodernism and "cannot accurately signify or represent the biographical subject because the author's subjective orientation will always inflect the representation" (Lackey "Locating" 5). According to Broom, it is a "linguistic collage of two literary genres, biography and fiction, where both elements contribute their respective qualities to form a new, imaginative whole" (341). In his *Biography and the Postmodern Historical Novel*, Keener defines biofiction as a form that "applies 'novelistic' discourse to the representation of a historical life" (183). Similar to postmodern fiction's attempt to subvert what is assumed factual in history, biofiction tends to employ some "facts" from the biography of a well-known figure and reinvents some aspects of the past to emphasize an ignored aspect of it or to generate a different perspective towards it. As Lackey further explains,

> [b]iographers seek to represent the life of the subject as accurately as possible, while authors of biofiction use the life of their subject in order to create their own vision of the world. This idea of using a life is of crucial importance, for it shifts the emphasis from biography's sacred art of accurate representation to the creative writer's sacred art of imaginative creation. (*Biographical* 10)

Thus, rather than an accurate life account of the biographical subject, the perception of the author is in the foreground. Barnes makes use of the composer's biographies, memoirs and documents, such as letters, and combines them with techniques like free indirect discourse and intertextuality to uncover and draw attention to possible current threats to art and freedom of speech. He also re-presents the composer's life to illustrate the relationship between art and Power. In so doing, Barnes both provides poetic justice for the composer and relates a highly crucial topic to a real-life story based on the actual life of the biographical subject. The novel makes its point clear in these lines:

> The world had moved on, become more scientific, more practical, less under the sway of the superstitions. And tyrants had moved on as well. Perhaps conscience no longer had an evolutionary function, and so had been bred out. Penetrate beneath the modern tyrant's skin, go down layer after layer, and you will find the texture does not change, the granite encloses yet more granite; and there is no cave of conscience to be found. (164-165)

It is the way of the world that the novel urges the reader to question by illustrating the historical oppression Shostakovich went through. In the novel, Shostakovich is not portrayed as actually encoding some messages into his music but he is a lifelong dissident who is struggling to compose his music despite the threats of Power. Journalists and critics have tried to detect irony in Shostakovich's works but Barnes provides the protagonist's life, thoughts, and speech with irony. In the novel, his feelings and thoughts are revealed through interior monologues and a third person narrative. He is not allowed to make a choice; even though he does not approve the impositions of the government on his music, he pretends to be obedient by hiding his disobedience through irony.

Barnes fictionalizes the three phases of the composer's life by making comments on irony which the composer lives on. In the first part of the novel, "On the Landing", Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is condemned by the official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Pravda*, as "Muddle Instead of Music" and as tickling "the perverted taste of the bourgeois with its fidgety, neurotic music" (Barnes 27). It is not signed but there is a strong possibility that Stalin himself wrote it. Shostakovich knows it is his death sentence. The novel demonstrates that the political control over music for propaganda conflicts with the creative spirit of art. The authority enforces censorship, and imposes party ideology on Shostakovich's creativity and pushes him to affirm the political agenda of the state and reflect it in his compositions. With regard to the relationship between culture and politics in Stalin's period, Sheila Fitzpatrick states that

> [t]he party controlled culture and Stalin controlled the party. Involved in this interpretation were a number of specific propositions and assumptions, among which were (1) that the party assumed responsibility for guiding, and if necessary forcing, scholarship and the arts in certain directions, generally directions suggested by ideology; (2) that Stalin required an identifiable "party line" on all cultural questions, and thereby excluded the possibility of fundamental debate within the cultural professions; (3) that the Stalinist party rejected even the limited concepts of professional autonomy and academic and artistic freedom … and by imposing total control deprived cultural institutions and professional organizations of all powers of initiative and negotiation; (4) that, as a consequence, there was a "we-they" relationship between the cultural intelligentsia and the party, with the party striving-usually successfully-to infuse its values into the intelligentsia. (212)

So, if you are not supporting the agenda of Power, you are not allowed to create art. The novel foregrounds the irrationality of cultural suppression through the arbitrariness of the incidents and repetition of the threats and accusations in different time periods. The protagonist has two options: to comply with the Party ideology and survive; or to get killed. He chooses the first option but adds an ironical touch to his creativity. Hayden White points out that throughout history, irony reflects its powerful "transideological" tool (38). Similarly, in her *Irony's Edge*, Linda Hutcheon contends that "it is because of its very foregrounding of the politics of human agency … that irony has become an important strategy of oppositional rhetoric" (11-12). It is the function of irony that the protagonist makes use of throughout the novel.

