CHAPTER 4

TRACING THE NARRATOR IN BARNES'S FICTION

i. “How long can I stretch the narrative line like a piece of elastic without it breaking?”

ii. “I’m very interested in form and in seeing what happens when you bend traditional narrative and fracture it, stretching it to the point at which you hope the chewing gum doesn't snap.”

(Julian Barnes in the interview with BBC2; in the interview published in Los Angeles Times Book Review 15).

Undoubtedly, poetics of postmodern fiction might be a key to understand Barnes's fiction, particularly his use of narrator. In Flaubert's Parrot, almost all series of studies hint towards the novel's multiple discourse and postmodern aspects. Understandably, the poetics of postmodern fiction is a complex phenomenon.

In the chapter entitled "Types of Narration" in The Rhetoric of Fiction, Booth, after raising his complaint of critics’ inattention to categorization of point of view, announces that first-person or third-person narrator has no meaning for him unless the production of each kind is analyzed. To support this notion, Booth draws our attention to the characteristics shared in both kinds like undramatized narrator rather than dramatized narrator. Then he represents his own classification of point of view as: the presence or omniscience narrator or, in other words, dramatic or undramatic narrator. Booth explains that dramatic narrator is one of the characters who is telling either his own or others' story in the novel. The undramatic narrator, on the other hand, is
someone who has no role in the novel, and his presence mostly reveals when he calls himself as 'I' (150-152).

According to Booth the degree of involvement in the action can divide the dramatic narrator into two types: observers and narrator agents. Booth raises another matter to classify the narrators: manner of narration, which regardless of the type of narrator can choose to narrate the story as a scene, summery or combination of both. Therefore, the importance of the function surpasses the type of narrator, and identifying the type without considering the function practically loses its validity. As Booth explains, Narrator's commentary that accompanies the direct relation of events is one of the functions that can be ornamental or part of dramatic structure or it can have a rhetorical purpose (156-157). According to Booth another distinction in the narration is self-consciousness of narrators. In this sense, Booth distinguishes narrators into two categories: those who know that they are in the process of creating a literary work and those who do not. Probably Julian Barnes's Flaubert's Parrot, Talking It Over and Love, etc, belong to the second group.

After Booth another significant critic is Genette who explains each form of narratee's complexity and function in his introduction to Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. With all the knowledge we have from the mainstream critics about narration and particularly narrator, mentioning Genette's confession is not in vain. Genette adds that he does not "claim to derive a cumbersome typology from that" (257). To Genette none of the categories can be considered as completely pure and exempt from complicity with the others, so that no work in this field will be comprehensive. He reaches to the conclusion,
it is rather a question of emphasis: everybody knows that Balzac ‘intervenes’ in his narrative more than Flaubert, that Fielding addresses the reader more often than Mme. de La Fayette does, that the 'directing indications' are more indiscreet in James Fenimore Cooper or Thomas Mann than in Hemingway. (257)

It may be useful to mention Barnes’s novels rely heavily on the concept of the narratee or the receiver which is described in last pages of Genette's work. Genette gives the narratee the same value as the narrator for situating both as elements of the narrating instance and also locating both at a same diegetic level. Based on this statement, he asserts that as the narrator is not necessarily the author, the narratee also is not the reader or even the implied reader. He claims,

to an intradiegetic [which is a synonym for homodiegetic or simply diegetic in Genette’s terms] narrator corresponds an intradiegetic narratee . . . [And] the extradiegetic narrator, on the other hand, can only aim at an extradiegetic narratee, who merges with the implied reader and with whom each real reader can identify. (259-260)

**Crossing narrative boundaries to Arouse Hesitation or Gain Trust**

Barnes's narrative technique lies heavily in his use of narrator, through which he challenges the tradition of British fiction. Though Barnes employs conventions which come down to him from Defoe and Defoe's grand-grand children, he introduces new fields for the study of narrators. He has created a new type of narrator that he calls 'hesitating' narrator which later was re-dubbed as 'reluctant' narrator. However, this term has so far only been used to refer to *Flaubert's Parrot*. Another innovative aspect in Barnes's narrative technique certainly is his skill in employing multiple
unreliable narrators in the absence of a mediating third-person narrator. And finally, it would be interesting to add that he has paid a special attention to the concept of narratee which has not received much attention from both the novelists and the critics.

Since most of the aforementioned techniques are employed in Flaubert's Parrot, Talking It Over and Love, etc, the mainstream of the following analysis will be devoted to these three novels. However, Barnes's original sense of narrative technique, which is heavily based on the idiosyncratic use of narrators and narratees, in his other novels will also be discussed in brief. Barnes's proficiency in using the conventions of the first-person narrative is appreciated by Sarah Harrison Smith: “Barnes’ greatest strength has been his facility in the first person voice” (28). Barnes's first-person voice is not traditional in his novels: he either uses multiple voices (multiple narrators), or uses multiple discourses in the absence of multiple narrators. Moreover, unlike conventions of narratives, the narratee in Barnes's novels takes an incredible role: he directs the route of the narrative, helps the reader to get the secret working of the novels, and functions as an intruding Victorian narrator who puts the reader’s judgement in correct order. The last function of the narratee looks significant in the sense that Barnes does not employ the third-person omniscient narrator to guide the reader through the complicated and challenging way of narration of the narrators.

The ontological doubt and de-centering are two major terms which determine a border, though vague and uncertain, between modernism and postmodernism. The death of the belief in master or meta-narratives and the emergence of micro-narratives figures out myths, faith in science development, art, and aesthetic implications of all
these. Raman Selden encapsulates the idea of postmodernism in the “theme of absent centre”:

The postmodern experience is widely held to stem from a profound sense of ontological uncertainty. Human shock in the face of the unimaginable . . . results in a loss of fixed points of reference. Neither the world nor the self any longer possess unity, coherence, meaning. They are radically ‘decentered’. (75)

According to Hutcheon one of the main postmodern characteristics is a tendency to challenge the convention and question everything, though without any positive and fruitful result. However, finally the crossing of the borders of tradition and convention results in the emergence of a new meaning to life or sensitivity which is later termed postmodernism. One of the strategies of postmodernism which is significant here is its challenging the conventions of novel where different discourses coexist. According to Hutcheon, these discourses can belong to different genres. As we see the blending of genres in Flaubert's Parrot, a novel can start as biography but can develop into criticism and end as historiography or any other thing. This is encapsulated in Brian McHale’s words, “destabilization of the projected world” which “involves ‘weakening’ the fictional world by placing it at several narrative removes” and “the paradoxical reproduction . . . within the fictional world of the fictional world itself” (154).

As elaborated in second and third chapters, there is uncertainty in the idea of ultimate truth and history and in the form of fiction and parody. In this chapter, after providing an outline of history of narrative techniques, this study focuses on the vanishing of conventions and metanarratives in postmodern narrative strategies
specifically in Barnes's fiction. To be considered a postmodern novelist who believes in novelty, Barnes must face tradition and find his way to further develop the employment of narrator. Barnes's use of the narrator displays some characteristics of postmodernism that are discussed in detail in the following pages.

By creating the self-opinionated narrator in *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes clearly problematizes the plot in narrative fiction. This does not stop after *Flaubert's Parrot*, but Barnes repeats this in his other novels such as *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* and later in *Arthur & George*. Geoffrey Braithwaite's metanarrative comments are notable due to their indication of two major plot patterns: convergent and divergent. Unlike Braithwaite's opinion, these two forms of plot are neither whimsy of a particular genre nor a period but they are phenomena that can be traced. Studying the historical developments of these plots, although it is widespread, provide us with an overview of the evolution of the postmodern novel. The way how narrative fiction's plots influence the space and time of fictional world by endowing them with cognitive and emotional power to make them compelling narratives, is remarkable.

Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* starts in Rouen and in front of Flaubert's statue where before the first paragraph is over, the reader gets to know the narrator by the common use of the pronoun 'I'. However, in first few pages his subjective recording of what he sees implies that he is an intrusive narrator. He seems like an observer or a tourist, but his bulky information about the statue reveals otherwise:

This statue isn’t the original one. The Germans took the first Flaubert away in 1941, along with the railings and door knockers. Perhaps he was processed into cap-badge. For a decade or so, the pedestal was empty. Then a Mayor of Rouen who was keen on statues rediscovered
the original plaster cast - made by a Russian called Leopold Bernstamm- and the city council approved the making of a new image. Rouen bought itself a proper metal statue in 93 per cent copper and 7 per cent tin: the founders, Rudier of Châtillonsous-Bagneux, assert that such an alloy is guarantee against corrosion. Two other towns, Trouville and Barentin, contributed to the project and received stone statues. These have worn less well. At Trouville Flaubert’s upper thigh has had to be patched, and bits of his moustache have fallen off: structural wires poke out like twigs from a concrete stub on his upper lip. (7)

After the information he provides on the statute's history and material, the narrator's status elevates from being a tourist to be at least a tourist guide. Yet this misconception of the narrator is also ruined in the next page, when he states:

I begin with the statue, because that’s where I began the whole project. Why does the writing make us chase the writer? Why can’t we leave well alone? Why aren’t the books enough? Flaubert wanted them to be: few writers believed more in the objectivity of the written text and the insignificance of the writer’s personality; yet still we disobediently pursue. The image, the face, the signature; the 93 per cent copper statue and the Nadar photograph; the scrap of clothing and the lock of hair. What makes us randy for relics? Don’t we believe the words enough? (8)

Thus, the above remark and the word 'project' unmask the fact that the narrator seriously pursues a project about Flaubert. Moreover, his referring to Stevenson,
Sartre, Flaubert and their works, immediately after the above statement, makes it clear that Braithwaite has the necessary interest to take up the project. From third page the narrative takes a sudden turn in which in rather informal and latent conversation with the narratee, Braithwaite reveals the reason for his writing, talks about his family, and recognizes the places he had been to forty years ago. The questions which are repeatedly raised throughout the novel: "how do we seize the past? Can we ever do so?", are answered by recalling a memory of catching greased piglet from his college time.

First chapter of the novel sets the tone of the narrative to the great extent. The homodiegetic narrator, who according to Genette is one of the intradiagetic or third-person narrative, though we participate as a character in the story, goes beyond narrating what he observes. The narrator, besides conversing with the narratee, raises philosophical questions and makes significant information available. All in all, as mentioned earlier, it elevates him to a higher status as an expert in the mind of the narratee. Considering all the basic information regarding the parrot, Flaubert and Braithwaite himself is provided in the first chapter, it would be nonchalance to consider it only as the narrating chapter and deny its significant role in the whole novel.

