Truth in Between: Postmodern Humanism in the Fiction of Julian Barnes

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Contents

Abstract

Contemporary British writer Julian Barnes (1946-) has generally been treated as a purveyor of postmodernist fiction, but this designation is being increasingly challenged. The bases for this challenge are the heterogeneity of his fictional works, and the constant humanistic concerns that underpin them. This research therefore delineates postmodern humanism as a defining feature of Barnes's works, and in doing so seeks to bring together the two seemingly incompatible notions of postmodernism and humanism. I argue that Barnes holds on to the humanistic values centring on truth and love, despite his formal playfulness and occasional overlaps with postmodern poetics (suspicion of grand narratives, awareness of how language mediates value-construction, and so on). While echoing postmodern deconstruction of grand narratives, Barnes reconstructs the essence of truth and love and insists on their ethical necessity in lived life. In this way, he transcends the antithesis between postmodernism and humanism and establishes his concept of truth as "in between".

In this thesis I examine five Barnes novels—*Metroland, Flaubert's Parrot, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters, England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending* —which, I argue, best illustrate the emergence and development of Barnes's postmodern humanism. In that regard, three themes dominate this sequence of texts: the interaction between art and life, human-animal relationships, and the fallibility of memory as a wellspring of identity and truth. I explore Barnes's deviation from postmodernism in light of his affiliations with contemporary humanism, insofar as the latter is developed by three French theorists, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur and Tzvetan Todorov. I draw, in particular, on their emphasis on the ethical relationship implicated in language e and art, the ethics of the Other, and the belief in memory and truth. With Barnes's novels as my case studies, I take postmodern humanism as an extension of the modernist pursuit of dynamic unity between form and content and evaluate the significance of this pursuit in the larger context of the ethical turn that began in the age of postmodernism.

Keywords: postmodern humanism; art and life; ecological humanism; memory; truth

Statement of Candidate

I hereby state that the following thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree in any university or education institution.

All sources of information used in the thesis have been indicated and due acknowledgement has been given to the work of others.

Signed: Lixia Lin

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Abbreviations

AG—*Arthur & George* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005)

EE—*England, England* (London: Vintage, 2000)

FP— *Flaubert's Parrot* (London: Picador, 1985)

HW—*A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1989)

LL— *Letters from London* (London: Picador, 1995)

IG—*Imperfect Garden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.)

KEO—*Keeping an Eye Open*: *Essays on Art* (*London*: Jonathan Cape, 2015)

M—*Metroland* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980)

MHF—*Memory, History and Forgetting* (Chicago &London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004)

SD—*Something to Declare* (London: Picador, 2002)

SE—*The Sense of an Ending* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011)

TIO—*Talking It Over* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991)

TI—*Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969)

TO—*Time and the other and additional essays* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987)

TW—*Through the Window* (London: Vintage, 2012)

Introduction

> Barnes is sometimes considered a postmodernist writer because his fiction rarely either conforms to the model of the realist novel or concerns itself with a scrutiny of consciousness in the manner of modernist writing. He has been said to stretch the bounds of fiction in his novels but it has just as often been suggested that he is an essayist rather than a novelist and his experimental books do not question the bounds of the novel but fall outside them.
>
> （Childs, *Contemporary Novelists* 88）

As one of the leading contemporary British writers, Julian Barnes is underestimated in comparison to literary peers such as Martin Amis, Ian McEwan, Kazuo Ishiguro or Salman Rushdie. Peter Childs's comment suggests the difficulty Barnes's overall artistic style poses to critics, which partly contributes to this underestimation. Another major reason is that Barnes's literary concerns can hardly fit into the prevalent auspices of "the holy trinity of race, gender, and class" in the contemporary critical environment (Berlatsky 175). It is questionable, however, whether this theoretical convenience can fully cover the ethical range and embody the aesthetic values of literary works. Domenic Head regards this practice as "the use of a theoretical perspective to determine rather than facilitate a reading" (3). In spite of the heterogeneity of his style, Barnes's works focus on the fundamental issue of the human heart and its relation to a broad range of matters such as art and life, history and fiction, memory and identity, love and truth, etc. To appreciate Barnes's works properly, we need a different paradigm.

As the following literature will demonstrate, current Barnes studies are bifurcated into postmodern studies and the exploration of humanistic concerns. To strengthen this dialogue, this thesis defines postmodern humanism as an exact illustration of Barnes's aesthetic principle and ethical concerns. I argue that Barnes holds on to the humanistic values centring on truth and love as transcendent principles, despite his formal playfulness and occasional overlaps with postmodern poetics, such as his suspicion of grand narratives and awareness of how language mediates value-construction. I explore Barnes's deviation from postmodernism in light of his affiliations with contemporary humanism, insofar as the latter is developed by three French theorists, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur and Tzvetan Todorov.

Truth and love are two axes around which I develop this thesis. Barnes shows a complicated attitude towards truth. On the issue of historical truth, while sharing the postmodern deconstruction of Truth established by the grand narratives, he avoids its relativism by holding the belief that the traces of historical events exist and will reveal themselves in time. He affirms the ethical necessity of such a belief. In the interview with Vanessa Guignery, Barnes notes, "History may be 56 per cent true or 100 percent true, but the only way to proceed from 55 to 56 is to believe that you can get to a hundred"("History in Question(s) 65"). There is another level of truth about individual experience in Barnes's novels, which I define as experiential truth. It registers the expectations, frustrations and disillusionment of his characters in their pursuit of meaning and truth. Characters—like Chris in *Metroland*, Braithwaite in *Flaubert's Parrot* and Martha in *England, England*—all experience such truth. It forms the foundation of their identity or self-identification. With the human heart as its locus, this sense of truth is different from both the realistic objective truth and the modern psychological truth. It is between instinct and reason. Barnes's stress on the experiential truth in his works indicates the same preference for the subjectiveness of truth as the French humanist Michel de Montaigne has demonstrated, which is often interpreted as a symptom of his postmodernism based on his additional awareness of the constructedness of any truth claim. Frederick M. Holmes suggests that all of Barnes's fiction shows the tension "between a need to discover and bear witness to fundamental truths about life and a worry that they can be apprehended only subjectively and expressed in words only inadequately" (*Julian Barnes* 123). In spite of his postmodern awareness of the constructedness and subjectiveness of truth, Barnes insists that literature is "the best way of telling the truth" and a paradoxical "process of producing grand, beautiful, well-ordered lies that tell more truth than any assemblage of facts" (Guppy, 2001:57). Barnes's attitude towards truth suggests a possible connection between postmodernism and humanism, so it is "truth in between".

Love is another theme this thesis will focus on. Based on the previous exploration of various kinds of love in Barnes's novels, I define his understanding of love as a respect for the alterity of the Other in light of the ethics of the Other[1] advocated by Levinas and extend it to the human-animal relationship.

[1] In *Totality and Infinity*, the word "other" is sometimes capitalized, but sometimes not. I capitalize it for consistency.

I develop the dialogue between humanism and postmodernism in Barnes's novels from three perspectives: the relationship between art and life, the human-animal relationship and the fallibility of memory as a wellspring of identity and truth. Barnes's postmodern humanism is interpreted as an adaptation of the modernist pursuit of the unity of form and content to the postmodern age.

I attribute this postmodern humanism to the British and French humanistic traditions Barnes integrates into his works. While asked to position himself, Barnes answers that he is "probably anchored in the Channel" (Guppy 57). This in-between position is the foundation of his whole artistic principle and literary style. On the British side, he inherits the tradition established by Jane Austen, which focuses on revealing humanity in the triviality of daily life. Born into a middle-class family and growing up in a London suburb, Barnes presents the life he is most familiar with to his reader. His observation of Englishness is so convincing that Michael Wood suggests that "no one knows the dark, quiet corners of its pathology better than he does" ("Stupidly English"). This judgment can find its support in Barnes's characterization of a series of vivid male and female characters in his novels.

The male character in his novels is usually a well-educated middle-class pedant, such as Geoffrey Braithwaite in *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) and Oliver in *Talking it Over* (1991) and *Love, etc.* (2000). While the former embellishes his narration with quotations from Flaubert, the latter can "scatter *bon mots* like sunflower seeds" (*TIO* 239). As part of Englishness, the pedantry in these characters endows them with a kind of "passivity", "a fundamental tendency towards self-reflexivity, and a preference for meditating about life instead of living it" (Vecsernyés 29). This meditation incorporates a broad range of topics, like literature, history, memory, truth, love, identity, etc. into Barnes's novels. These ideas often challenge the traditional understanding of them and represent what Jean-François Lyotard calls "incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv). They elevate the triviality of these characters' daily lives into macro quasi-philosophical reflections. For example, in *England, England* (1998) and *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), the construction of individual memory is mediated with contemplations of the construction of national identity and history. Moreover, although most of his characters are so-called losers in life, they show a nearly hysterical persistence in their pursuit of love or truth, such as Chris's exploration of art and life in *Metroland* (1980), Braithwaite's quest for Flaubert's parrot and Tony's search for his past life in *The Sense of an Ending*. These two

aspects offer a kind of transcendence over their incompetence and turn their average daily life into a life examined. Compared to the male characters, the women in Barnes's novels show more initiative in their pursuits and possess a clearer self-awareness, as we see with Jean in *Staring at the Sun* (1986) and Jillian in *Talking it Over* and *Love, etc*.

Barnes depicts the love between these men and women and reflects on the problems they encounter, especially the frustrations, compromises and failures in their pursuit of love and truth. He acknowledges that he inherits "a pervasive melancholy" from the English poets whom he admires, such as Thomas Hardy, A.E. Houseman and Philip Larkin. In his view, it "partly comes from the objective assessment of the human condition, the inevitability of extinction—and also from an objective look at how many people's lives turn out and how rarely achievement matches intention" (Freiburg 35). The observation reveals Barnes's double perspective—both macro and micro—from which he examines the human life.

At the same time, as a self-claimed Francophile with expertise in French literature and art, Barnes's work is pervaded with French culture and literature. Barnes's parents were middle school French teachers, so he was exposed to French culture and literature at an early age. He became familiar with French provincial life when his family went to France for holidays. During his study at Oxford, he first majored in law but turned to French and Russian later. He regards France as his "other country" and acknowledges that "[a] lot of my intellectual points of reference are French rather than English" (Swanson). The presence of French culture and literature dominates his exploration of the relationship between art and life. For most of his characters, exposure to these things forms the inseparable "other" in their maturity and life. It is a process of dialogue and integration. In *Metroland*, the three parts of the novel center on the protagonist Chris's evolving understanding of the relationship between art and life and its significance to his life. As the title suggests, *Flaubert's Parrot* is the homage Barnes pays to French writer Gustave Flaubert, whose works and life are the protagonist Braithwaite's detour towards the trauma caused by his wife's betrayal. A critique of French painter Théodore Géricault's painting *Medusa* features as a chapter in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989). This diversified presence of French literature and art is Barnes's way of meditating on the function of art and a unique angle from which to perceive the distance between the

ideal and the real.

The literary conventions involved in these works range from French symbolism in the late19th century to modernism in the early 20th century. Barnes himself was especially fascinated by "the story of how art (mainly French art) made its way from Romanticism to Realism and into Modernism", especially "[t]he central section of this period — approximately 1850 to 1920", which he takes "as a time of great truth-speaking combined with a fundamental reexamination of the forms of art" (Barnes, *KEO* 9). As the start of this period, the 1850s is crucial in French modern literature and art, for two of its monumental works were published in this period: Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* in 1856 and Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* in 1857. With a focus on the unity of form and content, they reform both the subject matter of the novel and poetry and the ways to write them, marking the beginning of modernism in their respective fields. Barnes's presentation of these two figures in *Metroland* and *Flaubert's Parrot* represents his early negotiation with the modernist pursuit of the unity of form and content.

As my analysis will show, Barnes to some extent shares this modernist literary pursuit. He reevaluates the validity of this principle by mediating it with postmodern reality. In his essay "The 'Unpoetical' Clough" collected in *Through the Window* (2012), he gives a unique interpretation of this principle embodied by the British poet Arthur Hugh Clough, a friend of Mathew Arnold. For Arnold, art is to "transcend or transmute-or avoid the unpoeticality", so he despised Clough's style and wrote to him: "I doubt your being an *artist*" (qtd. in *TW*: 37, italics in original). However, Barnes calls him the 'unpoetical' poet" and what he appreciates in Clough is exactly this style, which he thinks is the perfect form for the unpoetical age (*TW* 37). His novel writing is characterized by the same flexible understanding of the unity of form and content. In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Braithwaite explains this principle: "Form isn't an overcoat flung over the flesh of thought (. . .); it's the flesh of thought itself. You can no more imagine an Idea without a Form than a Form without an Idea. Everything in art depends on execution: the story of a louse can be as beautiful as the story of Alexander" (160). The emphasis on the performative function of form underscores Barnes's artistic principle and style,[2] which is better exemplified by the cross-generic

[2] While defining the theoretical novel, Mark Currie emphasizes its performative function, that is, "it does not try to state the truth about an object–narrative but rather enacts or performs what it wishes to say about narrative while itself being a narrative" (59). Of course, this is not exclusive to theoretical novels. Paul Sheehan points out, "The

juxtapositions in *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*. He is often quoted as saying, "In order to write, you have to convince yourself that it's a new departure for you and not only a new departure for you but for the entire history of the novel" (Stout). However, different from the radical formal experimentation of some postmodernists, Barnes's writing is mainly characterized by the free movement between different literary traditions, genres, and styles. It matches his thematic concern with the multiplicity and complexity of truth.

For all this inheritance, Barnes shows more an attitude of critical acceptance. F.R. Leavis has observed, "One of the supreme debts one great writer can owe another is the realization of unlikeness" (10). In his reflections on these two great figures, Barnes shows more of a humanistic position. He displays his doubts about the correspondence between art and life advocated by Baudelaire and Rimbaud and the possibility of a pure aesthetical life like that of a *flâneur* by presenting the character Chris's transformation from imitating art in life to giving up art for a happy practical life in *Metroland*. In *Flaubert's Parrot,* Barnes evokes the multiple lives and personalities of Flaubert behind his literary principle of impersonality. In his integration of a postmodern reflection on identity, intertextuality and fictionality and the humanistic pursuit of love and truth, he displays the humanistic position that art is about the human heart and human experience and artistic works cannot be independent of the author and the world in which they are set. Sven Birkerts captures Barnes's balance between ambitious formal experimentation and "commitment to literary seriousness" in the following insightful observation:

> Barnes is a writer determined to have it all ways; that he has adopted a coolly cerebral modernist stance that is flexible enough to accommodate some postmodern dalliance, but never in a way that would be binding. The postmodernist stance all but condemns a writer to ironic distance. Barnes, a consummate ironist, nonetheless reserves the right to get serious without the telltale arching of the brow (65).

This, in fact, is a return to formal realism, which Ian Watt considers as "the narrative embodiment of a premise that Defoe and Richardson accepted very literally, but

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modernist novel liberates narrative's latent performative power by introducing formal irregularities" (*Modernism* 15). Barnes's novels show more these modernist formal irregularities.

which is implicit in the novel form in general: the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience" (35). It demonstrates the continuity within literary traditions from realism to postmodernism.

Another prominent French influence upon Barnes is the essayistic tradition established by Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) and developed by other essayists like Nicolas Chamfort (1741-92). Barnes's novels have apparent essayistic features —the loose narrative structure and the embellishment of philosophical thinking and anecdotes in narratives. In *Flaubert's Parrot,* Braithwaite mentions one thing Flaubert learned from Montaigne: "Nature is always a mixture of genres" (*FP* 149). Barnes's juxtaposition of different genres in the novel is a direct illustration of this teaching. More importantly, the author's attitude towards truth and love, as highlighted in this thesis, can be traced back to the skeptical and dialectic attitudes of these essayists.

Montaigne's humanism is characterized by his skepticism, of which Donald M. Frame gives a felicitous description:

> His mental temper, for example, seems always to have been skeptical. Skeptical in the etymological sense of one who judiciously stops to look before he takes a mental leap, who considers all sides before he commits himself. Skeptical because his mind is always sensitive to diversity than to uniformity; because nature, as he sees it, has made things more unlike than like, so that all comparisons are lame and all statements oversimplications. Skeptical because his historical and personal perspective always reminds him that the views of his time, his country, and himself are by no means absolute truths. Skeptical from experience and judgment, which have shown him his own intellectual follies and those of others. Skeptical finally because he is deeply aware of the unceasing change in us and in all earthly things which keeps anything constant and permanent like absolute truth from dwelling in us. (7)

In his attitude towards truth, Barnes echoes Montaigne's skepticism and his preference for "subjective truthfulness" over "objective truth" (Luthy 35).

Another aspect of Montaigne's influence is his interpretation of friendship as a

non-utilitarian commitment. Tzvetan Todorov observes, "The novelty of humanist thought since Montaigne is to conceive of these relationships in an intransitive manner" (*Frail Happiness* viii). In *Essays* (1580), while talking about his friendship with Estienne de la Boetie, Montaigne explains the foundation of their friendship like this, "If I were pressed to say why I love him, I feel that my only reply could be: 'because it was he, and it was I'" (97). This foreshadows the ethics of the Other advocated by contemporary theorist Emmanuel Levinas. As I will show, Barnes's concept of love shares this sense of the alterity of the Other.

Chamfort is another essayist whose artistic and moral principles Barnes echoes. Albert Camus speaks highly of Chamfort's writing and personality. He calls him "a moralist"—"a man who has dedicated his life to the study of the human heart"—and distinguishes him from another famous essayist, Francois de La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680) (12). Accordingly, he regards Chamfort's writing as "thoughts", in contrast to La Rochefoucauld's Maxims, which he despised as "algebraic formula(s)" (13). In his essay "The Wisdom of Chamfort", collected in *Through the Window*, Barnes expresses a similar attitude of appreciation. He traces Chamfort's wisdom back to an engagement with the dark side of humanity—"familiarity with weakness, failure and misery than with strength and wealth" (*TW* 103). He further defines "a true moralist" as "an observer of human particularity in the same way a novelist is" (*TW* 107). Barnes shares Chamfort's taint of pessimism and focus on the particular.

In his exploration of the human heart, Barnes apparently follows the lead of these humanist precursors. He regards himself as a moralist. In reaction to the uncertainties expressed by the multiple parrots at the end of *Flaubert's Parrot,* he makes it clear that his standing is that of a moralist rather than the relativism of an old hippy. As he explains,

> I think I'm a moralist . . . Part of a novelist's job obviously is to understand as wide a variety of people as possible. And you put them in situations where there isn't necessarily an easy answer, and things aren't necessarily resolved. But this doesn't mean you don't have strong personal views about how life should be lived, and what's good and bad behavior, as I certainly do. (McGrath 18-19)

In this sense, Moseley thinks Barnes "sounds more like George Eliot than Samuel

Beckett"（15-16). This remark links him to the British humanistic tradition established by Jane Austen, who combined aesthetic value with "intense moral preoccupation" (Leavis 7). However, this does not mean writing novels for a didactic purpose, instead, it is about "challenging ideologies with the novel as a form of intellectual enquiry and not as a moral position" (Groes & Childs 7). Barnes's humanism is displayed in the sympathizing tone he adopts while narrating his characters' failures and compromises as well as in his affirmation of their efforts to pursue their goals.

In addition to this link to the two different humanistic traditions, as a writer living in the postmodern age, Barnes is sensitive to postmodern reality and this new theoretical development. Although he has made it clear that "there is no continuing dialogue between writing fiction and literary theory" in his writing, there is an awareness of or a contingent link to postmodern theories in his works (Freiburg 37). He responds to some postmodern theories, such as Roland Barthes's concepts—"the text" and "the death of the author"—in *Flaubert's Parrot* and Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality in consumer society in *England, England*, but he displays a critical distance from them at the same time. He insists on the realistic standing that "[n]ovels come out of life, not out of theories either about life or literature", and on the necessity of ethics in both life and literary works (Freiburg 37). However, in some other cases, as the following analysis will demonstrate, Barnes acknowledges "the postmodern condition": its challenges towards the grand narratives and awareness of the mediation of language in meaning and value constructions. Barnes thus accommodates his humanist aesthetic principle to postmodern reality. Therefore, the formal innovation in his novels, such as the juxtaposition of different genres and styles, which is usually interpreted as the prominent aspect of his postmodernism, is preconditioned by his reflections on the postmodern deconstruction of traditional norms. This is consistent with his thematic exploration of the complexity of postmodern truth.

Julian Barnes: Critical Perspectives

Although Barnes's first novel *Metroland* won the Somerset Maugham Award for a First Novel, Barnes did not attract much critical attention until his third novel *Flaubert's Parrot*. Scholarly studies on Barnes started in the 1990s after the publication of *A History of the World in* $10^{1}/_{2}$ *Chapters*. During the past 30 years,

international studies on Barnes have flourished. So far, in the English language world, numerous essays, five monographs, two collections of critical essays and a collection of conversations have been published. To set this research in context, I present a thorough analysis of the status quo of Barnes studies in the English language world with the purpose of illustrating the postmodern and humanistic features the current studies have identified. I trace the parallel development of two trends in Barnes studies in the English language world: the dominating postmodern analyses and the constant but not so prominent exploration of Barnes's humanistic concerns.

I. Barnes as Pioneer of British Postmodernism

While the bold juxtaposition of different genres in *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10$^1/_2$ Chapters* strikes a chord with the postmodern formal experiment, their deconstruction of the traditional concepts of history and truth resonates with the postmodern challenge towards metanarratives. Therefore, the two novels were quickly absorbed into the discourses of poststructuralist and postmodern historiographic metafiction. Postmodernism became the defining voice of the early stage of Barnes studies.

James B. Scott was the first to adopt a poststructuralist approach to Barnes's work. In the article "Parrot as Paradigms: Infinite Deferral of Meaning in '*Flaubert's Parrot*'" (1990), Scott analyzes the deferral of meaning in the novel based on Jonathan Culler's understanding of identity and Umberto Eco's theory of the rhizome pattern. In *The Pursuit of Signs* (1980), Culler develops Levi-Strauss's view that "[t]he goal of human science is not to constitute man but to dissolve him" and further suggests that "the self is dissolved as its various functions are ascribed to impersonal systems which operate through it" (37). Based on this, Scott observes, "There can therefore be no such thing as an absolute truth or a Meaning of Life, and yet any solipsistic sense of the self as *the* repository of meaning and value is equally a delusion" (58, italics in original). He thinks *Flaubert's Parrot* best illustrates the aim of art as "registering the non-existence of truth and the indeterminacy of signs" (58). Scott's analysis captures the central theme of the novel—the uncertainty of truth. As I will show in Chapter 2, however, it is still questionable whether Barnes shares this radical postmodern skepticism of any truth claim. I will argue that what Barnes explores is a modernist epistemological doubt about how we can grasp the truth rather

than a postmodern ontological skepticism about the existence of the truth.

In "Random Pattern? Orderly disorder in Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters"* (1997), German Scholar Claudia Kotte analyzes Barnes's presentation and deconstruction of three concepts of historical development: eschatology, secular teleology and mythical circularity in the novel. She concludes that "Barnes's History dramatises the tension between the chaos of historical events and the order / ing of historiography. In doing so, it makes us question our passive reliance on traditional systems of order and exposes the constructedness of laws or patterns that operate universally throughout all of history" (128). Kotte's analysis is in line with the ideas of history held by Hayden White and Michel Foucault, which unmask the use of narrative in historical representations. However, it does not mention the dialectical balance Barnes keeps between postmodern deconstruction and the ethical reconstruction of trust in morality, art and love in the novel, which I will highlight in the third part of my analysis.

Another postmodern approach is to analyze the writing of history in these two novels under the label of postmodern historiographic metafiction. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988), Linda Hutcheon first uses the term to refer to novels which "are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (5). She establishes it as the dominant form of postmodern novels and thus opens a brand new perspective with which to approach them. Bruce Sasto, Daniel Bedggood and Brian Nicol all explore Barnes's postmodern sense of history in light of Hutcheon's analysis.

Sasto's book *Language, History, and Metanarrative in the Fiction of Julian Barnes* (2001) represents the first effort to examine the postmodern elements in Barnes's work thoroughly. He establishes Barnes's postmodernism on his interest in the problems of naming and representation, the awareness of fictionality, the concern with the deceptions of traditional historical discourse and the distrust of metanarratives. In contrast to his theorization of postmodernism, his analysis of postmodernism in Barnes's works needs further expansion. In his book *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*（2009), Nicol takes *Flaubert's Parrot* as one of the paradigms of the postmodern historical novel based on its deconstruction of the traditional genre of biography. He generalizes Braithwaite's dilemma into "a metaphor for the problem at the heart of historiographic metafiction: the limits to our

attempt to know the past" (117). Bedggood compares the postmodern historicism in the novels of Graham Swift and Julian Barnes. He thinks their novels "constitutes an 'opening up' of possibilities for finding meanings from fictive pasts", but the sense of history they express is postmodern: "Now plural, self-aware of its constructed status, and reliant on a larger range of mediums of recording, history resists the threat of closure" (214). These studies both solidify Barnes's postmodern position and evince Hutcheon's postmodern theory.

Hutcheon's postmodern theory is also illuminating in another way — its illustration of postmodernism's relationship to previous traditions. Although taking White and Foucault's deconstruction of traditional historiography as her starting point, she defines postmodernism as "a contradictory cultural enterprise, one that is heavily implicated in that which it seeks to contest. It uses and abuses the very structures and values it takes to task" (*Poetics* 106). In her book *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction* (1990), Alison Lee adopts this view together with those of Lyotard to guide her study of the relationship between postmodernism and realism. She identifies the same dual relation between postmodernism and realism and regards *Flaubert's Parrot* as one of the best embodiments of this relation.

In fact, A.S. Byatt discussed a similar dual relationship before this. She regards postmodernism as "an awareness of the difficulty of *realism* combined with a strong attachment to its values, a formal need to comment on their fictiveness combined with a strong sense that models, literature and the *tradition* are ambiguous and emblematic goods combined with a profound nostalgia for, rather than rejection of the great works of the past" (qtd. in Guignery *Fiction*: 1, italics in original). In alliance with this dual relationship between realism and postmodernism, Guignery gives a convincing demarcation of Barnes's postmodernism: "he both resorts to and subverts realistic strategies; his writing is essentially self-reflexive; and he celebrates the literary past but also considers it with irony" (*Fiction* 1). This delineation captures Barnes's use and deconstruction of traditional realistic values; however, as I will further show, there is a dimension of reconstruction in Barnes's relationship with traditional values even after the deconstruction.

In addition to the thematic deconstruction of the grand narratives, the bold juxtaposition of different genres and styles, especially in his two experimental novels *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, constitutes the

postmodern formal characteristics of Barnes's works. In *The Modern British Novels* (1993), Malcolm Bradbury calls this "stylistic promiscuity" and defines it as "part of the going convention of contemporary British fiction" in the 1980s in comparison to the similar practice in American literature which had been happening since the 60s (407-08). Based on this, Holmes identifies the "combining of different discursive forms and modes" and "dense intertextuality" as two other features of Barnes's postmodernism (*Julian Barnes* 14).

In their early stage of acceptance, due to the relatively conservative British literary atmosphere, the generic mixture in the two novels caused controversy and their very status as novels was severely questioned by some scholars.[3] Faced with such a challenge, Barnes gave his broad definition of the novel: "It's an extended piece of prose, largely fictional, which is planned and executed as a whole piece" (qtd. in Moseley: 9). This definition displays Barnes's free and open attitude towards novel writing, which is not restricted by genre. As will be analyzed in Chapter 2, on the issue of genre, Barnes mediates Mikhail Bakhtin's sociological and historical poetics and Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist deconstruction of genre's traditional law.

In addition to Barnes's two experimental novels, generic mixtures appear in his later works, such as the triangular dialogue borrowed from the drama in *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*, the montage in *Staring at the Sun* and *The Sense of an Ending,* and the quest model in detective stories in *Flaubert's Parrot* and *Arthur and George.* In a recent interview, Barnes calls himself "a trans-genre writer" (Browne), and his generic and formal innovation in novel writing has attracted scholarly attention. Guignery's studies in this aspect are worth mentioning. As an influential scholar on Barnes's works, she has published three books on Barnes's postmodern art of juxtaposition: *Postmodernism et effets de brouillage dans la fiction de Julian Barnes* (2001), 'Flaubert's Parrot' *de Julian Barnes* (2001) and *Julian Barnes: L'Art du mélange* (2001). However, in addition to being in French, these books are confined to Barnes's early works. In her later English book *The Fiction of Julian Barnes* (2006), Guignery analyzes the intertextuality between Barnes's mainstream and detective novels and gives a detailed summary of all kinds of generic classifications of *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters.*

The blurring of the boundaries between fiction and history in Barnes's novels is

[3] For a detailed introduction to the controversy concerning the generic question in the two novels, see Guignery, *Fiction* 37-40, 61-63.

another area of critical attention. Jackie Buxton and Gregory J. Rubinson explore Barnes's generic juxtaposition in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters.* In his essay "Julian Barnes's Theses on History (in 10½ Chapters)" (2000), Buxton does an intertextual reading of Barnes's novel and Walter Benjamin's critical essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940). Taking Benjamin's essay as his theoretical frame and intertext, Buxton aims for "mutual illumination": he reads Benjamin's thesis as an elucidation of Barnes's historiography and Barnes's novel as a fictional instantiation of Benjamin's concepts and methodology. Buxton's analysis highlights the interpenetration between history and literature. In this sense, literature is an effective way of illustrating the philosophy of history. Similarly, in "History's Genres: Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*" (2000), Rubinson analyzes the inextricable relationship between historical, biographical, and fictional genres in the novel in alliance with Barnes's commentary on Margaret Thatcher's autobiography *The Downing Street Years* (1993). He discusses Barnes's exploration of the broad areas of the fictionality and violence of history and the relationship between art and history etc. Deviating from postmodern historiographic metafiction, these two studies offer a new perspective on the genre with which to approach Barnes's presentation of history.

Scholars have noted Barnes's borrowing from some popular genres. Kathleen A. Kelly's research is pioneering in this respect. In "Talk-Show Intimacy and Narrative Technique in Julian Barnes's *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc*." (2008), Kelly compares the triangular dialogue in Barnes's two novels *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc*. with the mechanism of talk shows. She regards the novel reading process as a successful parody of talk-show viewing. In another essay "Humors, Neuroses, and Falling in Love in Julian Barnes's *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*" (2011), she further explores the interaction between the effects of comedy and the workings of "humor", a concept she borrows from Henri Bergson and Northrop Frye. Kelly's analyses display the dynamic functions of the genre in thematic expression and are original attempts at exploring Barnes's generic innovation.

Through exploring the potential of incorporating other genres into novel writing, generic studies give a full display of Barnes's formal innovation. They highlight the inclusiveness of Barnes's writing style and enable a better understanding of the heterogeneity of his works. In addition to generic studies, narratological studies offer another vital perspective on Barnes's constant formal innovations. These studies

cover a wide range of topics concerning narrative structure, the narrator, the relationship between the author and the narrator, etc. Although these studies do not always focus on the postmodern features of Barnes's works, they help to highlight them, so I put them under the umbrella category of postmodern studies. In the following, I introduce the narratological work relevant to this study.

The early narratological studies mainly concentrate on the inconsistent structure of Barnes's two experimental novels. In *Gatsby's Party: The System and the List in Contemporary Narrative* (1992), Pattie White takes *Flaubert's Parrot* as one of her texts through which to analyze the structural function of the list. White compares Braithwaite's personal historiography to the encyclopedia and the museum project: "both attempt to reconstitute an essentially absent subject by means of a synchronically situated and spatially coherent collection of subversive fragments" (111). She identifies a paradox in these projects: the analytical gaze will inevitably collapse the totalizing structure of the subject implicated in them. White's intertextual reading of Barnes with Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881) is an influence on my approach in Chapter 2. While she focuses on the formal aspect, I explore the thematic connection between the two novels.

The relationship between the narrator and Barnes himself is another enlightening aspect of scholarly studies. Keith Wilson suggests that "a distinctive readily authorial voice supplies the dominant tenor" in Barnes's works (363). He thinks a "narrator-transposed authorial voice" is present in both *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (365). In contrast, Ryan Roberts gives a thorough analysis of Barnes's transformation of his own experience into a better way of presenting the truth. On the one hand, he emphasizes Barnes's faithfulness to reality by presenting real events in the novel; on the other hand, he suggests the author's purposeful distinction from his character. The two scholars hold opposite opinions but make good arguments. Based on these two contrastive readings of the relationship between the narrator and the author, I will further explore Barnes's negotiation with Gustave Flaubert's principle of impersonality in Chapter 2.

The coherence of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* similarly arouses controversy among scholars. In "A Worm's Eye View of History: Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*" (2003), Brian Finney gives a thorough analysis of the cohesive strategies Barnes adopts. He defines the structure of the novel as what Lévi-Strauss calls "*bricolage*", in that Barnes abandons "a God-eyed narrative

perspective" and identifies two levels of cohesive strategies (50, 69). In an overall sense, the novel generally "proceeds by juxtapositions, by parallels and contrasts, by connections that depend on irony or accident" (51). There are also some hidden cohesive devices, such as the distinction between the "clean" and the "unclean", the different images of Noah's ark, as well as some repeated phrases and motifs. Finney classifies Barnes's writing of history as part of the same genre as Salman Rushdie's novels, that is, "fiction written on and about the margins of life that nevertheless manages to occupy its center" (70). This analysis reveals not only the novel's aesthetic construction but also Barnes's challenge towards traditional concepts, like truth and history, which I will approach from an ecological perspective.

The unique narrative style of Barnes's Man Booker-winning novel *The Sense of an Ending* has attracted a lot of scholarly attention. Holmes's essay "Divided Narratives, Unreliable Narrators, and *The Sense of an Ending*: Julian Barnes, Frank Kermode, and Ford Madox Ford" (2015) represents the latest narratological study on Barnes's works. As the title indicates, Holmes gives an intertextual reading of Barnes's novel, Frank Kermode's eponymous critical work and Ford's novel *The Good Soldier*. His analysis of the fictional qualities of memory construction in Barnes's novel in light of Kermode's theory of fiction—especially the way we endow time with meaning—is insightful. Based on this, I dig further into the cognitive, psychological and ethical aspects of memory construction.

While the studies from the perspectives of poststructuralism and postmodern historiographic metafiction accentuate Barnes's challenge towards the traditional sense of history and truth, the cross-generic and narratological studies help to reveal the formal uniqueness and diversity of Barnes's works. They both draw attention to Barnes's resonance with postmodernism. For all this, as Childs's comment in the epigraph reveals, to define Barnes as a postmodernist is problematic. Firstly, it is mainly founded on Barnes's two novels *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters*, but so far Barnes has published fifteen novels, so it can hardly contain the heterogeneity of all these works. Sebastian Groes and Childs are aware that Barnes's work "was not postmodernist upon its arrival, but nevertheless became central to *shaping* the moment of British high postmodernism in the 1980s" (2, italics in original). Guignery further diagnoses the problems of this label based on her understanding of the diversity of Barnes's writing:

> It is only by deliberately ignoring a significant part of his production that some critics persist in calling him a postmodernist writer, a label which is undoubtedly justified for some of his works but becomes debatable when one considers texts in which Barnes draws on realistic codes without necessarily subverting them or employing irony, or when he seems to rehabilitate the quest for truth and the reliance on grand narratives. ("Introduction：Criss-crossing Lines" 16)

Moreover, the postmodern label may easily blur the differences between Barnes's literary principles and a postmodern embrace of radical skepticism and denial of traditional value claims. In an interview with Bruce Cook, Barnes himself says, "I can't say, 'I'm a post-modernist,' because, frankly, I don't think of myself that way" (20). As the next section will indicate, while showing a skeptical reflection on traditional values, Barnes mediates this skepticism with humanistic concerns and pursues a new certainty after deconstruction. Therefore, postmodernism is a crucial feature of Barnes's particular works, but it is not the whole story.

II. Humanistic Concerns in Barnes Studies

There has always been another voice beneath the postmodern wave in Barnes studies, that is, the exploration of Barnes's humanistic concerns. As early as 1989, when commenting on Barnes's novel *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters*, American writer Joyce Carol Oates wrote about Barnes's way of expressing "ideas" which she thinks are "crucial" to him, and stated that she regards him as "a quintessential humanist . . . of the pre-post-modernist species" (13). Oates is the first to recognize the delicate balance between form and content which Barnes endeavours to achieve in all his works.

Mathew Pateman is an early explorer of the ethical concerns in Barnes's works. In "Julian Barnes and the popularity of ethics" (1994), he ascertains a unified and ultimate concern in Barnes's fiction in spite of its heterogeneity, that is, "the potential for an ethical formulation in light of the breakdown of legitimating narratives" (180). He discerns a contradictory belief in Barnes's work which distinguishes him from postmodern philosophers: "Barnes both believes in and requires the acceptance of a true base from which to resist the fragmentation implicit in postmodern theories of

history and the self" (186). This belief leads to a "dual commitment" in Barnes's works:

> The first is to test to the limit the formal possibilities of fiction; disrupting expected narrative, reformulating notions of character and plot. The second, inextricably bound up with the first, is to try to re-invent legitimating formulae in an effort to arrest our fall into beguiling relativity, to ensure that we do not give in to valuing one liar's version as much as another liar's. (189)

This judgment accurately grasps the deconstructive and reconstructive forces in Barnes's works and the ethical necessity Barnes's works convey. However, it is based on a sketch of Barnes's several novels and does not give detailed textual analysis. In his later book *Julian Barnes* (2002), Pateman further affirms Barnes's ethical concerns. As he comments, "Barnes's novels are all searching for ways of knowing the world, each other; they all have characters who are striving for some way of finding meaning in an increasingly depoliticized, secularized, localized, and depthless world" (2). Positive as he is about Barnes's ethical concerns, his book as a whole is more like a comprehensive introduction to Barnes's works, with a focus on the innovation of each book.

Merritt Moseley is the first scholar to write a book-length study of Barnes. In his book *Understanding Julian Barnes* (1997), Moseley classifies Barnes's works as "novels of ideas" and gives a comprehensive analysis of the major themes and formal innovation in the novels preceding *Porcupine* (1992). As I will analyze in Chapter 2, Moseley shows a reserved attitude towards comments on Barnes's radical postmodern skepticism, such as those made by Scott concerning the novel *Flaubert's Parrot.* This deviation from postmodernism is closer to Barnes's overall aesthetic principles. Moseley's identification of love as one of the dominant themes in Barnes's works is also significant. Although his analysis of love is brief, it is seminal to this research. However, he mainly focuses on Barnes's presentation of love in human relationships. I bring in the concept of ecological humanism with the purpose of extending Barnes's concept of love into more broad humanistic concerns, focusing on our love for animals and nature. Moseley is insightful in his overall judgment of Barnes's works as "a unique mixture of literary experimentation, intelligence, and dedication to the

truths of the human heart" (17). This is a better expression of Barnes's pursuit of the perfect unity of form and content.

Several recently published books indicate an increasing concern with the humanistic explorations in Barnes's works. The latest monograph on Barnes, Childs's *Julian Barnes* (2011), offers several new perspectives. He defines Barnes's artistic approach to novel writing as "fabulation" [4]—a "mixture of approaches to fiction derived from reality and imagination" (8). Different from critics' emphasis on Barnes's postmodern formal innovation, Childs clearly relocates Barnes in the humanist tradition. He suggests that "there is a significant if not clear-cut moral element to the novels that places Barnes more in a humanist than a postmodernist writing tradition" (15), more concretely, quoting Barnes's own words, "the sceptical, pragmatic, realist, untheoretical strand represented by writers such as Montaigne, Voltaire and Flaubert" (2). This positioning of Barnes in the French humanist tradition inspires my effort to integrate postmodernism and humanistic concerns in Barnes's works. It directs my attention to the French origin of Barnes's humanism. Nevertheless, Childs does not concretize the connections between the French humanistic tradition and Barnes's writing and its embodiment in the works. Moreover, the concept of fabulation in Scholes's sense is more like a transitional term between realism and postmodernism. Most of the writers classified as fabulators, such as Kurt Vonnegut, Lawrence Durrell, and John Barth, were later regarded as postmodernists, and the term fabulation was replaced by the more popular term postmodernism. Finally, Childs focuses more on the farcical and comical aspects of Barnes's novels, as he stresses that the purpose of fabulation lies in "a sense of pleasure in form" (9), which may undercut the ethical commitment of Barnes's novels. These aspects are points of departure I will take in my study.

The issue of Barnes's humanistic concerns features in two recently published collections of essays. In *Julian Barnes: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (2011), Groes and Childs co-edit nine essays by some of the most authoritative scholars in Barnes studies. The two editors make it clear that their volume "is an attempt to revalue Barnes's work, and to resituate his *oeuvre* beyond the limits of postmodern trickery by placing his writings in various traditions and new critical contexts . . ." (3).

[4] Childs borrows this concept from Robert Scholes. In his work *The Fabulators* (1967), Scholes connects fabulation to its original focus on verbal fiction and highlights its artistic aspects: "the spirit of playfulness and the care for form" (41).

For instance, articles by Mathew Taunton, Moseley and Guignery explore the influences of European cultural traditions upon Barnes from different perspectives, especially the influences of French literary and cultural traditions and French geography. They highlight the interaction between the two cultures in Barnes's works and deepen our understanding of the significance of Barnes's self-identification as a Francophile. This focus on the continental influences upon Barnes is balanced by Richard Bradford's analysis of Englishness in Barnes's *England, England*. Christine Berberich's "All Letters Quoted Are Authentic: The Past After Postmodern Fabulation in Julian Barnes's *Authur and George*" is a direct revision of Barnes's postmodern label. She establishes *Arthur & George* "as a novel that attempts to re-create its historical setting rather than continuing postmodern fabulation" (119). Some concerns in Barnes's work are discussed thoroughly for the first time, such as Andrew Tate's analysis of the religious theme in Barnes's work, discussions of the relationship between art and life in Barnes's writing by Roberts and Dimitrina Kondeva and Childs's analysis of the matter of life and death in Barnes's *The Lemon Table* (2004) and *Nothing to be Frightened Of* (2008).

The collection *Stunned into Uncertainty: Essays on Julian Barnes's Fiction* (2014) is the most recent work on Barnes. Two Hungarian editors, Eszter Tory and Janina Vesztergom, collected studies by Hungarian scholars and PhD candidates. These essays approach Barnes's work from multiple perspectives ranging from thematic studies, narrative, philosophy, psychology and ideology, etc. This collection attests to the popularity of Barnes's works outside Britain. These two collections of critical essays introduce more diversified approaches to Barnes's work and direct attention to those works that have been less thoroughly explored, such as *Metroland*, *Arthur and George* and *Staring at the Sun.* In spite of the diversity and prosperity of recent Barnes's studies, they demonstrate the return to the ethical concerns in Barnes's works.

In brief, the past thirty years saw the gradual flourishing of Barnes studies in Europe. As this overview has shown, the early dominating postmodern studies have been gradually replaced by more diversified approaches. In addition to the formal and generic studies, some scholars focus on the exploration of the humanistic concerns in Barnes's work. This new trend comes closer to Barnes's insistence on the dynamic interaction between form and content and marks the maturity of Barnes studies.

Theoretical Approach and Methodology

To define Barnes as a postmodern humanist is to engage dialogically with two of the most controversial terms in both literature and philosophy, which both denote multiplicity and complexity. To set this research in a theoretical context, I start with a brief illustration of these two concepts and their evolution.

The word "postmodernism" was first coined in the 1940s in architecture, but was widely used in 1960s by scholars like Susan Sontag, Leslie Fiedler and Ihab Hassan to describe the new aesthetic phenomenon emerging in literature and art, which either challenges the modernist aesthetics or extends its dramatic experimentation. As Brian McHale suggests, as a literary-historical fiction or discursive artifact, it is possible to construct postmodernism in multiple ways (4). Efforts are made to define postmodernism as a new poetics, a break from modernism. In this respect, the relationship between postmodernism and modernism is an inevitable but complicated topic. Based on Hassan's way of writing "POSTmodernISM", McHale defines it as "a poetics which is the successor of, or possibly a reaction against, the poetics of early twentieth-century modernism, and not some hypothetical writing of the future"(5). Bran Nicol attempts to go beyond the controversy over the relationship between modernism and postmodernism and suggests another element as their common ground: "dissatisfaction with nineteenth-century realism" (18).This relationship with realism is more broadly interpreted as "double-coding" by Charles Jencks in architecture. Linda Hucheon adapts it to literature and defines postmodernism as "a contradictory cultural enterprise, one that is heavily implicated in that which it seeks to contest. It uses and abuses the very structures and values it takes to task" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 106). As has been illustrated above, Barnes's writing, to certain degree, shares this postmodern feature. His reflection on the modernist insistence on the autonomy of literary works is a key aspect to explore his postmodern humanism in this thesis.