Following the publication of the article in *Pravda*, the composers' union quickly condemns his opera, too, and many other editorials continue to attack his music for being pessimistic and immoral, without giving him an opportunity to defend himself. He is considered to be "Leftist, Petit-bourgeois, formalist" (Barnes 27) by the government. It was an era of terror; people get tortured,

killed or disappear at the Big House; therefore, when he sees the editorial, he realizes that both his and his family's lives are in danger. He wonders,

> [w]hy, ... had Power now turned its attention to music, and to him? Power had always been more interested in the word than the note: writers, not composers, had been proclaimed the engineers of human souls. Writers were condemned on page one of *Pravda*, composers on page three. Two pages apart. And yet it was not nothing: it could make the difference between death and life. (40)

The state started to search for a specific meaning among the notes of his compositions. It was a time when music was considered dangerous by Power as it was difficult to control. As Rothstein states, "recent totalitarian regimes have found all sorts of dangers in music we think of as totally harmless. … Treason is heard in a musical dissonance, sedition in a harmonic modulation. The more tyrannical a regime, the more it seems to fear music" ("Musical"). In a similar vein, Mulcahy points out that under the totalitarian control of art in the late 1930s and early 40s,

> realistic (that is, tonal) music is praised, atonal music is denounced; traditional aesthetic forms are held up for imitation, and the avant-garde is ridiculed; optimistic themes of socialist heroism are approved, while those that are overly explicit or critical are discouraged. Most important, the Party will impose a variety of restraints (ranging from sanctions to suppression) on artists who deviate from the official cultural canon. (70)

Any pessimistic note, according to the authorities, might cause a loss of public confidence about the future of the Soviet regime; therefore, Power made it clear that art should stimulate patriotism, optimism, and heroism in the public. Shostakovich's work is accused of being formalist, which means lack of optimistic melody and absence of a patriotic theme. In other words, he is considered to be too elitist and anti-socialist for the Soviet people. When he is announced to be "enemy of people" (Barnes 47) we see the composer anxiously waiting to be taken by the secret police in the first part of the novel. He is summoned to have a conversation with Power at the Big House and accused of complicity in a plot to kill Stalin. He is given two days by his interrogator Zakrevsky to confess everything and report about his friend and patron Tukhachevsky's misdeed. However, by an ironic twist of fate, it turns out that Zakrevsky himself is arrested for treason, and Tukhachevsky is later killed. Shostakovich is informed by the guards at the door: "Well, you can go home. You are not on the list. Zakrevsky isn't coming in today, so there's nobody to receive you" (50), so the composer's life is saved for now. Yet his works are forbidden to be performed, and Power forces him to serve the state by making his music simpler, more understandable, optimistic in tone, and ideologically appropriate for the people of the Soviet regime. Illustrating the corruption of the authorities holding all the power, the novel suggests the ways in which fascist authorities manipulate truth and shape its own reality to condemn anyone who does not comply with it. The protagonist thinks, "so this

is what history has come to. All that striving and idealism and hope and progress and science and art and conscience, and it all ends like this, with a man standing by a lift, at his feet a small case containing cigarettes, underwear and tooth powder; standing there and waiting to be taken away" (41). It is an era when "facts were no longer facts, merely statements open to divergent interpretation" (Barnes 52). Therefore, he, in a way, embodies the position of art and progress in the face of totalitarian regimes that disappoint all the hopes for progress in the world. The narrative demonstrates the composer's life to be "a vast catalogue of little farces adding up to an immense tragedy" (172) through the perspective of the protagonist as the focalizer. In one of his concerts in Kharkov, as he remembers, "[h]is first Symphony had set all the neighbourhood dogs barking. The crowd laughed, the orchestra played louder, the dogs yapped all the more… Now, his music had set bigger dogs barking. History was repeating itself: the first time as farce, the second time as tragedy" (41). The predicaments he finds himself in are so random and ironic that the reaction of the government reminds him of the barking of dogs. His personality is crushed by shame because he has to compromise his principles and be loyal to Power for the sake of his and his family's survival. Beside the situational irony he experiences in his first encounter with the investigator, in his struggle with Power his only tool to defend his identity and art is irony which he uses in his music and public speeches to imply his actual but hidden defiance of tyranny.