Moreover, the narrator in the first chapter is not really extraordinary that he cannot be found in any accepted definitions of a traditional narrator: in fact, in traditional terms he is called a limited first-person narrator, who repeatedly intrudes into the novel as a commentator and as a character. Yet, the above definition of the narrator in *Flaubert's Parrot* should not conduce to draw a comparison between him and first-person narrators in Barnes's other novels or of the novels such as *Great
Expectations, Wuthering Heights, Heart of Darkness or Moby Dick, who merely give account of their stories. His difference from other narrators starts from second chapter and then gradually reveals throughout the novel. The narrator somehow disappears in the second chapter.

While Barnes subverts “such novelistic techniques as temporal linearity and narrative closure”, to quote Bruce Sesto, the first-person narration is alternated with third person narration (33). Sesto states from “Richard Todd’s words” that “Flaubert’s Parrot is ‘palimpsestically constructed, and although chapterized, bear no ‘narrative’ in the conventional sense” (33).

While the first two chronologies of Flaubert out of three, presented in the second chapter of the novel, are told through the voice of an impartial third-person, the third chronology adopts Flaubert's voice. The first and second chronologies represent respectively the positive and negative aspects of Flaubert's life that problematize each other. However, both are written in the distanced language and the manner of traditional biography discourse. Apart from the contradictory tone in two chronologies, Moseley indicates to an obvious contradiction between the same items in both Chronologies about Flaubert's death (89). The first chronology conveys Flaubert's death as "1880 Full of honour, widely loved, and still working hard to the end, Gustave Flaubert dies at Croisset" (21). The same historical event in the second chronology appears as "1880 Impoverished, lonely and exhausted, Gustave Flaubert dies. Zola, in his obituary notice, comments that he was unknown to four-fifths of Rouen, and detested by the other fifth. He leaves Bouvard et Pécuchet unfinished" (25). While the two chronologies nullify each other, the third chronology which deals with Flaubert's life through the lenses of himself in his writings, challenges both of
them: "1880 When will the book be finished? That’s the question. If it is to appear
next winter, I haven’t a minute to lose between now and then. But there are moments
when I’m so tired that I feel I’m liquefying like an old Camembert" (30).

At this point, the questions “How can we seize the past? Can we ever do so?”,
which were raised and answered in the previous chapter, are implicitly answered
when the conflicts of historical writing appear. If the first chapter sets the tone of
overall narrative, in the second chapter, the postmodern narrator refers to different
approaches to history. In the third chapter, some events happen to Braithwaite that he
is not only trapped in contradiction but also throws doubts on Flaubert's normal death.
Braithwaite's blind and self-contradictory investigation on the relationship between
Flaubert and Juliet Herbert, leads to a visit with Winterton who claims to have the
letters. Though Winterton states that he has read the letters, as Flaubert wish was not
to publish them, he burned all of them. So the puzzles of correspondence between
Herbert and Flaubert remains unsolved since the letters have not survived. What
results to contradictory situation is that on one hand Flaubert himself never mentioned
about the letters, and on the other hand Braithwaite never considered that Winterton
has lied to him.

Some critics accuse Barnes of making a mistake and of neglecting Herbert's
case; however, differentiating between Barnes and Braithwaite would partly clear the
problem. When we considered how correspondingly the stories of Braithwaite and
Barnes progress, we may associate Barnes and the implied author with the narrator.
Yet Barnes frustrates our predetermined considerations by separating himself from his
narrator in his novel.
Julian Barnes, in an interview with Robert Birnbaum, points out that the protagonist and the author are not necessarily the same person, and the terms such as implied author is what some critics created to prevent this mistake. By bringing some examples he adds; “the assumption often is that if you write a book about a deposed Communist leader – we know that’s not autobiographical – the one about a love triangle or whatever terrible phrase the publisher uses, that’s probably about him” (7). Since the readers are aware of Barnes’s devotion to Flaubert and French culture and this point can make them associate him with Braithwaite, Barnes refuses to have any personal connection with the characters not only in Flaubert's Parrot but also in his other novels. Some other aspects in the novel help the readers to distinguish Braithwaite from Barnes, such as Braithwaite's contradictory approach to Enid Starkie and his reach for real parrot. Braithwaite accuses Enid of being simple-minded in criticizing Flaubert about Emma Bovary's eyes, explains that the colour of the eyes might change in different situations and it also depends on the writer.

However, he makes the same mistake when he tries to find the real parrot. Regardless of what he comments in Enid's case he looks for the parrot of the same colour that Flaubert described in his story, until a scholar on the last page of the novel indicates that Flaubert might have changed the colour in his story. So in this case as well as in Herbet's case, Barnes dissociates him with Braithwaite. Barnes says in an interview that, unlike the narrator of Flaubert's Parrot, he is not sure about the genre of biography: “I regard biography with some suspicion as a genre. I am frequently made uncomfortable and even disapproving of the certainties with which biographers describe lives” (qtd. in Guignery 45). Likewise, Barnes in his article, “When Flaubert Took Wing”, in The Guardian, discloses that he has consciously chosen a narrator who is not himself:
What if someone - clearly not me, but someone sufficiently interested in Flaubert, someone whose life might have parallels and points of bouncing contact with Flaubert's work and perhaps life - were to have the same experience? It could be the opening - or perhaps clinching - moment in a story about life and art, about France and England, about the pursuit of the writer by the reader, and that moment of contact - practical yet mystical - between the two of them. So I came up with my narrator: a retired English doctor, a widower and war veteran, returning to the Normandy beaches as well as to Rouen. (5)

As a result, in spite of "some teasing similarities between Braithwaite and Barnes", the conclusion that Braithwaite completely differs from the author can be derived (Richard Todd 123). As a postmodern writer, Barnes encapsulates his narrator-character in a sentence by Hutcheon in her article, “The Pastime of Past Time: Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction”: "the defining paradoxes of postmodern discourse” (56). Postmodernism is a contradictory cultural enterprise, one heavily implicated in what it seeks to contest. It uses and abuses the very belief it takes to task; it installs and only then subverts the conventions of the genre. Historiographic metafiction, for example, keeps distinct its formal representation from its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here- just unresolved contradiction. (56)

One more significant point about the narrator in Flaubert's Parrot in Higdon's definition is that the narrator can be categorized as a "reluctant narrator". According to Higdon, the reluctant narrator is one "who is reliable in strict terms, indeed often
quite learned and perceptive, but who has seen, experienced or caused something so traumatic that he must approach the telling of it through indirections, masks and substitutions” (172). However, Braithwaite's own definition of himself as a narrator is "hesitating narrator", which is rooted in his nationality and embarrassment and only slightly different from Higdon's definition:

I hope you don’t think I’m being enigmatic, by the way. If I’m irritating, it’s probably because I’m embarrassed; I told you I don’t like the full face. But I really am trying to make things easier for you. Mystification is simple; clarity is the hardest thing of all. Not writing a tune is easier than writing one. Not rhyming is easier than rhyming. I don’t mean art should be as clear as the instructions on a packet of seeds; I’m saying that you trust the mystifier more if you know he’s deliberately choosing not to be lucid. You trust Picasso all the way because he could draw like Ingres. (104-105)

It is not difficult to understand his hesitation as far as we know his traumatic experience, his problematic relationship with his wife and Flaubert, and his doubts about accessing the past and then correctly writing about it.

Geoffrey Braithwaite is a protagonist and a first person narrator who has "decided views on many matters" (Moseley 72). According to Moseley, “every such narrator is in some sense 'unreliable': the communication of truth is always affected by the character, the needs and psychology of the person communicating it, and eventually the medium becomes the subject of the reader's interest” (73). He generally labels Braithwaite a hesitant narrator, who is more "candid about his needs" of preparing more accurate life-story of the other person. Braithwaite is a widower and a
retired doctor whose obsession with Flaubert's life results in his research trip to France and to the depth of his own soul for enlightenment. In the chapter entitled "Pure Story" Braithwaite gives his own life's account and his wife's story in a skewed and secretive fashion which reveals his hesitation towards encouraging truth. Likewise, David Leon Higdon categorizes Braithwaite's narrative:

A most oblique and reluctant confession by a man who blames his hesitation on his typically reticent English nature, on his own embarrassment, and finally on his fear of unmasking himself as a cuckold, especially after he has earned the reader's respect by way of his erudition, his sincere love of Flaubert and his skilful amateur sleuthing. (182)

Higdon suggests terming Braithwaite “the reluctant narrator, who is reliable in strict terms, indeed often quite learned and perceptive, but who has seen, experienced or caused something so traumatic that he must approach the telling of it through indirections” (174). On the other hand, Braithwaite's intrusive narrative is evident in his interpretation of literary texts and his ensuing statements about possible types of narrators:

When a contemporary writer hesitates, claims uncertainty, misunderstands, plays games and falls into error, does the reader in fact conclude that reality is being more authentically rendered? . . . As for the hesitating narrator – look I'm afraid you've run into one right now. It must be because I'm English. You'd guessed that, at least – that I'm English? I…I…Look at that seagull up there. I hadn't spotted him
before. Slipstreaming away, waiting for bits of gristle from the sandwiches. *(Parrot 77)*

However, the firmness of an omniscient narration and Braithwaite's intrusive manner of narrative does not conceal his hesitation from the readers. Consequently, Braithwaite's narrative fashion – his comments on literary narrative structure, his linguistic hesitation and his intrusive manner of narration, serves to uncover the fictitiousness of the novel. As Sesto indicates, the narrative fashion of the novel lays more stress on "the text's artifice, by making the reader aware of the conflicting ontological levels involved in fictional representation" (39).