In the 1970s, different kinds of philosophical hypotheses begin to develop with an attempt to illustrate "the postmodern condition", among which Jean-Francois Lyotard's elaboration on metanarratives in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A*

Report on Knowledge (1979) is fundamental. By defining postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives", Lyotard delegitimizes the traditional "grand narratives" of metaphysics and science and establishes skepticism as a typical feature of postmodernism（xxiv）. Lyotard is followed by Fredric Jameson, Derrida and Michel Foucault and other postmodern theorists. They together launched a full-scale deconstruction of the traditional way of thinking and brought about epistemological and ontological changes to our perception. For example, the mediation of language in value- and meaning-construction highlighted by Foucault and Derrida has undermined not only the perception of language itself, but also the essence of concepts, such as truth, subjectivity and knowledge etc. With this theoretical flourishing, postmodernism has developed into a discourse. By the 1990s, it has achieved a kind of autonomy, that is, it becomes "the name for the activity of writing about postmodernism" (Connor 4). Postmodernism has been extended from "an aesthetic phenomenon" to "a condition" and even "a general sensibility" and developed into a pervasive phenomenon throughout all human sciences. Patricia Waugh gives a comprehensive illustration of postmodernism:

> Broadly, postmodernism can be understood as a gradual encroachment of the aesthetic into the spheres of philosophy, ethics, and most recently, science; a gradual displacement of discovery, depth, truth, correspondence and coherence with construction, surface, fictionality, self-reflexive narrative and ironic fragmentation: realism giving way to idealism and then to an all-pervasive textualism. (292)

The key words listed above marks the transition from realism to postmodernism and are the major aspects Barnes contemplates in his novels.

The 1990s also witnesses the controversial decline (or even demise as some scholars declared) of postmodernism.[5] In spite of these declarations, it is still too

[5] The declaration of the demise of postmodernism has become a critical controversy at the beginning of the 21st century. As one of the major postmodern theorists, Hutcheon regards postmodernism as "a twentieth-century phenomenon" or "a thing of the past" (*Politics* 165). She admits that this is a reiteration of the declaration of its death which has been pronounced for over a decade. Her declaration is further echoed by the two special issues on postmodernism that the journal *Twentieth Century Literature* has published—"After Postmodernism" (2007) and "Postmodernism, Then"（2011）. However, Hutcheon's view is challenged by some other scholars. Nicol expresses his disagreement in spite of his treating postmodernism as "a more or less 'complete historical movement' with its own core texts" (XV). He equates postmodernism to postmodernity and argues that it "still seems to shape the contemporary world, and much aesthetic and cultural production (novels, films, TV, etc.) still clearly deploys strategies and generates effects which have been defined as postmodern" (XV). Dutch scholar Hans Bertens also

early to have a final word on the subject. As Jeremy Green notes, "How much really has been changed by postmodern ways of thinking—whether the influx of continental theory and the stylistic changes of the last three decades truly represent a paradigm shift, or whether these phenomena are comparatively superficial and not of lasting interest—remains open to debate"(24). However, its decline as a fact proves postmodernism's radical challenge and skepticism has its own unsolvable paradoxes，which, as I will illustrate, Barnes supplements with his postmodern humanism.

The term humanism is no less controversial, even with its much longer history. The word is an anachronistic construction in the 19th century. It derives from the German word *Humanismus,* originally describing a high-school or university curriculum based on the "humanities", the learning of classical literature. Later, it becomes popular as an indication of Renaissance humanism. The construction of humanism also implies a desire for "an essential humanity unconditioned by time, place or circumstance" in the 19th century (Davies 25). This effort to define man, in fact, starts also in Renaissance. In his research into the French humanist legacy, Todorov highlights autonomy as the essence of humanism. He defines humanism as "a doctrine that grants the human being a particular role", which consists of "initiating one's own acts (or some portion of them), of being free to accomplish them or not—therefore of being able to act at one's will"(*IG* 30). He traces its origin to Montaigne's "affective autonomy"—the freedom to choose those he loves to live with—and the autonomy of reason and judgment. This autonomy is shared by the French humanist family Todorov focuses on. It is also the foundation of the new development of humanism by Levinas and Ricour.

Urged by the same undertaking to define what it means to be human, various types of humanisms—Enlightenment, liberal, existential—have emerged. Among them, the metaphysical humanism advocated by Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant is a shaping influence upon the humanist understanding of being human. Their abstract delineation of the mind and reason helps to establish the core humanist concept of the subject. As the father of modern western philosophy, Descartes's Cartesian dualism of body and mind gives mind priority over body, which is better expressed in his *cogito ergo sum.* It places man's existence in the mind's reasoning

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thinks postmodernism is "alive and well" and interprets the change in postmodernism as a more open display of "its affirmative humanist strand" (306).

ability. Based on the philosophy of Descartes and Hume, Kant continues to examine human reason and confirms man as a transcendental arbiter of reason and as both subject and object of knowledge. This metaphysical humanism is basically anthropocentric and becomes a target of antihumanism. The various humanisms are further elaborations on the different dimensions of this subject and its subjectivity / axiological dimensions. Therefore, they share "a degree of certainty about what it means to be human", such as man's reason, autonomy, freedom, etc. and "a belief in a universal human nature and / or condition" (Sheehan ix).

This certainty, however, began to be challenged in the late 19th century. Sheehan identifies an "anthropometric turn" in both literature and philosophy during the modern period from the 1850s to 1950s, that is, "the taking of the measure of the 'human': as transcendental category, empirical reality, or malleable, indeterminate becoming" (x). Its essence is "a turn away from the human as a *given* towards the human as a *problem*" (181, italics in original). The significance of this turn lies in that it "was crucial, not incidental, in establishing the conditions of possibility" for the prevailing postwar antihumanism (x).

Most critics agree that postmodernism is a full attack on humanism. The structuralist movement was the first to launch its attack on humanism. In its endeavour to uncover the objectivity and scientific nature of the structures underlining thinking and language, structuralism challenges the humanist subject's creativity and purpose. With the advent of poststructuralism and its overwhelming influence, humanism became the target of criticism in almost all fields. Kate Soper calls the contemporary anti-humanist movement in France "a neo-Nietzschean attack upon the Enlightenment commitment to truth, reason and scientific progress" (*Humanism and Anti-humanism* 15). The poststructuralists' foregrounding of the mediation of language in all meaning and value constructions further dissolves these humanist concepts as fictional constructs. It stresses "a fundamental unknowability, particularity, and multiplicity" in them (Holland 4). This deconstruction of the humanist transcendental thinking, however, displays its own unavoidably contradictory aspects at the same time. The fundamental dilemma lies in that it deconstructs humanistic metanarratives only to replace them with a new deconstructive meta-discourse. Hutcheon is aware of this paradox in the contemporary challenges to humanism posed by Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, Vattimo and Baudrillard, as she observes that "to claim epistemological authority is to be caught up in what they seek to displace"

(*Poetics* 7). For example, the arch-opponent of humanism, Michael Foucault, in his effort to critique subjectivity by revealing its subjugation to knowledge, power and discourse, only ends up with "the paradox of the transhistorical essentializing of the nonessentializable: power" (*Poetics* 190). As Hutcheon further suggests, postmodernism's institutionalization is its undoing (*Politics* 165).

Faced with this dilemma, even deconstructionists are aware of the inevitable use of the humanist vocabulary and the necessity of ethical values after all their deconstruction. Foucault and Derrida's cases are illuminating. As Nancy Fraser notes, "Not only does Foucault not elaborate a substantive postmodern alternative to humanism, but further, he continues to make tacit use of the very humanist rhetoric he claims to be rejecting and delegitimating"(58). Derrida's attitude towards ethics is more consistent, as Robert Eaglestone suggests, "his work has been centrally concerned with ethics since he began writing" ("Navigating an Ancient Problem" 128). In his later works, this concern becomes more apparent. Richard Kearney identifies an ethical re-turn in Derrida's late writing, which "supplements a Heideggerian resolve to deconstruct metaphysics with a Levinasian attention to the ethical demands of the other" (29). In his elaboration on the human-animal relationship, Derrida resorts to the human heart as a final solution to anthropocentrism. In addition to Foucault and Derrida, the same ethical turn can be identified in the theories of Lyotard and Luce Irigaray, as Beverly R. Voloshin suggests. The ethical turn in the works of these major French postmodern theorists indicates the awareness of the flaws inherent in their theories and efforts towards a postmodern ethics.

The radical challenges to humanism, especially the antihumanist position on language and literature, may go to the other extremes of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater, in its failure to recognize that some of the goals and beliefs of humanism remain worthy and in fact crucial to the continued production of art and literature" (Holland 4). Even Cary Wolf—the representative of posthumanism—acknowledges that "there are many values and aspirations to admire in humanism" (xvi). The value of humanism shows more clearly in the necessity of ethical judgment on the level of daily life and the human urge to make meaning out of life. Postmodern anti-humanist thinking is characterized by its radical theoretical challenges but is almost isolated from daily life. It may have deconstructed the established humanistic understanding of political or social structure on a grand scale, but on the level of

everyday life, traditional humanistic values still have their currency in spite of the challenges posed to them. The majority of the people, as F. Davis and Kenneth Womack suggest, "choose by default a middle ground between faith and reason where neither the modern nor the postmodern ultimately wins the day, and the fact that neither faith nor reason may be proved or disproved conclusively causes little contestation in the general populous" (*Postmodern Humanism* xvii-xviii). This choice is made out of an ethical necessity to make life meaningful.

Possible dialogues between humanism and postmodern anti-humanism have also been explored by scholars. The recent book *Early Modern Humanism and Postmodernism* (2016) edited by Jan Miernowski is an attempt in this direction. Issues like artistic agency, ethics for anti-humanism, justice towards animals etc. are examined in the dialogue between the early modern humanism and postmodern antihumanism. This thesis is an effort to further this dialogue.

Confronted with the challenges posed by antihumanism, humanism displays its resilience and capability of renewing itself. As Todorov points out, "A well-tempered humanism could insure us against taking yesterday's wrong and today's" (*On Human Diversity* 399). What the new development of humanism accomplished by three contemporary French scholars, Emmanuel Levinas, Todorov and Paul Ricoeur, offers is such new paradigms with which to interpret and make meaning out of the lived experience of daily life, and with which, I argue, Barnes resonates in his writing.

For all their diverse theoretical and social concerns, these three theorists share the same humanistic preoccupation with how to live a good and ethical life. They display a more realistic understanding of human nature based on lived life instead of an abstract human essence. They acknowledge the weakness of humanity and take it as the start of humanism. Their views are dialogues with both the humanistic traditions and the postmodern theoretical world. Compared with classical humanism, they interpret human nature less as a fixed state than as a dynamic interaction with the other, so they turn from prescribing an abstract human nature to describing the human experience and focusing on intersubjective relations. They stress the importance of the other in one's ethical life.

Among them, Levinas's philosophy highlights the ethics of the Other. In *Totality and Infinity* (1961), Levinas proposes the nontotalizing relation to the face of the Other as a breakdown of the totality and the sameness which characterize the previous western metaphysics, with Martin Heidegger as their most profound

explicator. The Other is external to the *I* and the new relationship with the Other is expressed by the term infinity. Levinas's anatomy of western metaphysical thinking, by ushering in the ethics of the Other, is fundamental to the whole postmodern disruption of western thought. In alliance with the ethics of the Other, Levinas underscores the ethical relationship in language and literature. He regards the link between expression and responsibility as "the ethical condition or essence of language" (*TI* 200). Thomas Docherty suggests that Levinas's philosophy offers a way to uncover "an ethical demand in the postmodern" (26). In addition to its influences upon other philosophers like Derrida and Lyotard, It is the foundation of the diversified postmodern ethics advocated by scholars like Zygmunt Bauman (1993), Adam Newton (2013), and Andrew Gibson (1999). The various kinds of postmodern ethics basically agree on the values of postmodern challenges to the traditional axiological systems and the ethics of alterity. As both a humanist and poststructuralist, Levinas is a crucial mediation between postmodern ethics and the postmodern humanism elaborated in this analysis.

In my analysis of the relationship between art and life in *Metroland*, I draw on Levinas's description of the ethical relationship implicated in language and art, and his affirmation of daily life in the formation of the self. I borrow his ethics of the Other—particularly the epiphany brought about by the face of the Other—in my study of memory construction in *The Sense of an Ending*. Levinas's focus on the absolute alterity of the Other is also the base from which I analyze the ecological humanism in *A History of the World in 10$^1/_2$ Chapters.*

Ricoeur's humanism features a sober recognition of the limits of human beings. This is most clearly expressed in his early essay "What Does Humanism Mean?" (1974):

> Man is man when he knows that he is *only* man. The ancients called man a "mortal". This "remembrance of death" indicated in the very *name* of man introduces the reference to a limit at the very heart of the affirmation of man himself. When faced with the pretension of absolute knowledge, humanism is therefore the indication of an "only": we are *only* men. (86-87, italics in original)

In contrast to Friedrich Nietzsche's critical attitude towards human weakness in his

famous work *Human, All Too Human*: *A Book for Free Spirits* (1878), Ricoeur defines weakness as the essence of the human being. This marks a dramatic turn from the anthropocentricism implicated in the metaphysical humanism represented by Descartes and Kant. Barnes's focus on the failures and compromises of his characters strikes a chord with this realistic acknowledgment of human weakness.

Furthermore, Ricoeur's profound analysis of the relationship between memory, history and forgetting in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004) is crucial to my interpretation of Barnes's exploration of memory in its relationship to identity and truth. His investigation of "the mobilization of memory in the service of the quest, the appeal, the demand for identity" and the expediency narrative offers to the manipulation of memory is especially relevant to my analysis (81). Ricoeur's insistence on memory as the locus of truth is also an illuminating reference in my analysis of the ethical connotation in *England, England.*

Todorov's humanism shows his inheritance of the French humanistic tradition developed by Montaigne and Rousseau and is "at once a restatement of the Enlightenment tradition and a revision of it" (Goodheart 84). Todorov takes common humanity as transcendence over race, gender, nation and other differences. This is what Barnes has expressed throughout his work. In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Braithwaite defends Flaubert's universalism. In *Arthur and George* and the story "Evermore" in *Cross Channel* (1996), the characters George and Miss Moss both express their resentment towards the narrow racism in their different times. What is relevant to the present research is Todorov's stress on the ethical obligations of literary works embodied in his comments on Aestheticism in his book *The Imperfect Garden* (1998). As Bracher Nathan observes, "after revealing the linguistic underpinnings and rhetorical mechanisms that structure the narrative, Todorov reaffirms the value of the literary text as a vehicle for transmitting ideas and experiences that would otherwise remain outside our grasp" (38). Moreover, this new vision of humanism cannot be better expressed than by his formula: "the *autonomy of the I*, the *finality of the you* and the *universality of the they*" (*IG* 30, italics in original).

In the area of literary studies, in addition to the turn to postmodern ethics, there emerged the ethical "return" to the traditional humanistic values in the 1990s, "a terrain that has always been there" (Davis and Womack, Preface ix; Buell 11). The ethical criticism carried out by Wayne Booth (1988) and Martha C. Nussbaum (1990) represents this branch of the ethical return. They attempt to recover the connection

between aesthetics and ethics established by Aristotle, and stress how literary works can strengthen our ethical awareness; they are thus referred to as "neo-Aristotelians" (Eaglestone, "One and the Same?" 596). Although "neo-Aristotelian" ethical criticism is regarded as the opposite of deconstructive ethics, they share the same concern with ethics implicated in narrative form. I contend that Barnes's postmodern humanism anticipates the ethical turn and is mediating between its two branches—the turn to postmodern ethics and the return to humanistic ethical values. The postmodern humanism I define in this analysis registers some features of both branches. This thesis proposes that Barnes insists on the humanistic values of truth and love and the connection between aesthetics and ethics

It needs to be noted that this thesis is mainly a text-based analysis. Although these scholars' theories are enlightening references in my analysis of Barnes's humanistic concerns, they are not a strict theoretical frame. Also, my study will bring in other theories about the *bildungsroman*, narratology, ecological thinking and psychoanalysis of memory.

Thesis Structure

In what follows, I examine five Barnes novels—*Metroland, Flaubert's Parrot, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters, England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*—which, I argue, best illustrate the emergence and development of Barnes's postmodern humanism. I start with a delineation of Barnes's postmodern humanism, the current existing studies on Barnes and the theoretical approach to this research in this introduction. The analyses of the three themes constitute the four chapters of this thesis: the relationship between art and life, the human-animal relationship and the fallibility of memory as a wellspring of identity and truth.

The first two chapters center on the relationship between art and life reflected in Barnes's two novels *Metroland* and *Flaubert's Parrot*. In Chapter 1 "From Art to Kitsch: Coming of Age in *Metroland*", I will analyze the emergence of Barnes's humanism in his first novel and position it as the prelude to his postmodern humanism. Through analyzing the shifting relationship between art and life in Chris's development from adolescence to early adulthood, I trace the origin of Barnes's humanism displayed in his insistence on the ethical relationship implicit in art and language and the experiential truth, a view which set the tone for the author's future

negotiation between humanism and postmodernism in *Flaubert's Parrot*.

In Chapter 2 "Faithful Betrayal: A Postmodern Journey towards Truth and Love in *Flaubert's Parrot*", I will focus on Barnes's formal negotiation between postmodernism and humanism. I will develop my argument—that the novel is an integration of a postmodern reflection on identity, intertextuality and fictionality and the humanistic pursuit of love and truth—from three perspectives. I first define Barnes's recreation of Flaubert's life and art as a performative construction in its deviation from the traditional biography so as to display his resonance with the postmodern understanding of the multiplicity and mutability of identity. Then parrotry and pastiche are discussed as both Barnes's reaction to the postmodern dilemma of intertextuality and Flaubert's double sense of the evocative power of words and their inadequacy to express human feelings. Finally, Barnes's attitude towards the author and the reader will be analyzed as a further development of his in-between position.

In Chapter 3, I will investigate Barnes's ecological thinking, as embodied in the novel *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters,* in light of the ecological humanism identified by Brian Morris and related to the thinking of three scholars: Lewis Mumford, Ren E. Dubos and Morris Bookchin. My contention is that Barnes insists on human transcendence through morality, art and love while challenging anthropocentrism and advocating a symbiotic ecological relationship. This ecological thinking will be first explored in the three types of human-nature relationship Barnes has presented: the anthropocentric hierarchical order described in the Bible, the seeming egalitarianism between human and nonhuman species typified in the Middle Ages animal trial, and the suffering of women and animals under patriarchal oppression in consumer society. Barnes's insistence on human transcendence will be further analyzed and his concept of love will be established as a foundation for the relational or symbiotic ecological relationship projected by ecological humanism.

In Chapter 4, my understanding of Barnes's postmodern humanism will be developed based on another major contemporary concern—the fallibility of memory in its relationship to identity and truth. Based on two major texts, *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending,* I will explore the mechanism of memory construction—cognitive and psychological motivations—and the ethical concerns involved in it. On one hand, I will focus on Barnes's sharing of a postmodern awareness of memory's elusiveness and susceptibility to manipulation. On the other hand, I will elaborate on

Barnes's insistence on memory as the locus of identity and truth, and the ethical connotations of memory construction. Barnes's presentation of the fallibility of memory will be analyzed in light of the cognitive distinction between memory and imagination, as well as through Sigmund Freud's psychological analysis of the workings of screen memory. Selective forgetfulness and fabulation will then be explored as two typical forms of manipulation of memory in identity construction at both individual and collective levels in view of Paul Ricoeur's analysis of the interaction between memory, forgetting and history. Finally, the ethical connotations of memory construction in Barnes's novels will be located in the protagonist Martha Cochrane's insistence on the "capacity for seriousness" in *England, England* and Tony Webster's awareness of the ethics of the Other in *The Sense of an Ending*.

My overall argument will identify the essence of Barnes's postmodern humanism as "truth in between". It is a dialogue between postmodernism and humanism, which blends the thematic exploration of the postmodern complexity of art and life, humans and animals, as well as memory and truth, with constant formal innovation. I will further evaluate the significance of postmodern humanism in the broader context of the ethical turn in the postmodern age.

Chapter 1

From Art to Kitsch: Coming of Age in *Metroland*

In Barnes's first novel *Metroland*, the author follows the literary genre of the *Bildungsroman* and reflects on the relationship between art and life. The three parts of the novel register the protagonist Christopher Lloyd and his friend Toni Barbarowski's evolving understanding of the role art plays in their development from adolescence to early adulthood. The novel turns on the conflict between the other-worldly sphere of art and the pragmatic pursuit of happiness in everyday life, wherein the distinction between the humanistic and aesthetic functions of art and the geocultural contrasts between Britain and France are presented.

Metroland is significant in this research for its embodiment of Barnes's early humanistic concern / stance and artistic scope. In the high tide of postmodernism in the 1980s, Barnes chose to start his literary career with the traditional form of the *bildungsroman*, which is regarded as the "clearest link between the humanist tradition and the novel" for its concern with the central theme of the Renaissance—human potentiality (Sheehan 2). This chapter examines Barnes's presentation of the humanistic theme of growing up in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman,* with particular focus on the function of art in identity formation and compromises in socialization. I argue that Barnes shares the humanistic criticism of Aestheticism for its lack of ethical concern while acknowledging the referential function of art in identity formation. This marks the initiation of Barnes's humanism. In addition, in his reaction to Chris's turn to kitsch, Barnes puts stress on experiential truth, which goes beyond the realistic imitation of reality and the modern psychosocial truth, and is closer to an emotional/ mental truth experienced in life journey. This is the literary truth Barnes endeavours to convey throughout his writing. Connected with it is the function of language which can turn fiction into truth and the ethical connotation implicated in its usage. I propose that the novel is a prelude to his postmodern humanism.

This proposition is developed in three ways. I first analyze the mirror image French literature assumes in Chris and Toni's early identity-formation, in which Barnes's negotiations with the aesthetic and humanistic functions of art are detailed. Then Barnes's focus on individual experience, illustrated by Chris's imitation of a *flâneur* and evasion of a great historical event (the 1968 *événéments*), is analyzed as

another embodiment of the author's humanistic inclination. Embedded in this theme are Barnes's reflections on language as both an internalization of identity and an ethical relationship. In this respect, Levinas's theory of language as both "the saying" and "the said" is an important reference. Finally, Barnes's critical assessment of everyday life represented by Chris's embrace of a happy bourgeois life in *Metroland* is analyzed in comparison to both Levinas's view of the formation of the self in daily life and another Barnes's novel, *The Sense of an Ending*. I contend that Barnes's stress on an individual's own experiential truths illustrates his understanding of the postmodern fluidity of identity.

1.1 Seeing Life Symbolically: Correspondence between Art and Life

The relationship between art and life has been a motif throughout the novel's history. In the first European novel, *Don Quixote* (1615), Miguel De Cervantes gives an anti-romantic presentation of the protagonist Don Quixote's farcical imitation of the adventures of romantic knights. After more than two hundred years, Flaubert created a female version of Don Quixote in his novel *Madame Bovary*,[6] but the farcical tone is replaced by the tragedy of Emma Bovary's suicide, caused by the failure of her naive pursuit of romantic love. Both of these stories are anti-romantic and indicate the danger of blurring the artistic world and reality.

In contrast to this critical attitude towards art, the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* sets great store by art as a positive, shaping influence on a character's development and identity formation. This is established by Wolfgang von Goethe in his *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travel*,[7] which is regarded as the origin and paradigm of the genre. Art functions in two opposite ways in the book. On the one hand, the protagonist Wilhelm Meister takes art as a reference for his "acts of aesthetic self-fashioning" (Gailus 153) in his eagerness to "see the connexion of parts" (vol. I, 13) and bring together "the whole ring of his existence" (vol. II, 333). In the novel, the Abbé says to Wilhelm, "What infinite operations of art and nature must have joined in before a cultivated human being can be formed" (vol. II, 172). In this regard, cultivation is an integration of art and nature. Wilhelm's experiences with aesthetic representations, such as the puppet theatre and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, are steps

[6] For Cervantes's influence upon Flaubert, see Fox.

[7] Goethe wrote the book between 1795-96, but the first edition was not published until 1821 and a substantially different second version was published in 1829. It was translated into English by Thomas Carlyle in 1824. The following quotations are from the 1842 version of Carlyle's translation.

towards this integration. Art "provides him with a model of unity that holds the promise of a coherent human life", and his involvement with art is, in essence, "the theatrical orchestration of his own identity" (Gailus 158-59). On the other hand, the secret society Tower's discipline of Wilhelm indicates that art can serve as a tool for social forces "to orchestrate their normative interventions" (153). Compared with Goethe's serious reflection on the role art plays in Wilhelm's identity formation, Barnes recognizes the inseparable reference art provides for adolescent identity formation, but he trivializes it by presenting two young adolescents' farcical imitation of art in life, which resembles more the Quixotian adventures.

In *Metroland*, art offers an aesthetic reference for Chris and Toni in their identity formation—the way it does for Wilhelm. French literature, especially the school of symbolism represented by Baudelaire and Rimbaud, envisions an ideal other life for them. The symbolic correspondence between art and life they advocate forms the artistic reference for Chris and Toni in their early rebellion against suburban bourgeois life. In the novel, the narrator Chris mentions Baudelaire's influence upon him: "We were very sensitive about colours at that time. It had all started one summer holiday, when I'd taken Baudelaire with me to read on the beach" (*M* 14). His brother even jokingly introduces him to his girlfriend as Chris Baudelaire.

Baudelaire's influence is pervasive in the first two parts of the novel. In Chris and Toni's early epistemological attempt to interpret life based on art, Baudelaire's Correspondence Theory is their "theoretical" foundation. As one of the most crucial aspects of his aesthetic principles, it proposes to establish correspondences between life and its meaning through symbols. Therefore, the symbol—which is defined as "a sign which conceals its being a sign, hides its conventional nature, in order to eliminate the distance between subject and object, the gap between thought and thing, experience and its representation" (Aboulaffia 776)—is a mediation between life and meaning. The best illustration of this theory is Baudelaire's poem "Correspondences":

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symbols
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Nature is a temple, where the living
Columns sometimes breathe confusing speech;
Man walks within these groves of symbols, each
Of which regards him as a kindred thing.

As the long echoes, shadowy, profound,
Heard from afar, blend in a unity,
Vast as the night, as sunlight's clarity,
So perfumes, colours, sounds may correspond.

(*The Flowers of Evil* 18-19)

The comparison of nature to "a temple" conveys the poet's transcendental aesthetics, that is, the harmonious unity of all things in nature established by correspondences between man and nature as well as between things, such as "perfumes, colours, sounds". Hence, symbols become the unity of sense and matter, the physical and the non-physical.

The transcendental mystery surrounding the poem makes it open to various interpretations. Paul de Man is impressed by the serenity of its diction. He thinks the poem "celebrates the powers of tropes or 'symboles' that can reduce any conceivable difference to a set of polarities and combine them in an endless play of substitution and amalgamation, extending from the level of signification to that of the signifier" (244). He compares it to the mimetic trope of representation in philosophical and poetic texts of the 19th century—such as Keats's "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" and Nietzsche's definition of truth as a tropological displacement in *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense* (1896)—so as to elaborate on the link between etymology and rhetoric, or between concept and figure. The concrete mechanism of correspondence de Man analyzes may go far beyond the young Chris's comprehension and concern, but what appeals to them is just the mysterious "powers of tropes" de Man identifies in the correspondence between meaning and symbols in life.

Barnes's emphasis on the referential function of art in the adolescents' interpretation of their life echoes Wilhelm Dilthey's comment on Goethe's poetic imagination:

> By making the casual links of events and actions obvious, [the poetical work] revives the values which belong to an event and to its individual parts in the plot [*Zusammenhang*] of all life. In this way, the event is raised to its significance . . . The brilliance of the greatest poets consists precisely in portraying the event in such a way that it illuminates the relationship between life and its meaning. Poetry thus opens the intelligence of life to us. Through the eyes of a great poet, we discover the value and the link [*Zusammenhang*] of human things. (qtd. in Moretti: 18)

As a revelation of epistemological truth, poetry offers him a way to interpret his own unfolding life. Nevertheless, to the two young adolescents, the symbolic significance of the two poets is far greater than the real meanings of their poems.

This can be illustrated by the epigraph to the first part— "*A noir, E blanc, I rogue, U vert, O bleu*", a line from Rimbaud's "Vowels". The poem itself is as mysterious as Baudelaire's "Correspondences" and is interpreted as the poet's "hallucinated but authentic vision of a mysterious universal harmony" (Aboulaffia 787).[8]Like Baudelaire's "Correspondences", Rimbaud's poem represents the mystical and colorful world the two adolescents intend to unravel, as Barnes explains that the epigraph "is about how you see life at 18" (Patterson). At this stage of their life, they may not be able to penetrate into the mystery of these poems, but they are attracted by the gestures towards life these poets display in their poems.

Baudelaire and Rimbaud's poems cater to their curiosity about the mystery of life and their desire to interpret it. The narrator's retrospective comment reveals the distance between his present state and his adolescent, idealistic vision of life: "At that age, everything seemed more open to analogy, to metaphor, than it does now. There were more meanings, more interpretations, a greater variety of available truths. There was more symbolism. Things contained more" (*M* 14). In addition to the adolescents' eagerness to endow life with meaning, this suggests that the meaning they find comes

[8] For a detailed introduction to the quarrels about the interpretation of Rimbaud, particularly about his poem "Vowels" and its comparison to Baudelaire's "Correspondences", see Aboulaffia.

from their literary acquisitions and is external to their own life.

Barnes embeds his reflections on the referential function of art to life into his characterization of the premature sophistication of the two adolescents. He highlights the contrast between the profound meaning of correspondence theory and the triviality of their real lives. Their adolescent naivety is presented in their carrying out this aesthetic correspondence between art and life in concrete life settings. For example, Chris tries to establish a correspondence between the colour changes of his mother's reversible coat and her duplicity. The naivety of this adolescent understanding of correspondence is captured by the description of the scene at the beginning of the novel when the two adolescents are observing the effect of art in the National Gallery. The comment the narrator makes on their observation of the effect Van Dyck's picture has on a woman reveals the farcical futility of their observations: "There were two ways of reading it: either she was beyond the point of observable pleasure; or else she was asleep" (*M* 12). Later, the narrator compares the adolescents to "those eighteenth-century physicians who combed battlefields and dissected fresh corpses to track down the seat of the soul", and doubts "if we were any the wiser" (*M* 30). This reflection further enhances the sense of futility of this practice of establishing a direct correspondence between art and life. Peter Childs summarizes it as "a leisured, adolescent, idealistic, and naïve enterprise" and reveals its essence as an "estranged, essentially voyeuristic engagement with life, amounting to a pretentious, but amusingly absurd, equivalent of trainspotting" (*Julian Barnes* 23). However, it cannot be denied that art offers them the only possible means with which to interpret life.

Barnes infuses his reflections on the aesthetic and humanistic purposes of art into the two young adolescents' attempt to practice the aesthetic principles of the French literary figures they admire. In their effort to establish correspondence between art and life, Chris and Toni display a mixed or even paradoxical understanding of the function of art. From the very beginning, the two adolescents' admiration for idealistic French literature is contaminated with British pragmatism. They modify the abstract aesthetic value of Baudelaire's principle into being about art's utility in life, as Toni later says that they believe "art was to do with something happening" (*M* 165). In addition to a liberal understanding of the correspondence between art and life, they take art as a counterforce against death. As Chris says, "Mostly, in our sneaky, whining dream of immortality, we concentrated on art" (*M* 55). This interpretation of art brings Chris closer to Walter Pater, the British counterpart of the French

Aestheticists.

In the conclusion of his work *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873), Pater takes Rousseau as his example to show that only "the wisest" choose to spend his "interval" in this world in "art and song" (252), for the latter finds literary excitement in Voltaire's writing as a power against encroaching death. Pater emphasizes the wisdom brought about by this purely aesthetic intoxication: "Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake" (252). The two adolescents in the novel revise this "aesthetic intoxication" into an "ameliorative" function of art:

> We agree . . . that Art was the most important thing in life, the constant to which one could be unfailingly devoted and which would never cease to reward; more crucially, it was the stuff whose effect on those exposed to it was ameliorative. It made people not just fitter for friendship and more civilized（ . . . ）, but *better*—kinder, wiser, nicer, more peaceful, more active, more sensitive. (*M* 29, italics in original)

The belief in the transfiguring effect of art echoes more the humanistic function of artistic cultivation in the classical *Bildungsroman,* which can be traced back to Aristotle's musings on the cathartic effect of tragedy, rather than the aesthetic autonomy advocated by Baudelaire and his French literary peers.

The adolescents' naïve attempt to establish a correspondence between art and life subtly brings together the two different functions of art. Chris and Toni's stress on the "ameliorative" function of art runs counter to the goal of the French Aestheticism they admire—"Art for art's sake". Baudelaire regards beauty as the highest aim of art. Barnes speaks of the writer's artistic pursuit like this: "In his writing he sought only Beauty, and believed that Art should not have a moral goal" ("How Unpleasant to Meet Mr. Baudelaire!"). This principle is better expressed by Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire's "friend and master", to whom he dedicated his *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In his *Preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1834), Gautier says that "a book does not make gelatine soup; a novel is not a pair of seamless boots; a sonnet, a syringe with a continuous jet; or a drama, a railway—all things which are essentially civilising and

adapted to advance humanity on its path of progress" (77). The denial of the practical use of the literary work contains the essence of the French aestheticism of art for art's sake, and is regarded as "the first product of aesthetic modernity's rebellion against the modernity of the philistine" (Calinescu 45).

Chris and Toni adopt French Aestheticism mainly as a pose of rebellion against local bourgeois life in Metroland, the London suburb where they live. Connected with the correspondence between art and life are the geocultural differences between the metropolitan city of Paris and Metroland. They typify not only the traditional contrast between suburban narrowness and the profoundness of urban culture but also the overall cultural differences between France and Britain. Mathew Taunton's contrast between "the *Flâneur* and the freeholder" better conveys this difference. As a rural suburb, Metroland embodies the traditional theme of the social and environmental restrictions placed upon the individual's self-development in the *Bildungsroman*. Chris's admiration for French culture is in proportion to his criticism of the local "*Weltanschauung*" (*M* 72). The suburban life represented by Chris's parents, whom he calls the "freeholders" of their homes (*M* 32), is characterized by "philistinism and social conservatism" (Taunton 15). For example, his mother will not tell him directly what an "oonuch" (Chris's misspelling for "eunuch") is, and his schoolteacher avoids talking about human reproduction in class. In his early effort to establish correspondence between symbol and meaning, Chris connects the whole local atmosphere with the dull colour of the street lamp—brown or orange.

In addition to mediocrity and dullness, Metroland is characterized by rootlessness and hollowness and is a symbol of unrealized dreams. Geographically, it is a living community created by the extension of the Metropolitan Line, a land "with no geographical or ideological unity" (*M* 34). The narrator explains the deceptive quality of the name "Metroland": it sounds "better than Eastwick, stranger than Middlesex; more like a concept in the mind than a place where you shopped" (*M* 33). In fact, it was "adopted during the First World War both by estate agents and the railway itself—gave the string of rural suburbs a spurious integrity" (*M* 34). The place's rootlessness symbolizes the awkward position of the people living there: "You lived there because it was an area easy to get out of" (*M* 34). The shabbiness of the place is further set off by the glory of its past ambitions, which is revealed through Chris's encounters with an old man on the train. The man speaks without being asked

about the glorious past of the line during the Victorian age, when it had "ambition with confidence", just as their great empire did. His disappointment reflects its modern degradation. For him, it is reduced to "[c]osy home[s] for cosy heroes" (*M* 38).

The old man's nostalgia for the golden age is an indirect expression of Barnes's own disappointment with the place. He regards it as a metaphor for unrealized dreams:

> Metroland was a residential area laid out in the wake of the London underground system, which was developed at the end of the 19th century. The idea then was that there would be a Channel tunnel, and pan-European trains would run from Manchester and Birmingham, pick up passengers in London and continue through to the great cities of the Continent. So this London suburb where I grew up was conceived in the hope, the anticipation, of great horizons, great journeys. But in fact that never came to pass. Such is the background metaphor of disappointment for the life of Chris, the hero, and of others, too. (Guppy 64)

The local suburb is a universal symbol of the disappointments in life. Although the novel was written in Barnes's mid-30s, it clearly displays his sense of the distance between dreams and reality at both individual and collective levels, which is expressed explicitly in the third part of the novel, when Chris chooses to go back to Metroland and lead the life he used to despise.

Barnes also embeds cultural difference into his characterization of adolescent naivety. Things connected with French art and culture are endowed with a snobbish value by the two adolescents, as forms of transcendence over the local culture and atmosphere. This is first exhibited by their unnecessary use of French in daily life: "We were, as you may have guessed, mostly doing French" (*M* 16). They take French as the language of rebellion against their suburban life and use it to create an illusionary and momentary escape from their living environment. For instance, they play tricks on their classmates by saying meaningless rhymed French to them. The juxtaposition of French and English forms a prominent feature of their use of language. A good example is the sentence "*J'habite* Metroland". On top of the fuzziness of the word Metroland, the French helps Chris to accomplish a double

escape: a momentary illusion of being segregated from the real place which they despise.

Chris and Toni's open preference for French culture and literature is another symptom of their adolescent snobbishness. They are attracted by the revolutionary spirit manifested by the French poets, as Chris stresses that they care for French literature "largely for its combativeness" (*M* 16). Concretely, he thinks French writers "were always fighting one another—"; in contrast, "Johnson was tough, but hardly swish enough for us" (*M* 16). Although the examples Chris gives are naïve in his contrast between the two literary traditions, they capture their respective characteristics: liberal, theoretical and intellectual France versus conservative, empirical and pragmatic Britain.

Accordingly, the adolescents identify with contemporary French thinking rather than British thought. The first part of the novel is set in the 1960s, an eventful period in both countries. French existentialism, which was developed by Sartre and Camus in the 1940s and 1950s, still exerted profound influence not only in France but also in other parts of the world, and had been extended to many fields. As Malcolm Bradbury emphasizes, "Existentialism was a philosophy, but it was also a literature—a variety of novels, stories and powerful plays—and a lifestyle" (270). Two representative figures, Jean-Paul Sartre and Camus, are the best illustrations of this combination.

In contrast, the lingering influence from that time in England was that of the "Angry Young Men", which originally referred to a group of British playwrights and novelists in the 1950s. They were mostly from working and middle-class families, but were well-educated and showed an outspoken irreverence for the British social class system and social conventions—especially represented by the so-called elite red-brick universities—as well as the welfare state. They created a new type of hero in their works, such as Charles Lumley in John Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953) and Jim in Kinsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954). Humphrey Carpenter gives a detailed description of this new hero:

> He is consciously, even conscientiously, graceless. His face, when not dead-pan, is set in a snarl of exasperation. He has one skin too few, but his is not the sensitiveness of the young man in earlier twentieth-century fiction: it is the phony to which his nerve-ends are tremblingly exposed, and at the least

> suspicion of phony he goes tough. He is at odds with his conventional university education, though he comes generally from a famous university: he has seen through the academic racket as he sees through all the others. (75)

The phrase "Angry Young Men" originated from newspaper comments on John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1956), but was dismissed as improper by most of the writers included in the group. Malcolm Bradbury thought the name was too narrow, as he made the famous comment that "a lot of the authors were not angry, many were not young, and a lot of them were women" (318). Moreover, the writers in this group were too diverse to form a movement. One of its members, Colin Wilson, stated, "In England, it was fairly clear, by say, 1958, that there never had been such a thing as an Angry Young Man 'Movement'" (9). Wilson views it as "an artificial fabrication of media" (9). In spite of all this, the phrase was popularized by the media as an expression of the mood of the time. Chris and Toni are aware that they are "part of the Anger Generation" (*M* 41).

The two adolescents, however, identify themselves less with their British contemporary Angry Young Men than with the French existential protagonist of Camus's *L'Étranger* (1942). They model his "deconditioning" in their identity construction. In Chris's opinion, the fact that they are "reading Osborne at school with Old Runcaster" indicates that "some sort of institutionalization might be going on"（*M* 41）. Incomplete rebellion is what they accuse the whole British literary world of, which is typically displayed in its lack of the "combativeness" and "sophisticated tough[ness]" possessed by French literature (*M* 16). However, compared with the rebellious spirit in French literature, Chris and Toni's rebellion against Metroland is more like an adolescent gesture and a type of possible attitude they borrow in their eagerness to interpret life. Therefore, there is a clear distinction between the two adolescents' artistic pursuit and that of their French ideals. As Moseley observes, "There is something more than a little philistine, by the way, in Christopher and Toni's museum visits; though they go there to mock philistines, they assume that art is good for them, hardly the tough modernist stance of their heroes" (22). The paradoxical fusion of different literary traditions characterizes the encounter between French and British literature in Chris's adolescent years, which foreshadows his later changing attitude towards art and life.

There is sincerity in Barnes's farcical description of adolescent snobbery, particularly in the ideal role art plays in identity formation. This is authenticated by the touch of nostalgia conveyed in Barnes's later comment on his youthful penchant for French culture:

> Doubtless there was an element of cultural snobbery in my initial preference for things Gallic: their Romantics seemed more romantic than ours, their Decadents more decadent, their Moderns more modern. Rimbaud versus Swinburne was simply no contest; Voltaire seemed just smarter than Dr. Johnson. Some of these early judgments were correct: it wasn't hard—or wrong—to prefer French cinema of the Sixties to ours. And culture maintained my relationship with France in those years of separation: books, art, song, films, sport. (*SD* xii-xiii)

Chateaubriand says, "The finest things that an author can put into a book are the feelings that come down to him, through memory, from the first days of his youth" (qtd. in Steegmuller, Introduction: 9). Chris's idealization of French literature reflects Barnes's youthful fascination with "things Gallic", which has permeated his writing throughout his career.

In this section, I have analyzed Barnes's presentation of Chris and Toni's adolescent attempt to establish a correspondence between art and life as a way to interpret life. Barnes integrates his reflections on the function of art—the contrast between the humanistic and aesthetic pursuit of art in particular—and the cultural differences between France and Britain into his representation of adolescent premature sophistication. By infusing his own adolescent enthusiasm for French literature and art into the characterization, Barnes affirms the significant reference point art offers to life. In the following, I will take Chris and Toni's imitation of the lifestyle of the *flâneur* as a transition from the egoistic pursuit of art to an interpersonal relationship and further explore the relationship between art and life, in which the ethical relationships implicated in art and language are highlighted.

1.2 Living like a *Flâneur*: Synthesizing Art and Life

If Chris and Toni discover a way of interpreting life by adopting the symbolic

correspondences between art and life implicated in Baudelaire and Rimbaud's poems, they find a way of living life by imitating the style of a *flâneur*. This marks the beginning of their attempt at synthesizing art and life. The modern Bohemian lifestyle of *flâneurs* in Paris is modeled by them as a concrete transcendence over the mediocrity and narrowness of suburban life in Metroland. By presenting Chris's imitation of the life of a *flâneur*, Barnes limits his writing scope to the individual's experience in daily life, which resonates with Baudelaire's pioneering turn to daily life in poetry. For Baudelaire, the aim of the flâneur is the pursuit of "modernity", by which he means "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" ("The Painter of Modern Life" 13). However, as in the first section, what Barnes reveals is the distance between art and life and the conflict between the solipsistic aesthetic life of a flâneur and the pursuit of love.

The word *flâneur* comes from "*flânerie*", whose precise meaning "remains more than a little elusive" (Tester 1). In the 19th century, it appeared in the writings of several of the most important literary figures of the time, such as Sainte-Beuve, Balzac and most famously Baudelaire. It became a concept closely connected with modernity and modern life. Mary Gluck makes an enlightening distinction between two "separate, though interconnected, formulaic narratives about *flânerie*" in 19th-century culture and aesthetics: the popular *flâneur* and the avant-garde *flâneur* (54). While the former stresses the cultural connotation of the word as "the ideals of a dynamic urban culture and sensibility" which was popular in the 1840s, the latter refers to "the aestheticist vision of innovative artists and poets" embodied by Baudelaire's critical texts of the 1850s and 1860s (Gluck 54).

Chris and Toni's imitation of a *flâneur* covers these two types of *flâneurs*. Its earliest form is the "Constructive Loaf" Chris and Toni carry out on London streets in their adolescence. Toni has a grand theory that "by lounging about in a suitably *insouciant* fashion, but keeping an eye open all the time, you could catch life on the hip—you could harvest all the *apercus* of the *flâneur*" (*M* 27-28, italics in original). They regard it as a way of living an observant and solitary life among the crowd, but the narrator's description reveals both the naivety of this imitation and the geocultural difference between London and Paris:

Toni and I were strolling along Oxford Street, trying to look like *flâneurs.*

> This wasn't as easy as it might sound. For a start, you usually needed a *quai* or, at the very least, a *boulevard*; and however much we might be able to imitate the aimlessness of the *flâneur* itself, we always felt that we hadn't quite mastered what happened at each end of the stroll. In Paris, you would be leaving behind some rumpled couch in a *chamber particulière*; over here, we had just left behind Tottenham Court Road Underground station and were heading for Bond Street. (*M* 17)

At their stage in life, instead of a real understanding of the essence of being a *flâneur*, they can only imitate its external and formal features. In contrast to the romantic *boulevard* in Paris, "Tottenham Court Road Underground station" and "Bond Street" sound more pragmatic and lack the cultural atmosphere permeating the local geographies of Paris. The geocultural difference is transmitted in their sense of bathos in the move from glamorous, exotic Paris to drab London.

