



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Living in a Copy: Fake Images and Real Feelings in Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*

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## ABSTRACT

The article is an exploration of Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending* through Jean Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and simulation as misleading image. Tony Webster reflects on his history, making it clear that his memory is not entirely correct, as he misses certain facts and changes others. It creates a made-up past for him that he accepts as genuine, even if it is not the real story. Through qualitative method of research, the study demonstrates how individuals may exist in these fictional realms and how these fabricated narratives might, at times, seem more realistic than what actually occurred. The conclusion explores how tales that mirror reality affect our sense of the feeling of an unreliable identity and significance. Barnes's book, analyzed through Baudrillard's concepts reflects how one's life becomes a simulation, and sometimes, looking for meaning in a postmodern world leads to additional outcomes and knowledge masked by ignorance.

**KEYWORDS** Simulacra, Simulation, History, Narrative, Reality

## Introduction

Managing age, choices, memory, and the unpredictability of life circumstances, Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending* took home the 2011 Man Booker Prize. Tony Webster, an older man, is reminiscing about his life. He is considering how he used to be when he was physically strong. He doubts the accuracy of his recollections of his school years, first love, and a friend's suicide. The readers are left encouraged to reflect on their own experiences in the light of the calming tales they tell themselves; since memories might be distorted by emotions and misunderstandings, and therefore might not reflect reality and real existence.

As suggested by Jean Baudrillard's thoughts on simulation, replacing real life with modern images and symbols might blur the line between reality and fiction. The application of the theory on Barnes' narrative holds that in Tony's life and in his twisted perspective his memories of being innocent are accurate. Things from his past returning to him reveal inconsistencies in his narrative. Tony's false self-perception, which is brought about by his fabricated memories, is illustrated in the story. It depicts that sometimes, memories seem to have more significance than actual events. Tony attempts to see the good aspects of his past since he was more emotional than logical. His memories demonstrate the complexity of the interaction between memory and emotion.

Memories can also shift with time. Tony's memory of individuals like Adrian and Veronica emphasizes distortion over blatant lies. Because Tony's perspective shifts with each memory, it mirrors how memory works in real life. The fallacy of how our memories are sometimes shaped, is ultimately addressed in the text. Data helps and directs us away from erroneous ideas about how our memories and feelings may affect, mislead, and change us.

## Literature Review

By analyzing *The Sense of an Ending* from a variety of perspectives, including history, philosophy, psychology, and its core themes, Julian Barnes has attracted numerous scholars. By means of personal sacrifice and a shift in his narrative, Maji (2018) examines the work through Freud's devised two main forces: Eros representing love and life; Thanatos, which means death and demolition. Maji emphasizes the connection between these components and the concept of living life to the fullest, as Tony and Adrian Finn struggle with their feelings rather than merely getting by. The ambiguity of memories and how quickly one's past might change are the topics covered. The story is told by a narrator whose truthfulness is nonexistent, and it also includes a self-referential element and is questionable.

According to Pamuk (2020), this book belongs to the *vollendungsroman* genre, which utilizes Erik Erikson's ideas to connect the tale of someone contemplating his later years. In terms of life development, Pamuk contends that Tony's ideas about his history reflect his personality. The eighth stage of development is how Tony's memories define who he is.

Each person appears to have distinct thoughts, ideas, and memories of the past. Allwyn, Amalaveenus (2021) employs the Integral Theory to examine how people comprehend their own viewpoint including themselves. Tony Webster's pursuit of reality is hindered by his lack of understanding of concepts like time, ethics, and identity. Özçelik (2022) argues that in an advanced society, it is clear that it is difficult to find the truth because memories are processed and experienced at multiple levels of recollection. According to Özçelik, memories cannot accurately represent reality.

They are, for the most part, academics who show how *The Sense of an Ending* tackles key issues such as our sense of self, our memories, and our existence. However, the key research on how memories affect our feelings, has got less attention. This article suggests by using Jean Baudrillard to illustrate Barnes' narrative how people's perceptions of reality are influenced by copies and illusions, as Baudrillard posits. The emotions created are powerful, but they do not always reflect reality by their ideologies, the tales they have read, and their efforts to make sense of themselves encounter. Beyond simple recall, Barnes seems to tackle a core issue. People seem to like living in a fabricated reality rather than really engaging with the world around them that is real.

## Material and Methods

Using concepts from Jean Baudrillard's theory of Simulacra and Simulation, this study focuses on the qualitative aspect of Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* that is understood and read. The method involves the meaning, concepts, and themes in the text rather than focusing on data or numbers that are used in this book. The research examines important selected lines from the book and explores how variation influences the protagonist's memories and life narrative. These are related by Baudrillard's theory which suggests that Simulations are misleading images. The selected themes are organized under

headings such as: truth, storytelling, remembrance, and the blurring of reality and fiction. When it is difficult to distinguish between reality and fiction and between concepts in modern society, this method guides in highlighting the book's critique to discover how the book brings ideas about identity and reality together.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Theme One: Thinking Back as a Skill: Restoring Past with Deception**