Linda Hutcheon states that irony "can and does function tactically in the service of a wide range of political positions, legitimating or undercutting a wide variety of interests" (10). In the novel, the protagonist uses it as a strategy to resist political and cultural repression through covert meanings in his speech and works. It is an inherent strategy of irony as it "involves some sort of contrast between two levels of meaning, often coded 'apparent' and 'real'" (Jay 37). For instance, when Comrade Troshin, who is a sociologist, is informed that Stalin talked to Shostakovich on the phone, he says: "I am aware that you are a well-known composer, but who are you in comparison with our Great Leader?" (126) and Shostakovich uses verbal irony in his reply to him: "I am a worm in comparison with His Excellency. I am a worm" (126). Hiding his contempt for Stalin and mocking Troshin, Shostakovich reveals how he feels about his obedience at the same time. The narrative voice comments on irony as an ability to communicate two or more opposed meanings at once. Hutcheon explains this double-voicedness in irony by pointing out that irony

> comes into being in the relations between meanings … so that both the said and the unsaid together make up the third meaning. … Irony functions as a set of dynamic and plural relations among the text or utterance (and its context), where meanings are slippery, multiple, and find their locations in the space between (and including) the said and the unsaid. (12-13)

In a similar vein, referring to the ambivalence of irony, Lang points out that "the double vision of irony reflects the uncertainty intrinsic to the

determination of any intention" (578). In this sense, there has to be a mutual understanding between the speaker and the intended audience. As Goffman contends, "irony allows a speaker to address remarks to a recipient which the latter will understand quite well, … know that he is known to understand; and yet neither participant will be able to hold the other responsible for what has been understood" (Goffman 515). Through irony, Shostakovich aims to disguise the real meaning in his music and speech and to make himself understood by his audience, who really wants to hear what he composes. In the novel, as the narrator states, "when truth-speaking became impossible … it had to be disguised. … And so, truth's disguise was irony. Because the tyrant's ear is rarely tuned to hear it" (85). He feels he has to secure his family's survival but he also wants to save the artistic merit of his music and retain his inner integrity. Irony is "implicated in questions of hierarchy and power" therefore, "instead of aiming at a direct expression of the speaker's attitude, it works through indirection" (Hutcheon 38). Thus, he has to be indirect in his non-conformity to the authority and struggle against the cultural repression. For ears untrained, it is not easy to detect ironic effect in music. In her study on the irony in Shostakovich's works, Gerstel sheds light on some parts of the composer's ironic twists:

> The symphonies he wrote in his middle period … are full of hidden messages, in-jokes, and allusions through which Shostakovich could phrase his frustrations, alienation, doubt, hope, and yearning, for an informed group of listeners. Certainly Shostakovich elicits special meanings from specific combinations of musical notes in a piece such as the *Tenth*, where his musical characterization of Stalin in the short and brutal second movement … signals his disgust, blending emotions of furious anger with a technical refusal of melody. (44)

Accordingly, in some of his works, he exaggerates the length of optimistic themes to a ridiculous degree and while the authorities think they are listening to the notes of genuine feelings, actually the music is loaded with sarcasm to manifest his resistance. In doing so, Shostakovich makes use of another function of irony that is "trivializing the essential seriousness of art" (Hutcheon 46). When Shostakovich writes *The Fifth Symphony*, he composes the fourth movement starting with an upbeat and heroic character but ending in a slower tone like a funeral march to undercut the heroic quality (Thomas). He adds ambiguous parts which provide an optimistic atmosphere with the sound to evade the interpretation of the regime. It is regarded as an optimistic tragedy because Power just hears what they want to hear in his music: however, he considers what he is doing as "a clown's grin on a corpse" (Barnes 174). He is glad that "they missed the screeching irony of the final movement, that mockery of triumph. They hear only triumph itself, some loyal endorsement of Soviet music, Soviet musicology, of life under the sun of Stalin's constitution" (58). So, irony functions as an act of subversion of his apparent compliance with Power and also a means to preserve his dignity. In Barnes's words, irony, for the composer, becomes "a defence of the self and the soul" (173). Through

his hidden disobedience which is the only source of relief for him, he is able to continue producing his art.