The attraction of being a *flâneur* to Chris and Toni lies in its implicated criticism of a bourgeois, pragmatic, moralistic lifestyle. It reflects the "heroic aspiration" or the desire to pursue the "epic side of modern life", which Gluck connects with Paris public life (57-58). Chris and Toni's epic goal to "*écreaser l'infâme and épater la bourgeois"* in adolescence is an imitation of this aspiration and turns the early *flâneur*'*s* implicit criticism into an open challenge. Like their other efforts to synthesize art and life, however, this imitation is full of adolescent naivety and the heroic becomes mock-heroic: "Ice-cream vendors? Small fry, and hardly bourgeois enough. That policeman? Too dangerous. They came into the same category as pregnant women and nuns" (*M* 17). The effect of this is just like Quixote running into the herd of sheep imagining he was conquering an army. The grandness of the motto degenerates into an adolescent trick. Like their other challenges, the imitation of the *flâneur*'s lifestyle is more an adolescent gesture, or as they call it "a public pose", rather than a real understanding (*M* 15). The problem is not merely that they are at the wrong place; more importantly, their actions are anachronistic.

Chris's life in Paris is the crucial stage of his imitation of a *flâneur*. His full absorption of this lifestyle in Paris is an embodiment of the transformative effect of going to a big city— one of the motifs in the *Bildungsroman.* Compared with his previous adolescent imitation, Chris is more mature, and has the geographical convenience of being in Paris. The geocultural atmosphere of Paris is central in the

literary construction of the image of the *flâneur.* Gluck suggests, "One of the striking features of popular images of the *flâneur* that emerged in the 1830s and the 1840s was their close and insistent association with the public landscape of Paris" (55). Walter Benjamin brings the word into the academy by giving a Marxist analysis of the connection between the *flâneur* and the urban landscape of modernity in his work *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1937). He connects the *flâneur*'s lifestyle with the rise of modern metropolitan life in Paris. Basically, the invention of arcades, which is "a cross between a street and an intérrieur", turns the street into "a dwelling for the *flâneur*" and makes strolling possible (Benjamin 37).

Chris apparently assumes the pose of Baudelaire's "avant-garde *flâneur*". In his essay "The Painter of Modern life" (1863), taking the painter Constantin Guys as his model, Baudelaire defines this type of *flâneur* as "an artist of the crowd", whose writing should be about "the beauty of circumstance and the sketch of manners" ("Painter" 1). For him, being a *flâneur* offers a new sensibility to express beauty, which he regards as the highest goal of art. There are two inseparable aspects in his sense of beauty: one is "an eternal, invariable element, whose quantity it is excessively difficult to determine", the other is "a relative, circumstantial element, which will be . . . whether severally or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions" (3). This is a combination of the historical and the contemporary as well as of the eternal and the transitory. Taking the "avant-garde *flâneur*" as a model of living, Chris aims at the aesthetic experience of beauty which Baudelaire prescribes. Compared with his early imitation in London, Chris now has the advantage of being at the authentic place to feel the cultural atmosphere he has admired. His early acts of imitation —visiting artistic places and even drawing or writing or sitting at an open window and writing down what he sees—seem successful. However, the *flâneur* is essentially a spectator of life: he is among the crowd but is only an observer instead of a participant in life. The beauty the *flâneur* finds in life is based on a distance from the crowd, which is exemplified by Baudelaire's comparison of the *flâneur* to "a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life" (9).

The problem with the egoistic lifestyle of a *flâneur* is highlighted when Barnes presents its conflict with the pursuit of love. Chris's love for the French girl Annick

betrays the conflict between aesthetic solipsism and an ethical relationship with the other. At the beginning of this relationship, Chris regards it as the culmination of his aesthetic journey. As he describes, "It felt as if everything was coming together, all at once. The past was all round; I was the present; art was here, and history, and now the promise of something much like love or sex" (*M* 93). It fulfills his dream of romantic love and creates an illusion of an ideal life, which, in his view, is "fusing all the art and the history with . . . the life" (*M* 93). However, during the relationship, the mystery of art is faced with the test of the trivialities of life. This is also an encounter between dream and reality, in which cultural difference plays a role; but more crucially, the ethical concern for the other which is necessary in a love relationship begins to pose a challenge to Chris's egoistic pursuit of a *flâneur*'s life. This is typified by his puzzlement and frustration over the subtle use of language.

During his stay in Paris, Chris becomes aware of the dual workings of language, which corresponds to Levinas's identification of two aspects of language—the saying and the said, in other words, the act of expression and the things expressed. On the one hand, Levinas acknowledges Martin Heidegger's view that we are spoken by language and maintains that language "conditions the functioning of rational thought: it gives it a commencement in being, a primary identity of signification in the face of him who speaks . . ." (*TI* 204). Chris's awareness of the shaping effect of language upon individual personality and identity formation echoes this sense of language as "the said". He quotes the result of a Californian experiment on Japanese-born GI brides: "The result showed that in Japanese, the women were submissive, supportive creatures, aware of the value of tight social cohesion; in English, they were independent, frank, and much more outward-looking"（*M* 105）. The shaping influence of language works on Chris too. After staying in Paris for a while, he finds himself behaving like a French person: "more prone to generalization, to labeling and ticketing and docketing and sectioning and explaining and to lucidity—"（*M* 106). Adaptation into another culture and language makes him more aware of cultural conflicts and the limits of language. The conscious absorption of everything French makes him more French-like; but at the same time he becomes more aware of his English identity and suffers from a split identity: "as if one part of me was being faintly disloyal to another part"（*M* 106）. In this sense, language is an internalized expression of national identity. It preconditions part of Chris's self.

On the other hand, Barnes reveals language as part of an ethical relationship by presenting Chris's insensitive use of language, which puts an end to his love with Annick. While still in love with Annick, Chris becomes attracted to an English girl, Marion. At the initial stage of the love triangle, he is eager to drop a hint to Annick about Marion's existence. In their conversation, Chris's unnecessary repetition of the phrase "*mon amie anglaise*" ("my English friend") arouses her suspicion. His choice of "*Je t'aime bien*" ("I like you") instead of "*Je t'aime*" ("I love you") strikes the final blow to their relationship. Cultural differences play a part in this break up in that Chris speaks like this out of directness and honesty, which he has learned from Annick. However, Chris's insensitivity to her subtle feelings is the decisive factor. In pursuit of exactness of language, he is unaware of the effect it will have on the receiver. As the hurt Annick comments bitterly, "How rational, how measured, how English" (*M* 122). For her, this is "cruel" not "honest". Barnes stresses here the ethical dimension involved in a love relationship—the caring for the Other, which goes beyond cultural differences and outweighs the need for exactness of language.

The stress on the ethical dimension of language resonates with Levinas's sense of language as "the saying". Levinas defines the essence of language as "the relation with the Other" (*TI* 207). He prioritizes the saying over the said and stresses that the ethical meaning of language falls beyond the content of language. In his note to Levinas's essay "The Transcendence of Words", Sané Hand explains that "in the saying there is always the traces of alterity that goes beyond anything that can be measured in terms of its thought content" (144). What Chris misses is just these traces due to his lack of sympathetic caring for Annick. In Chris's brief love relationship, Barnes has implied the kind of love he elaborates on in the "Parenthesis" section of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, which is characterized by two prerequisites: "imaginative sympathy" and "beginning to see the world from another point of view" (*HW* 243). Barnes regards these as qualities that make "a good lover, a good artist or a good politician" (*HW* 243). Chris tries to see the world from Annick's point of view, but he fails to convey "imaginative sympathy" towards her in his eagerness to make things clear. The conflict between the egoistic pursuit of the lifestyle of the *flâneur* and the ethical dimension of love distinguishes Barnes from the poet Baudelaire, whom his character Chris takes as a model of imitation.

The breakup with Annick marks the end of Chris's second stage of living like a

flâneur and the beginning of the third stage: writing like an "avant-garde *flâneur*". The failed love with Annick puts him into the mood of an artist, and he begins to express his own "spleen": "I wrote a series of prose poems which I called *Spleenters:* urban allegories, sardonic character-sketches, elusive verse, and passages of straight description, which gradually built up into the portrait of a city, a man, and—who could say?—perhaps a bit more" (*M* 126). As the title suggests, Chris's writing is a direct imitation of Baudelaire's collection of prose poems *Le Spleen de Paris*（1869）, which is a realization of his aesthetic principle that the artist should be "the painter of modern life". However, Chris's writing indicates the shallowness of this imitation. In contrast to the maturity of Baudelaire's work, Chris's spleen is nothing but an expression of his impression of life, and is full of youthful pretentiousness. As Moseley points out, "His title *Spleenters* is indicative. No matter how he might wish to be, Christopher Lloyd is no melancholiac; he knows little or nothing about spleen" (31). The imitation, however, reveals that being an avant-garde *flâneur* is nothing but an egoistic aesthetic indulgence.

Chris's shifting attitude towards art, especially towards the Aestheticism represented by Baudelaire, echoes the humanistic criticism of the movement made by Levinas and Todorov. In "Reality and its Shadow", Levinas thinks the formula of art for art's sake is "false inasmuch as it situates art above reality and recognizes no master for it, and it is immoral inasmuch as it liberates the artist from his duties as a man and assures him of a pretentious and facile nobility" (*The Levinas Reader* 131). Similarly, Todorov thinks that aestheticism is estranged from humanism "chiefly in that it does not grant a significant role to the relation with the other and, more crucially, the finality of the *you*. Aestheticism may or may not reject the universality of the *they* (it does in Baudelaire), but in any case it does not reserve a specific place for human sociability. Consequently, it valorizes only the quality of the *I"* (*IG* 177).

Both Levinas and Todorov direct us to aestheticism's lack of the ethics which, in their view, lie in the inter-subjective world. Todorov especially emphasizes the replacement of ethical values by aesthetic values in Baudelaire's poems. He thinks Baudelaire adapts to this aestheticism "on the one hand, by praising the life transformed into a work of art; and on the other, by regarding the production of works of art as the crowning achievement of a life" (*IG* 175). Baudelaire's aestheticism caters to Chris's egoistic pursuit of art at a certain stage of his life, but his later

abjuration of the solipsistic self-absorption of art in his early adult life and focus more on human relationships expresses the same opinion towards art as Levinas and Todorov.

Living like a *flâneur* shows the romantic idealism in Chris's mentality, but in the later part of his life in Paris, he begins to feel the discrepancies between art and life. The contrast between the epigraphs for the first and second parts of the novel anticipates this transition from the ideal to the real. As a response to Rimbaud's line quoted above, the epigraph to the second part is Verlaine's letter to Pierre Louÿs commenting on Rimbaud's poem "voyelles": "*Moi qui ai connu Rimbaud, je sais qu'il se foutait pas mal si A était rouge ou vert. Il le voyait comme ça, mais c'est tout*" (*M* 73).[9] The mystery of art is diminished by this external note. Barnes comments, "The Verlaine quote is about how realism kicks in" (Patterson). The awareness of realism foreshadows Chris's choice to go back to Metroland in the third part.

The reflection in the "Object Relations" section of Part Two shows the contrast between two different attitudes towards art and life. Different from the early enthusiastic pursuit of art, the narrator Chris shows a more mature and practical attitude, which characterizes his later life. When he recalls the initial aims in his life: "a vivid, explosive, enriching self-knowledge" and "finding the key to some vital synthesis of art and life", he comments immediately, "How naïve it sounds, put like that" (*M* 128). His meditation upon the relationship between art and life ends with six questions with no answers, but the apparently negative tone in the last three questions announces his disillusionment with art. Therefore, Chris's imitation of the lifestyle of a *flâneur* is his last tribute to art.

This focus on individual experience in daily life is paralleled by Barnes's tendency to purposefully avoid the grand political event in his writing. While depicting an individual's socialization, the choice to involve a character in broad historical and political events becomes the point of separation between two groups of writers. Writers like Balzac and Joyce take these events as a driving force in their protagonists' maturation, and incorporate political and historical dimensions into their respective *Bildungsroman*: *Le Père Goriot* (1835) and *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* (1916).[10] However, there is a "constant elusion of historical turning

[9] Christina Patterson's English translation goes like this: "I who knew Rimbaud know that he really didn't give a damn whether A was red or green. He saw it like that, but that's all".

[10] Several scholars have made a comparison between *Metroland* and *Portrait*. Moseley emphasizes the similarity between the two novels in terms of storyline (18). Frederic Holmes considers *Metroland* as "a wholly ironic

points and breaks" in the *Bildungsroman*, as exemplified by Goethe, Austen, Flaubert, Stendhal, and Eliot, which deviates from this trend. As Moretti notes,

> Just think of the historical course of the *Bildungsroman:* it originates with Goethe and Jane Austen who…write as if to show that the double revolution of the eighteenth century could have been avoided. It continues with Stendhal's heroes, who are born 'too late' to take part in the revolutionary-Napoleonic epic. It withers away with 1848 in Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* (…) and with the English thirties in Eliot's *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch* (…). (12)

Among these figures, Barnes is particularly close to Flaubert. Chris's tripartite journey from the suburb to the city and back repeats Frédéric Moreau's journey from his hometown to Paris and back in *L'Education Sentimentale* (1869). More importantly, Barnes displays the same evasive attitude towards grand historical events as Flaubert. Like Frédéric, who cherishes only his memory of those women in his life instead of the great historical event of his time—the Revolution of 1848, Chris was in Paris during the whole 1968 *événéments*, but sees nothing. As he stresses, "The point is—well I was there, all through May, through the burning of the Bourse, the occupation of the Odéon, the Billancourt lock-in, the rumours of tanks roaring back through the night from Germany. But didn't actually see anything" (*M* 76). As analyzed above, what Barnes focuses on is Chris's imitation of the lifestyle of a *flâneur* and his love of Annick. Barnes openly acknowledges his indebtedness to Flaubert at the end of Part Two when Chris has *L'Education Sentimentale* in his pocket when he leaves Paris.

This "political quietism", as some scholars interpret it,[11] bespeaks of Barnes's early literary scope and choice of literary truths. In this respect, Barnes shares Flaubert's preference for truth based on the individual experience of the subtlety of life—"those modes of existence that allow the ego to manifest itself fully"—rather than on grand historical moments (Moretti 12). These modes are more likely to be established in the sphere of everyday life, which Moretti takes as "the comforting dimensions of familiarity" and "a world where man truly is the measure of all things"

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portrait of the Artist Manqué" and emphasizes the complicated reasons behind Chris's compromises (*Julian Barnes* 58).

[11]See Pateman, *Julian Barnes* 2 and Taunton 23.

(34). Chris's mentality at that time in Paris gives further support to this argument. As the narrator describes, "I went to Paris determined to immerse myself in the culture, the language, the street-life, and—I would doubtless have added, with hesitant casualness—the women"（*M* 105）. Besides the 1968 Students' Movement, two other great cultural phenomena in this period which Barnes overlooks further evince his "lack of historical recognition": the Beatles in 1963 and the Punk Movement in 1967 (Childs, *Julian Barnes* 23).

The focus on individual experience in daily life and avoidance of the broad political background delineate Barnes's literary scope and artistic choice. Even when he deals with such a big topic as the history of the world, he replaces "the" with "a" and presents it from different individual perspectives. In this regard, Barnes is in line with the tradition created by Goethe, Austin, Flaubert, Stendhal and Eliot, as well as by Gautier, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud. He shares their concern with individual life, but his attitude towards aesthetic autonomy and the relationship between art and daily life, notably advocated by Flaubert and the latter group, needs further exploration. In the next section, I will further examine Barnes's attitude towards art by analyzing the different attitudes towards kitsch displayed by Chris and Toni in their early adulthood.

1.3 "Being into Life"：Embracing Kitsch

In the third part of the novel, Chris chooses to return to Metroland and settled down into a happy middle-class life, as he told Toni jokingly, "I'm into life" (*M* 146). Chris's return to Metroland and embrace of the happiness of bourgeois life in Part Three draws attention to the relationship between socialization and individual integration—the central tension in the *Bildungsroman*. In this section, I will interpret Chris's transformation in this context. I argue that Barnes confirms Chris's transformation from the egoistic pursuit of art to a concern for interpersonal relationships embodied by the happiness of daily life without failing to disclose the constant circulation of illusion and disillusionment behind it.

Early examples of *the Bildungsroman* often present harmonious socialization as an outcome of the process of growing up. As discussed previously, this theme was definitively established by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister.* As the first scholar to analyze the *Bildungsroman*, Karl Morgenstern points out that "no previous novel—not only of the German people—so successfully and to such a high degree and expansiveness

attempted to represent and promote the harmonious formation of the purely human" (655).[12] Wilhelm Meister's growing up is a development "towards his true nature by means of a collaboration of his inner dispositions with outer circumstances" (656).[13] The successful fusion of self-determination and socialization, "with a force of conviction and optimistic clarity" embodied by Wilhelm Meister, renders the *Bildungsroman* "the essential and pivotal point of our history", for it justifies "the comfort of civilization" (Moretti 16).

However, the process of legitimation—the individual's internalization of social norms—must require confirmation, which inevitably causes "conflict between individuality and socialization, autonomy, and normality, interiority and objectification" (Moretti 16). The English Bildungsroman, in particular, is characterized by this conflict between self-cultivation and social contact, so socialization becomes more problematic. As Brigid Lowe suggests, "In contrast English heroes typically find their desires and choices radically constrained by economic realities and socio-moral codes. The economic, moral, and social constraints, or lack of them, have great formal implications" (405). Compared to a formal education, societal encounters become a more shaping influence upon the formation of the self. In this sense, "the *Bildungsroman* is concerned not with self *per se* but with transformation of the self—by family, by bourgeois society, by history" (Sheehan 3). The constraints become major plot drivers in the English *Bildungsroman*; as a result, the genre had a strong moralizing tendency in the 19th Century. The conflict between the individual and society is usually brought to a resolution in the end, although it does not always end up with successful integration into society, as is evinced by Thomas Hardy's *Tess* of *the d'Urbervilles* (1891) or *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

In the 20th century, under the influence of modernism, the *Bildungsroman* was transformed dramatically. The formal innovation of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, such as the use of stream of consciousness, challenged the epistemological status of concepts like identity and humanity. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young*

[12] The quote is from Tobias Boes's translation of Morgenstern's article "On the Nature of the *Bildungsroman*". See Morgenstern & Boes.

[13] Interpretations of the relationship between the self and society in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* shift too. Andreas Gailus notes that up to the 1960s, the novel was usually interpreted as "modeling successful human formation (*Bildung*) in terms of the harmonious integration of expressive self-formation with social responsibility", but since the 1970s, the left-leaning critics in Germany have "emphasized the genre's ideological function, which was said to consist precisely in naturalizing, and hence veiling, the normative violence of socialization" (140).

Man, the process of growing up becomes moments of solipsistic internalization typified by epiphanies in resistance to the process of socialization. The whole meaning of existence is encapsulated in such crucial momentary epiphanies, which work as a form of transcendence over the triviality of daily life.

No matter what form socialization assumes, contradictions always exist. The choice for the individual is between Wilhelm Meister's successful assimilation by conforming to social norms and Stephen's listening to his heart's desire to pursue artistic freedom. Mediating between these two ends, *Metroland* presents the new circumstance of growing-up in contemporary bourgeois society. Chris and Toni's choices in life illustrate that neither the 19th century struggle against society nor the 20th century transcendence over daily life is available to them. The tripartite structure of the novel brings Chris and Toni, in their early adulthood, back to life in Metroland, the place they used to despise and rebel against. I argue that Barnes's presentation of their choices puts forth a dialogue between postmodernism and modernism on the level of everyday life. In this respect, Michael L. Morgan makes an insightful distinction: "Modernism is redemptive and elevating. It seeks to transcend the limitations of the everyday through heroic action, creativity, and extraordinary religious experience. Modernism is a heroic romanticism. Postmodernism, on the other hand . . . invokes a redemptive realism and an affirmation of the mundane, the prosaic" (86). While Chris displays a postmodern "affirmation of the mundane, the prosaic" in his active integration into suburban bourgeois life, Toni continues his adolescent modernist pursuit of transcendence through art. Chris gets married with the English girl Marion whom he got to know in Paris. After drifting through some jobs, he gradually settles down as a senior editor. Toni, in contrast to Chris, still sticks to his adolescent belief that "poetry has to do with something happening", but becomes more political and cynical. The contrast between these two choices forms the major tension of the novel.

Barnes's presentation of Chris's integration can be interpreted on two levels. The first level is the affirmation of Chris's pursuit of happiness in the interpersonal relationships found in everyday life. The epigraph for Part Three anticipates Chris's transformation from the early idealistic pursuit of art to the embrace of mundane middle-class life. It is a quote from Bishop Butler: "Things and action are what they are, and the consequence of them will be what they will be; why then should we desire to be deceived?" (*M* 131). The attitude of taking things as they are forms a

sharp contrast to the quote from Rimbaud's symbolic poem in the first epigraph, but is a continuation of the realism exposed in Verlaine's comment on the poem in the second. Its refusal to be deceived by art forms a sharp contrast with Chris and Toni's early attempt to establish a correspondence between art and life. It amounts to a break with a totalizing or synthesizing way of thinking, which seeks meaning from "theories".

Chris's contentment with daily life goes against the grain of the recent philosophical critique of everyday life developed by scholars like Henri Lefebvre, Agnes Heller and Karel Kosikis.[14] As Moretti observes, as an echo of Hegel's declaration of "the great crisis of universal history", this trend of critique focuses more on the negative aspects of daily life: "to 'disalienate' it, reveal its wretchedness or transience, unmask the 'happiness' it promotes as something mean or imaginary" (Moretti 35). This negative view of happiness in daily life is just what Chris criticizes in the novel. As he says,

> I wonder why happiness is despised nowadays: dismissively confused with comfort or complacency, judged an enemy of social—even technological—progress. People often refuse to believe it when they see it; or disregard it as something merely lucky, merely genetic: a few drops of this, a dash of that, a couple of synapses unclogged. Not an achievement. (*M* 174-75)

Chris's affirmation of happiness in daily life, however, resonates with Levinas's phenomenological analysis of everyday life. Instead of prescribing a metaphysical critique, Levinas describes it as a social relationship, especially in our ethical responsibility towards the Other. He defines the relationship between the self and the other "in the domain of love, eros, concern, generosity, and sensitivity rather than knowing and believing" (Morgan 93). While focusing on the interpersonal relationship, Levinas confirms the value of the various kinds of enjoyment and nourishment that the self obtains in the formation of subjectivity, especially the role the home plays as a dwelling place. He regards home as the threshold towards the ethics of the Other.

Chris's contentment with his family life is close to Levinas's idea of home as a

[14] For a detailed introduction, see Moretti 32-35.

dwelling place. The symbolic meanings Chris invests the street lamp with at the different stages of his life illuminate his transformation from adolescent rebellion to an appreciation of suburban life in early adulthood. No longer being a symbol of the dull colourless life of adolescence, the street lamp at the end of the novel reflects Chris's comfortable family life:

> In the road outside is a sodium lamp whose orange light, filtered through a half-grown fir in the front garden, softly lights up the hall, the kitchen and Amy's bedroom. She enjoys this civic night-light, and prefers going off to sleep with her curtains drawn back. If she wakes, and there is no orange glow pervading her room (. . .), she becomes fretful. (*M* 175)

Different from the rebellious tone at the beginning of the novel, this passage is full of the warmth of family life, showing directly Chris's acceptance of the "lazy pleasure" of the suburban life represented by the orange street lamp.

Barnes's description of Chris's attitude towards home agrees with Levinas's stress on the transitional function the home symbolizes. As a threshold, home dwellings can be compared to the Freudian "paradigm shift from the pleasure principle to the reality principle" (Gans 46). On Chris's part, it is a transformation from the early egoistic pursuit of art to the pursuit of interpersonal relationships. The "Object Relations" section in each part records his enhanced relationship with the outside world. As Childs points out, "He has moved from objects that imply writers he doesn't know, through self-reference, to a life in which objects are the tokens of interpersonal relations" (*Julian Barnes* 32). In the third "Object Relations", while expressing the enjoyment brought about by the things in his room, Chris connects them with the people behind them and shows his care for the interpersonal relationship, as he says, "Objects contain absent people" (*M* 176). In this respect, Barnes endorses Chris's postmodern affirmation of the happiness in daily life.

However, there is a substantial difference in the understanding of "home" put forward by Levinas and Chris. What Levinas cherishes in a dwelling home is the spiritual tranquility and freedom brought about by peace at home. As he stresses, "The primordial function of the home does not consist in orienting being by the architecture of the building and in discovering a site, but in breaking the plenum of the element, in opening in it the utopia in which the 'I' recollects itself in dwelling at

home with itself" (*TI* 156). In contrast, what Chris finds at home is "pleasure in material comfort"; as he describes more concretely, "I found my slightly clotted brain praising the constant carpet, the central heating, the double glazing" (*M* 175). Chris gives a detailed description of his kitchen: "The table laid for breakfast, the neat line of cups on their hooks, the onions giving off a crepuscular glisten from their hanging basket: everything is orderly, comforting, yet strangely alive" (*M* 176). All these things smell of the comfort of middle-class life. This contrasts sharply with the empty room in adolescent years described in the first "Object Relations", and speaks of Chris's contentment with the pleasure brought about by these material possessions. Chris's stress on the material foundation undercuts his confidence in happiness. As the following analysis will show, his happiness derives from compliance to bourgeois social standards rather than his heart's desire; therefore, it is only a new illusion he has at this stage of life.

If his contentment with a comfortable family life presents an affirmation of the mundane aspect of postmodernism, Chris's choice of jobs agrees with the postmodern preference for "the prosaic". Although these jobs are connected with art, they are all commercial and serve the consumption of mass culture. The first real job Chris finds in Metroland is as a copywriter, which he enjoys and describes as "ridiculous, but pleasant" (*M* 139). He then becomes an editor for reference books. Instead of providing a profound introduction to art, the books Chris works on cater to the average readers' taste, for purely commercial reasons. These books belong to the contemporary category of kitsch, which has degraded from "works of art of a certain kind" in Goethe's time to a synonym of "bad taste" (15), as Gillo Dorfles traces in his book *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste* (1968).

Kitsch's essence can be exemplified by the book about Italian Renaissance painting which Chris introduces in detail: "a TV tie-in to go with a series of drama-documentaries based on Vasari"（*M* 140）. Toni's joking chapter title for the book—"Buonarotti Bangs. Leo gets Lucky. Sandro Screws. Masaccio" (*M* 140)—suggests its essence as contemporary kitsch. The latest job Chris is offered is to run "Scavenger Books", that is, "translations of spunkbooks" (*M* 171). These jobs show more clearly that he has turned from a pursuer of real art to one who panders to the people with special if not "bad" tastes as a way of making a comfortable living. This embrace of kitsch is another indication of Chris's acceptance of the standards of

consumer society.

Barnes highlights the self-illusions Chris entertains at different stages of his life by offering the man's self-justifications for his choices. Chris's compromises represent the second aspect of his contentment—the constant circulation of illusion and disillusionment in the process of growing up. While explaining his return to Metroland, Chris asks rhetorically, "But isn't part of growing up being able to ride irony without being thrown?" (*M* 135). For him, going back is not a failure or compromise at all but a successful integration into life with the pragmatic consideration that "it's an efficient place to live" (*M* 135). Chris's active integration into the lifestyle of Metroland is similar to Wilhelm's interiorization or socialization, but in contemporary time, it is no longer applauded as success, but as a reconciliation or compromise with life.

Based on the modern heroic tradition, Chris's settling down to a mediocre middle-class life should be a failure. His "affirmation of the mundane, the prosaic" is an embrace of contemporary kitsch. Barnes attests to this theme of compromise in an interview:

> *Metroland* was about defeat. I wanted to write about youthful aspiration coming to a compromised end. I wanted to write a novel that was un-Balzacian, in that, instead of ending with the hero looking down from a hill onto a city that he knows, or at least believes, he is going to take, it ended with the non-hero *not* having taken the city, and accepting the city's terms. (Guppy 64, italics in original)

This sense of compromise is better illustrated by Chris's marriage to Marion. In contrast to his relationship with Annick in Paris, this marriage is based more on practical reasons, as the list he makes suggests. For example, one of the reasons he gives is that "she was the only child of comfortably-off parents" (*M* 141). The discovery of his wife's infidelity in their early marriage ushers in the imperfect but real aspect of contemporary life.

Barnes's description of Chris and his wife's confession to each other reminds us of the similar scene in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, when Tess and her lover Angel Clare confess to each other their past love affairs on their wedding night, but the contrasting reactions of the characters indicate the changing social moralities

in different times. Marion's calmness is in sharp contrast to Tess's extreme guilt and worry. For the former, sexual boredom is an even bigger sin than unfaithfulness: "You didn't go into marriage expecting a virgin and I didn't go in expecting a flagrantly faithful husband. Don't think I can't imagine what it's like to be sexually bored" (*M* 162). In contrast to Clare, who is unforgiving towards Tess, Chris does not know how to react at first, and finally accepts it calmly. To a certain extent, Chris's happiness arises from "his willingness to settle for less" (Moseley 30). Barnes reveals the compromises behind Chris's happy contentment, which mark the transformation from Hardy's romantic ideal of love to a more pragmatic and down-to-earth attitude towards life.

Chris's compromises are further off-set by Toni's constant criticism of his life. In the third part of the novel, Barnes makes Toni a severe critic of Chris's integration into suburban life, which offers an alternative angle to Chris's. At the same time, Toni's life is under Chris's scrutiny. Through this cross-examination, Barnes discloses the illusions and disillusionments behind their choices. For all their shared idealism in adolescent years, they diverge in their adult life. Chris describes Toni's later life like this:

> After Morocco, he went off to the states for a couple of years (from kif to kitsch as he put it); he came back, taught philosophy, and established himself as a callous academic reviewer; he published poems and two books of essays, and gradually become more involved in street politics. He lives now with a girl whose name we can never remember in the least fashionable part of the borough of Kensington he could find. The last time we asked him down we invited his 'wife' as well; but he said he'd come alone. (*M* 142)

This description reveals that Toni chooses to stick more to their early dream of a rootless life. It also shows his criticism of the kitsch represented by American culture, in contrast to Chris's affirmation of "the mundane and the prosaic".

The biggest difference between Chris and Toni in their early adulthood is their attitude towards art, more concretely, their belief in the efficacy of poetry or art. Chris, at this stage, is completely disillusioned by art, and holds a clear distinction between life and art. As he expresses clearly, "Old pictures, OK. I like it all; I always did; I just don't know whether there is any sort of direct link between it and me—whether the

connection we force ourselves to believe in is really there" (*M* 165). He adopts W.H. Auden's anti-utilitarian stance that "poetry makes nothing happen" (M 145). [15] In this thinking, he puts poetry back to its autonomous world and denies its efficacy in real life.

In contrast, Toni still cherishes their adolescent belief in art's function in life and makes it more political by insisting that "art was to do with something happening" (*M* 165). He writes poems in spite of his awareness that poetry cannot "change the world" and takes up radical "left-wing" political views typified by his constant criticism of "the fat cats"—the *bon bourgeois* (*M* 145). Toni despises Chris's middle-class bourgeois life and regards it as a selling-out job. However, his criticism is often weakened by his own compromises and cynicism, as he admits, "I make lots of decisions on grounds of selfishness which I call pragmatism. I suppose in a way that's just as bad as you" (*M* 150-51).

In this new controversy over the function of art, Barnes does not make any comment but presents the ideas as a dialogue, and reveals their limitations through the opposing perspective. As the contrast shows, neither of their choices is perfect. Chris's disillusionment with art and embrace of middle-class life is a compromise, but it is based on a more responsible attitude towards his family, and especially his child. Toni is devoted to art, but he is unwilling to commit himself to his loved one and only settles into "some modern arrangement" with his present girlfriend, which sounds more like sexual convenience. Barnes highlights the balance between the two angles in order to show the relationship between art and life. In his eyes, it is

> ambiguous, or balanced, or unclear so that on the one hand Chris, who is the main character, either has—depending how you look at him—become mature, sensible, wise or has completely sold out and turned all his values to those of wider society; whereas Toni—according to your choice—is either a ridiculously immature poser as he always had been, or someone who has stuck by his ideals and still believes in art and value and truth in the way he did when they were fifteen or sixteen. (Freiburg 33-34)

He points out directly that the novel was misinterpreted when Bernard Levin commented that "the hero [is] not merely exhibiting the suburban virtues

[15] For a detailed analysis of the connotations of the poem and its various interpretations, see Robinson.

but…extolling them" and that "Mr. Barnes believes in those values himself" (qtd. in Guignery, *Fiction*: 11). Levin's reading neglects the balance between the dialogues, which reveals the complexity of life and Barnes's open attitude to it.

The dialogic presentation of Chris and Toni's lives helps to highlight the illusions in life. The ambiguity of the ending has produced diverse interpretations.[16] Among them, Childs's interpretation of the theme of the novel as "to be less deceived" is enlightening. He quotes the title of Philip Larkin's poem-collection "The Less Deceived" to define the process of growing up in the novel. Larkin's collection of poems suggests that it is wiser to be "the less deceived" and Childs thinks Barnes's expresses a similar view in the novel. By comparing Barnes with Larkin, he regards the novel as "a contemplative and reflective fictional memoir that affirms the value of simple pleasures and resists the Larkinesque temptation to believe that 'life' lies somewhere else: beyond suburbia, at political riots and protests, or in leading a Bohemian existence" (*Julian Barnes* 19). He also opines that the spirit of Larkin's collection "permeates the darker aspects of the novel in its emphasis on a dread of death, the state of Englishness, and the waning of affect" (21). This reading captures Chris's gradual transformation from idealism to a pragmatic reconciliation with life, but taking the novel as a whole, Barnes's tone may not be as gloomy as Larkin's. Childs's interpretation, however, inspires me to propose that Barnes's work has the implication that the capacity "to be less deceived" is another illusion in the journey of life, as can be illuminated by a comparative reading with another Barnes novel, *The Sense of an Ending*.

Written 30 years after *Metroland*, *The Sense of an Ending* is a continuation of the early novel in many respects. It is also a first-person retrospective narration, this time of the protagonist Tony Webster's life from his school years up to his sixties. The longer life span enables the narrator to have a fuller view of life than Chris. While confronting the self-deceptions in a mediocre life, Tony reflects on his early self-convincing judgments of life, which are exactly Chris's convictions at this stage of his life in *Metroland*:

[16] Based on Barnes's own idea, Holmes insists on the uncertainty of the ending, as he emphasizes: "The novel raises, without answering unambiguously, the question of whether this return should be viewed as a betrayal of the youthful ideals . . . or a mature acceptance of the ordinary satisfactions" (50). Pateman takes the epigraphs as an indication and thinks, "There is a movement from complexity to simplification, from the desire to search to desire to accept" (5). This view summarizes the general tendency of Chris's life, but it neglects the fact that behind the complexity is the real simplicity of adolescent years, and that the simplification in early adulthood involves more experience of the complexity of life. For a summary of some of the critical views, see Guignery, *Fiction* 10-11.

> What did I know of life, I who had lived so carefully? Who had neither won nor lost, but just let life happen to him? Who had the usual ambitions and settled all too quickly for them not being realized? Who avoided being hurt and called it a capacity for survival? Who paid his bills, stayed on good terms with everyone as far as possible, for whom ecstasy and despair soon became words once read in novels? One whose self-rebukes never really inflicted pain? Well, there was all this to reflect upon, while I endured a special kind of remorse: a hurt inflicted at long last on one who always thought he knew how to avoid being hurt—and inflicted for precisely that reason. (*SE* 135)

A comparative reading reveals that Chris's early contentment is full of self-deception. The sentence "who paid his bills" is a direct response to Chris's sentence "*A noir, E blanc, I rouge* . . . ? Pay your bills, that's what Auden said" (*M* 175). The contrast shows that not only is Chris's adolescent idealization of Rimbaud's poem a self-deception, so is his pragmatic pursuit of a happy life in early adulthood. This sense of self-deception is the major theme of *The Sense of an Ending*, which is highlighted by the contrast between the different versions Tony constructs of his previous life. Putting the two novels together, we can see that Barnes reveals the constant circulation of illusion and disillusionment in life, as well as the human inclination to explain away compromises or failures by finding the best excuses.

However, Barnes also presents Chris's constant pursuit of truths about the self, as well as his persistence in overcoming self-illusions. These acts form his transcendence. In his dialogues with Toni about their different attitudes towards life, Chris inserts an argument for his changing attitude towards art and life:

> (But isn't it true that I'm—not 'into life', I wouldn't put it like that—I'm more serious? At school I would have called myself serious, whereas I was merely intense. In Paris I did call myself serious—imagined, indeed, that I was heading for some grand synthesis of life and art—but I was probably only attaching an inordinate, legitimating importance to unreflecting pleasure. Nowadays I'm serious about different things; and I don't fear my seriousness will collapse beneath me.) (*M* 146-47)

Here Chris affirms the experiential truths he obtained from life in spite of his

awareness that they may turn out to be illusionary or immature. This represents Barnes's perspective on how to present life: to give a view from inside, not from high above. He acknowledges man's limited understanding of the self and his surroundings but cherishes the spirit of the constant pursuit of truth.

Barnes's stress on the sentimental reasons behind these compromises, and their persuasiveness, characterizes his humanistic inclination. He once explained the character's compromises in the novel like this: "It was about the compromises that people make in a way without realizing that they're doing so. And making compromises, you know, with the best of intentions, maybe because they love someone, because they want to provide a home for a child, because they need to earn money" (Freiburg 34). The "best intentions", which Barnes endows his characters with, elevate them from the condemnations they should have suffered for their failure and instead mark their humanity.

This point is better exemplified in Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time* (2016), a fictional narration of the life of Russian musician Dmitri Shostakovich, under the oppressive watch of the Soviet authorities. Barnes calls his hero "a coward", for he sacrifices his personal integrity out of his love for both his family and art. However, Barnes expresses great sympathy for this cowardice:

> My hero was a coward. Or rather, often considered himself a coward. Or rather, was placed in a position in which it was impossible not to be a coward. You or I would have been cowards in his position, and had we decided to be the opposite of a coward—a hero—we would have been extremely foolish. Those who stood up to power in those days were killed and members of their family, friends and associates were disgraced, sent to camps, or executed. So being a coward was the only sensible choice. ("My Hero: Dmitri Shostakovich")

Barnes gives full consideration to the circumstances that render his hero a coward and manifests a sober and practical understanding of heroism in life. In his sense, the demarcation between a hero and a coward is not so clear-cut, and a coward can be a hero.

The issue here is the relationship or the boundary between socialization and reconciliation. Growing up is a process of socialization, but for the individual, it is at

the same time a reconciliation with external reality. Instead of presenting the dramatic conflict between the individual and society, Barnes chooses to present the pervasive but invisible influence of social values upon an individual's transformation. Chris's belief that paying bills is more practical and important than Rimbaud's poems in his later life is a simple expression of the internalization of social norms. It indicates his transformation from the solipsistic pursuit of art to an existence under the gaze of others. In the end, he cares more about the good reputation brought by paying the bills. This alienation of the self by society is an old subject. The moralists of the seventeenth century were aware that "man believes he is choosing; in reality he submits to trends and tastes that are alien to him. He believes he is acting for himself, while others dictate his behavior" (qtd. in Todorov, *IG*: 69). Todorov further elaborates upon the shaping influence of the social convention upon the self:

> We claim to desire and to judge on our own, but this pretense, much of the time, merely conceals an illusion. 'We forget ourselves, and we are imperceptibly estranged from ourselves'; we lack an adequately sensitive ear to hear our own thoughts and feelings. What we hear instead, and submit to, are the customs, trends and tastes that we read in the gaze of others. (*IG* 69)

As I will show in Chapter 4, this alienation is better expressed in Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of "bad faith" and degrades into a kind of simulation in the postmodern age.

Like Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* and Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, Barnes's narrative in *Metroland* violates "our expectation of a hero-centered *Bildungsroman* universe" (Lowe 414). It meets the definition of maturation as the "process of subsuming the particular to the general—of finding patterns in our world, and of placing our own individuality within a network of determined roles and choices" (Lowe 408). In this process, compromises are necessary steps towards integration into society and are the inevitable choices of most average individuals. Barnes registers these compromises and failures and displays how they shape identity.

To summarize, this chapter has analyzed the initiation of Barnes's humanism in his first novel *Metroland.* Putting Barnes's presentation of growing up in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, I examined the function of art in the protagonist Chris's aesthetic formation and the compromises in his early socialization. Through this

analysis, we can see that Barnes incorporates his early humanistic stance into his reflection on the relationship between art and life. While acknowledging the crucial reference point art offers to life, Barnes stresses the ethical concerns implicated in art and language. He particularly responds to postmodern kitsch and displays a complicated attitude towards it. He both confirms the pursuit of happiness in daily life, especially through the interpersonal relationship, and stresses the experiential truths obtained through the interaction between art and life. This process involves compromises and the constant circulation of illusion and disillusionment. The power of Barnes's humanism lies in the "imaginative sympathy" he shows to his characters, which, as quoted above, he thinks will make "a good artist". In his affirmation of experiential truths, Barnes displays his resonance with the postmodern fluidity of identity. Based on this analysis, the novel can be regarded as the prelude to Barnes's postmodern humanism.

As an autobiographical first novel, *Metroland* still has the mark of Barnes's effort to transmit literary acquisition and personal experience into literary creation. However, the focus on the individual pursuit of meaning, truth and love demarcates his early literary scope and anticipates the humanistic concerns in his later works. In the next chapter, I will analyze Barnes's typical negotiation between postmodernism and humanism in his novel *Flaubert's Parrot.*

Chapter 2

Faithful Betrayal: A Postmodern Journey towards Truth and Love in *Flaubert's Parrot*

Flaubert's Parrot, Barnes's third novel, continues the exploration of the relationship between art and life that the author began in *Metroland*. However, it marks a clear departure from the traditional way of writing displayed in his first two novels. The juxtaposition of diversified genres, the self-reflexivity and the exploration of historical truth make it a model text of postmodernism[17]. This interpretation, however, neglects the overall unifying structure—the protagonist and narrator Braithwaite's pursuit of Flaubert's parrot, which enframes the seemingly incoherent juxtaposed chapters like a modernist quest narrative[18].

Barnes incorporates complex views on the issues of identity, (inter) textuality as well as the presence/absence of the author into this embedded structure. In this chapter, I argue that the novel represents Barnes's typical negotiation between postmodernism and humanism: a perfect integration of postmodern reflection on identity, intertextuality and fictionality and the humanistic pursuit of love and truth. I develop this argument from three angles, considering: the dynamic construction of Flaubert's identity; parrotry and pastiche as postmodern modes of representation; and the use of authorial absence / presence and narrative distance in the novel. In each section, the delicate resonance Barnes establishes with Flaubert is taken as a starting point for further dialogue between modernism and postmodernism

As a fictional biography of Flaubert, the novel raises the issue of identity. In this respect, Barnes shows the postmodern insistence on the fluidity and multiplicity of identity by carrying out what I regard as a "performative" construction of Flaubert's

[17] For a more detailed summary of postmodern readings of the novel, also see Guignery, *Fiction* 44-46; Goode 151-52; Gitzen 45-49.

[18] Scholars like Neil Brooks, Erica Hateley and Ecaterina Pătrascu explore the novel's modernist and humanistic factors centering on the relationship between art and life. Although taking it as a postmodern novel, Brooks analyzes the novel's intertextual relationship with Ford Madox Ford's modernist novel *The Good Soldier*. He thinks the novel "demonstrates that the relationship that modernist texts posited between themselves and their audiences can no longer be accepted innocently" (50). Erica Hateley continues to approach the novel as a modernist quest narrative. Ecaterina Pătrascu makes the first effort to bring together "the postmodern interpretation of history with the necessity of establishing a saving system, [which] characterizes the British 'new humanism'" (208), but she mainly focuses on the relationship between art and life—the function of the biography of Flaubert and his work *Madame Bovary* as an "interpretation frame" for the evolution of Braithwaite's character—without touching on the deep resonance between Barnes and Flaubert on the issue of language.

identity, giving equal weight to the diversified identities of Flaubert. Inseparable from this dynamic construction is Barnes's pondering on the function of language. He further shows his affiliations with postmodernism by adopting the intertextual use of parrotry and pastiche, that is, parroting of Flaubert's words and imitation of his style. In this way, Barnes mediates Flaubert's modernist exploration of the possibility of language as a representation of truth and the poststructuralist claim that language mediates all value-constructions. This in-between position is also displayed in his view on the postmodern concepts like "the death of the author" and "the birth of the reader" put forward by Roland Barthes. Barnes confirms authorial agency in the production of texts, but retains postmodern playfulness by blurring the distinction between author and narrator.

2.1 Performing the Alterity of Identity Construction

Flaubert's Parrot is the homage that Barnes pays to his life-long literary idol, Gustave Flaubert. Barnes calls Flaubert "the writer's writer *par excellence*, the saint and martyr of literature, the perfector of realism, the creator of the modern novel with *Madame Bovary*, and then, a quarter of a century later, the assistant creator of the modernist novel with *Bouvard et Pécuchet*" (*SD* xiv). To write about a writer with such a broad range of contributions and multiple identities is to encounter all kinds of challenges[19].

While conceiving the novel, Barnes sought to do something different from the traditional biography. As a Francophile, he was quite aware of the French people's low estimation of it: "for them it is a low form, the roundup of such factoids and gossip as the law permits" ("A Love Affair with Color"). Barnes himself has a negative view of the traditional biography, calling it "sophisticated hair-collecting" ("The Follies of Writer Worship"). The flaws he finds in the traditional biography are its "certainties" and "mak[ing] too much sense of a life" (Guignery, "History" 53-54).