"What you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed" (Barnes, 2011, p. 10). One of the book's central themes—how—is highlighted by this statement from *The Sense of an Ending*. Our recollections cannot be perfect. Tony Webster, the narrator, ponders over human nature. In contrast to a camera that records every detail, our recall differs. All that counts are time, feelings, and time. How well we shield ourselves from pain, suffering, and our point of view, how we recall occurrences is influenced by emotions. While some individuals have perfect memory, others do not. Tony describes in the novel, recollections that evoke a sense of comfort or safety, an honest and sensible account of his early life. He mentions his former school, demonstrating in a manner that he comprehended what had happened in friendships, relationships, and life events. However, as the tale goes on, new information comes to light that contradicts his memories, finds that many of his assumptions are either totally inaccurate or only partially accurate. Not because he wanted to lie, but because he really remembered things. Otherwise, he starts to believe that he may have missed or misinterpreted certain facts. This statement highlights the connection between memory and how a person perceives them. Tony wants to see himself as a kind, innocent individual, but when he sees himself, he sees that he is not. As he begins to recognize the suffering, his behaviour may have caused others, his memories become suspect. His observed account of events—the one that actually occurred—differs from his memory, which he never completely believed. Furthermore, the postmodern perspective is in accordance with this concept. Some people think that postmodern literature has a personal, emotional, and subjective element. Their viewpoint changes, when there is no one around and no single unifying reality. This reality produces a wide variety of viewpoints. Tony's own thoughts are evident in his course. After years of denial and amnesia, Tony understands that verifiable historical facts, not revisionist interpretations, have influenced his memories. Memories may deceive us, as the book's conclusion states, even if what we remember seem true. Even if it is real, it does not always reflect every reality. He rethinks his entire life as a result of this discovery. He develops sorrow, guilt, and an improved understanding of himself, others, and history, which is fresh but excruciating selfawareness. "History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (Barnes, 2011, p.113). This is one of the most insightful concepts in *The Sense of an Ending*. It offers a questionable and very contemporary take on history, implying that what we call history instead. It is an opinion that is very delicate and is supported by two questionable sources: memories and papers. Events are recalled precisely, but feelings and personal recollections are often poor. The way time passes, our favorite perspective, and our interests all have an impact on the memories we choose. We recall events differently, confuse the details, or forget information, whether it's about ourselves or others. Nonetheless, memories may be changed, sometimes without our knowledge, therefore we frequently think it to be rather accurate data. In contrast, documentation might include letters and diaries. Additionally, emails, images, and even historical books are unreliable since they might be biased, incomplete, or inaccurate. People with different perspectives, are taken away from their environment or perhaps intentionally altered. As a result, documents provide less data than they possess. They expose the goals, even when they seem neutral, as in newspapers or government documents and the boundaries established by their authors. Julian Barnes

claims that a certain produced at is what history is. The point at which memory flaws and evidentiary holes converge is not what I mean actual assurance. He uses the word certainty ironically to emphasize how dubious and in fact weak history is. The past is studied using weak evidence and unreliable recollections, which is we invent the tale to persuade ourselves that what we call history is indeed the case; it is a security fiction. Comprehend precisely what occurred: Tony Webster in the story has trouble with this, mainly dealing with Veronica, Adrian Finn, and the circumstances surrounding the enigmatic letter. He labors to construct his past, but he soon realizes that he cannot rely on either his memories or the past. The letter, diary, and interviews contain a sufficient amount of restricted data. He begins to value himself more than he struggles to comprehend the situation. Therefore, a central concept of lost, misinterpreted, or never really known is captured in this statement. Contemporary philosophy holds that truth, especially historical truth, is always created, debatable, and the reader is compelled to think about the extent to which they may depend on subpar equipment. Barnes does not see history as fact, whether it be their own memories or the historical records they have at their disposal rather than the greatest knowledge, we could gain in light of the constraints of notes taken at random and human memory. "We live with such easy assumptions, don't we? For instance, that memory equals events plus time. But it's all much odder than this" (Barnes, 2011, p.119). A significant issue with *The Sense of an Ending* is highlighted by the following statement: the intricacies of memory and its initially deceptive simplicity. Barnes uses this as the foundation of his argument, a line illustrating how frequently we condense our memories into a simple formula: something happens. Nonetheless, Barnes maintains that our memories of time will remain with us long after it has passed. This concept seems sensible, obvious and much more challenging and strange than that in reality. Tony Webster questions the validity of his recollections. He has always questioned the accuracy of his memories, much like many other people. Even if time has given him a little bit of a bias, he thought that his memories accurately reflected life. However, through interviews, correspondence, and unexpected discoveries, he discovers that he is exploring his past. He has not only provided a simple account of what transpired, but he has also studied, fixed, and over time, there has been deliberate and organic manipulation. The underlying easy assumptions here is that memories are live there, as is prepared to be called back, should anything occur. However, Barnes claims that memory is actually shifting and unreliable. Time, emotions, future events, our inner narratives, and other variables all contribute to its development and even in our dreams of what might have been. To reconstruct the past, one must examine it. Instead of merely remembering a file, we should select it based on our current identity. Tony has always thought that what he did as a child, was reasonable. He is sure that he behaved correctly. He remembers a few occurrences, such as his breakups with Adrian and Veronica and the composition of a specific letter. However, he realizes it after reading the letter again and seeing its real effect. The worst aspects were either overlooked or forgotten by him. He could no longer remember. Perhaps even that unintentionally changing a narrative of events he may have had, he had deceived himself. More specifically, He permits it to think about a more fundamental postmodern question of truth and identity. The claim is that, "Should we trust the stories we make up about ourselves if our memories are correct?" If one assumes that, then, is it unstable? We believe that identity is unchanging since memory is made up of events and time. However, if memory is something else, then... Our feeling of self is also impacted by our growing strange, unpredictable, and reconstructive behavior, which renders it hazy and malleable. Barnes is not just recording facts; he is challenging the very premise of self-consciousness and personal history. This statement of his seems simple at first, but it raises some very complex questions. The fundamental question is whether the story of our life is genuine or fictitious. One can never be sure. Forgetting it also brings up the issue of how much of our lives is dependent on the past. The more basic issue of whether our memories are dreams or not, is brought up by