Shostakovich's second encounter with Power comes twelve years later, in 1948, when he is invited to represent the Soviet Union and give a propaganda speech, prepared by the state at Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace in New York. It was a time when *The Fourth Symphony* was banned due to its formalism but *The Fifth Symphony* got the approval from the state as "Shostakovich cut his aesthetics to meet the new Stalinist fashion" (Mulcahy 74). Only in twelve years, during which he continued to compose his most well-known symphonies, "tyranny turned the world upside down" (Barnes 67) and he has come to a point where he compromises his principles. Especially the success of his *The Seventh Symphony* (*Leningrad Symphony*), which is about the siege of Leningrad by the Nazis, as a symbol of resistance to fascism, brought him international fame. However, as Volkov reports in *Testimony*, the invasion theme of the composition is in fact about "the Leningrad that Stalin destroyed and that Hitler merely finished off" (156). Power missed the irony and Shostakovich received prizes, memberships, and honorary degrees from several countries. Yet, his success ironically put him in a more dangerous position; the authority wanted him to be a puppet for the Party now. The Party condemned many composers for being formalists, such as Prokofiev and Khatchaturian, and Shostakovich is still in Zhdanov's blacklist for being a "formalist" for the authorities, so "the criticisms embodied in the 1936 *Pravda* editorial were still valid: Music – harmonious, graceful music – was required, not Muddle" (Barnes 77). He attempted to decline the invitation at first, as he is supposed to represent his country where his works have been banned; however, Stalin called to change his mind. So, he has an ironic conversation with Stalin who pretends not to be aware that Shostakovich's music is banned:

> [Shostakovich:] The fact is, you see, that I am in a very difficult position. Over there, in America, my music is often played, whereas over here it is not played. They would ask me about it. So how am I to behave in such a situation?
> [Stalin:] What do you mean, Dmitri Dmitrievich, that your music is not played?
> [Shostakovich:] It is forbidden. As is the music of many of my colleagues in the Union of Composers.
> [Stalin:] Forbidden? Forbidden by whom?
> [Shostakovich:] By the State Commission for Repertoire. From the 14th of February last year. There is a long list of works which cannot be played. But the consequence, as you can imagine, Iosif Vissarionovich, is that concert managers are unwilling to programme any of my other compositions as well. And musicians are afraid to play them. So I am in effect blacklisted. As are my colleagues. (80-81)

That is how Zhdanov's decree is cancelled and Shostakovich attends the conference to praise the superiority of the Soviet vision for music. They demand a Communist consciousness in his music and speech that can be

understood by the mass but “even conformity did not necessarily offer protection from imprisonment or execution” (Mulcahy 72). The novel reveals the ways in which Power seeks to enforce political control and impose its ideology making it universal through art but at the same time uncovers its irrationality. At the conference, Shostakovich becomes the target of the anti-communists who asks questions about his standing. Nicolas Nabokov, an exiled Russian composer working for the CIA, asks questions that force him to show his commitment to the Soviet regime and to praise the views of Soviet Communist Party leader Zhdanov, the man “who had persecuted him since 1936, who had banned him and derided him and threatened him, who had compared his music to that of a road drill and a mobile gas chamber” (Barnes 102). He answers all the questions by repeating a single sentence: “Yes, I personally subscribe to such views” (102). Also, he is forced to denounce his idol Stravinsky, who lives in exile in the United States, and his “moral barrenness” labelling him as a member of “a clique of reactionary modern musicians” (100). While he feels deeply humiliated for producing music that appears to conform to Soviet aesthetics, now Power pushes him one step further and degrades his public self by making him speak against his ideals. As the narrator puts it, “[h]e had betrayed Stravinsky, and in doing so, he had betrayed music. ... it had been the worst moment of his life” (110). There is no escape from the oppression and the embarrassment he feels; however, he knows that “the pleasures of irony had not yet deserted him” (158). Booth, in *A Rhetoric of Irony*, states that irony is a “weapon of contempt” (43). Shostakovich reflects his contempt by delivering his speech at the conference in “a fast, uninflected gabble,” (98) by creating the impression that these are not his own words and this is not him speaking. As Hutcheon contends, irony’s defence mechanism works for “the politically repressed … This is the function of irony that has specifically been called ‘counter-discursive’ in its ability to contest dominant habits of mind and expression” (49). In Shostakovich’s case, his counter-discursive act is his exaggeration, the eagerness of his tone, the pace of his speech, in which irony lies. He wants the audience to realize that the text has not been written by him and that he was “a political imbecile” (Barnes 105). At least, he believes, he reminds the audience of “the one simple fact about the Soviet Union: that it was impossible to tell the truth here and live” (107).