Among the existent biographies, Sartre's voluminous *L'Idiot de la famille* (1971) serves as exemplary for Barnes, from which he endeavours to depart. In his review of Sartre's book, Barnes describes it as "[a] work of elucidation couched in a lazily dense style; a biography seemingly concerned with externals but in fact spun from

[19] William Bell gives a detailed elaboration of the difficulties Braithwaite encounters in his construction of Flaubert's biography, which are in fact Barnes's own. He summarizes them as three sets of problems: "One set has to do with time and facts. One set has to do with the writer as subject (…). One set has to do with modern literary theory" (151).

inside the biographer like a spider's thread; a critical study which exceeds in wordage all the major works of its subject put together ..."("Double Bind"). He regards it as "an outstandingly badly-written book" and "vigorously one-sided in method". He describes Sartre's overall judgment as "admirable but mad" ("Double Bind")[20]. Deviating from both the traditional biography's focus on "being a little more judicious, being fair", and Sartre's one-sidedness, Barnes pursues "the process" instead of "the result" and determines "to be somehow more active, more aggressive" ("The Follies of Writer Worship").

What Barnes realizes in the novel is a performative construction of Flaubert's identities. This is accomplished by creating a fictional character, Geoffrey Braithwaite, who undertakes a quest to find the parrot Flaubert uses as a model while writing *Un coeur simple* (1877). As an amateur writer and worshipper of Flaubert, Braithwaite's quest is at the same time his effort to accumulate a biography of Flaubert. In his interview with Rudolf Freiburg, Barnes regards the quest narrative as the "infrastructure" of the novel, the "tentpole" that holds up the whole book as a novel rather than an essay (44).

Barnes's deliberate and exquisite characterization of Braithwaite as both a doctor like Charles Bovary in *Madame Bovary* and an amateur writer enables him to interweave three levels of narration: the quest narrative about the parrot and Flaubert, the diverse aspects of Flaubert's life and art, as well as Braithwaite's own fictional life. A comprehensive summary describes it as "a novel at one remove: partly a novel about a novelist, partly a novel about a man obsessed with a novelist, and partly a novel about the business of novel-writing" (Childs, *Julian Barnes* 46). Their juxtaposition highlights both the alterity of identity and that of the novel as a genre.

Instead of presenting a unified but reduced image of Flaubert, Barnes turns the text into an imitation of the process in which Braithwaite constructs Flaubert's identity. As an amateur biographer, Braithwaite's whimsical assumptions and defense of Flaubert allow Barnes to incorporate multiple even incompatible aspects of Flaubert's life and art into the infrastructure of the quest narrative and turn the text into what G.

[20] Barnes is not the only person to give such negative commentary on Sartre's book. Harry Levin thinks Sartre has performed like "an ineptly amateurish biographer" in contrast with Leon Edel, the biographer of Henry James (644). In his opinion, Edel wins out in all respects, for example in "richness of documentation," "artistry of organization" and "handling of documentation (644). Haim Gordon also thinks Sartre's voluminous project "is quite a disappointment" based on two reasons: first, "Sartre seems to have created a Procrustean bed into which he wishes to fit Gustave Flaubert;" second, the book is "lacking in structure, especially chronological structure, and very often lacking in basic facts"(99).

Mitchell Reyes calls “a field of alterity” (223). It is composed of the different animal images accumulated in “Flaubert’s Bestiary”, the three chronologies in “Chronology”, Braithwaite’s defence against 15 items of accusation against Flaubert in “the Case Against” and the challenge of Flaubert’s own image by his lover Louise Colet in “Louise Colet’s version”. The manifold images reveal different dimensions of Flaubert’s identity from diversified angles, but it is impossible to put them together into a unified one. The alterity of these images to a certain degree resonates with the postmodern concept of identity as a construction.

In addition to the literary and individual identities of Flaubert, Barnes incorporates Flaubert’s unrealized thoughts and dreams into his concept of identity. He presents an apocryphal bibliography of Flaubert and his “apocryphal life’’ in the chapter “The Flaubert Apocrypha.” Barnes quotes a German requiem as an epigraph,

> It is not what they built. It is what they knocked down.
> It is not the houses. It is spaces between the houses.
> It is not the streets that exist. It is the streets
> that no longer exist. (*FP* 133)

Instead of simply introducing what Flaubert achieves, Barnes chooses to present his shifts of thought implicated in those unwritten books and the life he dreamed but did not realize. By doing this, Barnes implies that identity may not be what a man achieves or what a man’s life is composed of. Real longings, although unrealized or failed, are where the human heart lies. On the other hand, Barnes points out the falsity of those most well-known identities of Flaubert, such as “Hermit of Croisset”, “the Idiot of the Salons” and “the reverent Father Cruchard”, etc. They are the social roles that Flaubert has to play as his fame increases. As the narrator comments, they are “playthings, alternative lives issued under licence by the celebrated author” (*FP* 146).

Materials in “Flaubert’s Bestiary” and “The Train-spotter’s Guide to Flaubert” may never appear in any other writing on Flaubert, but it does not mean that they are pointless; instead, Braithwaite’s unscholarly quality enables him to explore Flaubert’s art and life both interactively and comically. Diversified and even unrelated things are brought together in this unique way and slip into each other easily. Flaubert’s personality and his sense of the inadequacy of words are united in the bestiary under the term “bear”. Flaubert’s attitude towards progress is put together with the role of

the train in his love for Louise Colet. The flying parrot interweaves the fictional world of Braithwaite with the intertextual world of Flaubert's literary works, private writing and scholarship. The outcome of Braithwaite's performative construction of Flaubert is "a cubist portrait of a writer from multiple often contending overlaid perspectives" (Bragg 22).

The novel poses a generic challenge. Writing a real literary figure in a fictional way is similar to biographical fiction, which takes real persons as characters. It deviates from this genre, however, in that Barnes does not fictionalize Flaubert at all. Instead, the fictionalization of the character Braithwaite enables him to be as faithful to Flaubert as possible. As Barnes notes, "I didn't fictionalize Flaubert. I tried to be as truthful about him as I could" (Guppy 69). Biographically speaking, it gives a more successful and dynamic presentation of Flaubert's art and life, so it makes great sense to read it as Flaubert's biography. William Bell insists that "it yields maximum interest when it is approached as biography" (194). On the other hand, the opposite view holds that the novel "stormed the firmly guarded borders between fiction and biography, and smashed them for good" (Dalley).

In fact, Barnes's cross-generic innovation in the novel goes far beyond this. The overwhelming presence of large quantities of non-fictional material from Flaubert's works and scholarship challenges the very quality of "fiction". Moreover, the seemingly loose narrative structure embodied by the bold juxtaposition of such rubrics as chronology, bestiary, dictionary, pure story and test papers, etc. poses a great test to the inclusiveness of the novel as a genre. The book's generic uniqueness is demonstrated by the early controversies over its status as a novel[21] and puzzlement over its generic classification[22].

The generic mixture endows the novel with the textual spectacle of postmodern fiction. Faced with criticism and challenges from critics, Barnes expresses his detachment from such controversies. As he has stated,

I don't take too much notice of the "but-does-he-write-proper-novels?"

[21] For detailed information on the controversy over the book's status as a novel, see Moseley, *Understanding* 8-9.

[22] David Lodge's different classifications of the novel at different stages best show this puzzlement. In 1987, he commented, "Deconstructionists hailed it as an exemplary poststructuralist text. More traditional literary scholars might categorize it as a Menippean satire—" ("The Home Front"). Later he redefined this kind of text, which mixes genres and styles, as "crossover" fiction to highlight the intertextuality and border-crossing in them, but the term did not establish itself as a widely accepted one in literary criticism ("The Novelist Today" 9). Guignery gives a more comprehensive summary of the diversified classifications of this novel, from a "collage," to "a tour de force of fiction, criticism, and biography combined," to "a clever, if at times gamesy, compendium of genres," to "a Menippean satire," to "an intellectual whodunnit," to simply a "text"（*Fiction* 38-39）.

> school of criticism, which I get a bit, especially in England. . . . I feel closer to the continental idea which used to be the English idea as well that the novel is a very broad and generous enclosing form. I would argue for greater inclusivity rather than any exclusivity. The novel always starts with life, always has to start with life rather than an intellectual grid which you then impose on things. But at the same time, formally and structurally, I don't see why it shouldn't be inventive and playful and break what supposed rules there are. (qtd. in Moseley:10)

The passage expresses Barnes's open attitude towards writing and his kinship with the continental literary tradition.

This inclusive view of the novel is a mediation between Bakhtin's sociological and historical poetics of the genre and Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist perception of it as contamination and participation. P. N. Medvedev and Bakhtin regard genres as "a complex system of means and methods for the conscious control and finalization of reality" (197). In the essay "Epic and Novel (1941)", Bakhtin focuses on the formation of genres as a dynamic process and regards the novel as "the genre of becoming" (*The Dialogical Imagination* 22). He highlights the crucial role of absorbing extra-literary genres in the novel's evolution:

> In its earliest stage, the novel and its preparatory genres had relied upon various extra-literary forms of personal and social reality, and especially those of rhetoric (…). And in latter stages of its development the novel makes wide and substantial use of letters, diaries, confessions, the forms and methods of rhetoric associated with recently established courts and so forth. （33）

Barnes shares Bakhtin's progressive understanding of the genre and his awareness of the importance of its renewal: "A genre is always the same yet not the same, always old and new simultaneously. Genre is reborn and renewed at every new stage in the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre. This constitutes the life of the genre" (*Problems* 106). In spite of this, Barnes is aware of the challenge postmodern thinking has posed to the concept of genre. While Bakhtin considers inter-generic dialogue as an expression of diversity and part of his

dialogism, Barnes highlights the alterity of the juxtaposed aspects and presents it as a reflection of the reality of the postmodern world, "where a stable version neither of history nor of books can be conceded" (N. Brooks 45).

Bakhtin's elaboration on the novel's incompleteness and openness to other genres finds its poststructuralist counterpart in Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of the traditional law that genres cannot be mixed. In his essay "The Law of Genre" (1980), Derrida formulates what he calls "the law of the law of genre", that is, "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" (59). In other words, it is "a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set" (59). The diversified cross-generic practices in postmodern novels are a better illustration of this concept of participation. Different from Bakhtin's stress on the genre's social dimension, Derrida puts the genre in "the limitless field of general textuality" (63). Although still focusing on the social functions of different genres, Barnes stresses more their stereotyped usage. By offering pastiches of some genres, he discloses the constraints they impose upon expression and the generic distortion of the intended meaning. In this respect, he shares the postmodern focus on the intertextuality of the genre and breaks up the strict border between them, which will be further illustrated by Barnes's adoption of parrotry and pastiche in the next section.

One of the tensions in the novel is the contrast between Barnes's intertextual practice and the view held by the character and narrator Braithwaite. The latter insists on the connection between the author and his works and thus speaks negatively of contemporary critics "who pompously reclassify all novels and plays and poems as texts—" (*FP* 98), with an apparent allusion to the distinction between the work and the text made by the French critic Roland Barthes. The textuality of Flaubert's works forms the subtle link between Braithwaite, Barnes and Barthes. It is part of Braithwaite's meta-fictional comment on Flaubert's principle of impersonality. Although Braithwaite does not appreciate Barthes's idea of "the death of the author", he acknowledges that Flaubert's insistence on impersonality has pioneered it. As he declares, "A century before them he was preparing texts and denying the significance of his own personality" (*FP* 98).

According to Barthes, the fundamental difference between the work and the text is that "the work is concrete, occupying a portion of book-space (in a library, for

example), the Text, on the other hand, is a methodological field" ("From Work to Text" 80). By preferring the text, Barthes takes writing as a dynamic and ongoing interaction between different texts, as he stresses that "*the Text is experienced only in an activity, a production.* It follows that the Text cannot stop, at the end of a library shelf, for example; the constitutive movement of the Text is a *traversal* [*traversee*]: it can cut across a work, several works"（80, italics and capitalization in original). He finds in Flaubert's works the typical feature of the text—the "interstices" or "seams" caused by the manipulation of the language.

Barnes's novel shares these features of the text. Andrzej Gasiorek stresses that "the novel alerts its readers to its own textuality" (159). The discontinuity between different sub-texts and its intertextuality makes the novel "the text of pleasure", in which "the feat to sustain the *mimesis* of language (language imitating itself)" forms "a pleasure of performance" (Barthes, "From Work to Text" 80). Braithwaite emphasizes that one of the virtues Flaubert teaches us is "to dissect out the constituent parts of reality and to observe that nature is always a mixture of genres" (*FP* 157). Barnes puts into practice what nature has taught Flaubert. While Flaubert imitates the social language—the clichés and platitudes—Barnes imitates Flaubert. His adoption of parrotry and pastiche displays the same *mimesis* of language but focuses more on the intertextual interaction with other texts, especially those of Flaubert's.

For all its postmodern foregrounding of intertextuality, the novel primarily explores man's longing for truth and love. The seemingly loose but delicately knitted structure combines the storyline of Flaubert's novels *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and *Madame Bovary*. Braithwaite's pursuit of Flaubert's parrot shares the former's motif of the quest for knowledge. In his desperate search for the truth about the parrot and Flaubert, Braithwaite repeats Bouvard and Pécuchet's fruitless effort to exhaust all knowledge.

This hopeless pursuit is better illustrated by Braithwaite's desperation to divulge the unknown life of Flaubert in the chapter "Finders Keepers." Braithwaite compares biography to a net, which he defines as "a collection of holes tied together with string" (*FP* 35). He takes Juliet Herbert—the governess of Flaubert's niece and rumored lover of Flaubert—as such a big hole. Braithwaite got the information about Herbert from his acquaintance—the failed American scholar Ed Winterson, who is embarking on an impossible Gosse biography and finds the letters by accident. He

burns them out of faithfulness to Flaubert's advice. The unexpected end is a frustration of Braithwaite's biographical mania for his biographee's undiscovered materials, and displays the same inevitable failure of the modernist pursuit of totalizing knowledge or truth.

Different from the void left behind by Bouvard and Pécuchet's blind pursuit of knowledge, the hidden impetus behind Braithwaite's quest for the parrot and Flaubert is love. It is first love for an admired writer, a projection of Barnes's admiration for Flaubert; it is then Braithwaite's love for his wife, whose heart he takes through the detour of Flaubert to interpret and understand. The interactions between the two types of love form the dynamics of the structure. Long before he comes to tell his wife's story in chapter 13 "Pure Story", Braithwaite has made a comparison between them in Chapter 4 "Emma Bovary's Eyes":

> Whereas the common but passionate reader is allowed to forget, he can go away, be unfaithful with other writers, come back and be entranced again. Domesticity need never intrude on the relationship; it may be sporadic, but when there it is always intense. There's none of the daily rancor which develops when people live bovinely together. (*FP* 82)

He has here intimated his wife's disloyalty by comparing it to unfaithfulness to a writer.

Behind the procrastination of his own story is the inexpressible sorrow for his wife's betrayal and the unapproachable distance between human hearts. In his interview with Guignery, Barnes highlights love and grief as two major themes in the novel and uses Freud's term "displacement" to describe the relationship between the two levels of narration. He explains,

> …and it's a novel about love—how the love of art compares with love of a human being—and I think perhaps beyond all that it's a novel about grief, it's a novel about a man whose inability to express his grief and his love is shifted (I'm sure there's a psychiatric term for it—displacement activity might be the one), is transposed into an obsessive desire to recount to you the reader everything he knows and has found out about Gustave Flaubert, love for whom is a more reliable constant in his life than has been love for Ellen.

("Julian Barnes in Conversation" 108)

Therefore, through a dynamic performative reconstruction of Flaubert's identity, Barnes incorporates the postmodern concepts of alterity and fluidity of identity into a modern quest for truth and love. In the next section, I will consider the novel's dynamic performance at the verbal level and focus on how Barnes realizes "the pleasure of performance" in carrying out "the mimesis of language" through parrotry and pastiche.

2.2 Parrotry, Pastiche and Postmodern Truth

Jonathan Culler has said that "to pay homage to Flaubert is one way of expressing solidarity with the writer in his battle with language and obsessive exploration of its possibilities" (*Flaubert* 13). Flaubert's engagement with language emerges in two ways: one is his torturous pursuit of "*le mot juste*" (the exact word), which "points to the artist's faith in the ideal of an absolute formal perfection as the crown and goal of his endeavor" (Block 199); the other is his feeling of the "Inadequacy of the Word" as well as the resulting paradoxical attitude of fascination with and terror towards clichés. These two aspects correspond to two positions Flaubert is put into by critics: realist on one end and modernist or even postmodernist on the other. While the former believes in the evocative power of words to represent reality, the latter predicts the postmodern awareness of separation between language and its referent. Braithwaite interprets the author "as [a] pertinacious and finished stylist; or as one who considered language tragically insufficient" (*FP* 11).

In this section, by identifying parrotry and pastiche as two means Barnes adopts to continue Flaubert's battle with language, I delve into the delicate intertextual resonance Barnes establishes with Flaubert, especially his dual sense of the evocative power of words and their inadequacy to express human feelings. I argue Barnes creates an "in-between" area between Flaubert's modernist exploration of the possibility of language as a representation of truth and the poststructuralist claim that language mediates all value constructions and determines their essence. Barnes's usage of these two devices offers a unique postmodern pursuit of truth where its three dimensions are woven out of intertexts, and their validity depends on the reader's judgment.

The word parrotry bears an obvious connection with the bird in the novel's title.

Among the performative reconstructions of Flaubert's identity, the bird parrot is the central pawn Barnes adopts to bring the whole novel alive. Literally, as the target of Braithwaite's quest, the discovery of two parrots of equal validity at the beginning of his quest breaks the realistic correspondence between the word and its referent and raises the issue of historical truth. The discovery of a roomful of model parrots in the end renders the realistic resolution impossible and symbolically pertains to the postmodern world of simulation. Moreover, it is open to metonymic and metaphorical interpretations. Childs takes Braithwaite's quest for the bird as a metonymy for his pursuit of Flaubert and the many parrots are compared to the many stories Braithwaite tells (*Julian Barnes* 48).

Another metaphorical meaning of the parrot can be identified in Barnes's recalling of Flaubert's description of the parrot perch Frédéric sees in a window after the 1848 uprising in *L'Education sentimentale*. Here "the parrot that wasn't there" becomes a metaphor for the historical event in absence (*FP* 62). Barnes's rephrasing of the scene better conveys this sense:

> We look in at a window. Yes, it's true; despite the carnage some delicate things have survived. A clock still ticks. Prints on the wall remind us that art was once appreciated here. A parrot's perch catches the eye. We look for the parrot. Where is the parrot? We still hear its voice, but all we can see is a bare wooden perch. The bird has flown. (*FP* 62)

Frédéric's wandering in Paris becomes a symbol of seeking history. The scene expresses symbolically Barnes's fundamental conception of historical truth. The empty parrot perch is a metaphor for the historical past which can never be fully present. As he further elaborates, "It isn't so different, the way we wander through the past. Lost, disoriented, fearful, we follow what signs there remain; we read the street names, but cannot be confident where they are. All around is wreckage" (*FP* 62).

This sense of the past as wreckage is preceded by Braithwaite's awareness of the constraint the textuality of Flaubert's materials exerts on his pursuit. At the beginning of his quest, he complains, "Nothing much else to do with Flaubert has ever lasted. He died little more than a hundred years ago, and all that remains of him is paper. Paper, ideas, phrases, metaphors, structured prose which turns into sound" (*FP* 2). Braithwaite's awareness of historical truth as a reconstruction of the traces left behind

reflects the postmodern sense of the textuality of history.

Raising the issue of historical truth through echoing Flaubert caricatures the construction of meaning in the novel. I define it as parrotry, which is both repetition and mimicry. It is used first to indicate the direct quotation of words, phrases or passages of Flaubert and other critics. I then extend it to include Braithwaite's mimicry of Flaubert and interpretation of his own life in terms of Flaubert and his works. The two types of usage work to establish a double resonance with Flaubert: first, to show Barnes's celebration of the evocative power of Flaubert's words; second, to find a backward nod to Flaubert's criticism of clichés and stupidity as well as his sense of the inadequacy of words to express human feelings. In the second sense, the usage is connected with pastiche. It is both Braithwaite's and Barnes's reaction to the textuality of history.

Parrotry is firstly defined as a way of quoting. I classify it as a type of intertextuality in its broad sense as designated by Julia Kristeva. In the essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966), Kristeva uses it to refer to Bakhtin's concept of text as "a mosaic of quotations" and "absorption and transformation" between texts (66).[23] In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982), Gérard Genette gives it a more restrictive definition: "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts" (1). It belongs to one of five types of transtextuality, which is defined as "the textual transcendence of the text" (1). Genette's transtextuality is close to Kristeva's concept of intertextuality. He classifies quoting, together with plagiarism and allusion, as one type of intertextuality. In the essay "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" (1940), Bakhtin states that quoting was popular in the Hellenistic period and the Middle Ages as a way of literary continuation. He translates Paul Lehmann's saying that the history of medieval literature and its Latin literature, in particular, is "the history of the appropriation, reworking, and imitation of someone else's property" (*The Dialogic Imagination* 69). He identifies the spectrum of quotations ranging from "the pious and inert quotation that is isolated and set off like an icon" to the "most ambiguous, disrespectful, parodic-travestying use" (69). What Bakhtin focuses on is the function of the latter in the inter-animation of languages during both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, exploring its contribution to the

[23]The essay was first published in French titled "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman" in *Séméiotiké* in 1966. It was later translated as "Word, Dialogue and Novel" and collected in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1969).

formation of the novelistic discourse of modern times.

The way Barnes quotes Flaubert and other scholars covers the two ends of the relationship Bakhtin identifies in quotations. His quotations of Flaubert's words in most cases belong to the former type. Words were quoted because of their authority and unique, evocative power. It is a celebration of the power and originality of words. But his quotations of Flaubertian scholarship in defense of the author tend to assume the parodic-travestying feature. As I will analyze in the following, they are the verbal embodiment of parody or pastiche indicating an intertextual relationship of subversion.

Parrotry is used as a significant way to recreate Flaubert's life and personality. Flaubert insisted on the impersonality of his works and once said, "I believe…a writer should leave behind him nothing but works" (qtd. in *SD:* 253). For such a writer, the best words to describe him should be his own. Therefore, instead of fictionalizing Flaubert or burying him deeper in paper, Barnes recreates his life and personality mostly through his literary comparisons. The character Oliver in *Talking It Over* describes himself as someone who: "scatter[s] *bons mots* like sunflower seeds among the waiting pupils" (239). This comparison can be used to describe Braithwaite's quotation of Flaubert's words.

Barnes uses Flaubert's own literary comparisons to evoke a more profound image of the writer, which reverses the traditional biographical practice of giving descriptions of the biographee's life. The most typical one is the following: "I'm devoured by comparisons as one is by lice, and I spend my time doing nothing but squashing them" (*FP* 11). This comparison is a vivid caricature of Flaubert's life as a writer devoted to pursuing the exact word. In Flaubert's sense, the comparison is more like simile or metaphor. Chapters like "Chronology" and "The Flaubert Bestiary" are mostly composed of Flaubert's literary comparisons. As literary rhetoric, it indicates literary words are more powerful evocations of life.

In the chapter "Chronology", by paralleling three different chronologies of the same person (Flaubert), Barnes challenges the objectivity implicated in the traditional form of chronology. The selection of information implicated in the first two chronologies shows the influence of the perspective of the selector: the first one is optimistic and the second is pessimistic. In contrast to this, the third chronology is highlighted, for it is made up of Flaubert's literary comparisons about himself. For example, the first sentence describes the year 1842: "Me and my book in the same

apartment: like a gherkin in its vinegar"（*FP* 28）. Barnes takes the third one as a better way to tell the truth about Flaubert. As he stresses in the same interview with Guignery, "But maybe seeing someone's life either as triumph or as disaster does not actually tell us half as much as just seeing their lives in terms of metaphor" ("Julian Barnes in Conversation" 106). This demonstrates Barnes's preference for the psychological truth conveyed by literary words rather than the subjectively interpreted historical truth.

This is the case with the chapter "The Flaubert Bestiary." Flaubert's diverse personality is embodied by his animal comparisons. For instance, under the item "The Bear", Flaubert's own comparisons to different bears are quoted: "He is the bear: a stubborn bear (1852), a bear thrust deeper into bearishness by the stupidity of his age (1853), a mangy bear (1854), even a stuffed bear (1869) and so on down to the very last year of his life, when he is still 'roaring as loudly as any bear in its cave'（1880）（*FP* 46）. Like the comparisons in the third chronology, these rhetorical comparisons are more interesting and more revealing of Flaubert's personality than factual descriptions. Moreover, Barnes recreates Flaubert's biocentric worldview through his intimate contact with animals, which permeates both his art and life.

In addition to the literary comparisons, Braithwaite quotes passages from Flaubert's works in his defence of Flaubert against all kinds of accusations. In Genette's sense, this commentary relationship between two texts forms another kind of transtextual relationship—metatexuality. Quotations of the original texts are inseparable from any commentary. As Genette observes, "The critical metatext can be conceived of, but is hardly ever practiced, without the often considerable use of a quotational intertext as support" (8). In the chapter "Emma Bovary's Eyes", to refute Dr Enid Starkie's criticism of Flaubert's inconsistency in his description of Emma's eyes, Braithwaite quotes six passages from *Madame Bovary* where Flaubert describes Emma's eye color together with Du Camp's delineation of the woman on whom Emma is based. This type of quoting is different from that of Flaubertian scholarship (to be analyzed next), for it is still a celebration of Flaubert's words. In this sense, parrotry is different from both pastiche (to be analyzed next) and parody, which Hutcheon regards as the principal form of postmodern intertextuality and the best expression of the double codedness of postmodernism—its use and subversion of the past. In contrast to parody's challenges to the humanist discourse of authenticity and

originality, parrotry here paradoxically celebrates them through repetition.

Different from this celebration of words, Braithwaite's quotations of Flaubertian scholarship veer towards the other end of the spectrum mentioned above. In congruence with his "simple-minded" reading of Flaubert (*FP* 12), Braithwaite is hostile towards scholarly criticism, as he declares, "I hate critics" (*FP* 80). His quotations of the scholarly criticism are often parodic, which is revealed by the sarcastic comment or description that follows. It continues a long tradition of disdaining critics in the novel, which has been around since Henry Fielding. Besides Dr Starkie, the other scholar Braithwaite responds to is Professor Christopher Ricks. Both of them are real scholars: the former is "Reader Emeritus in French Literature at the University of Oxford, and Flaubert's most exhaustive British biographer" (*FP* 80); the latter is "a professor from Cambridge" (*FP* 82). Their studies are characterized by attention to literary details. They both draw attention to Professor Ricks's argument that "if the factual side of literature becomes unreliable, then ploys such as irony and fantasy become much harder to use" (*FP* 84).

Along with this thematic focus, Braithwaite quotes these scholars to disclose their hair-splitting pedantry. For example, he quotes a passage from Dr Starkie's book on Flaubert: "Flaubert does not build up his characters, as did Balzac, by objective, external description; in fact, so careless is he of their outward appearance that on one occasion he gives Emma brown eyes (14); on another deep black eyes (15); and on another blue eyes (16)" (*FP* 80) . After quoting, Braithwaite gives a sarcastic description of Dr Starkie's lecture: "I'm glad to report that she had an atrocious French accent; one of those deliveries full of dame-school confidence and absolutely no ear, swerving between workday correctness and farcical error, often within the same word" (*FP* 80-81). This description discloses as much of Dr Starkie as of Braithwaite himself. It exhibits the unforgiving aspect of his personality. As he admits, it amounts to "a cheap revenge on a dead lady critic" (*FP* 81). The same tone is applied to the description of Professor Ricks's lecture, which he calls "a very shiny performance" due to his "shiny" bald head, "shiny" shoes and "shiny" views（*FP* 83）.

While quoting Flaubert's literary comparisons as a better way of presenting Flaubert's psychological world, Barnes quotes the real scholars' studies as a supplement to literary characterization. This subversion of the traditional use of language constitutes one facet of his innovation in the novel. The presence of a large

number of quotations endows the novel with an essayistic quality and challenges the very nature of fiction. In this respect, *Flaubert's Parrot* is different from Vladimir Nabokov's postmodern novel *Pale Fire* (1962), which is similarly characterized by the presence of lengthy commentary. Unlike the latter, it mixes the real and the fictional but does not take one for the other, so it does not blur the ontological distinction between the real and the fictional.

As a kind of repetition, parrotry raises the issue of representation, that is, language's relationship to its referent. It echoes Flaubert's criticism of clichés and stupidity as well as his sense of the inadequacy of words to express human feelings. As a rhetorical device, the comparison evokes the meaning of one thing by finding its similarity with another rather than by giving a direct description. Leo Bersani's view on metaphor and simile offers a revealing reference for its essence. In the introduction to the English translation of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Bersani comments on Flaubert's paradoxical feeling towards metaphors and similes in the novel. On the one hand, Flaubert is attracted by "the very 'inaccuracy', by the gap between their own suggestiveness and the experience they are meant to translate" (xxi); on the other hand, he is impatient with "the epistemologically approximative nature of metaphor", which "was meant to cover and absorb its hypothetically real subject with literal precision" (xxi-xxii). Quotations of Flaubert's comparisons are susceptible to the same paradox. They may evoke among readers a better understanding of Flaubert's feelings and personality but provide no idea of his real life. More optimistically speaking, they enable us to come closer to his psychological world, but not to his practical life.

Braithwaite frequently feels this frustration in his quest for the parrot and the real life of Flaubert. Ironically, he can only express it through new comparisons, especially numerous self-reflective comparisons with history. The frequently quoted one is that "History is merely another literary genre: the past is autobiographical fiction pretending to be a parliamentary report" (*FP* 101). His comparisons have the same problem as those of Flaubert. They evoke the intangibility of history but not what history is. The language here only leads to itself and parrotry becomes a barrier to the real presence of Flaubert. It is close to the poststructuralist conviction that language mediates all value constructions and constitutes their essence.

The symbolic meaning the ending of Braithwaite's quest implies also seems to affirm this conviction. As an image of the postmodern world of simulation, it brings

about two different interpretations marking the distinction between postmodern skepticism of the ontological existence of truth and modernist questioning of the epistemological knowability of truth. The former is represented by James B. Scott, who interprets it as "registering the non-existence of truth and the indeterminacy of signs" (58). I agree with Moseley's critique of this radical postmodern skepticism. As he notes, "Braithwaite doubts the possibility of finding out which was the 'real' Flaubert's parrot, but this does not lead him to conclude that there was no real parrot; he disclaims the ability to explain his wife's life but never the reality of it" (88). Brian Nicol regards the novel as a model of Linda Hutcheon's postmodern historiographic fiction, but he stresses its link to realism and "the return of 'plot and questions of reference'" in this special form of the postmodern novel (99). Based on this, he rightly interprets Braithwaite's dilemma as "a metaphor for the problem at the heart of historiographic metafiction: the limits to our attempt to know the past" (117). Based on these analyses, I contend that the issue of the parrot is epistemological, not ontological. What Barnes highlights is the difficulty of finding out the historical truth rather than its impossibility.

Moreover, what Barnes shares with Flaubert is the sense of language's inadequacy to express human feelings, which distinguishes parrotry from the poststructuralist view on language. When giving an etymological introduction to the word "parrot" in the chapter "Flaubert's Bestiary", Barnes emphasizes the bird's unique connection with human beings: its ability to imitate human voice and its sharing of some human maladies, especially epilepsy. In the chapter "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Flaubert", Braithwaite introduces epilepsy as a stereotyped stratagem Flaubert adopts to sidestep a conventional career and life. Barnes underlines the unique human-parrot relationship in Flaubert's *Un cœur simple* by tracing its origin to the story of Henri K and his parrot, which Flaubert clips from the newspaper *L'Opinion nationale.* In both stories, the bird's ability to imitate human voice enables it to offer the sympathetic feelings the characters are desperate for. Because of this, it is elevated to holiness. Braithwaite's pursuit of the parrot as "an emblem of the author", to a certain degree, expresses the same emotional longing for a kind of identification, which takes as a cure for the trauma brought about by his wife's betrayal.

The repetitive nature of parrotry in Flaubert's works, however, connects more with the autonomous use of language, which imparts no authentic feeling and is thus

ironic. Bruno Penteado gives an insightful analysis of the relationship between the philosophy of stupidity, the animal and religion in Flaubert's *Un coeur simple*. He uses the phrase "epistemology of parrotry" to "account for what can be known and claimed about the idea of language devoid of reference, or language only referencing itself, contained in the figure of the parrot" (148). He mainly focuses on the irony in the equation God=parrot=parrotry. God becomes the repetition of empty words, which forms the irony of the story, but it suggests the pathetic state of human life, for the parrot is the only company the character Félicité can rely on, and there is no other kind of comforting language available for her except its parroting.

Flaubert's sense of the inadequacy of the word to express human feelings is further embodied in his paradoxical attitude towards cliché. He believes that a cliché is "the purest art of intelligibility; it tempts us with the possibility of enclosing life within beautifully inalterable formulas, of obscuring the arbitrary nature of imagination with an appearance of necessity" (Bersani xviii). In this sense, Clichés have been the exact words the author pursues. Because of this, he is fascinated or even obsessed with them. However, Flaubert hates the mechanical repetitions of these words, which diminish their beauty and reduce them to clichés. His works are a full attack on clichés and platitudes at all levels of life. He is especially preoccupied with the inexpressible feelings caged in clichés. In *Madame Bovar*y, Emma can only repeat the romantic clichés to utter her love. Stratton Buck notes that "a part of Emma's tragedy stems from her inability to find words adequate to her feelings and her needs, and that the problem of communication is central for the heroine as for the author" (552). Flaubert voices his criticism of these romantic clichés from the perspective of her first lover Rodolphe:

> He had heard such things said to him so many times before that they no longer held any interest for him. Emma was like any other mistress; and the charm of novelty gradually fell away like a garment, revealing in all its nakedness the eternal monotony of passion, which always has the same form and speaks the same language…and human speech is like a cracked pot on which we beat out rhythms for bears to dance to, when we are striving to make music that will wring tears from the stars. (165)

The fact that Barnes quotes Flaubert's simile three times (11, 51, 191, in his own

translation) attests to his sharing of Flaubert's sense of the inadequacy of the word. Throughout the novel, Braithwaite displays a similar lack of the exact words to express his emotional world. His brief introduction to his family life betrays no feeling of closeness: "My children are scattered now; they write whenever guilt impels. They have their own lives, naturally" (*FP* 3). Like Emma Bovary, "he lacks an adequate emotional vocabulary" (Dyer 173). This is more concretized in his narration of Ellen's story. When he finally comes to her in the chapter "Pure Story", he quotes Flaubert's simile for the third time and describes his frustration at not being able to find a clear expression of their feelings:

> Sometimes you talk, sometimes you don't; it makes little difference. The words aren't the right ones; or rather, the right words don't exist…. You talk, and you find the language of bereavement foolishly inadequate . . . I loved her; we were happy; I miss her. She didn't love me; we were unhappy; I miss her. (*FP* 191)

The ellipsis and the parallel structure at the end implicate the ups and downs of feelings in their relationship which are beyond concrete expression.

The resonance further shows in Barnes's criticism of social clichés. As a doctor, Braithwaite mimics the clichés he has given to his patients who suffer from the pain of losing their loved ones:

> What do we doctors say? I'm deeply sorry, Mrs Blank; there will of course be a period of mourning but rest assured you will come out of it; two of these each evening, I would suggest; perhaps a new interest, Mrs Blank; car maintenance, formation dancing?; don't worry, six months will see you back on the roundabout; come and see me again any time; oh nurse, when she calls, just give her this repeat will you, no I don't need to see her, well it's not her that's dead is it, look on the bright side. What did she say her name was? (*FP* 190)

The professional clichés transmits more indifference than the authentic sympathies they are supposed to convey. The mimicry reflects the mechanism of social language, which, as Culler observes, "is not the instrument or vehicle of a spontaneous response to the world" and "is not something lived but something given, a set of codified

responses" (165). Its stupidity is caused by the separation between language and sincere feelings, or more broadly, between language and its referent. It is "a self-enclosed system" of language: "a set of objects with which man plays but which do not speak to him" (Culler 165). Therefore, it is impossible for them to be functional to Braithwaite when he loses his wife. Barnes's criticism of social clichés is better expressed in the chapter "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas", which will be analyzed as pastiche.

Clichés are connected with another interpretation of Flaubert's view of language —the sense of being spoken. As Braithwaite mentions, this is Sartre's interpretation: "The parrot / writer feebly accepts language as something received, imitative and inert. Sartre himself rebuked Flaubert for passivity, for belief (or collusion in the belief) that *on est parlé*—one is spoken" (*FP* 11). This view is repeated by Culler in his poststructuralist reading of Flaubert's attitude towards language: "one does not speak, one does not construct sentences to express one's relation to the world and to others; one is spoken" (165). The way Braithwaite interprets his life or expresses his own feelings by quoting Flaubert's words acknowledges this sense of being spoken. Braithwaite mentions how Mauriac writes his *Mémoires intérieurs*: "[h]e finds himself by looking in the works of others" (*FP* 108). This is the way Braithwaite tells his story. Flaubert's life and works, especially the storyline of *Emma Bovary*, function as major references when Braithwaite interprets his life. However, the dynamic interaction between the two levels of narration about Braithwaite and Flaubert's art and life is a testament to the truth Flaubert has expressed rather than Sartre's passive understanding of the nature of language. Braithwaite concludes that, in most cases, "Flaubert was right" (*FP* 94). It is an affirmation of Flaubert's art as a better expression of universal truth.

However, Barnes's reflection on the relationship between art and life goes far beyond this simplified correspondence. The contrast between Braithwaite and Flaubert highlights their differences. For example, after a brief introduction to his own life, Braithwaite quotes Flaubert's saying: "Life! Life! To have erections!" (*FP* 3). The passion in Flaubert's sexually inflected metonymy only sets off his own pale life, as he admits, "It made me feel like a stone statue with a patched upper thigh" (*FP* 3). This is more typically presented in Braithwaite's reflection on differences between his wife Ellen and Flaubert's Emma:

> Did the wife, made lustrous by adultery, seem even more desirable to the husband? No: not more, not less. That's part of what I mean by saying that she was not corrupted. Did she display the cowardly docility which Flaubert describes as characteristic of the adulterous woman? No. Did she, like Emma Bovary, 'rediscover in adultery all the platitudes of marriage'? We didn't talk about it. (*FP* 195)

The identification reveals more their differences. Braithwaite's awareness of the comparison's fruitlessness speaks more of his psychology in making this identification.

In this regard, Braithwaite is similar to Emma, who finds an ideal life in the romantic clichés and tries to realize it in real life. Braithwaite may not take Flaubert's life as perfect, but he needs a reference to make meaning out of his life, and this underscores the interaction between the two levels of narration of Flaubert's and his own life. As Emma Cox observes, Braithwaite's lack of "a sense of his own self-worth" may partly explain this identification (53). I maintain that it is more related to a psychological aspect, which French philosopher Jules de Gautier defines as *bovarysme*, that is, the "tendency to see oneself as other than one is, and to bend one's vision of other persons and things to suit this willed metamorphosis" (qtd. in Jenson: 167). Braithwaite needs Flaubert and his works to finish this transformation. Additionally, Barnes demonstrates the unexpected transformation and the mutual illumination between art and life. Braithwaite gives *Madame Bovary* as an example: while the curtained cab in the book originates from Flaubert's own practice of putting the curtains on so as to avoid being recognized by Louise Colet, the end of the novel, with Homais winning the highest decoration in France, sheds ironic light on Flaubert's own transformation from "arch anti-bourgeois and virile hater of governments" to "a chevalier of the *Légion d'honneur*" (*FP* 73).

Through cross-examining the relationship between art and life, Barnes underscores the ethical commitment towards truth; that is, in spite of the references offered by art, the truth in life can only be realized by experiencing / living. The author compares life to the process of reading: "if all your responses to a book have already been duplicated and expanded upon by a professional critic, then what point is there to your reading? Only that it's *yours*. Similarly, why live your life? Because it's yours" (*FP* 198, italics in original). There is a reflection on the truths in life and truths

in writing in the novel: "Truths about writing can be framed before you've published a word; truths about life can be framed only when it's too late to make any difference" (*FP* 202). This truth about truth can be termed meta-truth. By cross-examining the dynamic interaction between Braithwaite and Flaubert, Barnes presents a more complicated picture of the relationship between art and life and unfolds the third dimension of truth: the experiential truth realized in the inter-illumination between art and life.

Pastiche is another aspect of Barnes's mimesis of language. The word itself needs clarification. According to Richard Dyer, pastiche "has two primary senses, referring to a combination of aesthetic elements or to a kind of aesthetic imitation" (1). The first sense is based on its origin. As Genette observes, "The term *pastiche* appeared in French at the end of the eighteenth century in the terminology of painting and originates from the Italian word *pasticcio,* which "*literally* meant 'paste' and designated first a mixture of diverse imitations, then a particular imitation" (89). However, in its neoclassical sense, it mainly imitates "the characteristic defect" of writers and thus is connected more with satire (99). Marcel Proust's *Pastiches et mélanges* (1919) is a crucial book that redefines the status of the genre by his pastiches of great French writers like Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Renan, Flaubert. Proust extends pastiche's mode, which ranges from "the most satirical to the most admiring" and endows pastiche with a "purgative, exorcising virtue" (Genette 119). He establishes a dominant tonality, which Genette describes as "teasing", "a specific mixture (with a variable dosage) of admiration and irony" (119-20). Denis Hollier considers Proustian pastiche as the coming to grips of a writer with the works of revered authors and the intertextual play which constitutes literature (qtd. Hoesterey: 496).

In the age of postmodernism, pastiche became a significant device for intertextuality and cross-generic writing. Critics' attitudes towards it are controversial. Barry Lewis regards the "pervasive and pointless use of pastiche" as one of the dominant features of postmodernism (171). Like Lewis, many scholars take pastiche as a purposeless even meaningless practice in postmodern wordplay. Fredric Jameson's view is typical. He regards postmodern pastiche as a degradation of modern parody. As he puts it,

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead

> language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the 'stable ironies' of the 18th century. (65)

This critical view of postmodern pastiche is often accompanied by a positive valuation of postmodern parody, to which pastiche functions as contrast. Hutcheon is not so radical as Jameson, but she shows a negative attitude towards pastiche and thinks it "superficial" in contrast to her positive attitude towards parody: "[p]arody is to pastiche, perhaps, as rhetorical trope is to cliché" (*A Theory of Parody* 38). She supplements two features as evidence: "pastiche usually has to remain within the same genre as its model, while parody allows for adaptation…pastiche will often be an imitation not of a single text (…) but of the indefinite possibilities of text" (38). Her distinction highlights an important aspect of pastiche: the imitation of the genre.

The similarity between pastiche and parody causes considerable confusion. Margaret Rose points out that "pastiche has also been used as a synonym of parody, and especially in French literature, where it has, for example, been used to describe both conscious and unconscious parody" (*Parody* 72). The most authoritative distinction is made by Genette. In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982), he takes both of them as types of hypertextual relation and distinguishes them based on the structural distinction between transformation and imitation. He takes the relationship between Joyce's *Ulysses* and Homer's *Odyssey* as an example of transformation and the relationship of Virgil's *Aeneid* to the latter as an example of imitation. As he more bluntly puts it, "Joyce tells the story of Ulysses in a manner other than Homer's, and Virgil tells the story of Aeneas in the manner of Homer" (6). The latter is, in fact, an indirect transformation, but he calls it imitation as a way of distinction. Therefore, while parody is a playful transformation of "hypotext" (original text) by "hypertext" (new text), pastiche is a playful imitation of "hypotext" by "hypertext". Genette's structural distinction clarifies the functional confusions between parody and pastiche, as well as other similar devices, such as travesty,

caricature and forgery, etc. This becomes the foundation for the distinctions made by other scholars. However, it takes no considerations of other factors, such as the pragmatic and hermeneutic dimensions, which Hutcheon focuses on in her study of parody.

Efforts have been made by critics to free pastiche from its negative connotations. In his work *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (1977), Charles Jencks first registers pastiche as a device in postmodern architecture to realize the "double-coding" of modern architecture. Based on this, Margaret Rose further proposes pastiche as an effective device for intertextual communication in her essay "Post-modern Pastiche" (1991). James F. Austin develops Proust's pastiche and stresses the difference in mode and the object of imitation in his distinction between parody and pastiche: "parody is a critical, often mocking attitude toward a style or object, whereas pastiche is an imitation of a style, an imitation that may or may not mock and criticize" (4). In his systematic study of pastiche, Dyer confirms pastiche as a kind of purposeful aesthetic imitation. He highlights its feature as mimesis of language and explores its aesthetic and political values. He takes *Flaubert's Parrot* as an example to show pastiche functioning as an expression of feelings.

In my analysis of pastiche in the novel, I take Genette's definition and classification as my foundation, but emphasize the intertextual communication and metafictional reflection about writing brought about by pastiche. I do not agree with Dyer's opinion that the digressive items that punctuate Braithwaite's narration of his own story "are all to some degree pastiches" (169). As my previous analysis shows, I define some of them as parrotry. However, I support his view that "*Flaubert's Parrot* uses pastiche both to convey feeling, as it were despite Geoffrey's self (...), and also to reflect on the limits of the means to convey feeling, and uses the frustrating awareness of those very limits, enabled by pastiche, to intensify the feeling" (173). I further extend his second point to the intertextual echoes and metafictional reflection on the limits of specific genres or styles as well as to writing itself.