this statement. In addition to recording events, a powerful and innovative tool that occasionally changes the way we see the world. "I remember a period in late adolescence when my mind would make itself drunk with images of adventurousness" (Barnes, 2011, p.175). Tony Webster, the narrator, feels the same way when he thinks about his boyhood dream of being a hero, falling in love, and standing up for what he believes in. Barnes demonstrates how convincing and effective his ideas were, even if they weren't. The concept that his thoughts were elevated merely suggests that he was under the influence of alcohol. It also shows a lack of power. Tony gave priority to the numerous amazing opportunities in life over sound judgment. This retrospective is supported by comprehension, cynicism, nostalgia, and profound emotional yearning. Tony realized that he had already achieved most of his initial objectives, considering his age and education. For him, traveling was more about being significant, brave, and unique than about ever planning to utilize those qualities to turn feelings into actual occurrences. Tony's character development is fueled by the difference between reality and imagination. He presents himself to us as someone who spends a lot of time considering challenges but takes little action. The narrative consistently puts caution, safety, and prudence ahead of danger. He is never motivated by his initial goals to be brave or take chances. Additionally, this statement implies a higher level of one of the more common memories from his early years. Most people think they are the saviors. They are the subject of an incredible life story at times, and they also seek to be exceptional, transform society, escape from it, and pursue other goals, expectations, life on a planet, or love. These really ambitious ideas, despite their brevity, continue to influence how people view themselves and the world around them. As life progresses, many of these expectations are either abandoned or replaced by others. Tony's reflection on his childhood in his later years makes the contrast between his present life and what he had envisioned as a child, all the much more painful. This shows Tony's deepest sentiments. The passage of time, the discrepancy between our expectations and reality, and the consequent disappointment are all major themes of this work, and this is just one facet of growing older. Although the line may be short, it forces us to consider our identity, our regrets, and the story we tell ourselves. "How often do we tell our own life story? How often do we adjust, embellish, make sly cuts?" (Barnes, 2011, p. 179). The central themes of memory and self-deception are given a lot of weight in *The Sense of an Ending*. This is what the narrator, Tony Webster, had to say. Tony has come to understand that one's own life may be viewed from several angles. Historically, our framework has sought to symbolize stability, joy, or morality. The questions in the essay encourage readers to look at things from a different perspective. To some extent, everyone changes their history, even if it has been changed, adapted, or perhaps even warped. "Adjust" is a basic human reaction that often involves making minor changes in response to a picture or an event. They were meant to stay the same. We are not connected to anyone. We sometimes exaggerate occurrences because the term "embellish" suggests that we must enhance our looks in order to seem more alive or to make things more beautiful. The phrase "making sly cuts" is used to describe the practice of purposely omitting details from our story. Their purpose is either to portray us in a negative light or to damage the image we are trying to project. He acknowledges that the manner in which our memories sometimes function—erratically and inconsistently—may not be the cause of his narrative. Our viewpoints on our relationships and experiences may vary, whether we realize it or not. It could be challenging for us to define ourselves because our lifestyle is somewhat similar to that of a film editor, who may be able to add music to a movie or change scenes. We might not be able to rely on our memories of events as much as we believe. This is evident throughout the novel. It becomes much more important as we see that Tony's memories of his past are deteriorating. The events of his childhood are brought into perspective by his interactions with other people. As more information became available, Adrian and Veronica's love story began to flourish; Adrian had previously thought that what he now