Irony is also a form of personal resistance for Shostakovich. He has to write a letter to the representative of the state, after he agrees to attend the conference asking him to accept his “heartfelt gratitude for the conversation that took place yesterday. You supported me very much … I cannot but be proud of the confidence that has been placed in me” (85). His way of thanking is a reflection of his inner conflict; seeming to comply with the requirements of the regime but at the same time implying his disobedience to retain his honour. He composes his music “for the ears that could hear” (92). In this sense, he expects the audience of his music to be aware of his true personality. Booth states that “[r]eading irony is in some ways like translating, like decoding, like deciphering, and like peering behind a mask” (33). The ironist and the reader

must meet on a common ground to share the implicated meaning. Shostakovich hopes his messages to be decoded one day. The irony is not perceived by Power but, as he explains, the letter he writes, "would disappear into some file in some archive. It might stay there for decades, perhaps generations, perhaps 200,000,000,000 years; and then someone might read it, and wonder what exactly – if anything – he had meant by it" (85). Even if his opposition to Power is not perceived now, someday people will understand him and his dignity will be restored, he hopes.

Whenever an unfortunate event occurs in his life, irony helps him face the situation and overcome his fear and shame of the degradation of his artistic identity. Yet, irony fails to overcome the tragedy of life because whenever he thinks he is able to overcome the predicaments, things get worse. Sometimes he just wants to shout out to the world: "Do not trust what comes out of my mouth, trust only what goes into your ears" (168). Another instance of irony pervading his life is revealed in his thinking of himself as a courageous coward. To him, being a coward is more difficult than being courageous: he thinks that "to be a hero, you only had to be brave for a moment … to be a coward was to embark on a career that lasted a lifetime. … Being a coward required pertinacity, persistence, a refusal to change – which made it, in a way, a kind of courage" (158). He feels he is a coward for not standing his ground and resisting the authority but, at the same, surviving in this chaos in his own ways requires courage which he demonstrates through irony. Also, his considering suicide when he is already under the threat of execution contributes to the ironic tone of the narrative. In the final paragraph he hopes that

> death would liberate his music: liberate it from his life. Time would pass, and though musicologists would continue their debates, his work would begin to stand for itself. History, as well as biography, would fade: perhaps one day Fascism and Communism would be merely words in textbooks. And then, if it still had value – if there were still ears to hear – his music would be … just music" (179).

This is all he hopes for. He thinks his music will be what remains and be valued by people who can understand its merit. This is the hopeful note the novel presents by showing Shostakovich's artistic vision and ability to think of a better future. Also, although death would be an option to put him out of his misery, he knows that his suicide would be used by the Soviet authorities as an opportunity to destroy his legacy, musical achievements, and all his efforts so far; so, he chooses to live. He imagines,

> [h]e was saying to the Union of Composers, to the cats who sharpened their claws on his soul, to Tikhon Nikolayevich Khrenikov, and to Stalin himself: Look what you have reduced me to, soon you will have my death on your hands and on your conscience. But he realized it was an empty threat, and Power's response hardly needed articulation. It would be this: Fine, go ahead, then we shall tell the world your story: The story of how … how for decades you schemed to undermine Soviet music, how you corrupted younger composers, sought to restore

> capitalism in the USSR, and were a leading element in the musicologists' plot which will soon be disclosed to the world. (97)

At least he can still compose music and write his own story when he is alive. Even a small mistake would put his family and friends in jeopardy. He has to be alive to keep them safe. Throughout the novel, on the one hand, he is afraid of death and filled with self-hatred; on the other hand, he feels confident in his subversion of obedience to the state's demands on heroic and old-fashioned music. This capacity of subversion keeps him alive; despite all the horrors he goes through, he hopes his art will survive.