First, this pastiche involves the hypertextual / intertextual relationship with Flaubert's works. The most obvious one is "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas", which is a purposeful pastiche of Flaubert's *Dictionary of Accepted Ideas*[24].

[24] Critics have different opinions on this. Keith Wilson defines Braithwaite's imitation of examination papers and Flaubert's Dictionary as parody (362). Guignery thinks the dictionary is both "a parody and a stylistic pastiche of Flaubert's *Dictionary of Accepted Ideas*" (*Fiction* 49). I think it is mainly a stylistic imitation of Flaubert's

Patti White thinks this chapter "upon publication, mirrors and undermines the authority of Flaubert's dictionary just as the two parrots mock and compete with each other" (121). I contend that this is incongruent with Braithwaite's comment on Flaubert's dictionary in the chapter "Cross Channel." The uniqueness of Braithwaite's pastiche lies in his open declaration of his writing as pastiche: "It tempts me to write a Dictionary of Accepted Ideas about Gustave himself. Just a short one: a booby-trapped pocket guide; something straight-faced yet misleading. The received wisdom in pellet form, with some of the pellets poisoned" (*FP* 96-97). Braithwaite's humorous comment on Flaubert's dictionary suggests a gesture of appreciation: "Flaubert's Dictionary offers a course in irony to ridicule 'the lazy rash to understand'" (*FP* 96). The pastiche proves again "Flaubert is right", even today. Barnes / Braithwaite testifies to Flaubert's great insight into the stupidity of human beings by presenting its continuing presence in contemporary life. What Barnes ridicules is the contemporary stereotyped understanding of Flaubert, so it should be a pastiche in homage. The irony of "Braithwaite's Dictionary" lies in the fact that Flaubert—the person who criticizes clichés so fiercely—ends up as its subject.

The chapter "Louise Colet's Version" is defined as a pastiche based on its vivid imitation of the writing style of Flaubert's famous lover Louise Colet. Different from Braithwaite's stubborn defense of Flaubert, it tells of the love between Flaubert and Colet from the latter's perspective and thus challenges many of Flaubert's statements on their affair. It manifests Barnes's understanding of the alterity of both memory and the text. Due to this, Dyer thinks that Louise Colet's version is "quite far removed from any referent" (169). He claims, "It's hard to imagine that anyone in the nineteenth century would have written the way Geoffrey has Louise Colet write" (169).

A close reading of Colet's self-portrait[25], however, reveals that the first person narration in this chapter is a pastiche of her style. Barnes describes Colet as "bold and melodramatic, impulsive and self-advertising, admirable yet faintly ridiculous" (*SD* 176). The narcissistically confident even arrogant tone of the portrait can be illustrated by the following excerpt:

Now I'm thirty-four, no more, no less. I have grown stouter, my figure is no

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dictionary. It has an ironic effect but is not critical of Flaubert's writing.

[25] The portrait is appended in Steegmuller, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1830-1857* 237-38.

> long slender, but still elegant, well shaped. My bust, neck, shoulders, and arms are very extremely beautiful. I'm still admired for the smooth curve of my throat and chin…I have a high forehead, very well formed, very expressive, my eyebrows are thick, elegantly arched; my eyes, dark blue, large, very beautiful….(237)

The same tone can be easily identified in "Louise Colet's Version":

> I was thirty-five, I was beautiful, I was … renowned. I had conquered first Aix, then Paris. I had won the Académie's poetry prize twice. I had translated Shakespeare. Victor Hugo called me sister; Béranger called me *Muse*. As for my private life: my husband was respected in his profession; my … protector was the most brilliant philosopher of his age. You haven't read Victor Cousin? Then you should. A fascinating mind. The only man who truly understood Plato. A friend of your philosopher Mr Mill. And then, there was—or there was soon to be—Musset, Vigny, Champfleury. I do not boast of my conquests; I do not need to. But you see my point. I was the candle; he was the moth. The mistress of Socrates deigned to cast her smile on this unknown poet. I was *his* catch; he wasn't mine. (163, Italics in original)

The similarity in tone suggests Barnes must have had this self-portrait in mind when he wrote this chapter[26]. The pastiche forms a contrast to the rest of the text. It gives voice to Colet, whose image has mostly been built by her presence in Flaubert's letters before this. Her cross-examination of Flaubert's version of stories challenges both the authority of Flaubert's words and his personality. In this dynamic performance of identity construction, Barnes shows the subjective nature of truth claims.

In addition to the intertextual communication conveyed in the two chapters, pastiches of some genres or sub-genres are used to bring about meta-fictional reflection on the constraint or distortion these genres put on expression or even on writing in general, as the pastiches of chronology have revealed. In later parts, Barnes uses pastiche to discuss literary innovations. When Braithwaite plays the game of

[26] The note before the novel mentions Francis Steegmuller's translation, which shows Barnes has read his translation and is familiar with this self-portrait.

being a literary dictator, the first type of writing he bans is "novels in which a group of people, isolated by circumstances, revert to the 'natural condition' of man, become essential, poor, bare, forked creatures" (*FP* 110). A pastiche of this type of writing is offered to show "how easy it is to write, how much fun it is?"(*FP* 110). Barnes implies that the genre can become stereotyped and a barrier towards innovation.

Pastiche is further used to illustrate how the recycling of some genres turns them into clichés. A pastiche of an advertisement in the format of newspaper *New Statesman* is given in the novel: "60+ widowed doctor, children grown up, active, cheerful if inclined to melancholy, kindly, non-smoker, amateur Flaubert scholar, likes reading, food, travel to familiar places, old films, has friends, but seeks …"(*FP* 106). A man's whole life is abstracted into some key words. As Braithwaite comments,

> They aren't lying—indeed, they're all trying to be utterly sincere—but they aren't telling the truth. The column distorts the way the advertisers describe themselves. No one would think of himself as an active non-smoker inclined to melancholy if that wasn't encouraged, even demanded, by the form. (*FP* 107)

This shows Braithwaite / Barnes's criticism of the twisting of content by mechanized form. Therefore, in this case, pastiche is liberated from its negative connotations and assumes a critical function like parody, but it is based on imitation rather than transformation.

Parrotry and pastiche turn the regular biographical representation of Flaubert's life and art into a dynamic intertextual interaction between Braithwaite and Flaubert, as well as between Barnes and Flaubert. It engenders a metafictional reflection on the essence of language and writing. Barnes shares Flaubert's awareness of the dual nature of language but reinterprets it in his own way. When asked about his works' relation to other works, Barnes expresses his dislike of the word "palimpsest" as a descriptor applied to either *Talking it Over* or *Flaubert's Parrot.* He stresses, "…when I do use previous sources or reference points, I want them to be in the same focus as what I'm writing about; I want the world of Flaubert's novels to be as clear as the text that it appears in" (Freiburg 45). This quote reveals the intentions behind

his parrotry and pastiche, that is, both to show homage and at the same time to express ironic distance across time.

In these two sections, I have elaborated on Braithwaite's nostalgic pursuit of the realistic concept of the author and the intertextual features generated by parody and pastiche. The shift from the author to the text raises the issues of authorial presence and the function of the reader. In the next section, I will approach the integration of postmodernism and humanism from these two aspects and analyze Barnes's resonance with and deviation from Flaubert based on them.

2.3 Authorial Absence and Narrative Distance across Time

The most crucial aspect of Flaubert's principle of impersonality is his insistence on authorial absence. Flaubert compares the presence of the author in his work to the image of God, which is illustrated by his most frequently quoted saying: "The artist in his work must be like God in his creation—invisible and all powerful: he must be everywhere felt, but never seen" (in Steegmuller, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert* 230). This insistence on the absence of the author is seminal in what the character Braithwaite calls "a century of babbling personalities and shrieking style" (*FP* 98). Erich Auerbach further highlights Flaubert's innovation by comparing him to another two French Writers: Balzac and Scandal. He suggests this principle derives from Flaubert's "profound faith in the truth of language responsibly, candidly, and carefully employed" (135). Flaubert lays the foundation for "the modernist idea of the novel as a formal autonomous art object" (Creighton 219). For Flaubert, what matters is art, and the artifice and the artist should be hidden. Oscar Wilde has a better expression for this: "To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim" (3). Accordingly, the reader is the passive receiver of this art and there is no place for him / her in this autonomous fictional world.

Barnes deviates from Flaubert in his adoption of an authorial position between invisibility and visibility. On the one hand, throughout the novel, there is no authorial intrusion. Parrotry and pastiche present a kind of scientific objectivity with no apparent narrator in chapters like "The Flaubert Bestiary", "The Flaubert Apocrypha", "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas" and "Examination Paper". They foreground the words of Flaubert and reduce the author to a "parrot" to a certain

degree. The juxtaposition of different texts highlights the intertextual relationship and undercuts the authority of the author. It indicates that "the notion of paternity or author-ity has been seriously shaken and that the words themselves are more important than the identity of the writer" (Roberts 47). Barnes strikes a chord with Flaubert's principle of impersonality but in a different sense.

On the other hand, Barnes creates a unique authorial presence through the use of first person narration and the similarity between the character and the author. In this section, I mainly focus on this deviation and argue that Barnes purposefully blurs the distinction between the author and the narrator to present the truth as a complex mixture of the real and the fictional and achieve a sense of postmodern playfulness.

In contrast to the objectivity of Flaubert's omniscient narrator, Barnes's first person narrator is characterized by subjectivity and "unreliability." In the narration of the quest for the parrot and his own life story, Barnes underscores the influence his personality and psychology exert upon his narration. For example, Braithwaite's narration of his own story is characterized by the use of ellipsis. When he first mentions his wife, he only says, "My wife …died"（*FP* 3）. The procrastination of his own story directs the reader's attention to the psychological impetus behind it and the hidden connection between the two levels of narration about himself and Flaubert. All these features illustrate the view that "the communication of 'truth' is always affected by the character, needs, and psychology of the person communicating it, and eventually the medium becomes the subject of the reader's interest" (Moseley 72).

In addition to this contrast between subjectivity and objectivity, the high similarity Braithwaite bears with Barnes turns Flaubert's hidden seamless transfusion from the author to the character into an apparent one. Flaubert's insistence on the invisibility or absence of the author in his principle of impersonality tends to be overemphasized or misinterpreted by critics[27]. His famous saying "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi*"（Madam Bovary is me）further complicates its interpretation. It is often

[27] Flaubert's insistence on the impersonality of writing is developed later by other writers such as Henry James, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and writers of French *nouveau roman* with their different emphases. Nevertheless, it is also challenged by some writers and critics. Walter Pater maintains, "Impersonality in art, the literary ideal, of Gustave Flaubert, is perhaps no more possible than realism. The artist *will* be felt; his subjectivity must and will colour the incidents, as his very bodily eye *selects* the aspects of things" (79-80, italics in original). Alison Lee holds a similar opinion and gives examples from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary.* She thinks that comments like "Emma *soiled* her hands with the *refuse* of old lending libraries" can only be Flaubert's, which shows as much authorial presence as a first-person narration (10-11, italics in original). In *The Rhetoric in Fiction* (1961), Wayne Booth lists Flaubert's "presence" when he "moves into or out of a character's mind—" in *Madame Bovary* and declares that "the author's judgment is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it" (17, 20).

viewed as the other end of Flaubert's paradox. Victor Brombert regards this kind of contradictory statements as Flaubert's postmodern feature. As he notes, "Flaubert's literary habits and pronouncements, even if one discounts the consciously playful or aggressive nature of some of the paradoxes, do provide more than a hint of the essentially ironic, perverse, and aporetic nature of his literary idiom" (101).

I prefer to interpret them as two complementary angles from which to look at the role of the author. Flaubert's impersonality does not deny the real existence of the author; instead, it stresses the seamless transfusion of the author's sentiment and values into characters. It originates from Flaubert's dual belief in both art's realistic foundation and its supremacy as an expression of truth. There is a subtle transformation from personality to impersonality in Flaubert's principle of impersonality. Wallace Fowlie suggests that Flaubert is Emma's model: "'Madame Bovary c'est moi' was an accurate statement. The work of a novelist permits a man to live in all of his characters. Flaubert's romantic dreams are in Emma. Her defeat in life was his also, a defeat which forced him to find consolation in writing" (337). T. S. Eliot holds a similar proposition that "[t]he creation of a work of art, we will say the creation of a character in a drama, consists in the process of transfusion of the personality; or in a deeper sense, the life, of the author, into the character" (156).

Moving from personality to impersonality is at the same time the process of elevating the author's sentiment into a universal truth. Stratton Buck identifies this process in *Madame Bovary.* He observes,

> Compassion and irony, everywhere present and constantly intermingled, enrich and illuminate this impersonal narrative analysis. They add mysterious symbolic overtones to the intrinsic meanings of words and situations until the part of the world which Flaubert is describing becomes, in Mr. Philip Spencer's phrase, 'a microcosm of universal destinies.' (562)

In Eliot's words, it is an individual talent's integration into the literary tradition. In this sense, Flaubert's vision of truth is a combination of uniqueness and universality, which highlights the realistic quality in his works.

In spite of its postmodern intertextual parrotry and pastiche, Barnes reconfirms this realistic sense of transfusion by bestowing his unusual love for and extraordinary knowledge of Flaubert onto his character and narrator Braithwaite. Flaubert is

Barnes's life-long favorite writer. He began to read Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* when he was 15 years old. He loves his books and to a great extent identifies with his artistic principles. He regards Flaubert as "the writer whose words I most carefully tend to weigh, who I think has spoken the most truth about writing" (McGrath 15). Moreover, he is addicted to the intelligence Flaubert displays in his large volumes of correspondences, which are among Barnes's favorite books, as he says, "…when I'm reading his letters I just want to go and make him a cup of hot chocolate, light his cigarette" (15). Braithwaite's stubborn defence of Flaubert obviously reflects this great admiration. It also forms the foundation of the two contrasting storylines: the love for a writer and the love for one's wife.

Moreover, Barnes pours much of his knowledge about Flaubert into Braithwaite's meta-fictional reflections and comments on Flaubert's artistic principles, especially in contrast with contemporary writing. In his career as a literary critic, Flaubert is one of Barnes's major subjects. He had written several articles about Flaubert before he wrote *Flaubert's Parrot*. Critics acknowledge that he has become "*the* critical voice on Flaubert" (Messud 25, italics in original). An enlightening comparison can be made between the essays collected in his book *Something to Declare* and the novel *Flaubert's Parrot*, for nine out of seventeen articles in this collection are about or related to Flaubert. Many of Braithwaite's ideas expressed in the novel are based on Barnes's real opinions on Flaubert. The characterization of Braithwaite as an amateur writer makes it easier for Barnes to add in his knowledge of Flaubert.

In contrast to Flaubert's avoidance of making any direct comment on writing, Braithwaite's first-person narration is characterized by his meta-fictional reflections on Flaubert's works. Opposite to Flaubert's practice of hiding the artistry, these reflections join the postmodern endeavour to expose the essence and tricks of representation. Among these reflections, some are judicious enough to be passed for Barnes's artistic principles. Braithwaite's insistence on a realistic foundation and resistance to theories are in fact Barnes's literary propositions. In his comment on Flaubert or writing in general, Braithwaite primarily adheres to a realist aesthetic. He insists on the connection between the author and the work in his reading of Flaubert's *Un couer simple* and takes the parrot as "an emblem of the writer's voice" (*FP* 12). He opposes himself to Barthes's "death of the author." Barnes expresses similar views on several occasions. In his introduction to *Keeping an Eye Open* (2015), he registers

the transformation of his attitude towards realism from seeing it as "a kind default setting for art" to it being "truthful", "strange" and "transformative"(5). In the interview with S. Guppy, when asked whether he belongs to the straight realist tradition, he answers, "The novel is essentially a realist form, even when interpreted in the most phantasmagoric manner. A novel can't be abstract, like music. Perhaps if the novel becomes obsessed with theory (see the *nouveau roman*) or linguistic play (see *Finnegans Wake*) it may cease to be realistic; but then it also ceases to be interesting" (70). This is revealing of his realistic standing.

Barnes's tribute to Flaubert in the novel is his acknowledgment of the significance and authority of the author. In this sense, the novel is a continuing reaction towards the explosion of poststructuralist theories in the 1960s. Like writers before him, such as Ray Bradbury, David Lodge and A.S Byatt, Barnes shows the symbiotic relationship between literature and criticism and also resistance to criticism, especially the scholarly and theoretical. Braithwaite's sarcastic, sometimes even bitter, criticism of research done by Dr. Sarkie and Professor Ricks displays the same trend.

Another well-reasoned realistic view that Braithwaite holds is his insistence on a historical interpretation of literary innovations. For instance, he demystifies Flaubert's principle of impersonality and gives a valid historical and dialectical view of its formation, showing Flaubert's resonance with the 17th century, the pioneering innovation he made in his own time, and his prophecy for the contemporary death of the author. Together with this is the demystification of novel-writing: "the assumed divinity of the nineteenth-century novelist was only ever a technical device; and the partiality of the modern novelist is just as much a joy" (*FP* 99). This realistic view is better summarized by his questioning whether "reality is more authentically rendered" by using contemporary narrative techniques, such as an unreliable narrator (*FP* 99). These views largely derive from Barnes's own opinions on Flaubert's writing or writing in general, that is, mainly realistic, but open to formal innovations. Such convincing literary views to a certain degree establish Braithwaite's credibility as a critic.

Braithwaite's knowledge of Flaubert's work and scholarship is so profound that it has the tendency to exceed his status as a doctor and amateur writer and directs us to the author behind it. Keith Wilson takes this as evidence of the authorial presence in the novel and puts it directly,

> The winner of an Oxford scholarship in French, a Flaubertian of sufficient stature to be asked to review Flaubert's notebooks and correspondence for the *Times Literary Supplement*, is, after all, more likely than a Flaubert-loving doctor to have found himself sitting at the feet of Enid Starkie and in a position to comment with reliably [sic] on the atrociousness of her French accent and the inadequacy of her scholarship. (362)

For all these similarities between the author and the character, Barnes's effort to distinguish himself from Braithwaite is visible. It is where his high artifice lies. In spite of a shared interest in Flaubert, Braithwaite is different from Barnes and has his own unique features as a fictional character[28]. His pedantry and incompetence in life are the typical features of Barnesian characters. Braithwaite is characterized as arbitrary, stubborn and paradoxical. For example, he plays the role of the dictator of literature and makes arbitrary rules for writing novels. He writes letters to check whether redcurrant jam in Flaubert's time is of the same color as it is now or to find out the research on the size of the carriage in which Emma Bovary commits adultery. The fact that he is often the type of person he criticizes captures his paradoxical attitude. He excoriates Dr Enid Starkie and Professor Christopher Ricks for their being particular about literary trifles without realizing that he is the same kind of person. While condemning those people who try to take advantage of everything when crossing the channel as a "modern ship of fools", he openly admits, "I'm no different, by the way: I stock up on duty-free and await orders like the rest of them" (*FP* 94). In addition to bestowing on the novel a comic tint, these features undercut Braithwaite's reliability, especially his position as a critic. When defining Braithwaite's role in the novel, Barnes describes him as "being basically quite sane but given to bursts of extremity" (qtd. in Childs, *Julian Barne*s: 49). The traits I have described are the manifestations of this description.

Between this resonance with and deviation from Flaubert, Barnes achieves a postmodern sense of truth as a process of negotiation. By endowing a character that is not so reliable with his views, Barnes puts them into an open, dynamic dialogue with the reader. The reader has to decide the validity of Braithwaite's realistic pursuit of the author, especially with Barthes's "The Death of the Author" in mind. These two

[28]Based on his close reading of Barnes's different drafts, Ryan Roberts notices Barnes chooses to gradually highlight Braithwaite's role as a physician so as to make a distinction between the author and the character (34-35).

opposite interpretations of Flaubert presented in the first chapter "Flaubert's Parrot" bring the issue of authorship before the reader and involve him / her in an interactive interpretation.

Furthermore, Barnes achieves a postmodern sense of playfulness by purposefully blurring the distinction between the author and the character. This can be illustrated by two anecdotes in and outside of the novel. When discussing the issue of minor errors in literary works, Braithwaite gives the example of "a well-praised first novel", in which "the young novelist" mistakenly uses a non-existent "first suppressed edition of *Madame Bovary*" (*FP* 76). The readers who have read Barnes's first novel *Metroland* will identify the young novelist as Barnes himself. For them, it creates a subtle "inside joke about the invisibility of the author within the work" (Roberts 34). Another example of this playful blurring of the distinction between the author and the narrator is the note Barnes writes in the front of the book:

> I am grateful to James Fenton and the Salamander Press for permission to reprint the lines from 'A German Requiem' on this page. The translations in this book are by Geoffrey Braithwaite; though he would have been lost without the impeccable example of Francis Steegmuller.
>
> J.B

This is another trick played by Barnes. The reader knows he is the real translator of those quotations. Barnes's juxtaposition of fictional character Braithwaite with real figures James Fenton and Francis Steegmuller further blurs the distinction between the real and the fictional.

In the chapter "Cross-Channel", Braithwaite comments on the presence of the author in Flaubert's use of irony and regards it as "the attraction, and also the danger, of irony: the way it permits a writer to be seemingly absent from his work, yet in fact hintingly present. You can have your cake and eat it; the only trouble is, you get fat" (*FP* 97). In the *Dictionnaire des idées rescues,* Flaubert is seemingly absent, but his wisdom and severe attack on social clichés are present. While paying homage to Flaubert's insight into human stupidity through his pastiche of the dictionary, Barnes displays the irony across time. In fact, this is the overall effect he achieves in his use of parrotry and pastiche. Therefore, the phrase "have your cake and eat it" is a better

summary of the postmodern strategy Barnes adopts on the issue of authorial presence / absence.

Connected with this is the function of the reader in regards to narrative distance. Corresponding to the different types of authorial presence, the narrative distance varies. When the writing is narrated by a seemingly invisible omniscient narrator, there is no interaction between the author and the reader within the text and the reader becomes the passive receiver of the objective presentation. The juxtaposition of these different texts, however, involves the reader in an active meaning construction, mainly through an intertextual reading.

In first-person narration, the narrator and the reader keep a more intimate relationship. Firstly, in *Flaubert's Parrot*, the readership is part of Braithwaite's meta-fictional reflection. For instance, in the chapter "Emma Bovary's eyes", Braithwaite ponders on how to read: "is there a perfect reader somewhere, a total reader? Does Dr Starkie's reading of *Madame Bovary* contain all the responses which I have when I read the book, and then add a whole lot more, so that my reading is in a way pointless?" (*FP* 81). This metafictional reflection on the validity of reading functions like a dialogue with the reader and directs the latter's attention to his / her own identity in the process of reading. As both a reader and intended biographer of Flaubert, Braithwaite poses more questions than he can answer, but this incapability renders him more identifiable with the real reader.

Besides, the reader becomes a character "you" with various roles in the novel. This is close to what Peter J. Rabinowitz defines as "narrative audience", the narrator's audience[29], but Barnes presents it as a real character in the novel instead of an imagined one. In Braithwaite's narration, it functions as a partner or a "character of convenience" for him to address his opinions directly to, as if in a dialogue (Wilson 365). The narrator, for instance, can begin a chapter in a very casual way like this: "You can define a net in one of two ways, depending on your point of view" (*FP* 35). Thus an intimate dialogical relationship with the reader is established.

A more dramatic relationship between the narrator and the reader is presented in the chapter "Louise Colet's version." In his pastiche of Colet's tone and style, Barnes

[29] In "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences" (1977), Rabinowitz identifies four levels of audience based on Nabokov's *Pale Fire*: actual audience ("the flesh-and-blood people who read the book"), authorial audience ("the author's hypothetical audience"), narrative audience (the narrator's audience) and ideal audience (the narrator's idealized audience).

characterizes the reader as an obedient and patient listener to the narrator Colet. At the beginning of her narration, Colet commands the reader, "Look, take my arm, like that, and let's just talk" (*FP* 139). At the end of the narration, she speaks in the same tone again, "Slip your fingers down my wrist once more. There; I told you so" (*FP* 154). The dominance Colet holds over the imagined reader brings to life her condescending and arrogant manner. Therefore, the dramatic presentation of the relationship between the narrator and the reader is at the service of the characterization.

The dramatization of the relationship between the narrator and the reader also functions as a sarcastic response to the postmodern declaration of the birth of the reader. Together with Barthes's announcement of "the death of the author" is the birth of the reader, as he claims that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (*Image Music Text* 148). In accordance with his denial of "the death of the author", Braithwaite questions the efficacy of postmodernism's foregrounding of the freedom of the reader as innovative writing, through tricks such as offering several different endings or involving the reader in a dialogical relationship. He uses postmodern pastiche to expose the hypocrisy of this freedom. For instance, after refuting Dr Starkie for her criticism of Flaubert's "inaccurate" description of Emma's eyes, the narrator involves the character "you" in a seemingly congenial dialogue,

> You can see, at least, the colour of my eyes. Not as complicated as Emma Bovary's, are they? But do they help you? They might mislead. I'm not being coy; I'm trying to be *useful*. Do you know the colour of Flaubert's eyes? No, you don't: for the simple reason that I suppressed it a few pages ago. I didn't want you to be tempted by cheap conclusions. See how carefully I look after you. (*FP* 107)

The playful dialogue between the narrator and the reader reveals that the reader can only know what the author allows him to know; therefore, it further confirms the authority of the author.

The revelation of the postmodern trick being played on the reader is displayed in Braithwaite's metafictional reflection on his narration. Braithwaite defines himself as a "hesitating narrator" and gives a pastiche of his own style:

> As for the hesitating narrator—look, I'm afraid you've run into one right now. It might 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 the bits of gristle from the sandwiches. Listen, I hope you won't think this rude, but I really must take a turn on deck; it's becoming quite stuffy in the bar here. Why don't we meet on the boat back instead? The two o'clock ferry, Thursday? I'm sure I'll feel more like it then. All right? What? No, you can't come on deck with me. For God's sake. Besides, I'm going to the lavatory first. I can't have you following me in there, peering round from the next stall. (*FP* 100)

In this drama of hide-and-seek, the reader is both invited into a polite dialogue but at the same time kept at a distance. It demonstrates that the birth of the reader is only another invention of the author. This method is further developed into a structural pattern in Barnes's later novels *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*[30]

It needs to be noted that there is a distinction between Braithwaite and Barnes when it comes to their views on the role of the reader. Barnes apparently takes another middle way between Braithwaite's playful treatment of the reader and Barthes's foregrounding of the reader's role. On the one hand, his novel displays some of the features of the text and the involvement of the reader in more active reading, but he at the same time acknowledges that this is only a product of the author's artifice. It marks the difference between the author and the character and forms another tension in the novel.

To sum up, the tension between Barnes's adoption of intertextual parrotry and pastiche and his character Braithwaite's nostalgic pursuit of the real author represents Barnes's typical negotiation between postmodernism and humanism. In his dynamic construction of Flaubert's identity, he embodies the postmodern acceptance of alterity not only of identity but also of genre, and highlights the subjectivity and textuality of historical truth. He uses intertextual parrotry and pastiche to express his resonance with Flaubert's dual sense of language. The unique authorial presence of the author and the reader shows both his alliance with and deviation from Flaubert.

In his comment on the director Claude Chabrol's filming of Flaubert's *Madame*

[30] For a detailed analysis of the working of the dialogical pattern in these two novels, see Kelly.

Bovary, Barnes uses the phrase "faithful betrayal" to describe the director's relationship with Flaubert. Although Chabrol's version is "the most faithful adaptation so far", it is a violation of Flaubert's prohibition of any theatrical version of *Madame Bovary* being made (*SD* 279). When writing a book about Flaubert, Barnes faces the same dilemma. Flaubert did not openly forbid others to write biographies about him, but he made it clear that he wanted the reader to focus only on his works. Based on this, Barnes expresses a complicated feeling towards his novel: "The resulting book felt like an act of revenge, and an act of homage; but also—occasionally—like an act of betrayal" ("Follies of Writer Worship").

Between this homage and betrayal, Barnes shows his literary talents. Peter Brooks captures the subtle relationship Barnes has established with Flaubert when he regards the novel as "a book Flaubert would have scorned to write, a book well worth writing" (7). Guignery's audacious comment is a better summary of Barnes's achievement in the novel: "*Flaubert's Parrot* thus oscillates between repetition and difference, between the awareness of past literature and a desire to go beyond and make something new and hybrid. Barnes is in no way constrained by the heritage of Flaubert or by past conventions but manages on the contrary to create a voice of his own and a form of his own" (*Fiction* 49). Therefore, the novel is not merely an expression of the influence one great writer exerts upon a later one, but a work of admiration through meditation.

Chapter 3

Towards Ecological Humanism in *A History of the World in $10^1/_2$ Chapters*

A History of the World in $10^1/_2$ Chapters is another novel which raises controversy among critics. Its unusual way of presenting world history—"the lack of a single plot, the disruption of chronology and the absence of narrative cohesion" (Guignery, *Fiction* 61)—brings about similar questioning about its status as a novel.[31] As the literature review has demonstrated, the previous studies mainly focus on the deconstruction of the grand historical narrative in the novel. Deviating from this trend, I turn to Barnes's presentation of the human-nature relationship, examining the ecological thinking implicated in the dialogues between three of its types: the anthropocentric hierarchical order presented in the Bible; the seeming egalitarianism between man and nonhuman species exemplified in the Middle Ages animal trial; and the suffering of women and animals under patriarchal oppression in consumer society.

I investigate Barnes's ecological thinking in its pertinence to contemporary ecologism and animal studies. I contend that while challenging anthropocentrism and advocating a symbiotic ecological relationship, Barnes insists on man's transcendence through morality, art and love, with their varying degrees of validity. This position distinguishes him from contemporary animal studies and resonates with the propositions of French ecological humanism identified by Brian Morris in the thinking of three scholars Lewis Mumford, Ren E Dubos and Morris Bookchin. It is an integration of Darwinian naturalism with humanism. Barnes's concept of love with its two prerequisites of "imaginative sympathy" and "beginning to see the world from another point of view" will be extended to the human-animal relationship and taken as a valid foundation for the relational or symbiotic ecological relationship projected by ecological humanism. I regard this type of human-nature relationship as a concretion of Levinas's ethics of the Other and Todorov's humanist formula "the *autonomy of the I*, the *finality of the you* and the *universality of the they*" (*IG* 30, italics in original).

[31] For the controversies surrounding the book's status as a novel, see Guignery, *Fiction* 61-62.

3.1 Nature and Ecological Humanism

Animals are involved in several of Barnes's novels either metaphorically or literally. His second novel *Before She Met Me* starts with an epigraph quoted from a medical magazine elaborating on the three brains of men. It functions as a metaphor for the close biological connection between man and animals embodied by the character Graham Hendrick's final killing of his wife's former lover. In *Flaubert's Parrot,* along with the parrot in the title, Barnes compiles a bestiary of the animals in Flaubert's life and work. This shows the dynamic interactions between Flaubert and animals and presents Flaubert's biocentric outlook, that is, "being 'brother in God to everything that lives, from the giraffe and the crocodile to man'" (*FP* 159). The historical background for the novel *Arthur and George* is the "Great Wyrley Outrages", which were a series of animal maimings that happened at Great Wyrley in the district of South Staffordshire, England, in 1903. These presentations indirectly show Barnes's concern with the human-animal relationship. In *A History of the World in* $10^1/_2$ *Chapters,* Barnes takes different ideologies about the human-nature relationship as part of world history and gives it a comprehensive presentation. He starts with a subversion of the human-animal relationship described in the Bible through a worm's perspective and explores the transformation of this relationship throughout world history, especially during the Middle Ages and contemporary times. These ideologies form a dialogue and delineate Barnes's ecological thinking, which I will elaborate on in light of ecological humanism.

The term "ecological humanism" is used to convey the combination of ecological thinking with humanism, but it may have different connotations in different contexts. It was first used by French scholar Philippe Saint Marc in his book *Socialisation de la nature* (1971) and later reappeared in his book *L'Economie barbare*（1994）. His ecological humanism emphasizes the importance of nature for the protection of individual freedom and is a criticism of productivist society, which takes economic productivity and growth as the only purpose of human organization. He advocates the "state-led socialization of nature" and endeavors to explore the social and spiritual dimensions of environmental ethics. Saint Marc's ecological humanism, however, has been criticized for "relativising 'nature' entirely to the needs of human personality" and neglecting "the unique identity of 'natural environment'" (Whiteside 167).

Henryk Skolimowski is another scholar who discusses ecological humanism. He first put forward the concept "Ecological Humanism" in a long essay with the same title published in the magazine *Tract* and then reiterated his ideas in his books *Eco-Philosophy: Designing New Tactics for Living* (1981) and *Living Philosophy: Eco-Philosophy as a Tree of Life* (1992). Skolimowski regards ecological humanism as a new cosmology to replace industrial society, one which is "evolution-centred" and based on a reconsideration of three key concepts of science: values, evolution and their relations ("Ecological Humanism" 25). He changes the traditional humanistic view of man as "the measure of all things in our own right" to "a sacred vessel" of evolution, "vested with such powers and responsibilities" (26). He thinks man's sacredness lies in "the uniqueness of his biological constitution", "conscious awareness of his spirituality and his inner compulsion to maintain it", and his "awareness of the enormous responsibility for the outcome of evolution" (26). Although Skolimowski attempts to reunite the philosophy of man and the philosophy of nature, his ecological humanism is founded on Kant's philosophy and Albert Schweitzer's spiritual worldview. He endows human beings with the position of "guardians and stewards" and insists on the priority of man over other species, as he expresses clearly that "the exquisiteness of man is more precious than the exquisiteness of the mosquito" (34). Therefore, it is tainted with anthropocentrism and spiritualism.

Ecological humanism is often taken as a middle ground between the nonanthropocentric and anthropocentric ecologism represented by deep ecology and shallow ecology.[32] In *Thinking about Nature: An Investigation of Nature, Value and Ecology* (1988), Andrew Brennan defines ecological humanism in this way. He emphasizes that man is part of nature: "what we are and ought to be is partly determined by where we are" (7). His ecological humanism is accused of being "an ethic without substance", for it "seems not to differ significantly from that held by the 'deep ecologists' whom Brennan dismisses as naive and weakly grounded in both ethics and ecology" (Zimmerman 1964). Tim Hayward uses the phrase "ecological

[32]These two terms first appeared in Arne Naess's essay "The shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary" (1973), in which he makes a distinction between two environmental movements. In contrast to the presently powerful shallow anthropocentric ecological movement of taking concrete actions to "fight against pollution and resource depletion", he calls to develop the less influential deep ecology movement and establishes "ecosophy"—"a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium" (99). The two movements develop into two opposite groups of ecological thought. Deep ecology develops into biocentrism / ecocentrism, while shallow ecology takes the various forms of weak / enlightened / moderate anthropocentrism.

humanism" to assess humanism in an ecological context. In his book *Ecological Thought: An Introduction* (1995), he elaborates on an enlightened or moderate anthropocentrism based on enlightened self-interest, which means that "if humans become sufficiently enlightened about their own best interests, then they will also pursue the best interest of non-humans" (60). This is, in fact, a kind of ecological humanism, but it is "a version of centered ecologism" (Whiteside 73).

These definitions of ecological humanism tend to be either anthropocentric or biocentric. Kerry H. Whiteside offers a new angle which combines humanism and ecologism in her analysis of French ecologism in contrast to Anglo-American ecological thinking. Going beyond the debate between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism on the issue of intrinsic value, Whiteside suggests a "noncentered" theory:

> There is a possibility that thinking about our ecological predicament might best be developed by avoiding the very habit of 'centering' our attention. Rather than focus on how to adjust relations between two presumably distinct entities, one might open up the ecological theory by examining how the *identities* of 'nature' and 'humanity' get constituted—together, reciprocally—in the first place. (46, italics in original)

Therefore, French ecologism is characterized from the beginning by "a noncentered understanding of humanism" (Whiteside 73).

Whiteside further points out the different connotations of humanism in two different contexts. In Anglo-American ecologism, humanism often refers to the classical metaphysical humanism established by Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant, so it is often confused with anthropocentrism and is equal to the exploitation of nature. However, humanism usually conveys a positive sense in a French ecological context. Whiteside stresses, "In French ecologism, debates take place not *between* nonanthropocentricists and anthropocentricists but rather *through* various notions of humanism" (74, italics in original). French ecologists draw on the skeptical humanism of Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which Barnes also inherits in his ecological thinking. They advocate "humanizing nature", stressing the historical and cultural construction of concepts like nature and humanity, but at the same time keep a skeptical attitude towards "the gap in every philosophical system", and "strive for

ethical effects by playing one type of knowledge off against another" (Whiteside 73, 76). Whiteside's analysis of French ecologism establishes the inherent connection between French ecologism and humanism.

Brian Morris is the first to address ecological humanism as an ecological tradition. In his recent book *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism* (2012), he identifies a kind of ecological humanism in the thinking of three scholars: Lewis Mumford, Ren E. Dubos and Morris Bookchin. Morris has a special kind of humanism in mind when he defines his ecological humanism:

> [I]t is naturalistic rather than supernaturalist, repudiating spiritualist explanations of natural and social phenomena, thus putting an emphasis on human reason; it affirms the unity of humankind and a naturalistic ethics that recognizes the existence of basic universal values; it acknowledges the human dignity of the human personality and the crucial importance of upholding such human values as equality, liberty, tolerance and social solidarity; and finally, it suggests a relational epistemology that emphasizes free inquiry, the importance of reason and science, as well as of the human imagination. (4)

Therefore, the uniqueness of this ecological humanism lies in the integration of Darwinian naturalism and humanism, which acknowledges not only the biological link between humans and nature, but also the naturalistic and historical ways of understanding these things.

It is a balance between ecological realities and the ethical and cultural concerns of humanism. It highlights "the crucial importance of openness, chance, probability and the agency and individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process" (Morris 5). Although the three pioneering ecologists discussed are all based in America, their ecological humanism shares some similarity with French ecologism. They hold the similar view that man and nature are interdependent and advocate a relational or symbiotic ecological relationship, which, in essence, involves "biological associations in which each organism contributes to the survival and welfare of its partner"; "they are thus creative relationships" (Morris 108).

Morris's delineation of ecological humanism offers a theoretical base for my analysis. The different forms of the relationship between man and nature Barnes

presents in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* echo the view of these ecological humanists that "our understanding of the natural world is always mediated, by our own personal experiences, and by social and cultural factors" (Morris 6). Moreover, Barnes's interpretation of world history indicates the same "naturalistic and historical ways of understanding" in ecological humanism, as opposed to the linear causational world history in official historical discourses. Thirdly, the author seeks to criticize the blind pursuit of progress in modern industrial capitalism at the cost of the environment. Finally, Barnes's elaboration on love as man's source of transcendence shows the same combination of humanism and naturalism. It needs to be pointed out, however, that Barnes's ecological humanism is mainly based on a historical and philosophical reflection on the ways we make history, so it is philosophically critical, but lacks the active practical dimension of these scholars.

The evolution of humanism is a process of constant incorporation of new ideas, which demonstrates its resilience and capacity for perfection. The development of ecological thinking raises new issues for humanistic concerns and extends ethical duties to non-human species. Robyn Eckersley considers the shift from the self to a whole ecology as "a process of psychological maturing", so the purpose of the transpersonal ecology[33] may be shared by all people on this planet, the goal being "to expand the circle of human compassion and respect for others beyond one's particular family and friends and beyond the human community to include the entire ecological community" (63).

My analysis of Barnes's ecological humanism is in line with the theoretical guide of Levinas's ethics of the Other and Todorov's concept of "the universality of the *they*". In his article "Levinas and Our Moral Responsibility Toward Other Animals" (2011), Peter Atterson makes it clear that although Levinas was reluctant to extend to nonhuman animals the same kind of moral consideration he gives to humans, his ethics of alterity can be a challenge to the traditional moral status of animals and his phenomenology of face can be extended to those animals that have a face and are capable of expressing suffering. In fact, the French writer Bernard Charbonneau proposed the otherness of nature before this:

It is precisely because nature becomes for me the Other . . . that it exists for

[33] This is a reinterpretation of deep ecology by Australian scholar Warwick Fox. He proposes to "psychologize" eco-philosophy by bringing the psychological term "identification" into the human-nature relationship. For a more detailed elaboration, see Fox.

> the existent that I am. When I no longer reduce myself to nature by making man an element of the universe, or when I no longer reduce nature to man by taking it to be the vulgar matter of his making. When I no longer personify it, as the Ancients did, or, like the Christians, identify it with a Providence that is supposed to satisfy our needs and our reason. Or again, like some naturalists, by endowing it with specifically human rational or moral qualities: such a naturalism too is only a form of anthropocentrism. In order to know nature, it has to be distinguished from oneself: one must love it for its own sake. (qtd. in Whiteside: 162)

This clear demarcation of the otherness of nature, in essence, aligns with Levinas's stress on the alterity of the Other as part of an ethical relationship. Barnes's concept of love put forward in *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters* embodies this sense of alterity. Therefore, I contend that Barnes's love is not only a counterforce against history but also a very solid ecological attitude towards nature.

3.2 Challenging Anthropocentrism: The Disquieting Other

Barnes's ecological humanism starts with his challenge towards the anthropocentric hierarchical order established in the Bible. There are two different modes of human-animal / nature relations in the Bible: the seven-day myth in the Old Testament and the Eden myth in the New Testament. The Garden of Eden shows the peaceful coexistence of man and animals, but the world created in the seven-day myth is hierarchical with God high above, man in the middle and other species far below. Alan Bleakley thinks the fundamental difference between these two myths lies in that "[t]he Eden myth is inclusive, describing human participation in animal life, or continuity amongst species, and an immanent Creator; the seven-day myth is exclusive, separating humans from animal life, and God from humans, describing a discontinuity of Creation, where humans dominate" (26-27). These myths become the archetypes of the human-nature relationship. While the harmonious coexistence in the Garden of Eden is reduced to the lost Eden, an object of eternal nostalgia, the hierarchical structure in the seven-day myth becomes the dominating ecological order. James Hillman attributes the contempt for "the animal soul" in the western tradition to the seven-day myth (qtd. in Bleakley: 27).

In fact, besides these two myths, there is the myth of Noah's Ark, which also

involves human-nature relations. It can be regarded as a reinforcement of the hierarchical structure in the seven-day myth, for God's full ruling is further strengthened by his punishment of the disobedient creatures. Furthermore, the dominance of man over other species is established by God's covenant with Noah. Here, a Christian version of the chain of being is established. In addition to the hierarchical structure in the seven-day myth, among the nonhuman species, some are privileged over others by the distinction between "the clean" and "the unclean". With its implied anthropocentrism, the new order exerts great influence in western history. Bleakley regards it as a "fitting ecological metaphor", which "encodes a social regulation", for "the choice of animals by Noah is not based upon how animals appear, but upon what they represent for the human" (27). Therefore, from the seven-day myth to the myth of Noah's Ark, the Bible further strengthens the early western anthropocentric ideology. In this sense, Lynn White regards Christianity as "the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen" and the historical root of the contemporary ecological crisis (1205).

The myth of Noah's Ark is the very target of criticism in the first chapter of Barnes's novel, entitled "The Stowaway". By giving voice to a long-silenced other—a stowaway worm—Barnes reverses the anthropocentric human-animal relationship and puts man under the gaze of the worm.[34] The worm takes on an ironic human voice and severely attacks the two symptoms of Anthropocentrism—"human chauvinism" and "speciesism".[35] In its narration, the worm emphasizes its position as a creature excluded from the hierarchical order established by God. As he says, "I was never chosen. In fact, like several other species, I was especially not chosen" (*HW* 4). Therefore, the worm is a typical marginalized "other" in the postcolonial sense, or as Linda Hutcheon calls it, an "ex-centric" (*Poetics* 60). It functions as "a potent metaphor for that which is excluded or denied by various monologic discourses"（Finney 63-64）.

The worm questions the authority established in the hierarchical structure created by God. It challenges not only the intellectual and moral capacity of Noah and his family but also the wisdom of God. In the Bible, the flood is God's punishment for

[34] Cf. Jacques Derrida's essay "The Animal That Therefore I Am (1997)", in which Derrida takes the experience of being gazed at by a cat while he was naked as a metaphor for a new way to look at the human-animal relationship. Also see Szép 57-70.

[35] Alan Hayward defines these terms as "the attitude of those who believe that only humans are bearers of intrinsic value, that only humans are worthy of moral consideration, and that the rest of nature is of merely instrumental value, as means, in the service of human ends" (58).

man's evil doings. Noah and his family are selected to survive "because Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6.9). In the novel, however, Noah is characterized as "an old rogue with a drinking problem who was already into his seventh century of life" (*HW* 6). In addition to being a drunkard, Noah is described as "a monster, a puffed-up patriarch who spent half his day groveling to his God and the other half taking it out on us" (12); he is "bad tempered, smelly, unreliable, envious and cowardly" (*HW* 16). Moreover, Noah and his family are dishonoured by all kinds of unrespectable behaviors. Noah is once found naked by his sons. The wife of Noah's son Ham is even suspected of having sexual relationships with a pair of Simians which are later "accidentally" killed by a fallen spar.