Yet, the move in the structure of the novel's narration is noticeable particularly from time to time retaking the flow of narration, to becoming "a director of fiction" (Moseley 76). As the novel unfolds, Braithwaite emphasizes on his own code of novel-making by attempting to impose his perspective:

Novels about incest . . . novels set in abattoirs . . . novels set in Oxford or Cambridge . . . novels set in South America . . . novels in which carnal connection takes place between a human being and an animal . . . novels in which carnal connection takes place between man and woman in the shower. . . novels about small, hitherto forgotten wars in distant parts of the British Empire . . . novels in which the narrator, or any of the characters, is defined simply by an initial letter . . . novels which are really about other novels. *(Parrot 85)*

He implicitly calls attention into the artificiality of the whole story and partly deconstructs the novel’s thematic scope.
Another noteworthy point that has been indicated by critics like Lee is the importance of differentiating the persona of Braithwaite as a character from that of Braithwaite as a narrator, since their functions are quite opposite in the course of the novel’s narration. According to Lee Braithwaite as a character “affirms realism's faith in the veracity of facts”, while as a narrator he deconstructs the realism worshipped so much as character (3). Generally, as Sesto argues, 

The ‘broken’ narrative surfaces we witness in much contemporary fiction seem to reflect the author's belief that an ‘author’ is no longer in a position to impose his or her own moral vision on the world and that the contemporary novel can no longer be regarded as a representation of reality, but as a kind of reality, albeit a fictional one, in its own right. (34)

_A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters_ is Barnes's problematic novel as far as narrative technique is considered, since each chapter of the book has a different narrator and point of view. The first chapter entitled "The Stowaway" is an account of Noah's Ark told from the point of view of a woodworm. The woodworm was illicitly getting on board, so that its name never gets included in the record of animal pardoned by God, and retrospectively the existence the woodworm is uncertain. As a consequence, woodworm’s account is told through a voice of traditional first-person homodiegetic narrator. In the second chapter, "The Visitors", we encounter a third-person heterodiegetic narrator who retells the story of the Santa Euphemia's highjacking incident via the mind of Franklin Hughes, the guest lecturer on board and the main character. Third chapter, "The Wars of Religion", written in an inflated, almost mock-heroic style, tells the story of a trial in sixteenth century France. The
story uncovers how the religious extremists pave the way for religious wars through their fanatic excesses and intolerance.

In addition to setting the stories based on irony and accident rather than chronologically, which is contrary to the conventional historical accounts, Barnes employs bewildering variety of narrative points of view in each chapter. Barnes's account of history differs from other accounts for it explicitly neglects the stance of objectivity, while other historians desire for that. Barthes in his *The Discourse of History*, equals so called realist novelist to the objective historians who attempt to conceal himself as utterer of their own discourse. In the epoch of realism it was hard to consider novelist as a person who imagines and views a novel as an objective illusion. In this manner, the discourse appears as a particular form of imaginary projection which is produced by the referential illusion, since the historian denies any interference as the utterer and claims that the reference is allowed to speak on its own. Thus, in their discourse, the signs of "I" are restrained (11).

This type of discourse, praised by realism, is unwelcome in postmodernism. Postmodernist writers such as Barnes, in reaction to this digressing camouflage regularly employed by realist novelist and historian, positively scoff their proliferation of subjective narration by frequently appearing as the utterer of the novel. The techniques and mechanisms of objective narration such as metanarration, addressing the readers, pastiche, and parody are celebrated in most fictions and literary works of postmodernism. Barnes's novel *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, in a good postmodern fashion, demonstrates the subjective narrators. The novel opens with the morally superior voice of a woodworm for whom "man is very unevolved species compared to the animals" (*A History* 197). The absurdly self-
important voice in the French medieval law court is echoed in the third chapter. In the
second section of chapter five, the art historian takes over. The egotistical epistolary
voice of the actor is presented in eighth chapter. There are several first-person
narratives: Kathleen's possibly delusional voice in chapter four, the voice of eighteen-
year-old prep-school master in the first story of the chapter seven, and the mildly
didactic, highly personal voice of a narrator who claims to be the author in the half
chapter, "parenthesis". Yet Barnes acclaims, "All the narrators are meant to be
touching in their aspirations, even if often proved to be foolish or deluded" (Stuart 15).

In Barnes's case his collection deliberately blurs the clear border between
dream and any waking state; consequently, the border between fictional and historical
accounts is blurred as well by ignoring the difference between modes of narration and
abruptly switching it from monologic to dialogic and vice versa.

"The Wars of Religion" also sparkles with humour, is rooted in the mismatch
between actual nature and circumstances of the case and the pedantic behaviour of
opposing attorney. Sesto explains, "Barnes's motive here may be to satirize the kind
of trivial issues which have engulfed the church in conflict down through the ages"
(66). The author's engaged language, which is incorporated in the prosecuting
attorney's rhetorical speech and his several allusions to the Bible, highlights the comic
/ satiric effect of the story. The fourth chapter, "The survivor", in diverse narrative
forms and styles, unfolds a story of Kath Ferris, a protagonist, from her first-person
point of view. Since the story is a juxtaposition of dream and reality, Barnes engages
the alternative first and third person points of view. The incidents happen inside the
dreaming mind of the protagonist who steals her boyfriend's boat and manages to
survive the aftermath of nuclear disaster along with her couple of cats, Linda and Paul. "The 'omniscient' narrator, who seems at times to function as a 'chorus,' is a kind of Jamesian voice that reports events through a central consciousness (in this case the consciousness of the main character)" (Sesto 70).

The fifth chapter entitled "shipwreck", can be divided into two parts: the first is a documentary account of the ill-fated passengers onboard of a shipwrecked French frigate, the Medusa, and the second is concentrated on the Gericault's painting, "Scene of Shipwreck" inspired by the tragic fate of the Medusa. The chapter is presented by "the voice of nonfiction" or by an expert speaker (Moseley 114). The sub-section dominates by an extensive use of the narrative technique known as 'bifocalisation', also reaped in the chapter entitled "Three Simple Stories", because the voice of the narrator is fixed and certain:

The narrator decides to let the reader decide for himself [...] rather than impose a fixed and stable interpretation on the painting. [Thus,] bifocalisation underlines the vanity of trying to enforce a monologic discourse that would reveal a supposedly totalising truth. (Guignery The Fiction of Julian Barnes 68)

Vanessa Guignery notes that the narrator employed in the section may be labelled as 'schizophrenic', because “interpretation is presented as multiple and unstable, [moving] from one perspective to another, and this is epitomized by the coexistence of two eyes, the ignorant eye of the uninitiated reader and the informed eye reflecting the ideal reader”. (The Fiction of Julian Barnes 66).

The chapters, "The Mountain" and "Project Ararat" recount quite the same plot of visiting Noah's mountain in a “social-realistic style with an omniscient
narrator” and made some hundred and thirty years apart (Moseley 116). The story of Amanda Ferguson in "The Mountain" and the story of Spike Tiggler, a former military pilot and astronaut, “a flier, a man of science, an engineer”, in "Project Ararat" depicts the conflict between science and religion (A History 399). “Three Simple Stories” is a title of the chapter in which three stories in a similar line of reasoning are narrated by a nonfictional voice of an expert speaker. First story is represented by the first-person homodiegetic narrator, “a normal eighteen-year old [boy]; shuttered, self-conscious, untraveled and sneering; violently educated, socially crass, emotionally blurring”, recounting the farcical narrative of Titanic disaster according to James Beeseley, a survivor of it (A History 327). The second story in a comparative style narrates the story of Jonah and James Bartley, both swallowed by a whale with different results.

The third story deals with the voyage of the St. Louis with about 930 Jewish refugees on board who seek political asylum and after being turned away by Cuba and United States, are finally accepted by several European nations. The ninth chapter, "Upstream" is presented in a series of letters and via the voice of a first-person homodiegetic narrator. In the overall epistolary nature of the section, the epistolary character, known only as Charlie, “has the same quality as Kath's reports in “The Survivor”: presentness [and] writing to the moment” (Moseley 116). "Parenthesis" is the only unnumbered and the most famous chapter of the book. The narrator who identifies himself as Julian Barnes speaks of the need for love. Barnes, by unmasking the man's inability or unwillingness to learn from history and by revealing the brutality of the history of the world, notes: “Love won't change the history of the world, but it will do something much more important: teach us to stand up to history, to ignore its chin-out strut” (A History 386-387). With all the simplicity of the tone of
narrative of the half chapter, some critics raised the problem of unreliability of the narrator.

The openness and accessibility of the chapter "Parenthesis" lies in the self-representation of Julian Barnes himself as a narrator who directly addresses the implied reader. Barnes is completely aware of the translucence of the narratorial/authorial veil and is equally conscious of the postmodern reader's intolerance towards the mystified 'I' in any first-person narrative. He attempts to deny his role in the hoodwinking of the reader by deliberately countering the identity of his narratorial self:

Poets seem to write more easily about love than prose writers. For a start, they own the flexible 'I' (when I say 'I' you will want to know within a paragraph or two whether I mean Julian Barnes or someone invented; a poet can shimmy between the two, getting credit for both deep feeling and objectivity). \textit{(A History 375)}

To Barnes, no other literary protocol is as useful as a distinct narrative persona to write simultaneously about history and love, since the former is dominated by objective clarity, the latter by subjective sentimentality. Barnes reconciled both by the coy self-exposure that appears in "Parenthesis": the introduction of the author's name acts as a joining point of the public and private. The text offers both artificial fabular construct and material place in the real world to the reader. Barnes, as author/narrator of the text, sets history and love side by side and sets them as comparable structures for understanding the world. And his task is legitimated in the process of uniting the objective thing-ness of the text and the fact of its production by a subjective consciousness. Barnes withdraws into the narratorial mask refusing to uncover his
identity to the reader, simply in order to drive greater attention to the borderline between the text's ontological incarnations. He teases the readers with the possibility of his self-revelation and by openly highlighting their desire for an anchoring presence in the text. As a result, the parenthesis in "Parenthesis" somehow establishes a relationship between what is inside and what is outside, and as secondary as parenthetical additions, they are endowed with a central explicatory function to sentence structure.

Though this half chapter looks innocuous in the whole novel, it forms a very sharp division between the fabulation of the thirteen stories embedded in other ten chapters and the apparently sincere discursiveness of the essay on love by unmasking the name of its producer as Barnes. This does not mean that Barnes's metafictional intervention here is sincere, honest or ingenuous; rather Barnes makes the narrative mask's presence resoundingly obvious. Salyer observes, Barnes does not "come out from behind the narrative mask and speak to the reader as if they were discussing the novel over tea in the study" (226). Barnes's soliloquy is designed to tempt the reader to accept the privileged interpretation by virtue of its perceived visibility at this juncture. Similarly, in Flaubert's Parrot, Barnes invites the readers to read the novel through his perspective and the soft seduction of his method is ultimately nothing more than that: seduction.