For Shostakovich, the final irony of his life is the fact that the Soviet authorities in fact kill him by "allowing him to live" (177). In this last part of the novel, which is set in 1960, Stalin is dead and Power is represented by Nikita Khrushchev. Shostakovich, recognized as the greatest Soviet composer, experiences his "final, and most ruinous Conversation with Power" (148), when Power compels him to become a member of the Communist Party and work as the chairman of the Russian Federation Union of Composers. He describes himself as a "hunchback," and "morally, spiritually" tortured (115):

> 'He could not live with himself.' It was just a phrase, but an exact one. Under the pressure of Power, the self-cracks and splits. The public coward lives with the private hero. Or vice versa. Or, more usually, the public coward lives with the private coward. But that was too simple: the idea of a man split into two by a dividing axe. Better: a man crushed into a hundred pieces of rubble, vainly trying to remember how they – he – had once fitted together. (155)

He is no longer sure of irony's empowering and life-saving power because he is forced to sign the articles written by the state condemning his favourite writers and musicians. Again, it was the worst of all times: "[i]rony, he had come to realize, was as vulnerable to the accidents of life and time as any other sense. You woke up one morning and no longer knew if your tongue was in your cheek; and even if it was, whether that mattered any more, whether anyone noticed. … And irony had its limits. For instance, you could not be an ironic torturer; or an ironic victim of torture" (174). After signing public denunciations of Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, the critics of Stalin's regime, he feels he is betraying himself and "the good opinion others still held of him" (166). What makes him feel so exhausted is his silent attempts to resist the tyranny. He can never speak out against the regime, and especially being identified with the party policies leads him to feel distressed and embarrassed. Realizing that he can no longer manifest his non-conformity, he loses all his hope for the future. He cannot rely on irony, which is "disguise and communication" (Hutcheon 95), because having lost it all, it does not matter anymore whether anyone notices his irony: "you cannot sign letters while holding your nose or crossing your fingers behind your back, trusting that others will guess you do not mean it … [you cannot] join the Party ironically" (Barnes 166; 175). His despair now that he has lost his tongue-in-cheek attitude is an implication that it was his ability to use irony that had helped him

to survive by keeping his critical attitude so far. Since he is not capable of any counter-discursive act anymore, he remains as a tormented soul and thinks that he has lived too long and that is his fault. He thinks of the history of cultural oppression:

> Lenin found music depressing.
> Stalin thought he understood and appreciated music.
> Khruschchev despised music.
> Which is the worst for a composer? (115)

Power has always been there to prescribe forms of art and to make it a tool for its ideological agenda. This is a repetitive process, which makes the situation even more terrifying, but artistic creation has always found a way to emerge and reach its audience. The novel exemplifies this by fictionalizing the nature of Power and its manipulation of art by raising questions about the autonomy of art in today's world. Shostakovich is only one of the examples that have experienced cultural suppression. His musical achievements have survived despite the constant threat of tyranny and he managed to produce his art reflecting in his works "the true nature of [his] public masquerade" (105).

Combining biographical narrative with historical realities in a fictionalized form provides a space for the novel to give voice to what is suppressed. In one of his classes, Shostakovich is forced to test his students on Soviet ideology, and ponders on Lenin's statement **"**Art belongs to the people" (91) displayed on a banner at the conservatoire. Unlike the statement, Shostakovich thinks that "[a]rt belongs to everybody and nobody. Art belongs to all time and no time. Art belongs to those who create it and those who savour it. … Art is the whisper of history, heard above the noise of time" (91). As imagined by Barnes, in the end it is music Shostakovich is able to "put up against the noise of time" (91). He clung to his artistic vision despite the political pressure throughout his career. As a man who is ashamed of his duplicity in his entire life, he cherished his music and "as long [he] could rely on irony, [he][was]be able to survive" (174). Irony has become more of a tool for surviving his internal thoughts and self-criticism than surviving the terror in the end.

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