knew to be true. This knowledge is depressing and humbling because it only gives a small taste of a perspective shaped by his own prejudices and emotional needs as a way of illustrating how memory functions. It's possible that the data seems to provide a strong and trustworthy basis, but in reality, it has been misunderstood or misinterpreted. Barnes employs Tony to develop a compelling philosophical justification for why individuals should live exceptional lives. They help in the creation of their memories by actively building them as opposed to merely recognizing them. We are influenced by our present identity, favorite events, and objectives. This is connected to the postmodern literary theory of change. A tale that is reasonable, consistent, truthful, and genuine offers few facts. This sentence offers a highly helpful perspective, even if it's brief. Whether they are in our minds, in novels, or in our daily lives, it invites us to examine our autobiographical stories, emphasizes the significance of self-awareness. To find the truth about ourselves, which is not predetermined, we may need to reconsider memories that we have repressed or distorted. It emphasizes what memories are really made of. This framework, though, is built on a fictitious reality and on facts that may be portrayed in a correct or false manner, even if its rationale appears straightforward and consistent. Tony assists Barnes in making a more logical philosophical argument for others. People generate memories when they make a deliberate effort to document their experiences instead of merely living them. Our goals, the kind of person we want to be, and who we are now have an impact on them. From this vantage position, the subject appears to be a mild but powerful refutation of trust. We are urged to question the story we have written, whether in our memories or in our thoughts. Readers are encouraged to think about how self-awareness can be recognized in both books and daily life. Because the truth about who we are is not written in stone, it might be very important to find stories that we have since buried or changed. "That letter of mine was unforgiveable. All I can say is that my vile words were the expression of a moment. They were a genuine shock for me to read again after all these years" (Barnes, 2011, p. 269). Despite inflicting pain, Tony does not remember what he did. Baudrillard's theory demonstrates how he is trapped in a personality that appears to be harmless, innocent, and welcoming. A distorted perception of the past in which he hides his shame is a fake identity.

### **Theme Two: Fabricated Selves: Our Identity and How We Present It**

"Yes, of course we were pretentious – what else is youth for? We used terms like 'Weltanschauung' and 'Sturm und Drang,' enjoyed saying 'That's philosophically self-evident,' and assured one another that the imagination's first duty was to be transgressive" (Barnes, 2011, p. 23). The Sense of an Ending's protagonist, Tony Webster, thinks about his history. Tony remembers his adolescence when he and his buddies tried to be thoughtful, behaved with considerably more grace than they possessed, and mixed humor with emotion. The term "pretentious" counts, and forgiveness minimizes the joke by implying that this conduct is prevalent among young people and may even be a component of healthy development. Tony understands that he and his pals were merely pretending to be intelligent and that their actions were not always their fault, or that they were trying to experience being different, original, or rebellious rather than just thinking about it. Terms like the German "Weltanschauung," which means "worldview," and "Sturm und Drang" which means "expressing deep emotions and individuality," was used by Barnes to highlight to highlight the intensity of their emotions and set them apart from what they perceived to be the norm. This behavior is common in teens during Tony's adolescence, according to Barnes. People are looking for their identity and values. This is a typical action among kids. People express this quest through their words and opinions. Additionally, philosophical language can be employed as a means of a plan for addressing issues related to teenagers. Without a doubt, expressions like "That's philosophically self-evident" prove that Tony and his pals were likely not convinced of these statements, but

they are also intellectually drawn to these statements. They also have another side that is brought out by the notion that "the imagination's first duty was to be transgressive." Teenagers are constantly questioning the existing order, breaking norms, and defying social norms. Tony and his friends employed their creativity as a weapon, so their primary goal was to cause chaos rather than simply express themselves. The book's reflective tone also shows how Tony's perspective on his childhood has changed throughout his life. Although young people are always questioning the established norms and seeking their own truth, phrases like "What else is youth for?" seem amusing and maybe ironic to him, especially when an older man uses them to gently challenge their purity and emphasize the importance of youth, in relation to that period of one's life. The essay also explores some of the story's central themes, such as the connection between changes in identity and unreliable memories, the significance of forgiveness, and the differences between who we are now and who we were in the past. Tony's aspirations, which he had as a young, self-assured man, are in stark contrast to his shifting personality, which is now resolute and cynical. Generally speaking, this is the uncertainty, grief, and increased understanding of the difficulties of life. One of the book's main premises is that, unlike purely historical narratives, memories enable us to analyze and consider the past from a more rational and experienced perspective. This line discusses the arrogance of youth, the unavoidable epiphany that comes with age, and the appeal of mental fortitude, encouraging us to rewrite our own narratives to reflect our evolving identities. It expresses the universal human experience. It's frequently enough to recognize that what we formerly assumed to be true was sometimes merely a desire to have a sense of direction. Sometimes, all that was needed to increase one's self-esteem was a guilt-inducing and nostalgic memory. "We thought we were being mature when we were only being safe" (Barnes, 2011, p.176). Despite what Tony and his pals thought, they had just run away from their problems and issues. They behaved as if they were familiar with adulthood, even if they hadn't experienced it. The concepts of Baudrillard were a maturing of age, not actual maturity. It actually blurs the reality. "I had wanted life not to bother me too much, and had succeeded—and how pitiful that was" (Barnes, 2011, p.188). Tony claims that he decided to live a modest life in order to eliminate issues. Nonetheless, he has come to realize that prioritizing peace above goals, leaves him hollow. Life was portrayed as serene yet superficial. According to Baudrillard, it was a fake representation of a real life. "What did I know of life, I who had lived so carefully? Who had neither won nor lost, but just let life happen to him?" (Barnes, 2011, p.267). This shows a sad passage from Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* where we see Tony, the main character, think about his life as he is growing older, and thinks of it as something that has not been very adventurous or brave. He has often stood back and played it safe in major achievements. He has lots of regrets. Maybe he's acted this way because he realizes, he hasn't really lived, and it pains him and he feels pity. The question "What did I know of life?" elicits a lot of self-reflection and self-discovery in him. Even after experiencing the typical life, Tony is confronting the fact. He has experienced little of life's milestones, such as attending school, having a job, getting married, getting divorced, and retiring. Deeply involved in life, he realizes that his life has been safe, restricted, and free from genuine risks. Knowing allows him to understand that life is more than just being alive. In order to truly comprehend life, one must first understand it. To understand it, one must immerse oneself in the experience emotionally, morally, and sometimes even endure pain. The assertion "I who had lived", Tony's life seems to have been governed by a fear of making mistakes or breaking laws, as evidenced by his cautious lifestyle. His choices were primarily focused on prevention, suffering in place of seeking pleasure or meaning. He typically kept to himself adhered to the rules, and caused few problems. This strategy of life may have given him a sense of security and control, but it also left him untested and not very emotional. He did not disobey accepted social conventions nor put himself at risk. He prevented himself from experiencing actual