Finally the last chapter, “The Dream”, is represented by a first-person narrator and since the narrator uses similar philosophical and narrating techniques of “Parenthesis”, it seems “not very different in some ways from what is known as Julian Barnes” (Moseley 114). The chapter, in the past tense, deals with the story of a man who “dreamt that [he] woke up” in Heaven (A History 425).
Narrative technique in Barnes’s *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc* is manifested in another form. Barnes’s novel, *Talking It Over*, is a funny "he said, she said, he said" novel, in which each character takes turn addressing the reader to reflect over common events. This novel was followed by a sequel, *Love, etc*, in 2000. *Talking It Over* is a story that deals with the life of three main characters, Oliver, Stuart and Gillian. Oliver and Stuart are very close friends and have a good relationship till Oliver introduces Gillian to Stuart as his new girlfriend. Oliver and Gillian are married after some time but a new love relationship between Gillian and Stuart starts. And then the reader witnesses that both male characters attempt to earn Gillian’s love. Finally, Gillian who feels that she is in love with Stuart, divorces Oliver and marries Stuart. Her decision has a deep psychological impact on Stuart who tries to get a chance of taking revenge.

*Love, etc* narrates the same story with about ten-year gap. The readers confront Oliver and Gillian who have had another daughter and have moved to London and with Stuart who comes back from America where he remarried, divorced and made profitable investments. Gillian becomes the bread winner of the family by improving her trade in restoration of old paintings. Oliver, on the contrary, does not make any financial or business progress, he loses his job and prefers to look after the daughters and get along with the sense of depression. Stuart who owns a chain of organic food suppliers, decides to help his unfortunate friends, however, by unfolding the novel, we learn that he has never recovered from the effects of his failed marriage and he has plans to get Gillian back to get even with Oliver.

Some critics believe that the sequel appears to be bleaker than the first novel because revenge and depression take the place of the air of comedy and romance. As
Elaine Showalter notes, “romantic comedy has turned into madness and horror” in the second novel (Guignery 83). Talking It Over encountered mixed reactions from readers and critics. On one hand, it won some awards and is celebrated for its narrative technique and on the other hand, it faced critics who were uneasy with the speed of narration, found it difficult to categorize as a novel and believed that Barnes was so stingy in explaining the motives of the characters. Love, etc is more about human affairs than love and the themes of rape, depression revenge and illness are repeatedly used in the novel. Compared to Talking It Over, even characters have not undergone much changes, only “grown-ups are fuck-ups” according to the novel itself (220).

Edward T. Wheeler observes that Barnes has once again broken the realistic narrative frame (20). Michael Levenson says Barnes has found a perfect form for the story he recounts (45). Although Peck Dale disliked Barnes and his novels in general, he called the narrative technique in Talking It Over and Love, etc "clever" (31). The perspective and narration are the main characteristics of both the novels. In each chapter, same matter is discussed by the characters from different perspectives, unaware of what the others have said. The postmodern view of the deficiency in human perspective questions the reliability of history. The novel adapts what Algernon observes in The Importance of Being Earnest “The truth is rarely pure and never free choices. They seem to have emerged simple” (54). Kathleen A. Kelly in her article comments: "Considering the novels from the perspective of comic drama, however, invites us to notice that the characters are controlled by “humours,” and that laughter often arises from their mechanical inelasticity" (176). For Kelly, "Similar to a comic drama, the characters in these novels speak directly to the readers as if we were
in a theater. And as is characteristic of comedies, these novels deploy formulaic plots" (176).

Taking Suassure's attitude in his linguistic theory in which the absent part of each word also gets attention, we aim to study the choices Barnes refuses to employ in *Talking it over* and *Love, etc.*, in order to understand the strengths of narrative. Basically, three major narrative situations could be chosen for writing them: an authorial third-person narrative, first-person narrative, and the same narrative technique without any repression. In the first option a third-person omniscient narrator could have told the story in such a scheme that the suspension in the novel reaches to its lowest level and the readers could distinguish the honest from the dishonest. Moreover, since the narrator normally utilizes his own language, the readers do not face each character's idiosyncratic use of language, particularly Oliver in these two novels. The second option recounts the whole story from a principal character's point of view. In this mode, the information would have been limited to one person's understanding of the events and other characters. This eventuates in the absence of many details represented in the novel. And finally, the third option, in which each character wrote the novel in confession mode but for herself/himself, would have allowed to share most of the ironies of the present novels. However, the level of suspense would not be the same and consequently the depth and complexity of the novel, which stems from effects of multiple narrators and the presence of narratee as an active company, would be limited.

As Barnes indicates in an interview the role of narratee as an active participant of the novel rather than a simply a rhetorical figure and notes, "the membrane between readers and the character is so thinned, that if it works, is like meeting real
people,” who do not need authorial narrator to speak for them (Birnbaum 3). As a result, the reader must find their own way out of the maze created by the multiplicity of voices and viewpoints, in which one of them would be the narratee's though inaudible. Now that we know about Barnes's denied choices of narrative, we could understand more about the aspects of the narrative techniques in these two novels.

Barnes’s *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc* are made up of the monologues of three main characters, Oliver, Gillian and Stuart, and a number of secondary characters. Barnes did not write the monologues in the form of dairy which is conventional; he wrote them in a conversational mode wherein each narrator talks to an indefinite narratee. The narratee who is considered as police detective, an interrogator, solicitor, therapist or a friend by some critics, is repeatedly addressed as 'You', asked questions and targeted to be persuaded. Many critics reacted to the novels after being published, some compared it to the epistolary novel for its "demand for suspension of disbelief", some preferred to categorize it as "a television play" in which we have only "talking heads", some like Bayley viewed them as a modern play (Wheeler 23; qtd. in Guignery 75). Both novels are closer to the epistolary novel, since each character in separate part, where their names are mentioned at the beginning, takes turn to speak without being interrupted or speak with each other in the narrative transaction as it happens in writing letters. Moreover, as in epistolary novel, in this type of novel the reliability of the account and the rest of events are suspected. However, according to Genette's definition of epistolary novels, "the letter is at the same time both a medium of the narrative and an element of plot”.

The comparison between Barnes's novels and epistolary is limited because the narrator in epistolary who is also the writer of the letters, influences the rest of events
by acting based on the context of the letters (219). The limitation of comparison between Barnes's narrative techniques in *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc* and narrative in epistolary novels emanates from the fact that the act of narration does not impact upon the context, because each narrator is completely unaware of others' narrative, as opposed to the letter. To cite an example from *Talking It Over*, Stuart would know about Oliver's feeling towards Gillian after Oliver's confession to him and accordingly reacts to it, whereas the narratee gets to know about it much earlier than Stuart, but this knowledge cannot impact on the flow of the story until Stuart gets to know about it.

Another significant difference between Barnes's narrative technique in these two novels and epistolary novel is the distance between the utterer and the addressee. In *Talking it over* and *Love, etc* the narrator and the narratee seems to be in conversation in the same place but in epistolary the writer and the reader are far away in both place and time. A significant point about Barnes's novels is the separation of diegesis and narration of it. The characters are living and communicating with each other which exclusively happens in the story and not at the narrative level. Hence, all the narratives are rooted in the same diegesis, although, the narrative of each homodiegetic narrator differs, at times slightly and at other times greatly. It appears that in the narrative each character gives their account in a separate room which shows the proficiency of its author. Although, the same incidents are narrated, their point of view, interpretation, language and opinion are echoed in their voices that creates great difference between them.

Barnes's in *Love, etc* felt the need of revealing that the physical conditions of the transition in narrative are totally determinated and the narrator's isolation is a rule.
Only in two scenes of the novel Barnes lets the narrators violate the rule; first at the beginning of the novel, when Stuart and Oliver get into a quarrel, Gillian warns them of acting against the rule, and second is when Oliver is accused of being gay and of being after Stuart not Gillian by a secondary narrator, Val. The three of them kicked Gillian out and talk at the same time:

Oliver & Stuart. Out.

Get that bitch out of here.

Go on.

Out.

Out.

OUT.

Val. They can’t do this to me. You can’t let them do this to me. I’ve got just as much right…

Oliver & Stuart. OUT.

It’s her or us, Out, you bitch. OUT. Her or us.

Val. You know this is against all the rules? I mean, you realise what you’re doing here? You know what the consequences of this are likely to be? Have you thought about them? This is player power. Hey you - aren’t you meant to be the manager, aren’t you meant to own the whole fucking team? (Love 219-220)

A significant question that why Barnes allows the narrators to violate the rule of narrative is not exactly clear, yet some scholars suggest three reasons. The first is that Barnes would be able to poke more comedy into his novel at the expense of violating
his own rules. The second is hidden in the term 'alteration' once coined by Genette when he elaborated the focalization. He notes that the author can change the type of focalization for a certain reason. The third is that Barnes, by violating his own rule, increases the speed of narration to give limited amount of information in some parts of the novel in order to create suspense.

Barnes seems to have a more profound reason other than the three above mentioned. *Talking It Over* was praised for breaking the frame of realistic narration by using and subverting literary conventions of realism at the same time (Wheeler 23). *Talking It Over* in most part approximates to realism by using extradiegetic details and in some parts, like most metafictional postmodern novels, openly declares itself to be a novel and undermines the realist effect. The narrative technique employed by Barnes does not have an equivalent in real life and in some parts the gap is pushed wider, particularly when the characters leave the country or in other words leave certain chamber which should necessarily be closed, while the narrative goes on.

As a result, the narrative situation is incomparable to any situation in real life. Another point that unmasks the fictionality of the novel is characters' direct indications of it. To cite an example from *Talking It Over*, Oliver says that he changes his name from Nigel to Oliver only because one cannot be called Nigel throughout a book. Likewise, Val says she will not speak again unless “there is a real turn-up for the book” (183). She even asks, “Isn’t … [Gillian] just a heroine?” (186). In the last pages of chapter one of *Love, etc* Oliver makes a request, “I merely have one request, made on grounds not of egomania, self-interest or marketing, but of decorum, art and a general horror of the banal. Please don’t call this next bit ‘The Story So Far’. Please
don’t. Please. Pretty please” (11). The readers encounter the next chapter entitled "The Story So Far"; his mediations on fiction suggest the fictionality of *Love, etc.*

Perhaps another significant reason for violation of rule is that Barnes himself is interested in viewing his novels as literary construct rather than a slice of life. May be Barnes knows that even the indeterminacy of narrative situation can be internalised and considered as normal by the readers. To put it simply, the artificiality of narrative technique might be taken for granted. The narrative situation turns out to be a chamber where each one of the characters after facing some real events returns to it and recounts the events. However, the penetration of a narrator into other characters’ narrative highlights the metafictionality of the novels. But, as in *Flaubert's Parrot*, Barnes announces, rather than having any critical views towards his novel, it is simply a literary and linguistic game gained from alternation of the conventional mode of narration.