In addition to Noah's questionable personality, the worm highlights his incompetence in carrying out God's order. He exposes the arbitrariness in choosing the species to be brought onto the ark and the chaotic state of the whole process. The worm thus implies that Noah's being chosen is not based on his righteousness but on his willingness to listen to God, which discredits both Noah and God, whom the worm calls "the oppressive role model" (*HW* 21). Criticism of God's arbitrariness is also implicated in the worm's narration of His punishment of the only respectable person on the Ark—Noah's fourth son Varadi—who is "fraternizing with the beast" in his brothers' eyes.

In its criticism of human beings, the worm challenges human speciesism against other animals in history, which continues the philosophical and literary tradition of "animalising the human" represented by Charles Darwin and Friedrich Nietzsche. For example, the worm calls man "your species" (*HW* 4) and puts man back into the natural order described in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871). For Darwin, "there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties"（35). Echoing this point, the worm highlights man's closeness to animals: "I know your species tend to look down on our world, considering it brutal, cannibalistic and deceitful (though you might acknowledge the argument that this makes us closer to you rather than more distant)" (*HW* 10). Ironically, the worm adopts a condescending tone towards man / the reader as a form of revenge against human arrogance. It openly challenges man's position as a superior species and uses man's own evolution theory to suggest that "man is a very unevolved

species compared to the animals" (*HW* 28).

In addition to its criticism of the anthropocentrism of human beings, the worm turns himself into a spokesman for its species and boasts of "the sense of equality" and mutual respect for each other among worms:

> But among us there had always been, from the beginning, a sense of equality. Oh, to be sure, we ate one another, and so on; the weaker species knew all too well what to expect if they crossed the path of something that was both bigger and hungry. But we merely recognized this as being the way of things. The fact that one animal was capable of killing another did not make the first animal superior to the second; merely more dangerous. Perhaps this is a concept difficult for you to grasp, but there was a mutual respect among us. Eating another animal was not grounds for despising it: and being eaten did not instill in the victim—or the victim's family—any exaggerated admiration for the dining species. (*HW* 10)

The worm's practice and proposals—its subversion of man's superior position, its insistence upon the equality of all species and mutual respect, as well as its denunciation of taking the ability to kill as superiority—make it almost a spokesman of biocentrism in contemporary ecological thinking. Its speech strikes a chord with the major principles of the early deep ecology movement put forward by Arne Naess: "the relational, total-field image" of man, "biospherical egalitarianism" and "diversity and symbiosis" (95-96). Based on these principles, Naess suggests interpreting the struggle of life among species "in the sense of ability to coexist and cooperate in complex relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress. 'Live and let live' is a more powerful ecological principle than 'Either you or me'" (96). The worm's boasting of "mutual respect" among his species echoes this suggestion.

The dualistic thinking in the anthropocentric tradition is another target of criticism in *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters*, which is typified by the binary distinction between the clean and the unclean in the Bible. By rewriting the biblical story, Barnes reveals the fundamental power relationship of eating and being eaten behind the distinction. In Genesis, Noah is characterized as an "early conservationist" for his preservation of seven pairs of clean beasts and two pairs of unclean ones during the flood under the order of God (*HW* 22). The worm undermines this image

and reveals the self-interestedness in Noah's conservation of the creatures in the Ark, by making it clear that he did it "because his role-model told him to, but also out of self-interest, even cynicism. *He wanted to have something to eat after the flood had subsided*" (*HW* 22, italics in original). In contrast to the divine image of Noah's Ark as "a nature reserve", the worm describes it as "a prison ship", by giving examples of how some animals are maltreated or cruelly killed as food for Noah and his family (*HW* 4). This reveals that the honourable classification of "being 'clean'" is only "a mixed blessing", for it "meant that they could be eaten" (*HW* 11). The biological difference is, in fact, a screen. The worm turns the solemn covenant between God and Noah, which is supposed to be a preservation of all species, into a "death-warrant" (*HW* 22). This challenge culminates in the rhetorical question posed to the reader and its answer: "what the hell do you think Noah and his family ate in the Ark? They ate *us*, of course" (*HW* 13, italics in original). By turning the preservation story of Noah's Ark into a massacre of other species by man, Barnes uncovers the ideological workings of power behind the biological distinction between the clean and the unclean.

The worm further reveals the illogical speciesism behind the detailed dualist distinction between the clean and the unclean in the Bible (Lev.11) by pointing out the arbitrariness of the distinction:

> What was so special about cloven-footed ruminants, one asked oneself? Why should the camel and the rabbit be given second-class status? Why should a division be introduced between fish that had scales and fish that did not? The swan, the pelican, the heron, the hoopoe: are these not some of the finest species? Yet they were not awarded the badge of cleanness. Why round on the mouse and the lizard—which had enough problems already, you might think—and undermine their self-confidence further? If only we could have seen some glimpse of logic behind it all; if only Noah had explained it better. But all he did was blindly obey. (*HW* 11)

The arbitrary distinction based on physical features reminds us of Jeremy Bentham's comparison of animal liberation to the liberation of black slaves and his defense of animals:

> The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum,* are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate? What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversible animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*? (283, italics in original)

Barnes and Bentham hold the same view, that the specific differences which render one group superior to another do not hold water; therefore, discrimination based on them is not tenable. They advocate respect for all animals for "being what they are", in direct opposition to what Noah and his family did to some animals.

The worm particularly stresses that there is no excuse for discrimination against or the killing of something simply because it is a "cross-breed", as Noah did to the basilisk, the griffons, the sphinx, and the hippogriff, creatures people thought "were all gaudy fantasies", but in fact were just killed (*HW* 15-16). The worm's refutation of his own not being chosen at the end of the story is a more powerful proposition: "It's not our fault for being woodworm" (*HW* 30). The worm's personification of other species— "the weeping of the shellfish, the grave and puzzled complaint of the lobster" and "the mournful shame of the stork" (*HW* 11) —unveils an oppressed ecological world as sentimental as the human one. In this respect, the worm's appeal for equal rights of existence for all animals shares the same essence with the demands made by minorities in human society.

Taking the dualistic distinction between the clean and the unclean as an archetype, Barnes shows its penetrating influence throughout human history. He presents its variations in the distinction between the British and the American in "The Visitors", between the healthy and the unhealthy in "Shipwreck", between the Jews and other races in "Three simple Stories", and between the savage and the civilized in

"Upstream". All of them are in fact discriminations under the logic of this binary and show the working of power relations. Wherever there is domination, it will always function as an effective means for the dominating group to secure its benefits, so it attests to the pervasiveness of power and its circulation through knowledge, as put forward by Michael Foucault. As an arbitrary distinction, the two sides of the binary have the potential to transform into each other, as Barnes represents in the encounters between religion and science in "Project Ararat", and the savage and civilization in "Upstream".

Therefore, by giving voice to a stowaway worm, Barnes challenges the hierarchical world created in the Bible. While making a full attack on anthropocentrism, he presents an alternative version which reinterprets the human-animal relationship. However, as a narrative, there is a distance between the narrator and the implied author, which Wayne Booth defines as the image the author creates for themselves in the book (138).

The ex-centric views held by the worm are connected with its marginalized status and are not free from prejudices. The biocentrism the worm advocates is paradoxically based on its depreciation of human beings, which is similar to the "hatred of man" the critics accuse biocentrism of. The worm's characterization of Noah and his family completely subverts Shakespeare's humanistic hymn to man: "What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—" (*Ham* II, ii, 305-09). Throughout the story, the implied author expresses his distrust of the worm's version by presenting its self-claimed trustworthiness: "My account you can trust" (*HW* 4). As an ex-centric, its narration is more a subversion of God's version of hierarchical order than the solid construction of a new one, for it is a continuation of the either / or of dualistic thinking. Instead of advocating a harmonious relational coexistence, it is still centered, which is the major critique Bookchin levels against biocentrism. In dialogue with this challenge of the anthropocentric ecology presented in the Bible, I will analyze the ecological thinking implicated in Barnes's presentation of another type of human-animal relationship—the Middle Ages animal trial.

3.3 Animal Trials in an Ecological Light

The third chapter of Barnes's novel, entitled "The War of Religion", offers a pastiche of court debates recorded during Middle Ages animal trials. It starts with a brief introduction to the source of the document and the translator's note and ends with a short passage explaining the present condition of the archive, both in italicized form as a distinction from the body part (the record of the debate). The narrator claims that the story is a translation of the legal document of an animal trial during the Middle Ages. The woodworms on trial were accused of infesting the throne of the bishop and being responsible for his fall.

The interpretation of this pastiche highlights the importance of paratext, which, in Genette's view, includes "a title, a subtitle, intertitle; preface, postface, notices, forwards, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations, blurb, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic" (3). In addition to the formal features of this pastiche and the note at the end of the book, the different interpretations of the animal trial in contemporary eco-critical discourses are important paratexts. I interpret Barnes's ecological thinking reflected in this pastiche based on these different paratexts.

A significant paratext for interpreting the chapter is the book *The Criminal prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (1906) by the 19th-century scholar E.P. Evans, which is mentioned in the "Author's Note" at the end of the book. This reference reveals the chapter as pastiche—an imitation of the style of legal debate in Middle Ages animal trials. The structure of the debate imitates the "specimens of plaints, pleas, replications, rejoinders, and decisions" set up by the 17th-century Savoyan jurist Gaspard Bailly (Evans 95). The formal affinity to a legal document establishes the solemnity of the trial and the authenticity of the story.

In spite of this, the trial of the woodworms is a case of fabulation—the mixture of the real and the fictional. Bartholomé Chassenée, the procurator for the woodworms, is a genuine jurist and the introduction to him at the beginning is accurate. The erudition of Chassenée is based on Evans's introduction to his procuration style. The description of his defense in the story is an imitation of "a fair specimen of . . . forensic eloquence", and the style, "overburdened with legal lore and literary pedantry", offered by Bailly (Evans 98). There is no record of the trial of woodworms in Evans's book, but he told of a similar trial of "the inger" (*brucorum*), a

kind of wingless locust. The trial was conducted before the Bishops of Lausanne in 1478 and was recorded by a Swiss chronicler named Schilling. Barnes borrows from the trial the argument that the woodworm was not on Noah's Ark, which both sides interpret to support their arguments. He replaces the inger with the woodworms so as to establish coherence with other chapters.

The animal trial sounds ridiculous and impossible for contemporary people, but it had been a practice from the late 12th century even to the 20th century in Europe (Salisbury 108). The most amazing and even unbelievable point of this practice is the full application of human legal regulations to animals. Is this legal equality a real egalitarianism or naïve barbarism? The mentality behind this practice is open to different interpretations. The different reactions to this trial also show the transformation in mentality from the Middle Ages to the present. I approach it mainly from the relationship between law and religion.

The Middle Ages is known in the contemporary age as a time when religion exerted complete control over people's lives. As one of the three types of courts (the other two being royal [criminal] and manor courts), the ecclesiastical courts were quite powerful. They had jurisdiction mainly over spiritual or religious matters. The trial against the woodworms in Barnes's story takes place in an ecclesiastical court.[36] In the legal debate, the erudite Chassenée says he will quote Man's law, the Church's Law and God's Law to defend the woodworms. This shows that the ecclesiastical courts were a confluence of culture, law and religion, or in F. W. Maitland's words, the law in the Middle Ages "was the point where life and logic met" (xxxvii). Esther Cohen further points out that during the Middle Ages the interaction between custom and law had a long history and was quite complicated; as a result, "the force of custom was such that it was eventually incorporated into the written tradition, often achieving by the end of the middle ages the full force of posited law" (8). The animal trials are an illustration of "the interaction of various legal levels and cultural influences" (10), so a thorough study of those factors is the best way to probe the mentality during this period.

Among the levels of law, Man's Law, which mainly refers to the Roman law, shows the dominating influence of Aristotle's hierarchical biological order. In his

[36] Not all animal trials were held in ecclesiastical courts. According to Salisbury, the domesticated animals were usually tried in the criminal courts and animals "without any intermediary of human ownership", like woodworms, locusts, field mice, caterpillars, and flies, were subject to the ecclesiastical courts (110).

defense, Chassenée quotes *the Pandects*: "*Nec enim potest animal injuriam feciss, quod sensu caret*" (No animal devoid of understanding can commit a fault) (*HW* 66; Evans 54). *The Pandects* was one part of Roman law and was compiled under the order of Eastern Roman emperor Justinian I in the 6th century. It was discovered in 1135 and boosted a revival of learning of Roman law throughout Europe. In the late Middle Ages, Medieval Roman law appeared as a development of ancient Roman law. The animal trial in the story, which was held in 1520, indicates that the Roman law still worked at that time. Chassenée argues that the summons is invalid because the recipients are not endowed with reason and volition. This argument is an exemplification of Aristotle's *scala naturae*, in which all animals are arranged into a single grade "according to their degree of 'perfection'" (Lovejoy 58). The critical element for classification in this order is the "soul", which Aristotle defines as the essence of a thing. Three hierarchical orders of "soul"—the vegetative, the animal and the rational—correspond to plants, animals and humankind. Animals and plants are subject to humankind because only human beings own rationality.

In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, a faithful admirer of Aristotle, undertook to synthesize Aristotle's philosophy with Christianity. Aristotle's hierarchical order was further developed into "the Great Chain of Being", the dominating cosmology from the Middle Ages to the18th century. In this chain, the world is

> composed of an immense, or—by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity—of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite—every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the 'least degree' of difference. (Lovejoy 59)

This chain manifests the principles of continuity and gradation. Therefore, the basic attitude towards animals in the Middle Ages is still anthropocentric. Aquinas's view of animals is often considered speciesism,[37] for he continues Aristotle's instrumental subjugation of animals to man. This is better expressed in his attitude to trials. He once stated, "If we regard the lower animals . . . as creatures coming from the hand of

[37] For a detailed analysis of Aquinas's speciesism, see Singer 193-96.

God and employed by him as agents for the execution of his judgments, then to curse them would be blasphemous; if on the other hand, we curse them *secundem se*, i.e. merely as brute beasts, then the malediction is odious and vain and therefore unlawful . . ." (qtd. in Evans: 54).

Aquinas's view is echoed in Chassenée's defense of the worm, which is modelled on the specimen given by the jurist Bailly in Evans's book.[38] The Irrationality defense he gives as the first defense is based on Roman Law and is a paraphrase of the second point Aquinas made. The first aspect of Aquinas's view is also quoted by Chassenée as God's law in his defense. He argues that the woodworms are a creation of God and thus have the inalienable rights to make their habitation whereever they would like to. He stresses the felonies of man and takes the accident as God's "warning and punishment against the wickedness of mankind" (*HW* 68).

The animal trial is a symptom of the Middle Ages mentality, which was dominated by religious beliefs. In the trial, the powerful presence of God's Law in the debate shows the pervasive influence of religious beliefs upon legal systems during the Middle Ages. In the debate, the Bible becomes the most powerful constitution for both sides. Compared with Chassenée, the procurator for the habitants better exerts the power of God's Law. He bases all his refutations on biblical quotations and other legal precedents. For example, he evades Chassenée's argument about animals' irrationality and quotes from the book of Genesis that the animals are subservient to man's use and man has dominion over animals including punishing them. One important argument given by the procurator for the habitants is that the woodworm was not on Noah's Ark and thus is "an unnatural and imperfect creature", and is connected with "some foul spontaneity or some malevolent hand", such as that of "Lucifer" (*HW* 72, 74). This argument shows the pervasive influence of religion upon the understanding of the human-nature relationship in the Middle Ages, in which animals are regarded as "satellites of Satan" or "diabolical

[38] On this point, the contemporary scholar Joyce Salisbury has different opinions. In her book *The Beast Within* (2011), she gives a more nuanced study of the cases in Evans's book and argues that in these cases "the irrationality defense was insufficient, which suggests that the very premise of animal irrationality was under attack" (111). She concludes that there is a gradual shift in the human-animal relationship during the Middle Ages, that is: "the lines between humans and animals had blurred sufficiently that the courts were needed to sort out responsibility" (115). She attributes this shift to the influence of the popularity of fables. Her analysis registers the gradual shift in the human-animal relationship in the nearly 1,000 years of the Middle Ages, but may overstate the closeness between man and animals. The Great Chain of Being is characterized by the gradual perfection and continuity of species, but the classification of different species is strictly maintained. Her attribution of this shift to the influence of the fable is not so convincing, for to a great extent this practice clearly has deep religious causes.

incarnations" (Evans 54-55). The fact that the worms are declared guilty in the end is another proof of the power of the procurator for the habitants and therefore the power of God's law. The title "The Wars of Religion" indicates Barnes's acknowledgment of the religious essence behind the trial.

This strong religious belief also leads to the superstitious aspect of Middle Ages mentality. In this respect, the animal trials are similar to another religious superstition—the witch trials. Both practices show people's fear of the dark forces which act contrary to God's will, but on the other hand, they are also ways in which the church strengthened its religious control. As Evans observes, "Thus missionary zest and success, while saving human souls from endless perdition, served also to enlarge the realm of the Prince of darkness and to increase the number of his subjects and satellites" (13). In reality, both practices usually result in excommunication or anathema, which shows the influence of the "the same ecclesiastical-judicial tradition of exorcisms going back to early Christianity" (Cohen 31).

The superstitious belief in the church's power to restore order further exhibits man's cognitive ignorance of the surrounding world and fear of a chaotic state. Nicholas Humphrey discloses the deep psychological cause behind man's fear of these animal offences. He thinks the trials show man's desire to "establish cognitive control" and to "make sense of the certain seemingly inexplicable events by redefining them as crime" (xxvi). It thus embodies the limited mentality of the Middle Ages. People can simply believe in the power of God and explain everything in the name of God. As a practice with such a long history, it involves many other factors.[39] With the distance of time, we see more its positive aspects.

The animal trials shed new light on the conception of the human-animal relationship. Regardless of the religious superstition behind this practice, we see an Eden-like egalitarian human-animal relationship. In his *Simulacra and Simulation*

[39] Peter Dinzelbacher gives a multidisciplinary analysis of this practice and interprets it from broader social, religious and psychological perspectives. He summarizes six concrete factors which led to this practice: (1) the insecurity that arose from epidemics, economic depression, and social conflicts; (2) the establishment of Roman law and court procedure in late medieval society; (3) the religious subordination of all beings to priestly power; (4) the comfort derived from the ritual 'magic' of legal formalism, and public execution; (5) the interest of lords and lawyers to continue a lucrative practice; and (6) the tendency to personify animals in extreme situations (421).

(1981), Jean Baudrillard takes the animal trial as a special way of honouring animals. As he observes, "They held them to be guilty: which was a way of honoring them" (134). Of course, this shift of focus is made in the context of the contemporary cruel treatment of animals. Similarly, in his book *Animalizing Imagination* (1999), Bleakley quotes one of C.P. Evan's cases of the trial of a sow to show that "here the animal is being treated as a significant Other to be accounted for, and not discounted" (43). With contrast to the contemporary worsening ecological environment, the animal trial assumes the new identity as a symbol of equality between human beings and animals.

Barnes shares this idealization of the animal trial. Although not religious, he regards it as an expression of a grand egalitarian and inclusive ecological outlook. As he notes in an interview,

> Most people who look at animal trials tend to think that if in medieval times they gave the judicial trial to a pig for eating the face of a man who was lying in a ditch in a drunken stupor, that this was the sign of how incredibly primitive and stupid the Middle Ages were. It seems to me that it is a sign of how wonderfully larger and more extended the sense of what life was in those days, and that when the pig was executed by an official hangman, it was actually elevating the status of the pig rather than anything else. It was putting it into the order of God's creation, it was giving it a conscience, you could say, whereas now the horizon has lowered. God is not in his sky and we treat pigs worse now than they did in the Middle Ages. (in Freiburg 41-42)

In addition to the criticism of man's mistreatment of animals in contemporary life, Barnes expresses nostalgia for the more harmonious human-animal relationship in existence when there was still the idea of a God: "I don't believe in God, but I miss him" (in Freiburg 41).

With such ecological connotations, the animal trial finds its way into contemporary ecological thinking. Like Barnes, some contemporary scholars are aware of its ecological significance. Soper thinks that imputing responsibilities to animals in the animal trial extends present ecological thinking, which just focuses on man's responsibilities towards nature. Moreover, she thinks that the medieval morality behind the animal trial "applies not only to ecologically motivated assertions of our

affinity with the rest of nature, but to any and every theory that would have us view human attributes and culture as explicable in terms of features shared with the rest of animal life" (*What is Nature?* 41). Despite their different social backgrounds, the animal trial sets a model for contemporary biocentric egalitarianism through its equal treatment of other species.

However, it should be kept in mind that the animal trial basically reflects a religious even superstitious mentality, in which God's will rules out the free will of man, so some scholars take the analogy between the animal trial and contemporary biocentrism as a criticism of the latter. Bookchin holds, "Human beings may have a deep sense of care, empathy, indeed love for other life-forms, but for them to regard any ethical principle as *inherent* in first nature is as naïve as the medieval practice of judicially trying and hanging captive wolves for their 'criminal' behaviour" (qtd. in Morris: 219). The secular humanist Luc Ferry starts his book *New Ecological Order* with a detailed introduction to the Middle Ages animal trial. For him, the practice "is entirely indicative of a premodern, which is to say a prehumanistic, relationship to the animal kingdom as well as to nature in general" (VIII). Therefore, his purpose in comparing the posthumanist movement of extending legal status to other non-human species to this practice is to criticize the former as a return to "barbarism".

Barnes himself is not unaware of the naivety of this practice. The fact that both the accusers and the accused cite the Bible for their defence in the court debate suggests, to a certain degree, the intrinsic contradictions implicated in the book and challenges its authority. It is more likely that Barnes uses these debates to "ridicule the seriousness with which religious logic can treat nonsensical questions" (Childs, "Beneath a Bombers' Moon" 125). The most powerful deconstruction lies in the last italicized paragraph describing the present condition of these documents. The "translator" supplements: "*It appears from the condition of the parchment that in the course of the last four and a half centuries it has been attacked, perhaps on more than one occasion, by some species of termite, which has devoured the closing words of the juge d'Eglise*" (*HW* 79-80). The irony disclosed at the end reveals that the narrator is not merely a neutral translator; instead it conveys his awareness of the futility of the whole trial: in spite of the victory man won at the court, the worms still do what they are naturally inclined to do. Therefore, while expressing nostalgia for a lost egalitarian human-nature relationship, Barnes does not refrain from being sarcastic about the limited mentality of the Middle Ages, a time dominated by religious superstition.

The hidden deconstructive ending of the story is echoed by that of another story: "Shipwreck". After a comment on Géricault's famous painting *The Raft of the Medusa*, the narrator concludes, "And no doubt if they examine the frame they will discover woodworm living there" (*HW* 139). Both endings endow the worms with a mysterious invisible omnipotence, like God. In a postcolonial context, visibility is more connected with conceptual recognition and invisibility is a metaphor for the neglect the marginalized suffer from the dominating power. The worms' physical invisibility, however, forms their alterity in the human-animal relationship. It puts them in a position resembling God's omnipotence and represents the power of nature, which triumphs over man's manipulation and functions as an unconquerable mysterious other. In addition to the biblical and historical recording of the human-animal relationship, Barnes also focuses on its contemporary state, which both corresponds mysteriously to the former two types of relationship, and forms a contrast with them.

3.4 The Suffering Animals

In the chapter "The Survivor", the contemporary version of the human-nature relationship in consumer society is presented. The major character Kath is characterized as a woman with an environmental sensibility. Through her perspective —a fusion of third-person and first-person narration—Barnes reflects on the devastating consequences of the blind pursuit of progress[40] and the suffering of animals caused by human insensitivity towards them. This reverberates with the animals' suffering at the hand of Noah and his family in the story "The Stowaway". The two stories parallel in several aspects and "The Survivor" can be interpreted as a modern version of "The Stowaway".

Like the myth of Noah's Ark, "The Survivor" presents an eschatological picture of the human world brought about not by a flood but by the threat of nuclear war / catastrophe. The story is a projection of the great concern with nuclear safety in the 1980s after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, three years before the publication of the novel. Barnes directs his target at modern man's blind pursuit of progress and implies that the result is no less severe than the Flood in the Bible, as indicated by the following comparison: "[a]bandon ship, that was the old cry. Now it's abandon land. Maybe that was a mistake. Now we're going back to it" (*HW* 94). As a modern

[40] For an extended reading of Barnes's critique of modern civilization, see· Li Ying 76-83.

stowaway, Kath escapes from her homeland of Norway to Australia under the (illusion of a) threat of nuclear war / catastrophe. In addition to the mistreatment and killing of animals at the hands of man in "The Stowaway", "The Survivor" touches upon new types of human-animal relationship in contemporary consumer society, which result in new suffering for animals. Two types of human-animal relationship are involved in the story: animals as commodities and animals as pets.

Treating animals as commodities is a worsening of the mistreatment of animals by Noah and his family. In this respect, the reindeer is the link between the two stories. In "The Stowaway", the narrator has said that "the reindeer were troubled by something deeper . . . something . . . long-term" (*HW* 13-14), which foreshadows their bitter sufferings in the contemporary commercial world in "The Survivor". By presenting the Norwegian government's treatment of reindeer meat, Barnes displays the erosion of man's sentiment for and sympathy towards animals in favour of commercial interests, which reflects the persistent influence of biblical anthropocentrism in the contemporary world. This is better conveyed by the human exploitation of the radiated reindeer—the innocent victims of a nuclear leak. The calculating human beings think it is a great waste to bury them, so they feed them to the mink, although they themselves decide not to eat them. The narrator sarcastically shows man's self-deception and utilitarian pragmatism in the face of his own failure, that is, his willingness to protect the majority's interest at the cost of other species or even the minority groups within man's own species:

> At first, the plan was to bury them, six feet down. Still, there's nothing like a good disaster to get people thinking clever thoughts. *Bury* the reindeer? No, that makes it look as if there's been a problem like something's actually gone wrong. There must be a more useful way of disposing of them. You couldn't feed the meat to humans, so why not feed it to animals? That's a good idea—obviously not the sort which end up getting eaten by humans, we've got to protect number one. So they decide to feed it to the mink. What a clever idea. Mink aren't supposed to be very nice, and anyway the sort of people who can afford mink coats probably don't mind a little dose of radioactivity. Rather chic, really. (*HW* 86, italics in original)

This indifference to animal suffering, and willingness to endanger people in the

desperate pursuit of economic profit, indicates the severe outcome of the commercialization of the human-animal relationship, which deprived these reindeer of the due respect they deserve after their death. Standing in contrast to the government's cruel treatment of reindeer is Kath's tremendous sympathy towards them, which derives from her childhood Christmas fantasies. By presenting the contrast between fantasy and reality, Barnes highlights the erosion of commercial pragmatism.

Barnes further reveals the worsening ecological environment in the contemporary age by presenting the ubiquitous commercialization of the human-animal relationship. The deer are not the only animals that suffer in consumer society. Kath mentions that whales were turned into soap. The description of the fish feed at Doctor's Gully from Kath's perspective captures the overall precarious circumstance of animals in consumer society:

> She thought how trusting the fish were. They must think these huge two-legged creatures are giving them food out of the kindness of their hearts. Maybe that's how it started, but now it's $2.50 admission for adults, $1.50 for children. She wondered why none of the tourists who stayed in the big hotels along the Esplanade thought it odd. But nobody stops to think about the world any more. We live in a world where they make children pay to see the fish eat. Nowadays even fish are exploited, she thought. Exploited and then poisoned. The ocean out there is filling up with poison. The fish will die too. (*HW* 91)

People treat animals as simply "commodities" and get used to an abusive commercial relationship with them. Barnes regards this as the central problem in the human-animal relationship in contemporary society. He further explores the ecological question of whether animals deserve the same sympathy men show to each other. In the novel, the environmentally sensitive Kath is faced with people's incomprehension: "They said she shouldn't be sentimental, and after all it wasn't as if she had to live off reindeer meat, and if she had some spare sympathy going shouldn't she save it for human beings?" (*HW* 85). Posing this anthropocentric opinion as a counterpart to Kath's sympathetic view, Barnes directs the reader's attention to its validity.

Barnes further explores the human-animal relationship based on another kind of popular treatment of animals in contemporary life—animals as pets, with the particular focus on the practice of castrating the pet. In the story, Kath and her partner Greg have a pet cat. They have debates on whether the cat should be fixed so as to make it less aggressive and keep it from scratching the furniture. Greg strongly advises Kath to get her cat fixed, but she does not agree and suggests giving the cat a scratching pole instead. Greg's suggestion reminds Kath of man's practice of castrating reindeer to make them tame, so she thinks that it is wrong. Barnes here brings up a controversial but popular practice among people who keep pets. In reality, most of them share Greg's thinking and fix their pets for convenience. This practice, in fact, reflects the prevalent modern mentality to curb the bestial nature of the animal. Scholars have probed into the deep psychology and politics behind this practice. Midas Dekkres interprets modern man's practice of neutering their pets as a satisfaction of deep human needs: "On the one hand, castration expunges the fear that sex inspires, and on the other, satisfies the desire for power. To castrate is to desex and without sex it is easier to form a friendship" (180). H. Peter Steeves further connects castration with domination. For him, "it's a political and a sexual power and differs little from the power to kill. Both are dominations over the being of the other; in both cases something is done to the body of the Other; and both are lairs for some of our darkest fears" (150). Reading in this light, Greg's intention to fix the cat insinuates the same desire to dominate and control not only the cat but also Kath.

On the contrary, Kath seeks to exact revenge upon men by doing onto them what they did to animals. She has the radically rebellious thought that Greg should be fixed so as to make him less aggressive, which reminds us of Thomas Taylor's anonymous publication *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* (1792), which seeks to ridicule Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) . As a faithful adherent of androcentrism, Taylor thinks Wollstonecraft's proposition to give rights to women is as ridiculous as giving rights to brutes. Kath puts animals on the same footing as man, only to reverse it and show the bestial nature within man. Taking the suffering of the animals as her priority concern, she insists on their being treated like man.

Kath's attitude echoes the propositions of animal rights. In his work *Animal Liberation* (1975), Peter Singer makes it clear that it is not ridiculous to apply equality

to so-called “brutes”. Singer proposes “that the claim to equality does not depend on intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, or similar matters of fact. Equality is a moral idea, not an assertion of fact” (4). He adopts Bentham’s moral philosophy that “Each to count for one and none for more than one” and takes Bentham’s question “can they suffer?” as the moral standard for treating animals. Both of them regard concern for animals’ suffering as the base of equality and morality. Kath’s protection of the cat’s right not to be fixed expresses the same spirit.

In addition to criticism of the mistreatment of animals, Kath’s status as a woman brings in the connection between woman and nature. This connection shows first in her close biological connection with nature. Kath declares that she still keeps the “old connections” with nature, that is, the animal instinct for danger, which corresponds to the worm’s word about some animals’ power of foresight. This explains her quick response to the environmental worsening. Kath’s other connection with nature is her strong reproductive consciousness, which evinces her great desire to be integrated with nature. According to Mary O’Brien, reproductive consciousness “is a consciousness that the child is hers, but also the consciousness that she herself was born of a woman’s labor, that labour confirms generic coherence and species continuity,” so it is “continuous” and “integrative” (59). Kath is quite regretful that she did not get pregnant before she left. She regards getting pregnant as “giv[ing] ourselves back to nature” (*HW* 97). This regret typifies the “synthetic” value women cherish for their reproductive labour; for them, “[i]t represents the unity of sentient beings with natural process and the integrity of the continuity of the race” (O’Brien 60).

Kath’s thinking also resonates with the claims of eco-feminists. In eco-feminism, women are intrinsically close to nature in that they are both under oppression. Karen J. Warren insists that “there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature” (qtd. in Ferry: 116). Like those animals suffering at the hands of human beings, Kath suffers from the patriarchal oppression represented by her partner Greg. He abuses her physically and mentally. He beats her when he is drunk, takes her sensitivity for the disaster as “pre-menstrual tension” and calls her “silly cow” (*HW* 88-89). Therefore, in addition to anthropocentrism in “The Stowaway”, “The Survivor” goes a step further to critique androcentrism or male-centeredness.

The status of Kath makes this criticism more complicated. On the one hand, like

the worms analyzed above, Kath functions as a disquieting other to the western anthropocentric and androcentric worldview. Kath's environmental sensitivity is expressed through her awareness of the awkward positions the animals are put into in contemporary life: as commodities at one end and as pets at the other. Her sympathies for animals are a powerful criticism of the anthropocentric and androcentric ideology characterized by the pragmatic pursuit of social progress, which is reduced to the endless pursuit of profit and convenience at the expense of ecological ethics. As the survivor in the subtitle, Kath is symbolic. Like the worm, she brings about her own salvation in a sharp contrast with that of Noah and his family, which is given at the mercy of God.

Moreover, Kath is a real conservationist in that she turns her little boat into a conservation where she and her cats as well as their future kitties live harmoniously. Different from Noah's patriarchal and hierarchical world where animals are subjugated to man's mistreatment and arbitrary killing, Kath's boat is matrilineal and full of the warmth of harmonious relational coexistence. While Kath saves the fish she has caught for the cats and eats the canned food instead, the cat takes to hunting when the food on the boat is running out and brings back things like voles or mice. Barnes interprets this coexistence as symbiotic rather than biocentric. Here the central issue of biocentrism—the problem of intrinsic value—does not arise. Instead, like the Greek mythological figure of Mother Earth Gaia, Kath serves as the guardian of the cat family, and the cats contribute towards this harmony. She realizes the worm's dream of mutual respect for all life in her little boat. The little kitties the cats gave birth to in the end represent the hope of a harmonious human-nature relationship based on "imaginative sympathy", as one of the two prerequisites of the love relationship. Barnes extends his criticism of anthropocentrism to androcentrism and calls for respect for all kinds of life.

On the other hand, as I have shown, Barnes's construction is always accompanied by deconstruction. In her first person narration, Kath narrates her struggles against nightmares, especially dialogues with doctors who diagnose her as suffering from fabulation as a consequence of the nuclear threat, so the whole story about her escape from the nuclear leak is likely to be part of her hallucinations. This fact undercuts the trustworthiness of the third-person narration about the nuclear leak

and her escape.[41] The ambiguous nature of Kath's status makes her closer to the worm. Both of them are ex-centric, but as a woman who is supposed to be insane, Kath is doubly excluded. Kath's insanity is likely to be the product of other people's fabulation, which sets off her pioneering ecological thinking. Her isolation and the incomprehension of the surrounding world indicate the awkward situation of contemporary ecologism.[42]As a victim of androcentric oppression, however, Kath's criticism of androcentrism is prone to radicalism. She displays a hatred of men when she takes her partner Greg as "just an impregnator". Her principle of "the survival of the worriers" tends to be too pessimistic (*HW* 97). Her criticism of the abuse of modern technology goes to the other extreme: she is nostalgic for the "good old days" and even wants to "go back to some older cycle" (*HW* 93). Kath's opinions, like those of the worm, open our eyes to different perspectives on the world, but they are not necessarily valid.

Kath's double status can be interpreted as a metaphor for the awkward situation of the contemporary ecological atmosphere: the only woman with environmental awareness is suspected of being insane as a result of the nuclear threat. This denial of any absolute truth claim strikes a chord with both the early French skeptical humanism represented by Montaigne and postmodernism. In the next section, however, I will show how Barnes deviates from postmodernism in his insistence upon morality, art, and love as man's key to transcendence over history and nature.

3.5 Morality, Art and Love as Humanistic Transcendence

In addition to the ecological awareness displayed above, Barnes insists on man's transcendence over nature through morality, art and love. In this section, I explore his humanistic inclination in stories like "The Visitor", "Shipwreck" and the half chapter "Parenthesis". The fact that nature functions either rhetorically or literally as an inseparable other in the definition of man's identity indirectly shows Barnes's ecological humanism: the integration of Darwin's naturalism and humanism.

In the chapter "The Visitor", Barnes shows how an average man is capable of moral transcendence when faced with the threat of another person's death. This

[41] For an extended view of the interaction between the two different narratives in "The Survivor", see Kotte 91-92.

[42] Cf. Elisabeth Costello, J.M. Coetzee's fictional novelist in his collection of lectures *The Lives of Animals*（1999）. Like Kath, Costello is an animal sympathizer and advocator of ecological living. She is faced with the same incomprehension of the surrounding world throughout her lectures on animals. While Costello is characterized as a novelist who is capable of being critical of both anthropocentrism and holistic ecological thinking, Kath's ecological awareness is more instinctual and her opinions are not free from partiality.

transcendence is set off by giving an unfavorable image of the major character Franklin Hughes at the beginning of the narration. As a guest lecturer on a tourist cruise, Franklin "had started as a mouthpiece for other people's views, a young man in a corduroy suit with an affable and unthreatening way of explaining culture . . . What his special area of knowledge was nobody could quite discern . . ." (*HW* 34). His mediocrity in every aspect sublimates his later moral transcendence. When terrorists hijack the cruise, he asks his secretary and temporary lover Tricia to pretend to be his wife with the intention of saving her life, for he has an Irish passport, which secures him from the terrorists' killing list. When he is asked by the terrorists to give "a historical view of the matter" to the audience on the ship, he refuses decisively at the beginning, but later when the terrorist offers to accept the Irish nationality of his "wife" in return, he agrees.

Barnes's emphasis on an average man's capacity for moral transcendence denotes his sharing of the traditional humanistic belief in man's goodness. Franklin's altruism at the sacrifice of his self-interest highlights the ethical significance in that his choice makes him likely to be misunderstood as "operating out of self-interest" by his audience and even ironically by his lover whom he did all this to save. His nobility lies in the fact that the history of the world may record this event, but his altruism will obviously escape history, for he is the only person who knows the truth.

While delineating Franklin's moral transcendence, a TV psychological test on monkeys is referenced. A female monkey and her newly born baby were put in a special cage and then the metal floor of the cage was heated up to measure "the point at which self-interest takes over from altruism" (*HW* 52). The narrator describes the cruelty of the experiment:

> At first she [the monkey] jumped around in discomfort, then squealed a lot, then took to standing on alternate legs, all the while holding her infant in her arms. The floor was made hotter, the monkey's pain more evident. At a certain point the heat from the floor became unbearable, and she was faced with a choice, as the experimenters put it, between altruism and self-interest. She either suffer extreme pain and perhaps death in order to protect her offspring, or else place her infant on the floor and stand on it to keep herself from harm. In every case, sooner or later self-interest had triumphed over altruism. (*HW* 53-54)

Barnes presents this experiment mainly to show man's moral transcendence as embodied in responsibilities towards others. Faced with the choice, Franklin compared himself to the monkey: when he "imagined himself standing on Tricia's body to protect his own burning feet", he "shuddered" and decided to do the lecture (*HW* 53). The narrator further comments, "That was the difference between a monkey and a human being. In the last analysis, humans were capable of altruism. That was why he was not a monkey" (*HW* 53).

The way Barnes takes the animal as the other in his representation of man's transcendence is susceptible to anthropocentrism, but is quite popular in humanistic defences of human transcendence. This can be illustrated by the following explanation given by contemporary humanist Luc Ferry:

> For unlike an animal, which is subject to the natural code of instinct particular to its species more than to its individuality, human beings have the possibility of emancipating themselves, even of revolting against their own nature. It's by so doing, that is, by breaking away from the order of things, that one gives proof of an authentic humanity and simultaneously accesses the realms of ethics and culture.（Ferry 115）

Animal studies may take this as another kind of instrumental use of animals. As Bleakley observes, "'Animal' can be seen to represent an Other through which the human condition is defined, in terms of the exclusion of the animal Other as 'bestial', maintaining our anthropocentric identities" (xiv).

However, this view indirectly reveals the animal as the inseparable other in man's cognition of the self, as Lévi-Strauss points out that in "the triple passage from animality to humanity, from nature to culture, from affectivity to intellectuality", the animals or other species "had to become objects and means of human thought" (100). John Berger emphasizes the importance of animals in man's symbolic thought and interprets it as a result of the close human-animal relationship. As he stresses, "What distinguished men from animals was born of their relationship with them" (7). In this sense, animals are inseparable not only in daily life but in human sense -making.

I interpret this as a unique feature of ecological humanism. Different from traditional humanism, which stresses the separation of man from nature, ecological humanism acknowledges both man's close biological link with animals and his moral

transcendence as a consequence of evolution. It is an integration of humanism with Darwinian thought, which takes man's moral sense or conscience as a result of social evolution. As Darwin points out, "Ultimately a highly complex sentiment, having its first origin in the social instincts, largely guided by the approbation of our fellow-men, ruled by reason, self-interest, and in later times by deep religious feelings, confirmed by instruction and habit, all combined, constitute our moral sense or conscience" (166). Man's transcendence lies in overcoming the animal instinct of self-protection. The test shows the monkey is capable of this kind of altruism at the beginning, but it stops at self-protection, which prevents it from such transcendence. This is similar to Rousseau's view concerning the question of whether animals have ideas. He concludes that "it is only the difference of such Degree that constitutes the Difference between Man and Beast" (35-36, capitalization in original). Both opinions focus on the difference as a degree of evolution instead of supremacy.

Art is another category Barnes presents as part of man's transcendence over nature. In "Parenthesis", Barnes compares three man-made objects: religion, art and love. Compared with love, religion has the disadvantage of being mechanistic or even materialistic in its later stage. As the narrator of the half chapter "Parenthesis" says, "Religion has become either wimpishly workday, or terminally crazy, or merely businesslike—confusing spirituality with charitable donations" (*HW* 244). When talking about art, the narrator takes art as transcendence over death: "it lasts, it lasts! Art beats death!" (*HW* 245). As I have analyzed, this is the humanistic understanding of art's function the adolescent Chris and Toni adopt in *Metroland*. The disadvantage of art, however, lies in that "this announcement isn't accessible to all, or where accessible isn't always inspiring or welcome" (*HW* 245). This is proved by the humbleness of human beings before the power of nature during the disaster known as the shipwreck of Medusa.

The introduction to the depravity of the local inhabitants foreshadows the moral degradation of the people on the Medusa when extreme fear and hunger strike. Pressed by the local poverty, the women of Saint Croix urge the Frenchmen into their houses in spite of their husband's jealousies when the vessels of French expedition stop at Tenerife. The narrator sarcastically quotes the view of "reflective passengers",

who “ascribed such behavior to the southern sun, whose power, it is known, weakens both natural and moral bonds” (*HW* 115). The dramatically destructive power of nature challenges human morality and teaches them humbleness.

Barnes’s presentation of Géricault’s process of turning chaos into art illustrates art’s limited transcendence over nature. He emphasizes the artist’s artistic autonomy, which surpasses not only natural and political restrictions but also artistic conventions. As a history painting, Géricault’s *The Raft of the Medusa* shows its abnormality in every aspect. Lorenz A. Eitner gives the following comment on Géricault’s artistic independence:

> His feat went beyond anything the painters of the Empire had attempted. Their version of reality was official, buttressed by the authority of army bulletins and imperial decrees. Géricault, by contrast, assumed a position of unheard-of independence, courting neither official approval nor popularity. It may not have entered his mind that by transforming the scandal of the *Medusa* into an elemental drama he was bound to puzzle the public, disappoint his political friends and leave the government unappeased. But by this transformation, he gave his painting the power of survival and continuing suggestiveness. (197)

Similarly, Barnes takes the painting as an inner vision of the painter based on his personality and emphasizes the process of synthesizing the painter’s impressions of the historical events.

Barnes’s stress on Géricault’s transformation of the historical event embodies the artistic freedom G.W.F. Hegel identifies in the artist in his day:

> Bondage to a particular subject-matter and a mode of portrayal suitable for this material alone are for artists today something past, and art, therefore, has become a free instrument which the artist can wield in proportion to his subjective skill in relation to any material of whatever kind. The artist thus stands above specific consecrated forms and configurations and moves freely on his own account, independent of the subject-matter and mode of conception in which the holy and eternal was previously made visible to

human apprehension. (605)

The artist's subjective skill and personality is highlighted by advocators of Aestheticism. In his book *Plato and Platonism* (1893), Pater puts Plato's personality at the center of his Platonism: "It is however in the blending of diverse elements in the mental constitution of Plato that the peculiar Platonic quality resides" (113). Barnes's analysis of Géricault's personality continues Pater's critical method, but he avoids giving any absolute interpretation of it and elevates the personal impression of a disaster into something universal.

In his generalization of the significance of Géricault's painting, Barnes echoes Eitner's view that "Géricault has generalized, or humanized, his subject beyond timeliness and controversy . . . The ultimate significance of the picture does not lie in what it tells of the *Medusa*, but in its comment on nature as the destroyer of the shipwrecked" (195). Therefore, man's transcendence over nature lies in this assimilation of disasters into an understanding of the human-nature relationship. In this sense, the narrator describes the artistic creation as "freeing, enlarging, explaining" (*HW* 137). Man finds his temporary transcendence over nature in art: "[c]atastrophe has become art; that is, after all, what it is for" (*HW* 137). For all this transcendence, the omnipresent woodworm which appears at the end of the story speaks of the material constraint of art. Barnes quotes Flaubert to illustrate this: "No sooner do we come into this world than bits of us start to fall off" (*HW* 139). The material existence of the painting preconditions its inevitable decay and its temporary transcendence.