love or pain. He was proud of his rationality and balanced; but he now sees that this cautious approach to life prevented him from being protected. "Who had neither won nor lost" alludes to a life filled with deeper emotional and moral experiences. In life, dedication, passion, and perseverance are necessary to succeed or fail, not big promises. Be prepared to be open and work hard. You have to be prepared to fail. Tony is aware that he has never engaged in gambling or any other kind of risk. He never had much to lose because he was truly committed to others or to his situation. His existence went by in the background, free from the intense feelings that give rise to meaningful human experience. He lived a boring and safe life, neither winning nor losing and the occasions that never truly became significant. The statement "but just let life happen to him". It perfectly expresses his unhappiness and highlights the inactivity that has characterized his life. He just grabbed everything in his path; instead of making choices proactively, he reacted to life. He allowed relationships to form and fall apart without any effort. He avoided conflict. He was polite, maintained a calm demeanor, and put on a polite face, but at a cost of deeper relationships. Life started to pass him by of anything, he consciously formed. Since it brings back memories, this realization is especially noteworthy. The text makes several allusions to delayed awareness. The shallowness of Tony's life is something, he yearns for. Later in life, when the unanswered questions surrounding Adrian's murder and the agony he caused Veronica are brought to light, he would be held accountable for his past inaction, especially his failure to act. His meticulously crafted memories, which portrayed him in a positive light, are now being called into question as a result of newly discovered facts. Tony has a novel perspective on emotional sensitivity. In addition, he had not considered the consequences of his unethical behavior. Like Tony, a lot of individuals base their lives on prudence, routines, and the desire to stay out of trouble. The book's above line discusses a wider range of human behavior. They view themselves as only "good" because they follow the rules and avoid intentionally hurting others. However, Barnes uses Tony's experiences to encourage us to reflect on whether living in this manner is worthwhile either extremely moral or just an empty existence. Even a life free of hazards can be genuinely meaningless. Tony ultimately becomes a person that many people can relate to via self-reflection. His comprehension through reflecting the unspoken regrets of many individuals who, as they get older, wonder if they truly lived life to the fullest or simply went through the emotions, they evoke empathy. If they are actively shaping their future or simply being passive, consider their own life, observing the passage of time. The feelings and philosophies are well depicted in this line. At the heart of *The Sense of an Ending*, it discusses passivity, the cost of avoiding emotional dangers, and Tony's perspective is the unsettling truth that one may live a secure life yet not fully experience it. Although it is painful, it indicates the beginning of knowledge: the realization that it is still possible, even in old age. It's still conceivable to pursue the truth, meaning, and maybe even atonement. "There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest" (Barnes, 2011, p.282). His thoughts and feelings are conveyed in this line of the book. Although the three sentences might seem simple and straightforward at first, each bit acts like a building block letting Tony's meaning unfold and become more conscious or aware of the consequences of his behaviour—and his failure to behave. We tend to think that collecting-up the component bits of our experience, memories, choices and mistakes and, of course our friends, slice by slice over the years has no connection with the next minute. As we get older we perceive that all these parts add up. Tony did not leave anything behind, not the letters he wrote when he was a little boy and the friends. Instead he neglects the emotions, relationships he doesn't even see, and the fact of being ignored entirely. Sorting through things in bits and pieces he has closes-up about, and disregarded, Tony is learning to look on the past where the idea of "responsibility" originally sprang. Now that he's older, and thinking about his life, he begins to realize and rapidly how much every tiny little thing adds up to. He can no longer hide behind his youth, innocence,



ignorance. He must « face up », and, as in becoming conscious, a part of himself knows his responsibility. He begins to understand his part in what's happened, especially the horrific result and suffering which Adrian had to deal with and Veronica and her family also have to live with it. Something is beginning to awaken in Tony, but it is followed by something more "unrest". This feeling is beyond. This sensation is a profound and persistent problem rather than a temporary one, as suggested by the phrase "**great unrest**", the understanding that knowledge of one's duties does not result in discomfort. Tony's peak imagination is portrayed in this verse as a peaceful yet persistent disruption. The process by which one remembers memories, becomes conscious of one's moral duties, and experiences the inner conflict is known as the inner struggle. The topics of memory, consequence, and the existential despair that follows, all covered in this line, challenging journey of ego unearthing.