Genette explains that the time of narration does not necessarily have to be during the events and it can be earlier, later or between the events. According to Genette the last mode is called interpolated narrative, in which the narration happens between the moments of action (217). As in epistolary novels, in Barnes's *Talking It Over* and *Love etc* the readers get to know about the events that have already taken place only through narrative. Barnes employed an intricate narrative technique wherein it is not easy to determine the time of narration and the events. To Genette, interpolated narrative is both 'complex' and 'delicate' for involving number of examples of narrative and vague and confusing temporal position. As a result, the narrator can simultaneously occupy many roles such as a hero or anyone else, because of the time-gap between the events and narration (217-218). Therefore, the narrators
need to use the past tense in order to recount the event and the present tense for describing the impact of the events on them. All these complexities in both novels are rectified in the mind of the reader by employing interpolated narration. Though adverbs of time like 'two weeks ago' or 'last summer' appear in some parts, they are partial and cannot help in establishing a clear temporal relation between the time of events and that of narration.

Besides all the explanations presented in the previous pages about Barnes's intricate narrative techniques in *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc*, the narration can be viewed as a diegesis in Plato's terms. From Henry James and other early critics’ estimation, regardless of what they had in mind when they demarcated the difference, both novels merely do telling rather than showing. Yet, Lubbock uses the terms 'drama' and 'picture', to show the difference between showing and telling; another point is important in use of 'drama' and that is, “the spectator evidently has no direct concern with the author at all, while the action is proceeding” (113). Considering Lubbock's description, Barnes's narrative technique blurs the boundaries of telling and showing by filtering the material thorough the narrators’ consciousness who undertake all the narration in the absence of omniscient narrator. The narrators are first-person narrators whose limited point of views, both literally and figuratively, provides only recounting what they have access to. Although, the narrators add their feelings or their interpretations and explanations of how certain events might have influenced others, they are all limited as a witness's point of view. Based on Chatmen's descriptions it is also figurative, because it is through someone's worldview (166).
The obvious result of using character-narrators, particularly if they are flawed like the narrators in *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*, is the emergence of the unreliable narration, which stems from our suspicious of the narrators. The narrator might deceive the reader on purpose or might not have the pretended characteristics so they lie unconsciously or they are wrong. As Booth suggests, in order to avoid unreliability, the presence of another agent is needed; whom the reader can evaluate based on their judgment of the events. This becomes possible in these two novels only through other narrators or the secondary narrators who appear in a while and lay bare the unreliability. Distinguishing the reliability or unreliability of the narrators is an entangling task since each narrator enriches their account not only with their subjective perception and memory but also with the concealed agendas of the narrators.

For this reason, Mosseley describes *Talking It Over* as an embodiment of “alternative versions of events and the evanescence or inaccessibility of truth” (123). Bruce Sesto views “not truth but whose truth” as the “central credo of postmodernist fiction” and correctly asserts that “nowhere is this relativism more pronounced than in such novels as *Flaubert’s Parrot, A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters, Talking It Over,* and *The Porcupine*” (8). *Love, etc* should not be added to the list without indicating that it is a much more solipsistic novel.

Barnes highlights in an interview that in this technique the space between characters and the reader is eliminated, therefore the reader can quickly connect with the character without any intermediator. He notes:

Because there is no author mediating … [in the narrative], because there is no third-person narrator introducing Oliver as a character,
readers tend to respond much more quickly to the characters in the book. And they come to judgement much more quickly. Because the membrane between readers and character is so thinned, if it works, is (sic) like meeting real people” (2).

The narrative voice in a few of Barnes's fiction is explained in the following. In Metroland, Part One and Part Three employ homodiegetic first-person narration of a "precociously verbal protagonist", who is Chris (Moseley 21). Since the narrator is also the protagonist of the novel and since he is self-conscious of being the narrator, he addresses the readers, so to say, talks to us, which reveals the fictionally of it. Retrospectively, the reader encounters a mature narrator, “a more ordinary man looking back on the youth he once was; a man recounting the ironic way his life has turned out; a man who tells the story of growing up and an essentially happy life” (Moseley 33). Compared to Part One and Three, Part Two is slightly different by way of narration. “It begins with an explanation, couched in the form of a conversation with a disbelieving interlocutor of how [Chris] was in Paris in summer 1968 but somehow missed 'les événements'” (Moseley 24). Chris, in Part Two and in the course of communication with his close friend Tony, turns out to be both focalizer and focalized. The readers witness a sardonic conversation between Tony and Chris about Chris's venture in particular and life in general while in an ironic manner Tony is proud of remaining at the marginal section of society dealing with extreme politics and writing underground poetry.

As the plot develops the narrative tone becomes full of ironic notes. One of the reasons for ascending the degree of the irony lies in Chris's statement: “part of growing up [is] being able to ride irony without being thrown” (Metroland 135).
Moreover, the narrative in *Metroland* is full of intertextuality, parodies, allusions and references. That is why Richard Brown believed, “*Metroland* owes a great deal to the language and traditions of English poetry, [to the] steady, empirical treatment and suburban stoicism of the poems of Philip Larkin (1922-85)” (“Julian Barnes” 68). Furthermore, innumerable intertextual references to the works of French authors highlight the fact that the character-narrator “is being constructed through literary engagement” (Pateman 185). Consequently, the coordination of reflexive irony and self-conscious cases of intertextuality, on one hand, reveals the postmodern orientation of the novel and on the other hand points out the teenage need of being at the centre of attentions.

*The Sense of an Ending* recounts the life story of Anthony Webster, the protagonist, through the lens of memory. Reminiscing about his chums from school and later university and about the fraught affair he had with a girl, Veronica, the account is given by Tony in his sixties. Tony receives one of his friend's dairy as a legacy from Veronica's mother, through which he faces truth about his own and his friends' history. All that he believes about his own role in those relationships is upended and he questions how he has lived his life peaceably. The old adage “with age comes wisdom” is vivisected to a whole new level. Tony finds himself in need of re-learning the entire history of an event he had long assumed he knew. Barnes skilfully depicts the fear of encountering truth when we mature. As Tony laments to himself, "Sometimes I think the purpose of life is to reconcile us to its eventual loss by wearing us down, by proving, however long it takes, that life isn't all it’s cracked up to be" (64). Yet Tony does not give up and even after becoming aware of his deep misunderstanding he holds tight to treasured memories: the sight of Veronica dancing,
the rising of the River Severn against the tide at midnight, a slight wave from Veronica's mother.

The author's explicit vocal role in the novel distinguishes the implied authors. According to Booth, the implied author is more complicated than a fictional literary device. He explains that “the ‘implied author’ chooses consciously or unconsciously, what we read: we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own choices” (76-77). Moreover, implied author includes not only extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all characters. It includes in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole: the chief value to which this implied author is committed regardless of what party his creator belongs to in real life, is that which is expressed by the total form (74-75). In other words, Booth's idea of implied author encompasses both the content and the form of the novel. Booth acknowledges that various concepts like persona, mask, theme, meaning, symbolic significance, theology and ontology are represented to clarify the function and the importance of the implied author (74).

The third literary concept which is associated with Booth's name is the reliability of the narrator. He lays bare that a broad category of narrators for the author is either reliable or unreliable narrator. The difference between the two concepts are explained as "... [f]or lack of terms, I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), unreliable when he does not” (160-161). Unlike the idea of implied author, which is difficult to distinguish and can appear in number of ways, the diversity of unreliable narrator never exceeds a few types. Thus, the unreliable narrator might be consciously or unconsciously lying and he might be mistaken. For
example, in Ford Maddox Ford's novel, *The Good Soldier*, the narrator himself confesses that he lies while he is retelling some parts of the events to the readers and emerges as an unreliable narrator. Neil Brooks indicates Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*’s intertextual relation with Ford's *The Good Soldier*. Ford, along with Flaubert, is another literary figure whose works influenced Barnes. The theme of both *Flaubert's Parrot* and *The Good Soldier* is the story of a widower who tries to overcome the grief of the death of his unfaithful wife by means of telling a story about his loss.

Some critics explain unreliable narrator as a "narrator who may be in error in his understanding or report of things and who thus leaves readers without the guides needed for making judgments" (Harmon and Holman *A Handbook to Literature* 537). After Booth discovered and categorized the concept of unreliable narrator in his *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, another critic Greta Olson in her article, presents a summary of German scholar Ansgar Nunning's concept of unreliable narrators to help distinguish authentic from unreliable narrator:

(1) the narrator's explicit contradictions and other discrepancies in the narrative discourse; (2) discrepancies between the narrator's statements and actions; (3) divergences between the narrator's description of herself and other characters' descriptions of her; (4) contradictions between the narrator's explicit comments on other characters and her implicit characterization of herself or the narrator's involuntary exposure of herself; (5) contradictions between the narrator's account of events and her explanations and interpretations of the same, as well as contradictions between the story and discourse; (6) other characters' corrective verbal remarks or body signals; (7) multiperspectival
arrangements of events and contrasts between various versions of the same events; (8) an accumulation of remarks relating to the self as well as linguistic signals denoting expressiveness and subjectivity; (9) an accumulation of direct addresses to the reader and conscious attempts to direct the reader's sympathy; (10) syntactic signals denoting the narrator's high level of emotional involvement, including exclamations, ellipses, repetitions, etc.; (11) explicit, self-referential, metanarrative discussions of the narrator's believability; (12) an admitted lack of reliability, memory gaps, and comments on cognitive limitations; (13) a confessed or situation-related prejudice; (14) paratextual signals such as titles, subtitles, and prefaces. (Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators 28-29)

Unreliable narrators, besides enabling author to show more artistic skills like a sharp twist in the story-line, suspense and surprise, problematize it for the readers as well. The reader may be misled by the unreliable narrator who leads to misinterpretation of the narrative. Booth warns the authors specifically against the case which involves irony. He argues, “It is true that most of the great reliable narrators indulge in large amounts of incidental irony, and they are thus ‘unreliable’ in the sense of being potentially deceptive. But difficult irony is not sufficient to make a narrator unreliable” (161). Thus, for understanding the story as truly it is, the reader must know about irony or at least the story should have an agent who leads the reader towards the truth regardless of whether it is unknown to the unreliable narrator or was hidden by him. That is author's artistic skill to provide the reader with signs to distinguish between the fact and the character's interpretation. However, there are some cases in which the reliability of narrator plays no important role in the story-
line, particularly when the aim of the narrative is to disclose the personality of a character. For instance, in Barnes’s *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc* the narrators consciously or unconsciously lie about the events they narrate, yet their lies do not affect the flow of story and reveal only their character and personality to the readers. In *Love, etc*, Gillian gives two different accounts of her first sexual intercourse with Oliver, which does not influence the story but unmasks her own uncertain narrative.