Love is the major category where Barnes locates man's transcendence over history, as we see in the half chapter "Parenthesis".[43] The narrator suggests that he is likely to be Julian Barnes, so, to a certain degree, the author directly addresses his reader about the importance of love. Childs compares this half parenthesis to a dramatic "aside" to the audience by the author（*Julian Barnes* 73-74）.

Barnes's love is in line with neither the platonic ideal love nor the Christian unconditional love which is best expressed in the saying that "Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt.22:39). The author defines love as "a random development, culturally reinforced", which combines both its biological base and cultural construction (*HW* 235). This definition brings back Rousseau's naturalistic

[43] Scholars have analyzed the significance of love as a counterforce against history (Coe 27; Locke 42; Moseley 119- 24; Rushdie 242). I mainly focus on the way nature functions in Barnes's exploration of this significance.

view of love, as outlined in his work *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind* (1755). Rousseau distinguishes between love's physical and moral ingredients: "The physical Part of love is that general Desire which prompts the Sexes to unite with each other; the moral Part is that which determines this Desire, and fixes it upon a particular Object to the Exclusion of all others, or at least gives it a greater Degree of Energy for this preferred Object" (80-81, capitalization in original). He takes the moral ingredient of love as "a factitious Sentiment, engendered by Society", which a savage man cannot acquire (81, capitalization in original). In the novel, Barnes first shows a materialist's negative view of love:

> Love boils down to pheromones, it says. This bounding of the heart, this clarity of vision, this energizing, this moral certainty, this exaltation, this civic virtue, this murmured *I love you*, are all caused by a low-level smell emitted by one partner and subconsciously nosed by the other. We are just a grander version of that beetle bashing its head in a box at the sound of a tapped pencil. (*HW* 245)

The materialist view emphasizes man's biological connection with animals regarding love relations—taking man as "a grander version of that beetle".

Taking this biological condition as the base for more significant triumph, the narrator regards it as a more powerful refutation of the materialist view: "Do we believe this? Well, let's believe it for the moment, because it makes love's triumph the greater. What is a violin made of? Bits of wood and bits of sheep's intestine. Does its construction demean and banalize the music? On the contrary, it exalts the music further" (*HW* 245). The analogy shows Barnes's attempt to bridge the gap between continuity and discontinuity in the human-nature relationship: man comes from nature but transcends it, which forms man's glory. In this regard, Barnes continues Rousseau's evolutionary view, which was perfected by Darwin, who emphasizes the continuity between man and animals but "places the human at the apex of animal life arranged as a hierarchy of neurological complexity" (Bleakley 31).

Similar to his exploration of moral transcendence, Barnes adopts nature implicitly or explicitly as a reference when stressing the importance of love. Quoting the poetic line that "[w]e must love one another or die" by W.H. Auden, the narrator

highlights the semantic significance of the word "or" and the crucial importance of love in human life. The two reasons Barnes gives for this importance are illustrated with comparison to animals. The first is that "we must love one another because if we don't we are liable to end up killing one another" (*HW* 233). This implicit allusion to bestial behaviour has been better illustrated by another Barnes novel, *Before She Met Me*. The epigraph of the novel is an excerpt from Paul D. MacLean's article published in *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases:*

> Man finds himself in the predicament that nature has endowed him essentially with three brains which, despite great differences in structure, must function together and communicate with one another. The oldest of these brains is basically reptilian. The second has been inherited from the lower mammals, and the third is a late mammalian development, which . . . has made man peculiarly man. Speaking allegorically of these brains within a brain, we might imagine that when the psychiatrist bids the patient to lie on the couch, he is asking him to stretch out alongside a horse and a crocodile.

The fact that the protagonist Graham finally kills his wife's former lover proves the working of the bestial fury within the human mind. The coexistence of these brains is further shown in the extreme situation of the shipwreck of Medusa. Under extreme hunger and fear, man is reduced to killing and eating his own species just like beasts in the jungle.[44]

The second reason the narrator gives stresses the natural aspect of love. The narrator explains that "we must love one another because if we don't, if love doesn't fuel our lives, then we might as well be dead" (*HW* 233). Based on this, he thinks the primary effect of love is "to energize" (*HW* 233). As quoted above in the materialist view, the word "energize" conveys more biological connotations than spiritual or philosophical ones. It endows love with a "life-giving" force and puts man back to a natural state, but at the same time Barnes emphasizes the distinction between man's love and sexual relations in nature, where "we see merely the exercise of power,

[44] The ethical position on this issue is complicated. In his essay "On Cannibals", Montaigne agrees with the opinion held by Stoic figures like Zeno that it is proper for man to make use of dead human bodies as needed; see Montaigne 189-219. H. Peter Steeves also discusses the ethical controversies over the issue of man eating his own species in extreme conditions; see Steeves 160.

dominance and sexual convenience" (*HW* 234) .

Connected with the natural aspect is the non-utilitarian quality of love, which is illustrated with reference to animals:

> So where does love come in? It's not strictly necessary, is it? We can build dams, like the beaver, without love. We can organize complex societies, like the bee, without love. We can travel long distances, like the albatross, without love. We can put our head in the sand, like the ostrich, without love. We can die out as a species, like the dodo, without love. (*HW* 234)

In this comparison, love becomes the borderline between man and animal and the repeated phrase "without love" depicts animal life as a world without love.[45] Therefore, love becomes a category that defines man's essence as a species.

Different from the categories which philosophers adopt to define the human species, like the soul or morality, love stands opposite to reason and will. As Todorov points out, "If humanist thought were limited to praising the will, to praising autonomy in moral, political, and social life, then nothing would be more contrary to it than the very existence of love. For the loving subject is not the one governed by his will: one cannot love because one has decided to love" (*IG* 136). This view accentuates love as a natural and spontaneous reaction.

When Barnes connects love with truth, his understanding of truth shares this instinctual and anti-rational feature. The language of love and truth is a natural language based not on metaphysical inference but on biological instinct: "*Lying in bed, we tell the truth*" (*HW* 240, italics in original). This is a counterforce against the truth in grand world history, which is contaminated by logic, reason and speculations, or as the character Tony in *The Sense of an Ending* says, "the lies of the victors" (*SE* 18). The narrator reveals how world history is full of these lies by giving a marginal version of Columbus's discovery of the American continent, in which the famous discoverer stole the honour of the discovery from a sailor. This story, in turn, is but a repetition of that of the raven and the dove in "The Stowaway".

[45] Barnes's emphasis on the loveless state of nature is a bit different from Darwin's view. In *Descent of Man,* Darwin thinks certain animals are capable of love. This view is also likely to be accused of anthropocentric imposition and taking the human experience as the measure of animal life. It has been challenged by posthumanist studies on animals, which emphasize the animal as man's company. However, recent psychological studies on animal love contradict this. Psychologists give evidence that some animals are "capable of experiencing the same range of emotions as we can"; see Brogaard.

In accordance with his emphasis on instinct, Barnes sees love as a function of the heart. Taking an ox's heart—which he thinks has a human application based on the sentence "He had the heart of an ox"—as an example, Barnes shows the complexity of the workings of the heart. The emphasis on the heart reverberates with Kath's distrust of the mind in "The Survivor". Kath thinks the disastrous consequence of a nuclear leak is caused by the mind, as she says, "The mind simply got too clever for its own good, it got carried away. It was the mind that invented these weapons, wasn't it? You couldn't imagine an animal inventing its own destruction, could you?" (*HW* 102). The distrust of the mind shows Barnes's questioning of man's abuse of metaphysical reasoning, which can be related to Descartes's dictum *Cogito ergo sum.*

The two prerequisites the narrator prescribes for the love relations—"imaginative sympathy" and "beginning to see the world from another point of view" (*HW* 243)—require going beyond self-concern and thinking in the other's way. It conveys the same essence with Levinas's concept of love. For Levinas, love is based on alterity. As he observes, "The pathos of love . . . consists in an insurmountable duality of beings" (*TO* 86). The love relationship is "a relationship with alterity, with mystery—that is to say, with the future, with what (. . .) is never there, with what cannot be there when everything is there,—not with a being that is not there, but with the very dimension of alterity" (*TO* 88). As mentioned before, this stress on alterity can also find its source in Montaigne's elaboration on friendship.

Barnes's concept of love can be seen as a valid ecological standing, which is supported by the similar attitude Coetzee expresses in his collection of lectures *The Lives of Animals* mentioned above. The fictional writer Elizabeth Costello calls for "sympathetic imagination" towards animals. In her lectures, she considers the heart as the seat of this sympathy, in contrast to reason. The demarcation of sympathy by both Barnes and Coetzee is close to Levinas's emphasis on the alterity of the Other. Costello says, "Sympathy has everything to do with the subject and little to do with the object, the 'another', as we see at once we think of the object not as a bat ('can I share the being of a bat?') but as another human being" (35). She bases her definition on the potentiality of imagination: "there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination" (35). She calls people to open their closed hearts towards animals. This resort to the human heart is Derrida's strategy in his lectures entitled "The

Biographical Animal", given at the third Cerisy-la-Sale conference in 1997. In the first part "The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow) ", Derrida uses phrases "naked words" or "words from the heart" to convey his ethical position towards animals. Like Costello, Derrida calls to speak from the heart in line with his insistence on basing the human-animal relationship on difference instead of discrimination. The similarity of these scholars' opinions may show the leading trend of the ethical turn in the 1990s and the symptoms of the invalidity of metaphysical theories in the case of ethics towards animals.

Although Barnes mainly focuses on love in the human world, he does not confine love to personal relations and instead extends it to the political field. He takes it as a test of a political leader's "imaginative sympathy". Todorov holds the same opinion that love is "the best embodiment of . . . *active* humanism: not only does it demand the equality or autonomy of citizens, which prevents certain injustices from being inflicted on them, but also the promotion of positive values that allow every existence to be given meaning" (*IG* 138, italics in original). This humanistic concept of love shares the same essence with Costello and Derrida's concern for animals. It incorporates the three levels of relationship Todorov illustrated in his humanist formula: "the *autonomy of the I*, the *finality of the you* and the *universality of the they*" (*IG* 30, italics in original). At the core of this formula is an awareness of the alterity of the Other advocated by Levinas. In this sense, Barnes's concept of love can be adopted as the key to a harmonious symbiotic ecological relationship with animals.

Barnes's critique of consumer heaven in the last story "The Dream" proves the importance of love and nature in a meaningful life. Most critics identify the heaven in the narrator's dream as a metaphor for the future of consumer society: people die from tiredness in pursuit of endless material possessions. If we press this question further, we can find that that the root problem is the lack of love and nature in this heaven. Life here is characterized by "the shopping, the golf, the sex and the meeting famous people" (*HW* 295), from which the dreamer cannot find the things that can "energize" his life. Golf is the only activity that involves nature, but during the playing, the dreamer concentrates on the improvement of his score, like man's obsession with progress: "A while ago I was shooting a regular 59, and now, under cloudless skies, I was inching down to the low 50s" (*HW* 297). Therefore, this consumer world is like the world Samuel Beckett created in *Endgame* (1957) where "there is no more nature" (18). Man is trapped in a loveless material world. He can survive for a long while but

loses his individuality and purpose, which only love can bestow.

While basically holding a naturalist view of nature, Barnes shows the anthropocentric understanding of nature to be unavoidable when he presents the opposite interpretations of nature that the feminist and the chauvinist offer based on their own theoretical needs:

> The feminist looks for an example of disinterested behavior in the animal kingdom, sees the male here and there performing tasks which in human society might be characterized as 'female'. Considering the king penguin: the male is the one that incubates the egg, carrying it around on its feet and protecting it for months from the Antarctic weather with a fold of its lower belly . . . Yeah, replies the chauvinist, and what about the bull elephant seal? Just lies about on the beach all day and fucks every female in sight. (*HW* 234)

These contradictory interpretations of natural phenomena are anthropocentric projections of nature, through which human beings explain away their own behaviours. The narrator's humorous refutation of the feminist interpretation by comparing the penguin to his own species, which may work "to his own convenience", shows that our interpretations of animals are based on our understandings of ourselves. As Salisbury says, "We define ourselves as much by what we are not as by what we are, and our attitudes toward animals, our treatment of animals, reveal our attitude towards ourselves" (9). The equivocal interpretation of nature attests to the mysterious alterity of the natural world. The silence of nonhuman species keeps the secret of that world no matter how it is perceived through man's lens.

Putting these sporadic ecological ideas together, we can see that Barnes shares the views of contemporary ecological discourse in his criticism of the anthropocentric, androcentric and dualistic thinking present in traditional humanism. Accordingly, he acknowledges the alterity of nature and affirms the inseparable function of animals in human understandings of identity. He advocates a relational, symbiotic ecological relationship and respect for all life. Nevertheless, he does not give up on man's attempts to create the history of the world, and his final tone still falls on the

insistence on man's humanistic transcendence over animality through morality, art and love. These dual aspects fit well with the features of the ecological humanism illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, which acknowledge both the continuity between man and nature and the alterity of nature. Barnes's elaboration of love, with its two prerequisites of "imaginative sympathy" and "beginning to see the world from another point of view", is a valid guiding principle not merely in human society but also in the whole ecological world. It offers a possibility of transcendence in spite of man's position as the ethical agent. It is the realization of Todorov's humanistic goal of the "universality of the *they*" in an ecological sense.

Chapter 4

Memory, Identity and Truth in *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*

In his semi-memoir *Nothing to be Frightened Of*, Barnes recounts the distinctly different memories of their childhood that he and his brother hold. This is illustrated by a description of their recollections of their grandfather killing a chicken:

> But our memories of the slaughter in the shed diverge into incompatibility. For me, the machine merely wrung the chicken's neck; for him, it was a junior guillotine. 'I have a clear picture of a small basket underneath the blade. I have a (less clear) picture of the head dropping, some (not much) blood, Grandpa putting the headless bird on the ground, its running around for a few moments . . . ' (4).

Barnes then asks humorously, "Is my memory sanitized, or his infected by films about the French Revolution?" (4). The treachery of memory in daily life caricatured in this amusing anecdote is one of Barnes's favourite topics.

In his writing, Barnes combines the two contrasting attitudes his brother and he have displayed. His brother, as a philosopher, "believes that memories are often false", but Barnes, as a writer, is "more trusting or self-deluding, so shall continue as if all my memories are true" (5). His exploration of memory shows the features of what Brigit Neumann calls "fictions of meta-memory", which "combine personally engaged memories with critically reflective perspectives on the functioning of memory, thus rendering the question of how we remember the central content of remembering" (337). In this way, Barnes reflects on both the elusiveness of memory caused by cognitive and psychological factors and the manipulation of memory in pursuit of an identity, which often intertwines on both individual and collective levels.

These features are typified in Barnes's novels *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*. In *England, England,* the protagonist Martha Cochrane's construction of her own memory is interwoven with the construction of a grand theme park, named England, England, by the financial tycoon Sir Jack Pitman. Her pursuit of authenticity in her own life is paralleled by the pursuit of postmodern hyperreality in the theme

park. The two levels are linked by the fiction present in memory construction. *The Sense of an Ending* focuses more on individual memory construction. In its two-part structure, the novel presents the different versions of an average life that the protagonist Tony Webster constructs. Embedded in the memory construction is Tony's philosophical meditation on memory, time and history. In both of these novels, Barnes explores how we remember rather than what we remember and highlights the cognitive, psychological, political and ethical factors behind memory construction.

In this chapter, I take Barnes's exploration of the fallibility of memory in these two novels as another perspective to approach Barnes's postmodern humanism. I argue that Barnes's postmodernism lies in that he believes in memory as the locus of identity and truth and the ethical connotation of memory construction in spite of his sharing of postmodern awareness of truth's elusiveness and susceptibility to manipulation. Classifying Barnes's novels as "fictions of meta-memory", I examine the ways in which Barnes has dug into the broad areas of cognitive, psychological, and political mechanisms and ethical connotations behind memory construction. Barnes's presentation of the fallibility of memory is analyzed in light of the cognitive distinction between memory and imagination and Sigmund Freud's psychological analysis of the workings of screen memory. Enlightened by Ricoeur's work on the interaction between memory, forgetting and history, I then analyze Barnes's exploration of two typical types of manipulation of memory in identity construction: selective forgetfulness and fabulation. Finally, the ethical connotations of memory construction in these novels are explored, which are represented by Martha's insistence on the "capacity for seriousness" in *England, England* and Tony's awareness of the ethics of the Other in *The Sense of an Ending*. These ethical connotations constitute another aspect of his postmodern humanism.

4.1 Memory, Imagination and Screen Memory

For Barnes, the attraction of memory lies at the junction of the real and the imagined. He once made the observation that "memory is closer to the imagination than it is to recorded newspaper fact" (Wachtel). This view is in line with the long philosophical tradition of blurring the distinction between memory and imagination, and positions memory in "the province of the imagination" (Ricoeur, *MHF* 5). This cognitive blurring of the distinction between memory and imagination is the fundamental cause

of the fragility of memory. As Ricoeur notes, this fragility lies in "the constant danger of confusing remembering and imagining, resulting from memories becoming images . . ." (*MHF* 7).

This confusion can be further traced back to the traditional understanding of remembering. Norman Malcolm observes that it has generally been agreed by memory theorists since Aristotle that the process of remembering requires an image. He traces this assumption to another notion that "remembering is a kind of thinking, and in all thinking there must be something (variously called an 'idea', a 'picture', a 'proposition') that is the *content* of the thinking" (64, italics in original). The notion may have started with Aristotle, who says in *De Anima* that "the soul never thinks without an image", and finds its best expression in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, in which "a proposition is conceived of as a picture of reality" (qtd. Malcolm: 65, 62). Therefore, stress on the importance of image construction in thinking results in the blurring of memory and imagination.

The workings of the imaginative aspect of memory on the construction of identity are the primary focus in Barnes's exploration of memory. It is often connected with the recollection of childhood memory, as several of his protagonists are preoccupied with their first memories. For example, at the beginning of *England, England,* the protagonist Martha reflects on how her first memory of the "Counties of England jigsaw puzzle" is constructed:

> It wasn't a solid, sizeable thing, which time, in its plodding, humorous way, might decorate down the years with fanciful detail—a gauzy swirl of mist, a thundercloud, a coronet—but could never expunge. A memory was by definition not a thing, it was . . . a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when. (*EE* 4)

Here memory is equal to a copy with its origin far-removed. Through Martha's reflection, Barnes illustrates the fluidity of memory and the inevitable decoration in memory construction. Martha's first memory of the "Counties of England jigsaw puzzle" is a peaceful scene, in which she plays with her jigsaw puzzle and her mother helps her with the outside and the sea. She admits that this memory is an invented one and takes it as "her first artfully, innocently arranged lie" (*EE* 4).

The fiction of memory also features at the beginning of *Arthur and George.* The

protagonist Arthur Conan Doyle, who later becomes a famous detective writer, has a clear first memory, but the narrator adds that it has undergone numerous revisions:

> 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. (*AG* 3)

In contrast to Arthur, another protagonist, George Edalji, who was brought up in a Christian family and later became a solicitor, has no first memory because "he lacks imagination" (*AG* 4). In his family education, "too much imagination" is "a term of dispraise" and is considered a lower scale of telling lies (*AG* 4). In these two cases, instead of a direct presentation of these protagonists' first memories, Barnes displays the characters' awareness of the inevitable workings of fiction in memory construction, which borders on imagining or telling lies.

Barnes's exploration of the psychological forces behind this fiction of memory resonates with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis of memory and forgetting, especially his concept of screen memory. According to Freud, both memory and forgetting are connected with repression, the essence of which "lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness" (*A General Selection* 101). The things rejected are usually unpleasant or even traumatic. A more pertinent concept is "screen memory", which refers to the memory of an indifferent thing as a replacement for something suppressed. In the paper "Screen Memories (1899)", Freud suggests that screen memory "owns its value as a memory not to its own content but to the relation existing between that content and some other, that has been suppressed" (320). He stresses the shaping influence of later forces upon the construction of the childhood memories and concludes:

> Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were formed at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in

the selection of the memories themselves. (322, italics in original)

In *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), Freud maintains that repression functions in the same way in forgetfulness and the false recollection of memory in daily life. He states that "in every case the forgetting turned out to be based on a motive of unpleasure" and "distressing memories succumb especially easily to motivated forgetting" (186, 199). A comparison between the forgetting of proper names and the formation of screen memories is made to reveal the mechanism of replacement and "interference by some disturbing factors" in both of these phenomena (85).

The workings of repression and replacement Freud identifies in screen memory and forgetting explain the psychological operations behind Martha's construction of her first memory. Martha's invented first memory about the jigsaw of England is a screen memory for the childhood trauma caused by her father's abandonment of her at an early age. She admits that it is based on a real, but to some extent processed, memory of the jigsaw puzzle, in which she always finds a piece missing at the end, and "whereupon a sense of desolation, failure, and disappointment at the imperfection of the world would come upon her, until Daddy, who always seemed to be hanging around at this moment, would find the missing piece in the unlikeliest place" (*EE* 6). As a projection of the longing for her father's home-coming, Martha's processed memory is an "amalgamation" of different memories, in which she blends "the distinguishing marks of each separate time" (*EE* 6). In the finally constructed first memory mentioned above, her father, as a source of trauma, is screened from the happy scene.

Martha's construction of the agricultural show is another example of the workings of screen memory. As the final memory of her family, it is fixed on a happy scene: "A day of frivolous clouds over serious blue. Her parents took her softly by the wrists and swung her high into the sky, and the clumpy grass was a trampoline when she landed" (*EE* 7). Martha admits that it is "[a] continuing self-deception" (*EE* 7). Martha's comparison of memory to a dream further confirms its psychological connection with the workings of repression and replacement:

> Memories of childhood were the dreams that stayed with you after you woke. You dreamed all night, or for long, serious sections of the night, yet when

> you woke all you had was a memory of having been abandoned, or betrayed, caught in a trap, left on a frozen plain; and sometimes not even that, but a fading after-image of the emotion stirred by such events. (*EE* 6)

Freud's analysis of dreams almost parallels his study on memory and forgetting. For Freud, they indicate the same psychological effects of repression. Martha's comparison echoes this idea and reveals the traumatic causes behind memory construction.

The concept of screen memory explains the different versions of memory the protagonist Tony Webster constructs in *The Sense of an Ending*. One of Tony's youthful traumas is his break up with his girlfriend Veronica caused by her love for Tony's best friend Adrian. They later write to Tony politely for his permission to develop a relationship. Tony's memory of his reply goes like this: "I took the nearest postcard to hand—one of the Clifton Suspension Bridge—and wrote words like: 'Being in receipt of your epistle of the 21st, the undersigned begs to present his compliments and wishes to record that everything is jolly fine by me, old bean'" (*SE* 42). The treachery of memory is revealed by the contrast between this version of memory and the truth discovered when Tony contacts Veronica to retrieve Adrian's diary in his elderly years. Urged by Tony's demand to get back the diary, Veronica sends him a copy of a page of the original letter. Tony's surprise and guilt at seeing the copy indicate that he has forgotten the original letter: "I didn't recognize that part of myself from which the letter came" (*SE* 97). In addition to his accusations against Adrian and Veronica, it contains his vicious curse upon their future generations: "Part of me hopes you'll have a child, because I'm a great believer in time's revenge, yea unto the next generation and the next" (*SE* 95).

Technically speaking, Tony's memory of the letter does not belong to his childhood memory. Nevertheless, according to R. R. Greenson, the kind of screen Freud identifies in screen memory also functions in the formation of personality. In his article "On Screen Defenses, Screen Hunger and Screen Identity (1958)", Greenson puts forward concepts like "screen defenses" and "screen identity" to show the consistent psychological workings of the screen mechanism. In this broad sense, Tony's memory can be regarded as a screen memory. The contrast between the two versions of events shows that the one Tony keeps in mind is only a screen for the "ugliness" of the original letter, which helps him forget the hurt he suffers when his

girlfriend falls in love with his best friend and the viciousness he displays in the way he deals with the matter.

The twisting effects Tony's present mentality and desire for a unique identity exert upon the construction of his past life echo Freud's stress on the shaping influence of later experiences on the construction of early memories. In the novel, the philosophically minded Adrian expresses a similar proposition during their history class discussion that "we need to know the history of the historian in order to understand the version that is being put in front of us" (*SE* 12). This can function as a metafictional illustration of the way Tony constructs his life story. Tony's narrative tone tries to convey a sense of contentment with his present life, which he describes as "[s]ome achievement and some disappointments" (*SE* 56). His description of this life, however, sounds a little bit banal: keeping up with a few drinking pals, having some platonic women friends, being a member of the local history society, volunteering to run a library at the local hospital. It only depicts a life of mediocrity.

The uneven narrative speed Barnes adopts in Tony's narration of his former life tells more about Tony's life than he is willing to admit. In the first part of the novel, Tony constructs an image of his whole life, composed of arrogant adolescence, disappointed youth and contented, mediocre elderly life. The detailed part is his uneventful adolescent years, especially his friendships at school and love relationship; the supposedly more important adult life, including his marriage with Margaret, divorce and fatherhood, is summarized in just two pages at the end of the first part. This uneven narrative speed suggests that Tony's later life may not be as satisfactory as he describes. Holmes makes great sense of this with his claim that "the brevity and flatness of his narration imply that his working and domestic life after university has been one long anti-climax" ("Divided Narrative" 31).

The contrast between the two parts of the novel indicates that the image Tony has created in the first part is only the product of self-illusion. In the second part, during Tony's quest for Veronica's diary, new traces of the past are discovered and new memories are evoked. They reveal that he was neither the victim of Veronica and Adrian's betrayal nor the good father and ex-husband he imagined himself to be. The falseness of these memories reveals the workings of present intention upon memory construction. The image Tony has created for his past life accords with his current demand for an identity that is normal and mediocre, or is employed, using Michael

Greaney's words, to avoid "the sense of [being] an oddball" (231).

Tony's construction of the weekend he spent at Veronica's home further exemplifies how memory construction is shaped by Tony's mentality. The four versions of the event Tony constructs on separate occasions mark, as Tony is aware of , the distinction between "the actual events" and "the impressions these facts left" (*SE* 4), a distinction Tony makes at the very beginning of his memory construction. The impressions are in fact subjective interpretations of the event based on the context. "To 'render impression' means to recreate the level of original experience before reflection composes life into a clear, orderly narration", as Paul B. Armstrong notes (232). In his reconstruction of the weekend or the whole relationship with Veronica, Tony highlights this distinction and the influence of situations upon the recollection of memory, as he reflects that "you can infer past actions from current mental states" (*SE* 48).

The different constructions of memory in these novels reveal the inevitable subjectiveness of memory construction. In this regard, Freud's screen memory offers a better explanation of the psychological causes behind this phenomenon. In addition to individual memory construction, Barnes resonates with Freud in finding a parallel between individual and collective memory construction. In *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud mentions twice the analogy between the formation of childhood memories and that of a nation's tradition (88, 199). Later, in his essay "Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of Childhood (1910)", Freud further elaborates,

> Historical writing, which had begun to keep a continuous record of the present, now also cast a glance back to the past, gathered traditions and legends, interpreted the traces of antiquity that survived in customs and usages, and in this way created a history of the past. It was inevitable that this early history should have been an expression of present beliefs and wishes rather than a true picture of the past; for many things had been dropped from the nation's memory, while others were distorted, and some remains of the past were given a wrong interpretation in order to fit in with contemporary ideas. Moreover people's motive for writing history was not objective curiosity but a desire to influence their contemporaries, to encourage and inspire them, or to hold a mirror up before them. (83-84)

This analogy can also be found in *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*. In *England, England*, the narrator compares Martha's recollection of her first memory to "a country remembering its history: the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself. The same went for individuals, though the process obviously wasn't straightforward" (*EE* 6). In the novel, Martha's pursuit of individual identity and truth through memory construction parallels the construction of collective memory in Sir Jack's project England, England. Barnes makes the two levels of stories contrast with and counterbalance each other: "There are these disparities and opposing extremes running through the book between the public and the private, between the fake and the authentic . . . And what's happening in the public story is the creation of something that is completely false and what's going on in the private story is the search for some sort of inner truth about life and love" (Dening). However, at bottom, they are united by the shared demand for identity and thus the fiction of memory. Only in the case of the theme park, economic stimulation is highlighted and the construction of fifty "quintessences of England" is foregrounded by Great Britain's practical need to relocate its position in the world for financial purposes.

In *The Sense of an Ending*, the parallel is established by introducing history class discussions into the narration. The three questions raised by the history teacher Old Joe Hunt involve the description of a historical event (the characterization of Henry VIII's reign of history), the individual's responsibility in the history (the responsibility of Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassin for starting the whole thing off) and the essence of history (what is history?). The presentation of these discussions conveys a double significance. On the one hand, it incorporates a meta-historical dimension into the novel, presenting a dialogue of different understandings of the essence of history. On the other hand, the discussions predict and interpret the development of the stories of the characters. William Deresiewicz notes that Adrian's trio of propositions "pretty much map out the rest of the novel" (30).

Adrian's definition of history is worth mentioning here: "History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (*SE* 17). This statement resonates with the new historicist's awareness of the textuality of history and is often taken as a thematic expression of Barnes's postmodern suspicion of the possibility of finding out the truth of history, but it neglects the dialogue between the multiple views of history put forward by the

students and the teacher. Barnes offers a counterweight against Adrian's opinion by giving the history teacher's positive view of history and historians.

In this exchange of views, the suicides of Tony's classmates Robson and Adrian function as a conjunction of the two levels of history. When Robson commits suicide in sixth grade with no reason disclosed, Adrian takes it as a historical event through which he can explain his definition of history and stress the uncertainty of history. Hunt refutes him based on the same case, and emphasizes the importance of the traces left behind after Robson's death, such as the coroner's report, Robson's diary, phone calls, the letters of condolence, etc. Adrian thinks the absence of Robson's testimony forms the fatal blow to the reliability of any narration of his story, but Hunt just asks him "to treat a participant's explanation of events with a certain skepticism", particularly the statements "made with an eye to the future" (*SE* 18). Tony defines history as "the lies of the victors", but Hunt corrects him by noting that "it is also the self-delusions of the defeated" (*SE* 16). Hunt's propositions predict the way Tony tells his story. As mentioned above, the first version of the life story Tony has constructed is full of such self-illusions.

Freud's psychological analysis of the workings of memory offers a useful perspective through which to explore both individual and collective memories. However, Barnes goes far beyond taking it as the only explanation for the functioning of memory and forgetting. He reveals the absence of the ethical dimension in this explanation. In *The Sense of an Ending*, Freud's theory of Trauma (the word "damage" is used in the novel) is abused by Tony as an easy explanation for others' behaviors, or as an excuse for his irresponsibility. In his "ugly" letter, he attributes Veronica's betrayal of him as a result of some damage suffered in her youth and advises Adrian to check with her mother. This suggestion brings about Adrian's meeting with Mrs Ford and thus causes his suicide indirectly. He even uses it to explain his uncertainty about whether he broke up with Veronica after they slept together or they slept together and then he broke up with her.

Barnes casts doubt on Tony's excuse for his evasion of responsibility and commitment in his love relationship, for Tony's childhood is characterized by the absence of trauma or damage. Barnes questions the validity of Freud's interpretation of all things in terms of sex and trauma. This is captured by Tony's ex-mother-in-law's scathing sarcastic comment that "I reckon we were all abused" (*SE* 43). In *England, England*, when Martha tries to interpret her situation with Paul

as the product of her distrusting older men as a result of her father's departure at an early age, Paul calls it "fairly cheap psychology" (*EE* 140).

This critical attitude towards Freud's psychoanalysis can be traced back to another Barnes novel, *Before She Met Me*. At the last party the major character Anne gives at her home, her former lover, the ironic novelist Jack, provokes cheap laughter by quoting from Freud and giving "prepared speeches about how Freud's interpretations of dreams were either obvious (. . .) or unverifiably fantastic" (146). Jack doubts the efficiency of psychoanalysis and make sarcastic remarks about it: "how the cure rate for those who went to shrinks was no higher than for those who went on being crackers by themselves; how, in terms of the science of understanding people, the novelist's methods were much older and more sophisticated . . . " (146). Therefore, while echoing some ideas of Freud's psychoanalysis, Barnes shows a critical attitude towards it. As critics suggest, attributing all behaviors to unconscious motivations neglects their social and ethical aspects.[46] In the next section, I will further analyze Barnes's exploration of the manipulation of memory in identity construction at both individual and collective levels, beyond the workings of screen memory.

4.2 Selective Forgetfulness and Fabulation

Going beyond the cognitive difficulty in distinguishing memory and imagination and the psychological workings of screen memory, Barnes explores the complicated manipulation of memory in both individual story-telling and collective memory construction. I identify two types of manipulation of memory in his exploration: selective forgetfulness and fabulation. While selective forgetfulness is defined as purposeful neglect of certain unfavorable memory traces so as to construct a favorable or acceptable identity, fabulation is a combination of the real and the imagined in history and memory construction. The two types of manipulation of memory appear

[46] Erich Fromm thinks that the psychoanalysis performed by Freud and his school probes into unconscious motives, but does not contribute to the inquiry into ethical problems. He even thinks Freud's relativism on the point of "establishing the validity of the value judgments" confuses the ethical issues, especially the issues of conscience and morality (see Erich Fromm 24-25). In *Freud and Philosophy* (1965), Ricoeur does not think Freud abandons the entire sphere of ethics. He calls the reality principle the "prudence" principle and takes it as the ethics of psychoanalysis, for "it is opposed to the false idealism of the superego, to its destructive demands, and in general to all the exaggerations of the sublime and to the bad faith of the good conscience" (279). In its "substitution of a neutral regard in place of condemnation", the reality principle opens up "a clearing of truthfulness, in which the lies of the ideals and idols are brought to light and their occult role in the strategy of desire is unmasked" (280). In spite of this, Ricoeur thinks Freud's scienticism and his concept of reality are limited. In his opinion, there is more in the works about law, art, religion and philosophy, such as the mutual constitution of the self and the other.

in both individual and collective memory construction, bringing together the issues of memory, history and forgetting. Thus Ricoeur's profound study of these themes in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting* is an excellent reference in my analysis.

Ricoeur extends Freud's analysis of memory to the perception of identity and history. In addition to a phenomenological illustration of the workings of memory and forgetting, he explores the practical applications of memory and forgetting, that is, their use and abuse in identity and history construction. Ricoeur identifies three levels of abuse of memory: blocked memory, manipulated memory and abusively summoned memory, corresponding to pathological, practical and ethico-political levels of memory. His exploration of manipulated memory is especially relevant to my analysis. Ricoeur follows John Locke's theory of memory "in which memory is established as the criterion of identity" (*HMF* 80-81), but he concentrates more on "the heart of the problem", that is, "the mobilization of memory in the service of the quest, the appeal, the demand for identity" (81). This provides the theoretical base for my analysis of the manipulation of memory in Barnes's works.

Another illuminating aspect of Ricoeur's theory is his analysis of the relationship between manipulation of memory and the selectiveness of narrative. He thinks the same kind of narrative configuration or emplotment he identifies in the narrative functions in ideologizing memory:

> On the deepest level, that of the symbolic mediation of action, it is through the narrative function that memory is incorporated into the formation of identity. Memory can be ideologized through the resources of the variations offered by the work of narrative configuration. And, as the characters of the narrative are emplotted at the same time the story is told, the narrative configuration contributes to modeling the identity of the protagonists of the action as it molds the contours of the action itself. (84-85)

Ricoeur discloses the expediency narrative offers to the manipulation of memory. In his opinion, the selective function of the narrative configuration "opens to manipulation the opportunity and the means of a clever strategy, consisting from the outset in a strategy of forgetting as much as in a strategy of remembering" (85). He further reveals the link between the narrative configuration and manipulation of memory and forgetting: "one can always recount differently, by eliminating, by

shifting the emphasis, by recasting the protagonists of the action in a different light along with the outlines of the action" (448). Ricoeur is straight-forward in his criticism of the manipulation of official history and calls it "authorized, imposed, celebrated, commemorated history" (448).

In Barnes's exploration of memory, forgetting is an important aspect. As he stresses in *Nothing to Be Frightened Of*, "We talk about our memories, but should perhaps talk more about our forgettings, even if that is a more difficult—or logically impossible—feat"（38）. In his novels, Barnes explores the workings of selective forgetfulness in various kinds of history writing, which is best exemplified in *A History* In the chapter "The Stowaway", Barnes exposes the workings of man's purposeful forgetfulness in biblical history. The worm criticizes the human being in the following way:

> You keep forgetting things, or you pretend to. The loss of Varadi and his ark — does anyone speak of that? I can see there might be a positive side to this willful averting of the eye: ignoring the bad things makes it easier for you to carry on. But ignoring the bad things makes you end up believing that bad things never happen. You are always surprised by them. It surprises you that guns kill, that money corrupts, that snow falls in winter. Such naivety can be charming; alas, it can also be perilous. (29)

The forgetting the worm accuses human beings of is a purposeful neglect of certain memories as a result of ideological manipulation, so it belongs to what we call selective forgetfulness. It is part of what Ricoeur calls "the dialectic of presence and absence at the heart of representation of the past" (*MHF* 414). What the worm challenges is the biblical history of the world, in which the anthropocentric hierarchical structure is maintained by the ruling class. As Noah's son, Varadi distinguishes himself from his father and other brothers by showing kindness to the animals in the ark. This is a challenge not merely to his father, but also to the authority of God, for he breaks the hierarchical structure God has established for the world. Barnes takes this as the reason for his being erased from the Bible.

The positive side of forgetting that the worm mentions seems to echo Friedrich

Nietzsche's "active forgetfulness".[47] However, the worm's sarcastic tone indicates Barnes's critical attitude towards the self-service behind man's selective forgetfulness. As I have analyzed in the previous chapter, the worm speaks for those who have been erased from human history. By presenting figures like Varadi through a worm's perspective, Barnes reveals the ideological manipulation behind the construction of biblical myth and challenges the practice of effacing those marginal figures in the sacred history of the world. Selective forgetfulness here is at the service of maintaining the anthropocentric hierarchical structure by the ruling class. Barnes shares Ricoeur's criticism that the official history is "authorized, imposed, celebrated, commemorated history" (*MHF* 448).

The workings of selective forgetfulness in some historical narratives by eye-witnesses are another aspect Barnes explores. In addition to the unavoidable subjective perspective in any description, he reveals the manipulation of narrative out of individual interests or moral weaknesses behind these so-called true stories. In another chapter "Three Simple Stories", the story of the real figure Lawrence Beesley illustrates this point. As a famous survivor of the sinking of the Titanic, Beesley published his narrative of the experience, *The Loss of the Titanic: Written by One of the Survivors* in 1912. In the book, he declares that the purpose of writing a short account of the disaster and publishing the book is to "calm public opinion by stating the truth of what happened as nearly as I could recollect it" (5). In Barnes's story, however, he is suspected by "the more skeptical members of his family" of having "escaped from the Titanic in women's clothing" (*HW* 173). In an interview, Barnes acknowledges that the narrator's encounter with Beesley is, in fact, his own. By turning the real story into a fictional one, Barnes challenges the truth claim in Beesley's book, and exposes the manipulation of memory at the service of constructing a publicly acceptable image. This challenge can be posed to all truth claims in such kinds of historical narratives.

Furthermore, these cases evidence that the workings of selective forgetfulness are inseparable from narrative configuration or emplotment in ideologizing memory to construct a desired identity. In addition to the historical level, Barnes explores how

[47] In his book *On the Use and Abuse of History* (1874), Nietzsche says that animals and children are blessed with living "unhistorically" (6), that is, with no burden of the memory of the past. He thinks that "the unhistorical and the historical are equally necessary to the health of an individual, a community, and a system of culture" (8). In *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche further expands on "the benefit of active forgetfulness" as "a doorkeeper or guardian of mental order, rest and etiquette" (35).

selective forgetfulness works on the level of individual story-telling in *The Sense of an Ending*. By presenting Tony's arbitrary selection in memory construction and tight control over his narrative, He exemplifies what Ricoeur regards as the complicity between narrative configuration and manipulation of memory and forgetting. Tony admits he has manipulated his memory when he first meets his ex-wife Margaret, as he says, "I wrote Veronica out of my life story" (69). He tells lies not only to Margaret but also to himself and reflects on the psychological motivations behind this: "[t]he odder part was that it was easy to give this version of my story because that's what I'd been telling myself anyway. I viewed my time with Veronica as a failure" (69). Tony's confession shows that the deviations in his memory construction are not entirely the workings of unconscious motivations but also the result of conscious manipulation. This can be related to the presence of a poor self-image.

Barnes displays Tony's tight control over his narrative and his arbitrary selection in memory construction, demonstrated by insertions in brackets such as "My mother-in-law (who happily is not part of this story)" (43), or "Annie was part of my story, but not of this story" (46). These insertions insinuate "a bland brutality in the way Webster goes about cutting and pasting his autobiography" (Greaney 234). Barnes purposefully brings in these absent stories so as to highlight Tony's manipulation of his narrative in order to create the image he desires. Moreover, Barnes's subtle use of the insertions reveals Tony's self-centred personality behind the manipulation: in his narrative selection, Tony shunts other people's story to "side-lines" and only focuses "on the all-important world of 'me' rather than the peripheral concerns of the 'you' or the 'they'" (Greaney 233-34).

Tony's avoidance of corroboration from others further accentuates the role personality plays in memory construction. He admits that he had thought of checking with his adolescent friends, but was afraid that others' memories would be "better than" his or "proved the opposite of helpful" (*SE* 108-09). It echoes Ricoeur's view that the fragility of memory is caused by the fragility of identity (*MHF* 81). Therefore, Tony's avoidance of others' corroboration can be explained by Ricoeur's observation that the encounter with others is one of the major causes for the fragile identity, for others' negative opinions will form a threat to individual identity (*MHF* 81). The contrast between the two parts of the novel, however, reveals that without others' corroboration, identity construction easily becomes a solipsistic self-deception.

Based on the above analysis, we can see that selective forgetfulness—as one of

the major ways of manipulating memory—is employed in both collective and individual memory construction. Its working mechanism involves both political and ideological factors in addition to psychological ones. It basically embodies a "self-centred" ideology or personality which excludes the "ex-centric" or others and is criticized by Barnes for its lack of ethical concerns for the others. I will come to one of the ethical connotations of Barnes's memory construction in the last section, that is, the idea that only through an awareness of the alterity of the Other, can memory construction come close to its historical truth. In the following, I will investigate another kind of memory manipulation Barnes presents in his novels—fabulation.

Aside from selective forgetfulness, Barnes presents another way of dealing with memory and history—fabulation. The word comes from the Latin *fibula*（fable）. It has been used in both philosophical and literary senses, with broad connotations. Henri Bergson first used the word in a philosophical sense in his work *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932). Bergson argues that the broad, vague definition of imagination groups together different kinds of representation, such as phantasies, memories, dreams, hallucinations, superstitions, artistic creations, even scientific inventions. However, Bergson is attracted to "phantasmic representations", which he defines as "the myth-making faculty" ("*la function fabulatrice*"), and the act which produces them as a process of "myth-making" or "fiction" (108).

Bergson's fabulation contains two levels of meaning. The primary meaning is "a visual instinct" and a religious imagination to evoke all kinds of spirits (110). The interplay of image and perception characterizes the early features of religion. Bergson thinks the faculty "is deduced from the conditions of existence of the human species" (196). He takes fabulation as a trauma reaction: "a defensive reaction of nature against what might be depressing for the individual, and dissolvent for society, in the exercise of intelligence" (205). This is similar to the workings of Freud's screen memory. Beyond this primary level, Bergson links fabulation to man's "perception of things, of events, of the universe in general" (162). It is thus connected with creative representations of the world, such as "the novel, drama, mythology together with all that precedes it" (108).

In *What Is Philosophy?* (1991), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari mention Bergsonian fabulation in a note and connect its second meaning with their concept of the artist as a "seer" or "becomer". They further explain,

> Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory, however exaggerated, or with a fantasy. In fact, the artist, including the novelist, goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer. How would he recount what happened to him, or what he imagines, since he is a shadow? He has seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it, so that the corner of nature or districts of the town that he sees, along with their characters, accede to a vision that, through them, composes the percepts of that life, of that moment, shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism, a sort of simultaneism, of harsh or crepuscular light, of purple or blue, which have no other object or subject than themselves. (171)

Deleuzian fabulation is accordant with their interpretation of literature as the preservation of the "being of sensation". It is a pathway towards their core concept of "becoming", which, for artists, refers to the state when they "do not perceive but have passed into the landscape and are themselves part of the compound of sensations" (169). They call it affect.

Barnes is resonant with Deleuzian fabulation in his analysis of Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of Medusa* in "The Shipwreck", a story in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters.* In his appreciation of the painting, the narrator, who in fact can be regarded as Barnes himself, emphasizes the "life" the painter endows his work with: "For all its subject-matter, 'Scene of Shipwreck' is full of muscle and dynamism. The figures on the raft are like the waves: beneath them, yet also through them surges the energy of the ocean. Were they painted in lifelike exhaustion they would be mere dribbles of spume rather than formal conduits" (136-37). Here Géricault, like Paul Cézanne and other great artists Deleuze and Guattari take as their models, becomes what he is envisioning. Barnes's description of the process of creating as "freeing, enlarging, explaining" sounds close to Deleuzian becoming (137). Creative fabulation, however, like the transfusion I have mentioned in Flaubert's artistic principle of impersonality, features in the work of almost all great modern artists or writers who succeed in conveying the sensations they feel in life through art or literary works. This process is even elevated into a state of existence: "We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero"

(*What Is Philosophy?* 169).