### **Theme Three: Understanding Time: Analyzing How We Refer to Time**

"We live in time—it holds us and moulds us—but I've never felt I understood it very well" (Barnes, 2011, p.11). The difficulties of life and its influence on our daily actions are highlighted in this quote. The manner in which one of the main themes of the book is Tony Webster's understanding of how time shapes our lives. Time has a major impact on our thoughts, emotions, moral decisions, and views. It "holds us" and then "molds us" by defining the boundaries of our existence and directing the course of our memories, remorse, actions, and development. Despite battling it every day, Tony admits that he still doesn't quite understand it. Time actually moves linearly, jumping, combining, and then disappearing from consciousness, as evidenced by a variety of other uncertainties. Our memories are sometimes imperfect. The story implies that time might alter our viewpoints rather than merely affecting them, as Tony is aware that his perspective on the past may be partially or entirely wrong. The book's central ideas are now related to this temporal ambiguity. It asks if certain experiences, personal opinions, and tales may be false. As time goes on, Tony's memories change, which in turn affects how he sees the past. Furthermore, the declaration raises the delicate question of how far we may go if we know ourselves but don't completely comprehend the force guiding our existence. We are reminded by this that, in the end, we are still who we are. The findings highlight the limitations of our understanding, the boundaries of what we only partially comprehend, and the enigma of time. "When we are young, we invent different futures for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different pasts for others" (Barnes, 2011, p.152). Tony sheds light on the future perspective of young people, while older generations dwell on the past. People are creating their own narratives while disregarding the facts in every circumstance. Baudrillard claims that these are all lies that look more realistic than the truth. "Time ... give us enough time and our best-supported decisions will seem wobbly, our certainties whimsical" (Barnes, 2011, p. 176). Tony's distorted view of events and twisted sense of reality are evident here. Memory is currently changing. He lives in a past that may never have happened, and his ideas are incorrect. "You get towards the end of life—no, not life itself, but of something else: the end of any likelihood of change in that life" (Barnes, 2011, p. 281). No matter what he claims, Tony appears to live his life in one area. The concept of Baudrillard is one example. He predicts that nothing will ever be fascinating. He's in a rut. Even if he isn't there physically, he is actually going through the life cycle.

### **Theme Four: Big Stories and the Fake: Sharing Stories as Copying**

"And that's a life, isn't it? Some achievements and some disappointments" (Barnes, 2011, p. 109). This statement shows Tony Webster, the narrator, to be a thoughtful and composed person, even if it may seem simple at first. He brings up the idea that every life is a mixture of variety of events. Tony is struggling to comprehend how his previous

choices and relationships have shaped who he is now. He wants to comprehend and take apart both his accomplishments and failures. Tony has an epiphany even if his departure has been permitted. The rhetorical question "Isn't it?" invites the reader to reflect on the truth of Tony's own life. Life, from this point of view, is a combination of accomplishments and failures, triumphs that may make others happy, and successes and failures that are not recorded. Think about whether we all live in the same reality or whether "isn't it?" should be used as a rhetorical question. Tony's journey, the height of the human experience, is the phrase "some accomplishments and some disappointments" implies at least a tinge of melancholy, even if the narrative is replete with disappointments. Tony's true feelings may change throughout the story. They are, in a word, "letdowns." Even though his lifestyle is somewhat ordinary, he has always had a conservative, if not harsh, outlook on life. The best indicators of who he is, are his ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges and his lack of emotional extremes, which means that his life has few highs and lows. In this manner, he is able to view his life objectively, rather than in a fit of anger. He never stops boasting about his achievements, though, despite these flaws. He makes an effort to be authentic. Furthermore, our method of assessing our lives is completely contrary to this line of reasoning. As a result, are we gauging our success by the variety of our experiences? Or according to our current state of mind? What really occurred? Tony's honesty and introspection reveal the boundaries of his emotional range and the precise course he follows. He came to a decision. Tony admits that he would have lived a better life if he had avoided taking chances and forged close relationships, even if it might have saved him a lot of agony. Since it suggests that there may be a purpose to life other than just living it, the book raises its fundamental existential topics, which are those concerning realities. Because he is his support system, his successes and failures cannot have the true organic significance that characterizes his existence. "Life isn't just addition and subtraction. There's also the accumulation, the multiplication, of loss, of failure" (Barnes, 2011, p. 196). Tony thinks that life isn't something you can calculate like a math problem – it's much more complex than that. Emotions like sadness and pain don't follow any rules. His earlier views showed a misunderstanding of life that ignored deep feelings. Baudrillard might refer to that as a copy of reality or a replica of existence. "The events reconfirm the emotions – resentment, a sense of injustice, relief – and vice versa. There seems no way of accessing anything else; the case is closed. Which is why you seek corroboration, even if it turns out to be contradiction" (Barnes, 2011, p. 226). One of the toughest Unsettling aspects of Julian Barnes's book, highlighted in this passage, is life that is difficult to define is one in which memories, emotions, and the quest for clear answers interact. The narrator, Tony Webster, expresses ideas that suggest persistent worry, namely the difficulty of truly comprehending the past, especially one's own. The story also illustrates how our feelings affect how we perceive and remember events. In turn, events influence our feelings, which make it more difficult to view them from a different perspective. "The events reconfirm the emotions...vice versa" implies a psychological perspective. In our relationships, few individuals demonstrate objectivity; rather our emotions frequently play a role. Therefore, we maintain not just the facts but also our memory of them. It gave us emotions. For instance, if a memory contains shame or betrayal, we may feel regret and we unconsciously alter our memories in order to defend ourselves or rationalize our emotions. Emotions may have an impact on memories, and memories may have an impact on emotions, leading to a back-and-forth interaction. Since it fosters comprehension, it offers solace. However, it could also restrict us and keep us rooted in a single mindset. Tony said, "There seems no way of gaining access to anything else." This highlights his realization and discontent; the case is closed. It becomes quite rational. It's difficult to view our own history as being based on our chosen memories or else, after we've built it. Although new information is brought to light, they must still overcome the widely held conventional narrative. The past seems unattainable, and we and others share that sentiment. However, the subsequent line raises