In order to avoid misunderstanding of the narrative by the reader, Booth suggests dramatic irony. However, “there can be no dramatic irony, by definition, unless the author and the audience can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold” (174). One way is giving reliable commentary in contrast to unreliable narrator’s commentary by the author, though it may unmask the irony and lead to its degeneration. (174).

In *The Sense of an Ending*, Barnes challenges the narrative conventions used by people for telling a story. In the novel the protagonist struggles to retell the story of his own life with the main concentration on one of his friends Adrian's suicide and his eventual role in it. The novel turns out to be a case study of the unreliable narrator, for the narrator's self-awareness through time in second part of the novel casts doubt on his own credibility in the first part of it. Braithwaite also confesses in *Flaubert’s Parrot*: “When a contemporary narrator hesitates, claims uncertainty, misunderstands, plays games and falls into error, does the reader in fact conclude that reality is being more authentically rendered?” (76). But, near the midpoint of the novel, Tony proves with his statement that he is not naïve to believe in the perfect memory; “We live with such easy assumptions, don’t we? For instance, that memory equals events plus time. But it’s all much older than this. Who was it said that memory is what we thought
we’d forgotten?” (69). Abandoning faith in pure memory, Tony employs three structures, such as law, to reconstruct the story of him and his friends. The past in a legal frame draws Tony's attention to the extent that he looks for confirmation and evidence, what he calls "corroboration" from both the statements of others and from other forms such as notes, letters, and emails. Accessing the past for Tony, besides, becomes a sort of legal case, it is viewed as a historical and literary narrative. Against the sense of unreliability that his narrative implies, he hopes it to be a truthful narrative. Palani M. Kumar points out:

[T]he novel presents narration based on recollected memory, . . . Yet, he is capable of making the readers rely or believe his narrative up to certain level in the novel. Faulty or false memory has led both his individual history and narrative imperfect thereby making their very self imperfect. (67)

Mark A. Oakes and Ira E. Hyman, Jr. in their article state, “Memory is always constructed. What people remember will be constructed from remaining materials and from general schematic knowledge structures…. The fact that memory is constructed also means that history is constructed” (62). Harmon and Holman describe the unreliable narrator in A Handbook to Literature as a “narrator who may be in error in his understanding or report of things and who thus leaves readers without the guides needed for making judgments” (537). However, it was Wayne C. Booth who discovered and formulated the concept of unreliable narrator in The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961).

According to some critics, The Sense of an Ending earns its unreliability of narrative partly from its theme, which is about fallibility of human memory. Julian
Barnes, in one of his renowned articles, “Past Conditional, What Mother Would Have Wanted”, asserts his view of memory by quoting from his elder brother as "So much so that, one the Cartesian principle of the rotten apple, none is to be trusted unless it has some external support” (2). That is to say Barnes strongly believes in the fundamental deficiency of memory. Certainly, the "idea that history or more precisely, historiography, is fictional" (Sesto 8-9), brushed aside the former beliefs of the validity of memory, credence of history and ability to seize the past. Such an opinion resulted in the birth of ever-present disbelief and a ready-to-question approach underlies most of the fiction, interpreted as postmodern.

Notwithstanding, the disclosure of fictionality is more evident in the fiction of Julian Barnes than in postmodern scepticism and proneness. It seems that it is Barnes himself who opposed his brother's avowal that he once strictly believed in, and he acknowledges that "I am more trusting or self-deluding, however, so shall contain as if all my memories were true" (Barnes 2). Thus, for Barnes the accessibility of the objective truth at all times and the reachability of ultimate meaning were potent; nevertheless, utilizing the score of postmodern complications are inescapable to make the fiction justly post-modern. Postmodern complications such as the necessity to construct and deconstruct stale notions, sour truth's defamiliarization, dominating the constructedness of reality, point to the artificiality of fiction, and interrogation of the ontological status of the fictional world, numerously employed by the novelists to create a new star in the world of chaos wherein beliefs are necessary and the desire to get closer to the objective truth is not dead.
Writing Memory, Writing Narrative

The answer to the question how Tony was deceived by his own memory and how he attempts to get out of this problem is dramatised throughout The Sense of an Ending. The theme of accessing the past via memory, directly or indirectly, is repeated in most of Barnes’s fiction: Flaubert’s Parrot, A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters, England, England, Arthur & George, Talking It Over, and Love, etc. Yet whenever the theme of memory is at the center, Barnes’s The Sense of an Ending shines more than his other novels. Barnes’s other fiction, with quite the same hint towards the memory, will be discussed in brief in the following pages.

In his introduction to "Memory in Julian Barnes’ The Sense of an Ending and Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children", Palani Kumar quotes from Towards a Paradigm of Memory in Literature: “Literature” is “a direct consequence and offspring of memory” (64). However, the fallible and discrepant nature of memory as well as narration and history has been already proved to the scholars and researchers. Memory is simply defined as collections of past events yet David Gallo in his article believes, "memory is not simply recording of the past, but is a deliberate 'piecing-together' of retrieved information and other relevant information in an effort to make sense of the past" (“Associations and Errors through History” 13). What makes the efforts of recollecting memories more problematic is that the individuals consciously or unconsciously influence upon them while reconstructing, so that not all the memories are genuine and authentic.

Kumar refers to Daniel L. Schacter’s formulation of faulty memory in seven types which he terms as “The Seven Sins of Memory,” which include "transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias and persistence"
(64). "Among them", Kumar informs, “the sin of transience (forgetting past events) which is frequently found in literature”, and all the other sins might apply on memory of people when they construct by remembering it (64). Likewise, Oakes and Hyman, in their article note that “Memory is always constructed. What people remember will be constructed from remaining materials and from general schematic knowledge structures. The fact that memory is constructed also means that history is constructed” (“The Changing Face of Memory and Self: False Memories, False Self” 62). All in all, the unreliability of memory and consequently narration and history would emerge when we consider all the aspects of memory. With this introduction one might know that Barnes's main consideration in The Sense of an Ending challenges the traditional concept of memory and the postmodern view of it.

The protagonist in The Sense of an Ending like characters in other novels which depict misleading and impressionistic aspect of memory, experiences a lapse in memory when he attempts to remember and record his history and understands that memory tends to fade, change and transform in the course of time. Barnes's The Sense of an Ending is often compared with Salman Rusdie's Midnight Children; both novels won the Booker Prize, both are about memory distortion and both are narrated from first-person point of view. However, Barnes's fiction lacks the magic realism and metafictional aspects employed in Midnight's Children. Kumar compares these novels and highlights how both authors "have consciously attempted to present their narrators with errata or distorted memory" and quotes from both authors interviews; Barnes's interview with Jeffrey Brown “Conversation: Julian Barnes, winner of 2011 Man Booker Prize”: 
I wanted to write a book about time and memory, about what time does to memory, how it changes it, and what memory does to time. It's also a book about discovering at a certain point in your life that some key things that you've always believed were wrong. This is something that I started thinking about a few years ago, and it's probably one of the preoccupations that you have as you age. You have your own memories of life, you've got the story that you tell mainly to yourself about what your life has been. And every so often these certainties are not. Something happens, someone reports something from 20 or 30 years ago, and you realize that what you'd believed is not the case. So I wanted to write about that. (Memory in Julian Barnes’ *The Sense of an Ending* and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* 65)

And Salman Rushdie's interview in Imaginary Homelands about *Midnight’s Children*:

What I was actually writing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: my India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions. I tried to make it as imaginatively true as I could, but imaginative truth is simultaneously honourable and suspect, and I knew that my India may only have been one to which I (who am no longer what I was, and who by quitting Bombay never became what perhaps I was meant to be) was willing to admit I belonged. This is why I made my narrator, Saleem, suspect in his narration: his mistakes are the mistakes of a fallible memory compounded by quirks of
character and of circumstance, and his vision is fragmentary. (Memory in Julian Barnes’ *The Sense of an Ending* and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* 65-66)

In *The Sense of an Ending*, Tony at the age of sixty cautiously and carefully retells his life and his history, whereas he discovers truth about himself which somewhat differs from what he knows of himself. From the first few pages of the novel the narrator confesses that what we are reading is a story which emerges from his memory that might not be as authentic as what one might have witnessed.

He begins by saying that “I remember, in no particular order:” and continues explaining the images he remembers and ends the paragraph by stating, “This last isn't something I actually saw, but what you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed” (3). After emphasizing the impact of time and emotion on memory which make it unreachable, he notes:

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

He chooses incidents from his life chronologically, from his school days, and then his college life followed by what happened before and after marriage and finally his present retirement life.

Barnes registers the imperfections of both memory and history from which the erratic narrative of the novels stems. The reader encounters many expressions and
statements from Tony in the novel that shed the light on the unreliability of his memories. On one hand, the account based on unreliable memory might consequently cast doubt on the narrative as well, and on the other hand, the very act of assuring and reminding can convince the reader to believe in the narrative. Some of Tony's expressions and assertions appear throughout the novel as follows: “Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange” (18); “...I couldn't at this distance testify” (22); “...this is my principal factual memory. The rest consists of impressions and half-memories which may therefore be self-serving” (22-23); “But few other memories come back to me” (28); “I don’t think I can properly convey the effect the moment had on me” (27); “I wish I'd kept that letter, because it would have been proof, corroboration. Instead, the only evidence comes from my memory” (29); “Actually to be true to my memory, as far as that's ever possible...” (29); “As far as I remember....” (30); and “But I remember....” (31).