a different issue. "Which explains why you seek help even if it turns out to be contradiction," said the unexpected layer. This statement is full of sarcasm. The narrator claims the "case is closed," but he goes on to say that and admits to having an almost obsessive impulse to open it in order to search for evidence or consensus on it, what he recalls and what he feels. The intriguing aspect is the notion that contradictory information and asking questions about our comprehension of occurrences might be beneficial since it allows us to make connections. It breaks the inertia of memory by allowing us to move – intellectually, emotionally, and morally – in the past. Tony begins to see at this point in the story that his memories are not as he had previously thought, he was either trustworthy or objective in his inquiry into letters, speeches, and other documents. A person's concepts reveal his need to either strengthen or question his own story. He starts to keep in mind that memory is a constantly changing process that is influenced by time, individual prejudice, and emotional needs in place of a permanent record. The emotions listed are bitterness, a feeling of Tony's inner struggle is revealed by the injustice he suffers and the relief he feels. Concerning Adrian's passing and his problematic relationship with his family, in particular Veronica, from rather than these emotions influence how Tony views things. For instance, he might believe that he has been treated unfairly or that not understood because he is resentful or maybe relieved by what his memory tells him. Regardless of whether the stories are flawless or entirely true, people often seek tales that can help them comprehend their lives rather than just learning the truth. People are often motivated to look for these stories by the anguish of not knowing the truth. New conflicts or decisions that might be turned and lead to either greater denial or self-improvement may alter the course of this tale. Tony meets someone in *The Sense of an Ending* as part of his belated self-discovery. This section argues that in order to truly comprehend the past, one must be prepared to confront the emotions connected to it. Instead of clinging to the comforting notion that everything is perfect, it may accept inconsistencies. Even though memory may not offer the complete truth, searching for contradictions can help you gain a deeper and more intricate understanding of yourself.

### **Theme Five: Feeling Far Away and the Mask of Reality**

"It strikes me that this may be one of the differences between youth and age: when we are young, we invent different futures for ourselves; when we are old, we invent different pasts for others" (Barnes, 2011, p. 152). A key theme is highlighted in this quote from *The Sense of an Ending*: how attitudes towards time and one's own identity change throughout one's life. Through the figure of Tony, In addition to getting older, Barnes also writes about the ways that our memories, dreams and expectations change over time as well. The statement is masterfully constructed around a comparison between both youth and old age and produces novel ideas, but they concentrate on different events and targets. We are forward-facing in our youth. Life appears to provide a lot of possibilities, and the possibilities seem endless. The "invent different futures" reflects the hopes and desires of the community. Common aspirations associated with being in one's teens or twenties. Young people see a variety of options for their lives, including different careers, relationships, places to live, and more. Even if some of these dreams are overly sentimental or unrealistic, young people often believe that their passion motivates us and influences our choices. Time is a reflection of their hard work in shaping their own future; conversely, as individuals get older, they tend to reflect. In this stage, it's crucial to produce new concepts. Prior events are the focus of new ideas, not on what is coming. As opposed to consciously daydreaming, older people frequently reevaluate or rewrite their history, including their past, as they consider their future. For Tony, this is evident as he thinks about the lives of his old buddies such as Adrian and Veronica are the subject of his altered recollection, which occasionally includes hints of emotion. They may have been a way to deal with things mentally, but not a way to establish a clear and obvious. This "invent"

highlights the unreliability of memory and the influence of perspective on it, rather than being a deliberate falsehood. Tony begins to see as he grows older. He came to understand as he grew older that a lot of what he knew about his past was either inaccurate or insufficient. He begins to understand that at that time he had been using beliefs based on his limited knowledge to conceal. He viewed other people through the lens of his own emotions, such as anger, envy, or fear and then realized how simple or wrong those concepts may be. This data is used to develop a postmodern understanding of individual reality, in which the past is always present. It is not a predetermined sequence of events, but rather a reinterpretation based on memory, feelings, and individual tastes. The implication of the story is that we invent multiple pasts for others, highlighting how frequently we comprehend the complexity of life, people altered history—not simply to defend themselves. This may involve altering our feelings for someone, falsely accusing them, or idealizing them for some occurrences. The remark emphasizes how important it is to know one's life well. People fantasize about creating the narrative of their future when they are youngsters. As they get older, they attempt to rewrite or reinterpret the incidents that started the tale. Initially, Tony believes he is merely watching. Despite all that he has experienced, he is much more resilient than he had ever imagined. The emotional high point of the book is this newfound level of self-awareness. Furthermore, the word conveys both the knowledge gained through experience and the losses endured. Wisdom here: The truth of what has happened must be accepted, no matter how overwhelming it may be. In contrast, young people are driven by their imaginations of what could happen. From a different angle, you may understand your own life by creating other people's pasts. In essence, it depicts with delicacy how time, memory, and identity evolve over time and how the way people think about the world changes as they get older, moving from the optimistic to the pessimistic. To the prudent (and frequently altered) re-evaluation of the past, future dreams are constructed. Barnes contends that while both the young and the old create stories, they do so for distinct reasons: the young do so to plan for the future, while the elderly do so to reflect on the past. Young people dream, while older people comprehend their world. "I had wanted life not to bother me too much, and had succeeded—and how pitiful that was" (Barnes, 2011, p. 188). Tony thought that peace was the best thing ever, but he now sees that it made his life feel empty. He lived in a fake kind of peace, where nothing real happened. Baudrillard might suggest that this is a type of life that seems nice but is really shallow. "Sometimes I think the purpose of life is to reconcile us to its eventual loss" (Barnes, 2011, p. 198). One of the major themes in Julian Barnes's "The Sense of an Ending" is highlighted by this passionate expression. The manner in which we gradually, and sometimes unconsciously, accept our eventual fate: life is a gradual road toward understanding and accepting this fate. Its sure conclusion aids us, rather than a list of achievements or important events. Prepare yourself for death emotionally and mentally, rather than chasing after wealth, fame, or a long-lasting legacy. Tony frequently loses himself in thoughts of memories, age, and emotions. The novel is permeated by remorse, frequently accompanied by concerns for someone who is getting older. He starts to realize how little time he has as he thinks about his history and reevaluates his present, choices and relationships. This assertion implies that every moment of our joys and sorrows reconcile at some point. Furthermore, ideas might play a more, gentler role in assisting us in coming to terms with our own unavoidable death. The line clarifies more than it conveys. From this perspective, life is all about how we deal with the truth that one day we will be replaced by others. It will halt at every encounter, whether it be love, friendship, or failure and even simply our behavior. Would you be able to coax us into accepting this reality? Forgiveness may be quite painful. Later in his life, Tony fights to make amends for his past and finds clarity in the hazy areas of his memories that are in the background of the story. The trip reveals his personal narrative as well as the Barnes' line thus provides a comprehensive understanding of the constraints imposed by time and by life itself: that the

most important existence can achieve, however, is coming to terms with death. "You just don't get it, do you? You never did, and you never will" (Barnes, 2011, p. 238). Veronica's comments reveal Tony lived in a story he made up and was unable to fully grasp reality by himself. Tony's fake perspective of reality was something. Baudrillard's theory addresses: he cherished it more than anything, the real occurrences taking place all around him.

## Conclusion

To put it simply, this is Baudrillard's view on simulacra and simulation; *The Sense of an Ending* demonstrates that Tony Webster's memories are copies without a clear source rather than being instantaneous reflections of previous events rather than accurate reproductions of them. Tony's recollections are biased fabrications driven by guilt, emotion and selective forgetting, turning these recollections into replacing simulacra for what are said to be more ethically or emotionally acceptable. The real ones are the events. Tony's hyperreal reflection on his life is seen in his retrospective narrative: One with a realistic touch that is based on logic and emptiness.

Baudrillard's work and Barnes's are in agreement; misinterpretation reigns over reality. Tony's life is more influenced by his ideas of hyperreality. The line between real memories and his last finding of the disorganized condition of his fictitious world is revealed by contradictory evidence: the feeling of an unreliable identity and significance.

## Recommendations

The conclusion explores how tales that mirror reality affect our sense of the feeling of an unreliable identity and significance. Barnes's book, which also reflects on the self, memory, and aging, is analyzed through Baudrillard's concepts on how one's life becomes a simulation, and sometimes, looking for meaning in a postmodern world leads to additional outcomes and knowledge masked by ignorance.

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