In the second part of the novel, wherein Veronica, Tony's ex-girlfriend, brings some documents like letters, the unreliability of Tony's narrative is revealed to the reader. The discrepancy between first and second part of the novel and between what Tony recounts and what the evidences reveal, provoke the unreliability in the novel. To cite an example, Tony receives a letter from Adrian, his best friend, in which he asks for permission to date Veronica, Tony's ex-girlfriend. According to Tony's memory, his reaction was to write half-jokingly a short letter to Adrian and express that he has no interest in Veronica and their relationship. After this episode, Tony continues with his own life without giving any news about Adrian and Veronica until they finish their degrees. At the end of the first part of the novel, the readers get to know that after graduation Adrian commits suicide for no apparent reason, though he was of above average intelligence. All these incidents are retold while the narrator is
completely aware of the deceitful nature of memory and while he becomes aware that every decision, even if unimportant, may cause a different turn in others' life: “Again, I must stress that this is my reading now of what happened then. Or rather, my memory now of my reading then of what was happening at the time” (30).

In the second part of the novel, the narrator tells that he receives a letter from a solicitor in which he is informed that he is given Adrian's personal dairy as an inheritance from Veronica's mother, whom he saw only once in his life. From the dairy which is safeguarded by Veronica, he gets the same letter he had sent to Adrian that he spoke about in previous part of the novel. Against his belief and narrative, the letter was a long and a vehemently written in which he poured out his anger and disillusionment against both Veronica and Adrian, accused Veronica of having domineering and uncontrollable character, and warning Adrian of any relationship with her. The reason why Tony wonders about the truth of memory and his keenness to revise his life story is revealed. He finds himself at the same crossroads he had passed forty years ago in his life. That carefree young Tony who had inhabited in the protagonist's memory for many years disappeared and the one who has replaced is difficult to recognise:

At first, I thought mainly about me, and how – what – I’d been: chippy, jealous and malign. Also about my attempt to undermine their relationship. At least I’d failed in this, since Veronica’s mother had assured me the last months of Adrian’s life had been happy. Not that this let me off the hook. My younger self had come back to shock my older self with what that self had been, or was, or was sometimes capable of being. And only recently I’d been going on about how the
witnesses to our lives decrease and with them our essential corroboration. (98)

This incident proves that time and emotion are capable of altering our memory in a way that it no longer represents the fact: “How often do we tell our own life story? How often do we adjust, embellish, make sly cuts? And the longer life goes on, the fewer are those around to challenge our account, to remind us that our life is not our life, merely the story we have told about our life. Told to others, but – mainly – to ourselves” (95).

Therefore, gradually as the story unfolds the readers find out the unreliability of Tony's narration. The faulty memory of Tony, cast doubt on his narration and his ‘Self’ as well, since the novel, consequently the narration and history are based on faulty and incomplete memory. Mark Oakes and Ira Hyman, in their article remark, “People create false memories.... Because the self is constructed from memories, the self will be a false self, based on beliefs and memories that do not accurately represent the past” (“The Changing Face of Memory and Self: False Memories, False Self” 61). Tony accepts that the deceitful nature of memory and feeling such as remorse can emerge at any time over a human life and he has to find a solution. Similarly, Piquer as in his article “Memory Revisited in Julian Barnes's The Sense of an Ending” observes:

The first step is to come to terms with the fact that memory and reality do not always match and that memory is strongly influenced by the feelings that invaded someone regarding a specific event. Secondly, the narrator has to admit and include the changes in his life narrative. The following logical step is to try to find a way to come to terms with
the reality of the facts as well as his feelings of remorse and guilt since change is impossible at this stage (93).

The artificial identity and history which is depicted by creating an analogy with the formation of personal and individual identity of the protagonist in *The Sense of an Ending* appeared in Barnes's previous fiction as well, for example in the character of Martha Cocharine in *England, England*.

In the first part of the novel, although she is aware of the impossibility of providing a logical and authentic sequence to memories, she tries to remember her first memories: "What's your first memory?" Someone would ask. And she would reply 'I don't remember'" (3). Then she explains memory is not a "solid, seizable thing" (3). Finally she concludes that no single memory would exist without having a lie in it or being completely based on a lie. Thus, she lies too when she determines that her first memory of completing a puzzle while sitting on the kitchen floor: "Yes, that was it, her first memory, her first artfully, innocently arranged lie" (5). Unlike, *The Sense of an Ending*, in which we never hear anything from narrator's side as a person who guides the readers when the protagonist lies or is unaware of a situation, Barnes's in *England, England* appears in some parts of the fiction to reveal some facts and ideas. While Martha tries to construct her past and memories, the idea of deceitful memory is raised by Barnes, saying that memory is not simply a "solid, seizable thing," but it is an object of change, variation and artful manipulation: "And there was another reason for mistrust. If a memory wasn't a thing but a memory of a memory of a memory, mirrors set in parallel, then what coloured by what happened in between" (8). However, Barnes in *England, England*, chases the formation of collective
memory turning history into a textual discourse built on untrustworthy records by dramatizing the uncertain conceptions of personal memory:

It was like a country remembers remembering its history: the past was never just the past; it was what made the present able to live with itself. The same went for individuals, though the process obviously wasn't straightforward. Did those whose lives had disappointed them remember an idyll, or something which justified their lives ending in disappointment? . . . An element of propaganda, of sales and marketing, always intervened between the inner and the outer person.

(6)

The unreliability of memory and consequently the unreliability of any issue based upon it such as identity and past is the main focus of Barnes in his fiction. He unmasks that rewriting and recounting our history has two sides: idealizing some facts and omitting the others based on the imagined self. The postmodern narration supposes imagination as a skilful and creative manipulation of remembrance by linking bits of memory and fancy. As Barnes's in Love, etc shows, "Our memories are just an artifice" (15). Or in the other scene in Love, etc, where Oliver comments on Stuart's remarks about a neighbour: “Ah, but why remember her any longer? Stuart has pronounced her wisdom ‘irrelevant’. Let us erase her memory, let us delete her sole contribution to the dictionary of quotations, ‘seeing as no-one actually has a valet nowadays’” (190). In Love, etc, memory is depicted as a mechanism by which the characters can store information selectively. When Stuart remembers younger Gillian, he says: "I do not mean that she only had green socks, just that she always did in my memory" (159). And later in other part of the novel he describes memory as "left-
luggage office” (163). Yet, Oliver shows that he is more aware of the intricate nature of memory: "I'll pretend that memory is laid out like a newspaper" (23). When he shares some memories about his childhood and his father, he confesses that in his view memory is linked with forgetfulness and is prone to alternative speculation: "Used to beat me up with a hockey stick when I was barely weaned. Or was it a billiard cue?" (37). In other words, he deeply believes that information does not store as it occurs and what is represented as true might be a total manipulation. Therefore, Oliver informs the readers of the possibility of alteration of his memory and truth: “I can offer the visual vignettes from the distant bourn of childhood . . . but how many are truly mine and how many purloined from the Cyclopaedia of False Memory I cannot at this juncture discern” (201-202).

_Talking It Over_ and _Love, etc_ are fiction in which the events are presented to the reader from the memories of the various witnesses. To cite a case as an example, the first time Stuart and Oliver meet after their long estrangement. Stuart uncovers that he had to buy all the rounds: "Oliver himself has ‘several projects in development’. Not so many that he couldn’t afford to buy his own round" (_Love_ 59). However, Oliver's account of the same matter when unfolded, is slightly different from that of Stuart's: "[Stuart] wouldn’t let me buy my own round" (_Love_ 61). It appears that both _Talking It Over_ and _Love, etc_ are filled with examples where unimportant matters turn out to be serious unpleasant ones by the witnesses' subjective perspective. That is why some very usual incidents such as a dinner meal made by Gillian is viewed differently by the three narrators: Stuart describes it as a "delicious vegetarian lasagne", Gillian ironically says “I overcooked the lasagne”, and Oliver comments that “Gillian was so tense that she cremated the pasta” (_Love_ 74; 79; 80).
Apart from the conflict which appears in the narrators' account of the same incident, the reader encounters discrepancies within the narration of a narrator. For instance, Gillian's narration of her sexual intercourses with Stuart changes every time she explains about it. Her first description of the event shows Stuart as an initiator while she consents. In her second account of the same incident Gillian states that although they both were drunk Stuart forced himself to her while she albeit mildly protested. Then the reader becomes aware of Stuart's account in which he clearly says that Gillian makes the first step. These examples imply the unreliability of the narrator. Nunning claims that only by the idea of unreliable narrator the reader can find a solution to the textual inconsistencies, and disharmony stems from multi-perspectival accounts of the novel. As Oliver claims: "I also, you might have noticed, deal in subjective truth – so much more real, and more reliable, than the other sort" (Love 67); or when his depression sets in: "Add memory loss to my list of symptoms. I can't be relied upon to remember to do it myself" (Love 231).

Barnes in Arthur & George narrates two life stories simultaneously that not only are different in time but also in certain other aspects. George Edalji is the son of a parse Vicar, from humble origins and is victim of racial prejudice. The other character is Arthur Canon Doyle, from well-situated family and has bright future ahead of him. The two main characters of the novel are depicted so differently. While Arthur is introduced as a promising athlete and scholar, George is presented as myopic, someone who has no imagination and friends. From the very first pages of the novel, the reader sees the differences between the characters. In the beginning of the novel Barnes explains the main characters' first memories. The importance of people's first memory is highlighted in the novel because the author believes only the events with powerful impression on their later life are remembered by people. The
same issue, remembering the first memory, is similarly raised in *England, England*, where Martha has a problem with her first memory which ironically ends up with her not remembering it and narrating an untrue account of her childhood memory. In *Arthur & George*, Arthur's first memory is narrated as follows:

> What he saw there became his first memory. A small boy, a room, a bed, closed curtains leaking afternoon light. By the time he came to describe it publicly, sixty years had passed. How many internal retellings had smoothed and adjusted the plain words he finally used? Doubtless it still seemed as clear as on the day itself. . . . An encounter in a curtained room. A small boy and a corpse. A grandchild who, by the acquisition of memory, had just stopped being a thing, and a grandmother who, by losing those attributes the child was developing, had returned to that state. (*A&G* 3)

And George's first memory as; “George does not have a first memory, and by the time anyone suggests that it might be normal to have one, it is too late. He has no recollection obviously preceding all others – not of being picked up, cuddled, laughed at or chastised” (*A&G* 4).

According to Childs, probably Barnes attempted to link Arthur's later spiritualism to the images he had in his childhood (Childs 144). Furthermore, in *Arthur & George*, Barnes laid stress on the distortion of memory over time and by constant retelling, and the cycle of life, wherein an old person childishly depends on the help of others, whereas the child behaves in opposite direction. Memory is portrayed as the powerful and significant source that is capable of changing Tony's
life in *The Sense of an Ending*. Similarly, in *Arthur & George*, memories, distorted or immaterial, represent the origin of the characters' future course.

The examples of the first memory of the two main characters demonstrate the dissimilarity between them. Many different concepts of memory are indicated throughout the novel. Memory, in the novel, is viewed as an interstage between a state of forgetfulness and a state of awareness. However, memory in *Arthur & George* and particularly in the statement mentioned, unlike Barnes's other fiction, seems to be synonymous with fame or popularity. Arthur after marriage has to leave his family and the other occupant of their flat, Dr Bryan Waller, who is too damned at ease with the world for there is something rankling about him. Arthur believes that if Waller could get a little widespread positive belief about his character, his previous image in people's memory would be faded. "When he left, Arthur had imagined that Waller would soon set up his own Edinburgh practice, would acquire a wife and a little local reputation, and then fade into the status of an occasional memory" (45).

Metaphorically, memory is described in the other scenes as a private place where one safely keeps treasures. The place with no boundaries, which besides having an advantage of having numerous dimensions, also has the disadvantage of difficulty in finding and recalling the dimension of previous stored treasures. In the scene where Inspector Campbell visits Captain Anson in his luxurious house, he thinks that memory would be a room with lots of treasures, that most of them are worth stealing, and he adds that some of such items might already be stolen: "When the parlourmaid admitted him, he tried to suspend his natural professional habits: working out the likely probity and income of the occupants, and committing to memory items worth stealing – in some cases, items perhaps already stolen" (105).
Comparing memory or heart to the room is earlier attempted by Barnes in *Flaubert's Parrot*, where Braithwaite talks about his wife. He describes the heart as a room or chamber where people keep their treasured memories and secrets. He also underlines that the difference between people is not in having secret memories or not but the difference is between those who desire to know everything and those who do not:

She didn’t ever search for that sliding panel which opens the secret chamber of the heart, the chamber where memory and corpses are kept. Sometimes you find the panel, but it doesn’t open; sometimes it opens, and your gaze meets nothing but a mouse skeleton. But at least you’ve looked. That’s the real distinction between people: not between those who have secrets and those who don’t, but between those who want to know everything and those who don’t. This search is a sign of love, I maintain. (134)

In the beginning of *Arthur & George* Barnes claims that George has no first memory; later in the novel he resets George's first memory. In court George explains his first memory to Inspector Campbell: "When I was four, I was taken to see a cow. It soiled itself. That is almost my first memory. . . . 'Yes. I think from that day I have distrusted animals" (145). However, by saying the word 'distrusted' George is indicating his disinterest in animals, the court and Inspector Campbell consider it as George's hatred of animals and as one of the reasons for his crime. As mentioned earlier, on one hand, George's first memory, whether considered as positive or negative, implies the importance and impact of it in his later life particularly his accusations of maiming and wounding a number of animals. On the other hand,
because of the discrepancy in George's narration, the reader suspends the reliability of the narrator. That is the reason why the court repeatedly questions George and others' memories to distinguish their reliability. The court considers the possibility of not remembering some part or entire of the memory and also susceptibility of memories to have various distortions. The reader sees that the same question of the same incident is asked repeatedly by all the members of Edalji family to find discrepancies in their account:

He used the word deliberately, in the full memory of his father's disapproval.

. . . 'Oh, I see,' said George, his temper suddenly returning.

'You want me to say I am loony.'

'You have a memory of each night?'

'I do not see the point of that question.'

'Sir, I do not ask you to see its point. I merely request that you answer it. Do you have a memory of each night?'

The Vicar looked around the court, as if expecting someone to rescue him from this imbecilic catechism. 'No more than anybody else.' (A&G 148; 189)

In spite of the abstract nature of memory, Barnes emphasizes the emotional and intellectual healing aspect of it in difficult moments. Like imagination, memory, after perceiving, can be reconstructed in one's mind at any place or time. And the impact of feeling in memory is also very significant that a pleasant memory is repeatedly cherished and recalled to heal in difficult moments, while the bad one is
mostly left to be forgotten. In a scene wherein George is found guilty by the jury, Maud, George's sister, unlike her parents who looked so disappointed after hearing the verdict, poses particularly to remind George a memory that she thinks can heal George:

Maud, whom he had expected to be wailing, surprised him. She had turned her whole body in his direction and was gazing up towards him, gravely, lovingly. He felt that if he could retain that look in his memory, then the worst things might possibly be bearable. (200)

Or in other part of the novel, George recalls a short trip with his sister whose presence in his life is very precious and appreciable: "'It was a happy day,' he said firmly, holding to the memory he had made into certainty by repetition. The Belle Vue Hotel. The tramway. Roast chicken. Not going to pick up pebbles. The railway journey. It was a happy day" (461).

Barnes skilfully draws a moment when people lose their access to memory, while they clearly learn from it or feel it. Arthur feels like a schoolboy who "has learned the most beautiful love-speech in Shakespeare and now that he needs to recite it his mouth is dry and his memory empty", after expressing his love to Jean in their meeting (230). The healing aspect of memory was also employed in *Flaubert's Parrot*, where Barnes via Braithwaite hints at the life of Caroline, Flaubert’s niece. Braithwaite states: "He [Flaubert] adored her. In London he carried her round the Great Exhibition; this time she was happy to be in his arms, safe from the frightening crowds. . . . She [Caroline] loved her childhood with him, and the memory of it survived the misfortunes of her adult life" (107).
Memory, qualified or deficient, corresponds with bias, feelings, and possibly of suggestibility. It means that memories with all influences are abstract features which can be implanted by suggestions, comments or questions. *Flaubert's Parrot* employs memory as a medium by which the protagonist both reconstructs the past experience and problematises the reliability of the material. Braithwaite is depicted as a doomed person who finds himself in search of the real stuffed parrot once used by Flaubert while he wrote one of his short stories. Barnes attempts to portray Flaubert's preoccupation with the challenging nature of memory in Romantic literature by reviving the same representation of memory in his novel. As Flaubert sought to capture the complexity of memory, Barnes seeks to overcome its complexity by understanding it. Flaubert believes that one has a little control over memories and memories have the power of evoking involuntarily and violently.

Flaubert's characters as well as Barnes's, particularly in *The Sense of an Ending, Flaubert's Parrot* and *Talking It Over*, often unsuccessfully grapple with the task of uniting memories to form a coherent whole story. In *The Sense of an Ending*, Tony attempts to keep his reliability in remembering his own history, but ends up representing only some deceitful memories. In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Braithwaite makes an effort to reconstruct the life story of an author in order to find lost puzzles of his wife's life. Whereas Flaubert asserts that memory is accessible as much as one attempt to achieve it, Barnes presents it as something elusive and difficult to catch. In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Barnes mostly focuses upon the authority of physical objects in bearing witness to the past.

That is to say, Barnes in *Flaubert's Parrot* deals with the historical objects which are claimed to represent fact by building one-to-one relationship with historical
reality. Braithwaite views a stuffed parrot as an object which epitomizes the entire Flaubert's life and personality. The parrot is an object which is taken as the "emblem of the writer's voice", and consequently the symbol of sheer truth (15). The uniqueness of the parrot in Braithwaite's mind equals the truth about Flaubert's life and career. Therefore, distinguishing the real stuffed parrot from the unreal out becomes Braithwaite's main preoccupation throughout the story. That is until he enters a room in Croisset museum where approximately fifty other stuffed parrots are kept, each one with the possibility of being the real one. Even Braithwaite's efforts to find the real parrot according to Flaubert's description failed, due to a scholar's statement:

Well. You have to remember two things. One, Flaubert was an artist. He was a writer of the imagination. And he would alter a fact for the sake of a cadence; he was like that. Just because he borrowed a parrot, why should he describe it as it was? Why shouldn’t he change the colours round if it sounded better? Secondly, Flaubert returned his parrot to the Museum after he’d finished writing the story. That was in 1876. The pavilion was not set up until thirty years later. Stuffed animals get the moth, you know. They fall apart. Félicité’s did, after all, didn’t it? The stuffing came out of it.’ (Parrot 165)

As a result, the parrot fails to be a historical object for being endlessly reproduced and it shakes Braithwaite's confidence by withdrawing reality further from sight. For Braithwaite the only thing that idealises the real parrot and makes it authentic compared to the other one is memory and metaphor hidden in it: "How do you compare two parrots, one already idealised by memory and metaphor, the other a
squawking intruder? My initial response was that the second seemed less authentic than the first, . . .” (16).

At times Braithwaite forgets about the parrot and looks for other sources, such as the memory of Mme Schlesinger, Caroline, and Du Camp to pursue some part of Flaubert's life that either was not recorded, like what happened to Flaubert's dog (60; 97). However, those accounts are also not very helpful to finalize the exact incidents that had happened in Flaubert's life.

In the chapter “Emma's Eyes”, Braithwaite concentrates on the criticism of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, wherein for the first time he underlines the importance of forgetting. He finds out that Dr Starkie and other critics are trapped in the details of a great fiction, while the lay readers just enjoy it without remembering what he calls as pointless details. And he points out the forgetting as an advantage a reader has over critics and states that critics are cursed with memory:

But I can tell you one advantage we have over them. We can forget. Dr Starkie and her kind are cursed with memory: the books they teach and write about can never fade from their brains. They become family. Perhaps this is why some critics develop a faintly patronising tone towards their subjects. They act as if Flaubert, or Milton, or Wordsworth were some tedious old aunt in a rocking chair, who smelt of stale powder, was only interested in the past, and hadn’t said anything new for years. (64).

Braithwaite in facing the reality of his life understands in the novel that "Perhaps [he is] too accepting. [His] own condition is stable, yet hopeless. Perhaps it’s just a question of temperament, Remember the botched brothel-visit in L’Education
sentimental and remember its lesson. Do not participate: happiness lies in the imagination, not the act. Pleasure is found first in anticipation, later in memory" (185). In other words, he confesses that the happiness, which he chases in his life, is not in what has happened but it lies in what is remembered.
Works Cited