Barnes's writing style is connected to fabulation but in a different sense. Childs defines Barnes's understanding of memory and history as "generic fabulation", that is, the "mixture of approaches to fiction derived from reality and imagination" (*Julian Barns* 8). Childs focuses more on a generic classification of Barnes's works in line with Scholes's typology of modern fabulation.[48] He thinks Barnes shares the modern fabulators' aim to "reach beyond reality to truth", as well as the characteristic style of fabulation, that is, "a sense of pleasure in form" (9).

Deviating from these scholarly concerns with fabulation as a way of creative writing, I will narrow my focus to Barnes's exploration of the approach as a means of memory and history construction. In this way, I dig into Barnes's concept of truth or truth construction. My approach is closer to Bergson's primary understanding of fabulation as a defensive reaction, but is broadened to create a combined presentation of the real and the imagined in memory and history construction. In fact, in his discussion of fabulation, Scholes connects fabulation with the way some modern writers deal with history, that is, "turning back toward the stuff of history and reinvigorating it with an imagination tempered by a decade and more of fictional experimentation" (*Fabulation and Metafiction* 210). Similarly, Ronald Bogue adopts Deleuzian fabulation to interpret some contemporary historical novels. In his work *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (2010), he stresses the dialectic interaction between the historical dimensions of the chosen novels on the one hand and the "mythic nature" they display in accordance with the Deleuzian notion of becoming on the other. As Bogue explains,

> The term 'fabulation', by contrast, allows one to conceive of storytelling simultaneously as a way of engaging and articulating real and material problems—and hence as a way of getting at truths of a certain sort, of countering lies and insisting on historical facts that have been denied, buried or distorted—*and* as a means of inventing new possibilities for construing the world and its future development. (13, italics in original)

The two levels of advantage Bogue identifies in fabulation are also the focus of

[48] Scholes analyzes fabulation as innovation in five types of genre, that is, romance, satire, picaresque, allegory and epic.

Barnes's exploration of fabulation. He reflects on the same dialectical interaction of the real and the fictional in history and identity construction.

The word fabulation first appears as a medical term in the story "The Survivor" in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters.* In the character Kath's nightmares, some doctors diagnose her as suffering from "fabulation". Its symptoms are identified by a doctor as follows: "You make up a story to cover the facts you don't know or can't accept. You keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them. Particularly in cases of double stress" (*HW* 109).[49] In fact, Kath's arguing with the doctors in the nightmares can be interpreted as her fabulation, a reaction to the official report on the nuclear disaster and other people's opinions toward her. It is an action of "self-preservation" and "her own unconscious attempt to deny the reality of her own impending death on the island from radiation sickness" (Connor, *The English Novel in History* 233). Fabulation here keeps its essential medical meaning, stressing its function as a self-deceptive fiction and a way of avoiding the uncomfortable truth in life. It echoes Bergson's understanding of fabulation as a defensive reaction.

Barnes extends the medical term into a way of telling (hi) stories, which exist in both the "petit" narratives from below and the grand historical narratives high above. It first refers to the way average people challenge the grand narratives. In the half chapter "Parenthesis", from *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, echoing Kath's case, the narrator compares an average person to "a voluntary patient" of history, and their symptom repeats the doctor's definition of fabulation. Barnes makes the symptom universal by changing the subject from the second person to the first person plural: "We make up a story to cover the facts we don't know or can't accept; we keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them" (*HW* 242). In addition to its self-deceptive aspect, fabulation is taken as a challenge towards the grand historical narratives. For example, instead of 1492, the narrator fabulates the story of the year 1493, when Columbus came back to Spain and stole from an ordinary soldier the prize of 10,000 maravedis promised to the first man to sight the New World. This is a counter-narrative of the glorious history of Columbus.

Barnes identifies a similar pattern of fabulation in the grand narratives of history. Still in "Parenthesis", the narrator says, "We all know that objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs, we shall have a multiplicity of subjective

[49]The proper medical term for this should be "confabulation", but in Bergson's sense, fabulation is also linked to trauma reaction.

truths which we assess and then fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what 'really' happened. This God-eyed version is fake—a charming, impossible fake" (*HW* 245). This is a direct criticism of the so-called objective official history of the world written by historians. Barnes attributes this version to a kind of "complicity between the reader of history and the historian: the reader of history wants to be told the whole story, wants to understand all the motivations, and wants to know exactly what happened" (Guignery, "History in question[s]" 55). In Barnes's opinion, the whole story inevitably involves fabulation, or even fabrication, and historians should be more honest about their ignorance. He suggests that they "ought to say more often, 'I don't know, I don't know why, I don't know why he did that, it was completely out of character. We'll never understand it. All the evidence has been lost'" (55).

Barnes takes these two versions of history as both a contrast and a dialogue. The historian's and Kath's ways of telling history correspond to "the victor's" and the "victim's" versions of history. The narrator of the half chapter calls both of them "liar(s)" (*HW* 246). Barnes highlights the common consoling essence of the two types of history and calls them "soothing fabulation" (*HW* 242). They are both subjected to the agent's individual or ideological demand, so their objectivity is questionable. As the narrator supplements in brackets, "Whose truth do we prefer, by the way, the victor's or the victim's? Are pride and compassion greater distorters than shame and fear?" (*HW* 243). This questioning attitude expresses the author's distrust towards fabulation and embrace of a broader and neutral vision of history going beyond the narrow stand of sticking to one side or another.

This dual vision of history is further discussed in *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*. In *England, England,* the narrator presents the different images of the historical figure Francis Drake that Martha and her Spanish friend Cristina keep in their mind. Cristina insists he is a pirate, but Martha thinks he is a hero and regards Cristina's thinking as "the comforting if necessary fiction of the defeated" (8). The introduction to Drake in the British encyclopedia, which Martha consults, can be interpreted as the workings of the "element of propaganda" in the victor's version of history, for in it "the word 'pirate' never appears" (*EE* 7). In *The Sense of an Ending*, during Tony's history class discussion, history is defined as either "the lies of the victors" or "the self-delusions of the defeated" (16). Tony's construction of his past life illustrates that even "the memories of survivors, most of whom are neither victorious nor defeated" are far from being objective (56). In this way, Barnes shows

the inevitability of fabulation in history or memory construction.

This inevitability is further displayed in the grafting of history. Barnes is critical of the two extremes of traditional ways of teaching history. One is reducing history to dates and events; the other is fabulation. In the story "The Survivor", the character Kath complains in her first-person narration: "They always make it sound so simple. Names, dates, achievements. I hate dates. Dates are bullies, dates are know-alls" (*HW* 99). In "Parenthesis", the narrator challenges the view of history as linear progress marked by important dates: "Dates don't tell the truth. They bawl at us—left, right, left, right, pick 'em up there you miserable shower. They want to make us think we're always progressing, always going forward" (*HW* 241).

In contrast to the reduction of history to dates is fabulation. In *England, England*, Barnes presents Martha's mocking of history chanting in school and shows fabulation as a popular way of grafting history: in addition to chanting, the history teacher "would tell them tales of chivalry and glory, plague and famine, tyranny and democracy", "making history not a dogged progress but a series of vivid and competing moments, beans on black velvet" (*EE* 12). Barnes mocks the result of this unsuccessful educational curriculum by presenting Dr. Max's interview with a 49-year-old "cultured, aware, intelligent, well-informed" Englishman about his knowledge of British history (*EE* 84). What the Englishman is sure of about the historical events, like the Battle of Hastings, is the widespread anecdotal knowledge of King Harold getting an arrow in the eye, leaving all the other more crucial questions in uncertainty.

Barnes connects fabulation with the human desire to tell "a full story". In his interview with Guignery, the author explains that "the human mind can't exist without the illusion of a full story. So it fabulates and convinces itself that the fabulation is as true and concrete as what it 'really' knows. Then it coherently links the real and the totally imagined in a plausible narrative" ("History in question[s]" 54-55). As a writer, Barnes is aware of narrative's advantage and thinks "it's rather gratifying for a novelist" (54). Guignery takes Barnes's practice of deliberately mixing "imaginary and historical material so as to shatter the certainties of historical knowledge" as an illustration of the fabulation the narrator defines in "Parenthesis" (*Fiction* 66). In *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, Barnes uses stories told in this way by minorities to challenge those told in the official history. It is not necessarily a

replacement, but a dialogue toward truth. In this sense, fabulation incorporates a broader and more dynamic understanding of the historical truth.

In addition to being a supplement to the real, Barnes reveals how the fabulated can assume the role of the real. Among the "Three Simple Stories" in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, is the story of John Bartley, which parallels the myth of Jonah in the Bible. The narrator reflects how the myth of Bartley "has been retold, adjusted, updated" and "has shuffled nearer" for people to believe (*HW* 180). It is a metahistorical demonstration of the workings of fabulation in the construction of collective memory. The mutual transformation between myth and reality is summarized by the narrator like this: "Myth will become reality, however skeptical we might be" (*HW* 181). In the story "Fake" in *Letters from London* (1995), the copy of invented "Canadian fur-bearing trout" finds its final way into the British Museum together with other fakes such as "a unicorn's horn, a griffin's claw, a couple of mermen (. . .), and the famous 'vegetable Lamb of Tartary'" (24). Barnes traces this to the "nerve of phantasmagoric need in us" (24).

In *England, England*, stories about a Russian musician and Beethoven told by Martha's lover Paul function as metaphorical illuminations of this mutual transformation between the real and the fictional. In the story about the Russian musician, the folk songs invented by the musician replace the authentic folk music which has been wiped out by Stalin together with the villages. In the story about Beethoven and the village policeman, the shabbiness of Beethoven's clothes prevents the policeman from believing the man's claim that he was Beethoven. Barnes satirizes man's stereotyped imagination by presenting the policeman's ironic explanation that "Beethoven doesn't look like this" (*EE* 100). In both of these stories, the fabulated either takes the place of the real or enjoys priority over it. This phenomenon may be explained by Bergson's explanation of the workings of fabulation: "A fiction, if its image is vivid and insistent, may indeed masquerade as perception and in that way prevent or modify action. A systematically false experience, confronting the intelligence, may indeed stop it pushing too far the conclusions it deduces from a true experience" (109). The early working pattern of religion or superstition applies to daily life.

In *England, England*, Barnes further combines the workings of fabulation on individual and collective levels. The sense of fabulation as a combination of the real and the imagined continues to work in the construction of the theme park England,

England and in that of the major character Martha Cochrane's identity. The novel itself is Barnes's fabulation of the "idea of England" (Guppy 74). The construction of the theme park has its realistic models in contemporary heritage tourism.[50] Fabulation and simulation of cultural memory or myth for financial purposes are popular practices in most theme parks and historic tourist sites. As Childs suggests, "Under the names of preservation and conservation, heritage culture thus seems to domesticate the radical past as a consumer product" (*Julian Barnes* 113). Connected with the popularity of heritage tourism is the cultural identity a nation chooses to present to the world. Randall Stevenson identifies this as the problem Great Britain encounters late in the century, and it "coincides awkwardly with a new need to turn English culture into foreign exchange, sometimes making artificial, or easily consumable, the very authenticities that 'heritage' supposedly sought to sustain" (47).

Barnes highlights the economic stimulation behind the fabulation of national identity. The decline of Great Britain is the background of the novel. The idea of the theme park comes from Sir Jack's consultant Jerry Batson. The contemporary awkward condition of Britain is captured by him in a metaphor: "This is the third millennium and your tits have dropped, baby. The days of sending a gunboat, not to mention Johnny Redcoat, are long gone. We have the finest army in the world, goes without saying, but nowadays we lease it for small wars approved by others. We are no longer mega" (*EE* 40). In his product-dominated thinking, England's abundant social and cultural history is "eminently marketable", so the product placement is "*We are already what others may hope to become*" (*EE* 41, italics in original). The theme park is built under the guidance of this production theory. The simulacra of fifty "quintessences of England" are the final "marketable" products. The problem of the construction lies in that the principle of being faithful to the historical truth is compromised to fit the consumer's demand and desire.

Fabulation functions in the construction of the fifty "quintessences of England" the same way it does in the narration of world history in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, When they turn old myths or historical figures into visual presentations, the blank left by mythological or historical records can only be filled by fabulation, so the advice Sir Jack gives his project manager Mark is to "fill it in" and

[50] Childs defines the contemporary meaning of heritage as "a drive towards repositioning the past in the cause of national pride across both culture and politics" (114). He gives a detailed analysis of the development of the heritage movement in Britain. See *Julian Barnes*, 113-16.

"concrete it over" (*EE* 78). The vagueness of historical records and legendary stories is taken as a good excuse for Sir Jack and his team to recreate them in their desired image. As Guignery observes, "The malleability of history and the unreliability of collective and individual memory are what enable the creators of the theme park on the Isle of Wight to rewrite, simplify and caricature national history so as to meet the expectations of tourists" (*Fiction* 106). In order to meet "third millennium family values", Martha suggests making Nell Gwynn, the self-claimed "catholic whore", older, and suggests that they "lose the children, lose the other mistresses, and lose the social and religious background" so as to turn her into "a nice middle-class girl who ends up marrying the King" (*EE* 98). Sir Jack calls this "a little massaging" (*EE* 97).

This focus on the economic stimulation behind fabulation has been illustrated in the story "Fake", in which Barnes ponders the effect of economic erosion on the production of art works and the question of authenticity. At the beginning of the story, the narrator quotes Mallarmé's description of London as "the country of the fake Rubens paintings" (22). He attributes the prevalence of fakery in England to the domination of money: "It's not that the British are more naive or more aesthetically dim than other races; it's simply that fakery follows wherever money leads (. . .), and Britain has for many centuries run a financial surplus" (22). In *England, England*, Barnes further reveals the invasion of what the Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath calls "the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism" into the making of history (*LL* 40).

Barnes shows us how myths are recreated by presenting a discussion among Sir Jack's team about the concrete visual construction of "a primal English myth" (*EE* 150), the myth of Robin Hood and his Merrie Men. The concept developer Jeff's conservative idea that "[y]ou can't start *messing around* with Robin Hood" forms a contrast with Martha's progressive idea of the "repositioning of myths for modern times" (*EE* 151-2, italics in original). There is Sir Jack's postmodern questioning of history as a representation of reality: "What, my dear Jeff, do you think History is? Some lucid, polyocular transcript of reality? Tut, Tut, Tut. The historical record of the mid-to-late thirteenth century is no clear stream into which we might thrillingly plunge" (*EE* 152). Their discussion highlights the negative aspects of the myth, which demonstrate its historical limits, such as the hierarchical, theocentric and male-dominated ideologies of the medieval ages. Dr. Max's report of the discussion is a summary of problems concerning race, class and gender, etc., which contemporary

interpretation of the myth confronts. In this sense, myth construction is preconditioned by its current historical context.

Although still based on historical records or legends, the construction of the Robin Hood Myth evinces that considerations of tourist psychology and mentality have far outweighed faithfulness to history or legends. In this respect, fabulation tends to assume another meaning, which Barnes endows it with in the third part of the novel, "Anglia". The word fabulation is used in a more negative way and in a sense closer to its dictionary meaning. In *The American Heritage Dictionary*, "to fabulate" means "to engage in the composition of fables or stories, especially those featuring a strong element of fantasy". It is a fabrication rather than imagination or creation and conveys the more negative meaning of groundless invention. This is illustrated by the way the farrier Jez Harris, who was formerly "Jack Oshinsky, junior legal expert with an American electronics firm", tells "invented folklore" to the few tourists to Anglia for "monetary exchange or barter" (*EE* 251). Some citizens call Jez Harris's practice "fabulation" and take it as "proof of the farrier's un-Anglican origins" (*EE* 252). In contrast to Harris's practice is the local schoolteacher Mr. Mullin's way of telling local histories. He insists that the "books of myths and legends" are the reliable sources to carry on the local history. The recreation of the village fête reveals, however, that his way is not totally free from invention and faces the same problem of concretizing cultural memories.

Similar to the visual construction of the Robin Hood Myth, the local citizens have to rely on their own interpretations to construct the details of the fête, in spite of Mr Mullin's effort to stick to historical records and legends. The essence of myth or legend is better suggested when Martha reflects on the legend of Gibbet Hill: "Had there really been a gibbet up there? Had corpses swung while rooks pecked out their eyeballs? Or was that in turn the fanciful touristy notion of some Gothic vicar a couple of centuries back?" (*EE* 274). She even imagines its potential as "an Island feature": "Clockwork rooks? A bunjee jump from the gallows to know what it felt like, followed by a drink with the Hooded Hangman? Something like that" (*EE* 274). Martha's reflection suggests that pressed for economic profits, any place has the potential to become a theme park.

The discussion of and contrast between the creation of myths in England, England and Anglia are Barnes's way of presenting polyphonic views. In fact, the different opinions expressed in the discussion about the reconstruction of the Robin

Hood myth echo different voices working towards the reconstruction of myths in reality. Holmes thinks the two versions of English history reveal "the same indifference to and ignorance of the complex actuality of the past that is evident in England, England" (*Julian Barnes* 100). I suggest what Barnes emphasizes through this contrast is the inevitability of fabulation in any construction of cultural memory. All cultural memories, in essence, are not representations but constructions. This is not a rejection of all cultural traditions, but a postmodern reconsideration of their essence. In this sense, Barnes strikes a chord with the theory of the "invention of tradition" held by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger and the concept of "imagined community" put forward by Benedict Anderson.[51]

Though critical of the arbitrary twist of collective memory and history, Barnes indicates the inevitability and necessity of fabulation in memory and history construction. In his interview with Guignery, Barnes thinks Ernest Renan's saying "Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation" would be "a perfect epigraph for the book"（"History in Question[s]" 59）. He further explains,

Getting its history wrong is also part of creating a nation. You have to build up those myths of liberation, myths of fighting the oppressor, myths of bravery. Often they have a certain percentage of truth in them, so they're easy myths to build up. But then being a nation as well as becoming a nation also depends on the continuation of those myths, which you see in all countries. (59)

This view indicates Barnes's sharing of a postmodern understanding of the constructed essence of national history and myth. Nevertheless, Barnes also stresses that this is inseparable from a nation's demand for an identity. Vera Nünning further connects this process to the necessity of meaning construction. As she observes, "The construction of continuous history gives coherence to fragmentary experiences, makes it possible to establish patterns, and to provide explanations for what happened. The invention of traditions is thus shown to be of great importance for individuals and nations" (73). Therefore, fabulation of history or myth contributes to a sense of identity.

Barnes also presents the more complicated postmodern situation when fabulation combines with simulation. The theme park is constructed with the aim of being a model of postmodern hyperreality. At its conception, the founder of the theme park,

[51] For further information, see Nünning 27-28; Head 121-2; Rubinson 42 .

Sir Jack Pitman, gathers together all kinds of scholars to develop the "Englishness" theme of the theme park. He creatively adopts French scholars Guy Debord's elaboration on postmodern society of spectacle and Jean Baudrillard's criticism of simulation and simulacra introduced by the unnamed French intellectual. Opposite to the former two scholars' negative attitudes, he celebrates the postmodern spectacle and simulation. In his opinion, people "prefer the replica to the original because it gives us the greater *frisson*". Furthermore, the represented world "is not a substitute for that plain and primitive world, but an enhancement and enrichment, an ironization and summation of that world" (*EE* 56-57).

This celebration of postmodern simulation as an enhancement of reality is adopted by Sir Jack as the guiding principle for the whole project. The great similarity with the real makes him believe in his theme park's superiority over a "heritage center", "Disneyland" and "World's Fair" etc., and leads him to declare that the aim of the park is "offering *the thing itself*" (*EE* 61, italics in original). He gives the contemporary concept of nature as an example. In his opinion, so-called nature is nothing but a man-made "natural" environment, catering to man's paradoxical desire for both being close to nature and being in a place more comfortable and suitable for human activity. This idea sounds similar to the aim of harmonious coexistence between man and nature in ecological humanism and thus has its sensible aspect. It also explains the financial success of the theme park as a caricature of the popularity of contemporary heritage tourism. However, Barnes's farcical presentation of the simulated life in the theme park conveys his criticism towards postmodern simulation: one cannot live in a vacuumed simulated reality for a long time and one must get an identity in order to identify with others.

Although mixed in the construction of the theme park, fabulation and simulation need to be distinguished. The French intellectual's idea of postmodern simulation *as frisson* shares certain similarities with the philosophical and literary celebration of fabulation. Both of them go far beyond simple imitation and efface what Baudrillard calls "the contradiction of the real and the imaginary" in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993) (72). In spite of this, they are different in their relationship with reality. As an imaginative representation of life, fabulation is based on reality, but the case of simulation is more complicated. In his analysis of the order of simulacra, Baudrillard classifies three orders of simulacra, among which simulation is "the dominant schema in the current code-governed phase" (50). He defines today's new

reality as a hyperreality, stressing that "*today reality itself is hyperrealist* . . . Reality has passed completely into the game of reality. Radical disaffection, the cool and cybernetic stage, replaces the hot, phantasmatic phase" (74, italics in original). Baudrillard even declares, "The great event of this period, the great trauma, is this decline of strong referentials, these death pangs of the real and of the rational that open onto an age of simulation" (*Simulation and Simulacra* 43). Compared to simulation, fabulation still belongs to "the phantasmatic phase" and is based on authentic socialization.

In contemporary heritage tourism, collective memory or history is often first fabulated and then simulated. Faced with this mixed treatment, these sites are on the verge of becoming a collection of simulacra. After the theme park is established, Dr. Max's role as a historian loses its practical function, for as Paul says, "No one wants to know any of Dr. Max's old history" (*EE* 208). Barnes echoes Baudrillard's view of history as a "lost referential" and his pessimistic picture of history:

> [T]oday one has the impression that history has retreated, leaving behind it an indifferent nebula, traversed by currents, but emptied of references. It is into this void that the phantasms of a past history recede, the panoply of events, ideologies, retro fashions—no longer so much because people believe in them or still place some hope in them, but simply to resurrect the period when *at least* there was history, at least there was violence (albeit fascist), when at least life and death were at stake. (*Simulation and Simulacra* 43-44, italics in original)

Connected with this sense of history is the question of individual identity. In the story "Fake", Barnes ponders upon the effects of the fakery of national identity upon the construction of individual identity: "And since individual identity depends in part upon national identity, what happens when those symbolic props to national identity turn out to be no more authentic or probable than a fur-bearing trout?" (*LL* 27-28). While showing the inevitability of fabulation and its function in establishing an identity at both individual and national levels, Barnes expresses his resistance to indifference and desocialisation in postmodern simulation, which is best illustrated by Martha's insistence on the capacity of being serious and her persistent pursuit of truth and authenticity.

4.3 "Capacity for Seriousness" and the Ethics of the Other

As I have shown in the previous sections, Barnes shares the postmodern sense of the fluidity of memory and identity in his exploration of the elusiveness of memory. He explores not only the cognitive and psychological causes of this, but also the manipulation of memory at the service of identity construction. In this section, I illustrate Barnes's deviation from postmodernism in his insistence upon memory's connection with truth, authenticity and responsibility. In *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*, Barnes presents two ethical choices as a counterforce against the elusiveness and manipulation of memory.

In *England, England*, Martha's insistence on "a capacity for seriousness" forms the ethical standing of the novel (*EE* 243). Martha is aware of the workings of fabulation in the constructions of both her own memory and the fifty quintessences of the theme park, but she still believes there are some real traces of the past and some authentic contacts kept in human interactions. She bases the seriousness of life on these traces and contacts. After she is dismissed from the theme park, Martha goes to the deserted Church of St. Aldwyn. In an imagined dialogue with Dr. Max, she reflects on her own pursuits in life:

> —So, Martha, what are you after? You can tell me.
>
> —What am I after? I don't know. Perhaps a recognition that life, despite everything, has a capacity for seriousness. Which has eluded me. As it eludes most people, probably. But still. (*EE* 243)

The narrator thus distinguishes Martha from Dr. Max through her belief in the seriousness of life and comments, "The seriousness lay in celebrating the original image: getting back there, seeing it, feeling it" (*EE* 245). The self-reflections permeating the novel are an indication of Martha's persistent pursuit of truths in life, and this makes her "a representative seeker for truths about origins, her own and England's" (Cunningham).

The complexity of truth is enhanced by Barnes's characterization of Martha as having a double-face during her work life and her private life. Though always looking for an authentic life, Martha becomes the "Appointed Cynic" in Sir Jack's project. During Sir Jack's interview with her, Martha exhibits her talent for fabulation. By

inventing her life story and speaking with an exaggerated cynicism to meet Sir Jack's expectation of a cynic, she successfully secures the position. She replaces him by threatening him with secret information about his infantilism, which her lover Paul has obtained by accident. Her management of the theme park is no different from that of Sir Jack's except she does call her secretary by their real name. In this respect, Martha is no different from the actors employed to play legendary and historical figures. In the theme park, the actors' real life is cancelled and they are reduced to their personae. As simulacra of these historical images, they become representations of certain codes. The actors who play Nell Gwynn become Nell 1, Nell 2 and Nell 3. They have to represent "Nellness" (*EE* 191) and show her typical feature as "an English Carmen": "Raven hair, sparkling eyes, a white flounced blouse cut in a certain way, lipstick, gold jewellery, and vivacity" (*EE* 190). This is the case with Sir Jack's employees. All of his secretaries are named Susie. The crucial members of his team exist only as their roles in the project. Martha assumes her role as Appointed Cynic so well that she suggests some cynical views for the project, which she does not agree with in her personal life.

The simulation in the theme park is similar to the socialization discussed in Chapter One. This alienation of the self by society has been termed by Sartre as "bad faith" and is exemplified by the waiter in the café in Sartre's book *Being and Nothingness* (1943). In Sartre's opinion, the waiter has an inauthentic life, for he loses his freedom and autonomy as a human being and his actions become mechanical: he is only "playing at *being* a waiter in a café" (59, italics in original). What Sartre emphasizes is the obligation society imposes on individuals, who have to give up their autonomy to comply with social demands. D. Z. Phillips takes the waiter's job as "almost a paradigm of simulation" and thinks what the waiter amounts to is "a ceremony, a play" (27). In this sense, the theme park is also a caricature of the social alienation in the contemporary world.

Martha's transcendence of a life of simulation lies in her capacity for self-reflection and her critical attitude towards the project in spite of her participation in it. This is set off by Dr. Max, with his postmodern proposition that all concepts and values are constructed through language and discourse. Their dialogues represent Barnes's negotiations between humanism and postmodernism. For instance, when they discuss about the bogusness of the theme park, Max denies the project is bogus. Instead, he asks: "Is not the very notion of the authentic somehow, in its own way,

bogus?" (*EE* 134). Max's view echoes the poststructuralist foregrounding of language in meaning and value constructions, and Barnes's sarcasm in his characterization of Dr. Max indicates his own distance from this view. Dr. Max is capable of being multi-faceted. He is both Sir Jack's employed historian and a column writer for *The Times,* writing Nature Notes under the pseudonym "Country Mouse". His appearance always seems funny to other employees, but Martha regards him "as something vulnerable, innocent, decorticated" in spite of his "shiny carapace" (*EE* 242). He proves far more sophisticated than Martha knows. As she later realizes, "Dr Max needed neither her advice nor her protection" (*EE* 242). As a historian, he obtained "a certain nose for the mechanisms of power in the course of his studies" and knows exactly how to secure his place in the project (*EE* 242). In contrast with Dr. Max, Martha still keeps her desire for authenticity and sincerity in spite of her double-face.

Barnes's presentation of the problem of identification arising among the actors shows his doubt about the possibility of an utterly simulated world. Like the character in "The Dream", in *A History of the World in 10$^{1}/_{2}$ Chapters*, who is finally tired of consumer heaven, the actors in the theme park cannot live a simulated life for long, so they adopt their simulated identity. For Barnes, what matters is not the border between the real and the imagined, but the human heart that is involved, as epitomized by the actor who plays Dr. Johnson. Instead of playing the assumed role, the actor becomes his persona and incurs various complaints from visitors for his verisimilitude. As a result, he is sent to Dieppe Hospital, where "both therapy and advanced psychotropic drugs . . . failed to alleviate his personality disorder" (*EE* 256). This ironic anecdote shows again how the fake can turn into the real. For Martha, the new Dr. Johnson is real in the sense that "his pain was authentic because it came from authentic contact with the world" (*EE* 223).

This authentic contact is what Martha pursues in her private life. She tries all kinds of relationships to find a proper one, but they all fail for lack of the authenticity she desires. In her relationship with Paul, who falls in love with her because she "made things real" (*EE* 107), she registers those authentic moments, but is quite sensitive when their relationship gradually falls into a fixed pattern. Even in her discussion about postmodern bogusness with Dr. Max, what attracts Martha is a feeling of intimacy between human beings. As the new CEO of the project, her sympathy for him prevents her from dismissing him from his job, though she also underestimates his sophistication.

Martha's quest for truth and authenticity is Barnes's principal way of countering fabulation, simulation and commercial erosion. Still at the church, Martha imagines the legendary moments of Heavens-to-Betsy. It was initially the incredible survival of a woman with a basket of eggs being blown off a cliff top by a strong wind, but "had been appropriated, reinvented, copied, coarsened; she herself helped" to become the logo of the theme park (*EE* 245). Dr. Max, who has contributed the original story, thinks that "there is no authentic moment of beginning, of purity" (*EE* 135), but Martha chooses to believe such moments, as the narrator comments, "This was where she parted company from Dr. Max. Part of you might suspect that the magical event had never occurred, or at least not as it was now supposed to have done. But you must also celebrate the image and the moment even if it had never happened. That was where the little seriousness of life lay" (*EE* 245). This comment is a clear expression of Barnes's postmodern humanism. As Richard Bradford note, this is a turning point in the novel where "Barnes, via Martha, stops the farcical procession of emptiness, confusion and despair and indicates that moments of certainty, all the more powerful for their brevity, are possible"(95). It is a triumph over postmodern simulation.

On this point, a comparison with Ricoeur's belief in memory sheds new light on Barnes's understanding of memory and history. Ricoeur connects memory with the truth. In spite of his awareness of the cognitive difficulty in distinguishing memory and imagination, as well as the manipulation of memory in life, he still identifies the existence of "good" memory. For Ricoeur, memory is the only way towards the past: "we have no other resource, concerning our reference to the past, except memory itself. To memory is tied an ambition, a claim—that of being faithful to the past" (*MHF* 21). Therefore, behind the trust in memory is the belief in the truth of the past. For Barnes, the images of the past may not be true, but they register the feelings and experiences evoked by them; even those imagined images are expressions of authentic longings or fears in the deep of our hearts. That is where the truth of life lies. It amounts to an affirmation of the experiential truth conveyed in *Metroland* and *Flaubert's Parrot.*

Martha's choice of the deserted old England Anglia as her final retreat is another angle from which to discuss the issue of authenticity. It is also Barnes's reflection on man's future if we continue to be pushed by consumption, technology and economic profits. By describing the political fate of Anglia, Barnes reveals the trickiness of international relations based on financial benefits. Politically and economically

speaking, Anglia becomes the other of the theme park England, England, "a place of yokeldom and willed antiquarianism" (*EE* 262). Judging by modern social progressive theory, Anglia represents "quaintness, diminution, failure" and is thus a regression (*EE* 263). However, on an individual level, it becomes an alternative and a retreat for those who are tired of a life dominated by consumption and modern technology. It marks a return to the more authentic and humanistic pre-modern way of life. Man's relationship with nature becomes more natural:

> Over the years the seasons had returned to Anglia, and become pristine. Crops were once again the product of local land, not of airfreight: spring's first potatoes were exotic, autumn's quince and mulberry decadent. Ripeness was acknowledged to be a hazardous matter, and cold summers meant much green tomato chutney. (*EE* 263)

The human relations between villagers or inside family become closer when modern external distractions disappear.

The narrator calls the culture in Anglia "voluntary austerity" (*EE* 265), the essence of which is close to the voluntary poverty advocated by Henry D. Thoreau in his book *Walden* (1854). For two years and two months, Thoreau lived a deliberately simple and self-reliant life in Walden. In the book, he describes his purpose:

> I want to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. (91)

Like Thoreau, the citizens of Anglia, Martha included, stand opposite to the social demand for progress, and choose to escape the enslavement of modern technology to live a real life. Advanced communication technology and convenient transportation are deserted in Anglia just as in Walden. By presenting a nostalgic picture of a more natural and authentic life, Barnes expresses the same worry about the eroding effect of modern civilization upon man's integrity as Thoreau did.

Regardless of this, Barnes does not favor Anglia as an ideal replacement for England, England. As I have shown, the way legends and folk traditions are constructed in Anglia is not so different from what Sir Jack did in England, England. The only difference lies in that there is sincere participation and pleasure on the part of the villagers, while the actors are not allowed authentic participation. Holmes makes a revealing comparison between the villagers' masquerade and the characters' impersonalisation of history and mythology in England, England:

> What in England, England amounts to nothing more than a superficial, postmodern culture of spectacle, a flattening out of the past into mere visual display sold as commodity, in Anglia takes the form of a populist carnival that has some of the liberating characteristics extolled by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World*. The masquerading exemplifies the playfulness, the openness to change, and the fluidity of identity that Bakhtin praises. (*Julian Barnes* 100)

Bakhtin celebrates the carnival in Rabelais's world as a "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (*Rabelais and His World* 10). Compared to this, the recreated carnival in Anglia has been reduced to some extent to a combination of fabulation and simulation of its ancient form. What people get from it is more pleasure than liberation.

Ironically, the recreated carnival achieves a new mixture of the high and the low, as solemn songs like "The British Grenadiers" and "Land of Hope and Glory" alternate with pop songs like "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" and "Penny Lane". It becomes the initiation of a new tradition: "It had been a day to remember. The fête was established; already it seemed to have its history" (*EE* 275). In his interview with Guignery, Barnes says the concluding chapter is "about the question to what extent a country can begin again, and what that beginning again means" ("History in Question[s]" 71). In his opinion, "there's no such thing as a clean slate, you always start with little bits of remembered and rediscovered stuff" (72). Therefore, Barnes's depiction of Anglia, particularly the village fête, is not totally nostalgic; instead, as Richard Bradford notes, it "seems by turn enduring and absurd" and is "an exercise of disdainful pathos" (Bradford 97).

Barnes shows his critical distance by endowing the elderly Martha with contrasting views towards life in Anglia. In her old age, Martha keeps both an open and skeptical attitude towards others' views and standpoints, as she says to the schoolmaster Mr. Mullin, "[W]hen you get to my age you often find that you aren't on anyone's side, not particularly. Or on everyone's side" (*EE* 254). In spite of Martha's skepticism in her old age, Barnes introduces a dual vision of truth Martha identifies on the face of a group of children near the end of *England, England*:

> As she saw it, they had not yet reached the age of incredulity, only of wonder; so that even when they disbelieved, they also believed. The tubby, peering dwarf in the distorting mirror was them and wasn't them: both were true. They saw all too easily that Queen Victoria was no more than Ray Stout with a red face and a scarf round his head, yet they believed in both Queen Victoria and Ray Stout at the same time. (*EE* 274)

This inclusive and open attitude towards cultural memory better expresses Barnes's view on truth. As Holmes suggests, it is "an ability to accept the fabrications of individual and national identities as necessary fictions that need not wholly destroy our capacity to experience life as real" (*Julian Barnes* 101). This double vision is an integration of the fictional and the real and what Barnes promotes is "an idealized conception of identity, the capacity to make conscious use of the past in embracing the present" (Head 121). The conception highlights the synchronic and diachronic aspects of reality and its representation.

By presenting the pursuit of truth and authenticity as a gradual understanding at different stages of life, Barnes shows identity as a process of becoming. Martha realizes she cannot "[b]e herself" as people often say; instead she can only "become herself"（*EE* 210）. Barnes insists on the existence of those momentary truths in life encapsulated in memories, which mark the process of the individual's becoming and help to form his or her identity. The rabbit which appears at the end of the novel, described as "fearless and quietly confident of its territory" (*EE* 275), symbolizes Barnes's belief in truth and reality. As Childs has noticed, it is an echo of Dr. Max's early metaphor that "[R]-eality is r-ather like a r-abbit" (*Julian Barnes* 123). Deviating from Childs's interpretation of the rabbit as a symbol of Anglia's wild history, I regard it as the reality which the general course of history will finally reveal.

It is different from both the pet bunny—which Dr Max uses as a metaphor for the reality the "distant, happy paymasters" want and is simulated in the theme park (*EE* 133)—and a badger, which the farrier claims it to be. In "The Parenthesis", the narrator says, "However ferociously we ink over our first thoughts, history finds a way of reading them" (*HW* 242). Here, Barnes suggests the same trust in truth and reality, which the natural course of history will reveal in spite of all the fabulation and simulation.

In *The Sense of an Ending*, Barnes shows another ethical connotation of memory construction—the ethics of the Other. Throughout his memory construction, Tony undergoes a transformation from solipsistic egoism towards a gradual awareness of the alterity of the Other in his life. As Levinas designates time as our relations with the Other, Tony's constant negotiation with memory is the process of coming to his true self and becoming aware of others. It is a process of realizing the otherness of the Other and developing an ethical responsibility for others. In the following section, I will analyze this ethical connotation embodied by Tony's memory construction, in light of Levinas's description of the epiphany of a face and the ethics of the Other.

Tony's narration shows that most of his life is characterized by solipsistic egoism. For example, in his reflection on his school years, Tony mentions that he and his friends had talked about their classmate Robson's suicide "artistically, philosophically and technically", but without any sense of sympathy. The narrator, Tony in his old age, attributes this cruelty to the adolescent desire to exceed others in uniqueness:

Perhaps we wouldn't have been so hard on Robson if it hadn't been for one central, unshiftable fact: Robson was our age, he was in our terms unexceptional, and yet he had not only conspired to find a girlfriend but also, incontestably, to have had sex with her. Fucking bastard! Why him and not us? Why had none of us even had the experience of *failing* to get a girlfriend? At least the humiliation of that would have added to our general wisdom, given us something to negatively boast about . . . (*SE* 14, italics in original)

If this can be explained as adolescent ignorance of the suffering of life, Tony's later attitude in love and marriage shows his solipsism. In his relationship with his girlfriend Veronica, he fails to give a definite answer to her question: "do you ever think about where our relationship is heading?" (*SE* 34). It finally leads to them breaking up. His non-commitment is further displayed in his relationship with his

ex-wife Margaret and their daughter Susie. In his mind, he keeps a good relationship with his ex-wife even after their divorce. Whenever he needs some advice, he turns to her. Nevertheless, a detail gives a glimpse of his non-commitment in their relationship: "Once or twice we've talked of sharing a holiday, but I think we each expected the other to plan it and book the tickets and hotels. So that never happened" (*SE* 60). Ironically, while he does not bother to book the ticket to mend his relationship with his ex-wife, he is willing to spend a great deal of time and energy defending a tree in his front garden from being cut, which he takes as a continuation of his youthful rebellion against bureaucracy. His insensitivity to the feelings of others is disclosed by his former girlfriend Veronica when she says to him after their encounter in old age: "You just don't get it . . . You never did, and you never will" (*SE* 131). For so many years, he has been trapped in these solipsistic illusions of his past life.

The virtue that saves Tony from his illusions is his courage to face up to his past faults in his old age and reexamine his life with corroborations from others. The starting point of Tony's transformation is the discovery of the letter he had sent in reply to Adrian and Veronica. It marks not only "an unwelcome change to the structure of his autobiographical narrative" but also a turn in his attitude towards others (Holmes, "Divided Narrative" 35). The ugliness of the letter makes him realize the "damage" his solipsistic thinking has done to others. Though still trying to find some excuses for his behaviour, he expresses his sincere remorse: "Hurt pride, pre-exam stress, isolation? Excuses, all of them. And no, it wasn't shame I now felt, or guilt, but something rarer in my life and stronger than both: remorse. A feeling which is more complicated, curdled, and primeval" (*SE* 99). This feeling of remorse changes his mentality from being a victim of Veronica and Adrian's betrayal to possessing an awareness of having been the wrongdoer.

The new sympathy Tony feels for Veronica and her parents evoked by the letter is the starting of his awareness of the Other. As he says, "That ugly letter provoked remorse in me. Veronica's account of her parents' deaths—yes, even her father's—had touched me more than I would have thought possible. I felt a *new* sympathy for them—and her" (*SE* 120, emphasis mine). This sympathy is new because he may have never felt it before in his egoistic life. Barnes takes this transformation as a gradual process. At this stage Tony has not yet come out of his egoistic state completely and this sympathy is motivated by his intention to be reunited with

Veronica,[52] but he has begun to develop what Barnes calls "imaginative sympathy" towards others, as I have analyzed above. Barnes shows that opening up to others can bring about new recollections of memory. During his resumed contact with Veronica, Tony gradually goes out of "the familiar memory loops", and many fresh memories are released into consciousness. Without his subconscious repression, many erased traces come back to his mind. For instance, he recalls the night he went to the Severn Bore: "Veronica had been alongside me. My brain must have erased it from the record, but now I know it for a fact. She was there with me" (*SE* 119).

In this reawakening of memory, Tony's face-to-face encounter with Adrian's son functions like an epiphany. During their second meeting, Veronica brings Tony to a group of mentally challenged individuals but does not explain their identities. Motivated by his curiosity about Veronica's relationship to this group, Tony later goes to the street several times by himself, hoping to come across them again. His first direct encounter with Adrian's son is in a shop:

> The gangly bloke was now in front of me and as I was about to make my way past I stopped and looked at him properly. He was about forty, just over six feet, with pallid skin and thick-lensed glasses. I could sense he was keen to turn his back again. But instead, he did something unexpected. He took off his glasses and looked me full in the face. His eyes were brown and gentle. (*SE* 136)

This is an encounter full of interpersonal warmth. The man overcomes his fear and opens his heart to a stranger. But Tony's first word of kindness just frightens him away when he mentions Mary's name. As the narrator Tony describes, "I watched as he first began to smile, then panic. He turned away, gave a muted whine, shuffled close to the Indian woman, and took her hand" (*SE* 136).

While describing this encounter, Barnes sets great store by the face. Just as Levinas regards the face's epiphany as "a word of honor" (*TI* 202), Barnes describes the face as the mark of sincerity. As the narrator comments, "But if the face contradicts the speaker's words, we interrogate the face. A shifty look in the eye, arising blush, the uncontrollable twitch of a face muscle—and then we know. We

[52]Rachel Carroll interprets Tony's attempt to contact Veronica as "both a desire for reconciliation and a desire to enlist her in the act of rewriting the past so as to erase the trace of his transgression" (160).

recognize the hypocrisy or the false claim, and the truth stands evident before us" (*SE* 137). When he sees the face, the identity of the person dawns on him and he realizes he is Adrian's son.

In addition to this revelation of the person's identity, the face brings about Tony's ethical epiphany. Tony's face-to-face encounter with Adrian's son changes his understanding of his own life and that of others. It brings about a real transformation in his attitude towards others. Tony admits that his first reaction is still "solipsistic" (*SE* 138), for he takes this encounter as fate's punishment for his curse upon Adrian and Veronica. After this first reaction, his "imaginative sympathy" begins to work. He imagines Veronica's hard life with "her" son, who is not "able to function independently in society" (*SE* 139), although it is based on his miscalculation that the disabled man he met is the child of Adrian and Veronica (in fact, he is the child of Adrian and Veronica's mother Mrs Ford). In addition to this, he begins to examine the flaws in his own personality, especially his meanness towards others in his past life, such as his unforgiving attitude towards his daughter, who "occasionally forgot to send an email" (*SE* 140), and the "ungrateful thoughts" he had about Veronica in their recent contact.

Tony's remorse for his youthful indifference towards Robson's death marks his real awareness of the alterity of the Other. The discovery of the real cause of Adrian's suicide brings back the similar suicide of Robson in their adolescent years. Adrian's son helps him realize the pain suffered by Robson's family, which arouses his sincere sympathy for the dead Robson, his girlfriend and their child:

None of us had thought about the child, or the future. Now, for the first time, I wondered what had happened to Robson's girl, and to their child. The mother would be about my age, and quite probably still alive, while the child would be nearing fifty . . . I found myself wanting, even at this distance, to apologise to Robson's girl for the idle way we had discussed her, without reckoning her pain and shame. Part of me wanted to get in touch and ask her to excuse our faults of long ago—even though she had been quite unaware of them at the time. (*SE* 141)

This sympathy for strangers is a further step in Tony's ethical awakening.[53] With the awareness of the alterity of the Other comes responsibility towards others. Levinas

[53] In the recently adapted movie version directed by Ritesh Batra, this ethical attitude towards others is highlighted by several inserted details, such as the gradual change of Tony's attitude towards the mailman, his ex-wife and daughter. Though unfaithful to the original in content, it captures Barnes's ethical tone in the novel.

takes the face of the Other as a revelation of the moral responsibility we have to the Other, as he says, "The face position, or opposition par excellence can be only as a moral summons" (*TI* 196). He endows it with a religious solemnity: "I do not struggle with a faceless god, but I respond to his expression, to his revelation" (*TI* 197). After the encounter with Adrian's son, Tony begins to reconsider Adrian's life and his suicide. He has been an important reference and the ideal other for Tony, but the revelation of his son's face "change[s] him from a Camus-quoting repudiator for whom suicide was the only true philosophical question, into . . . what? No more than a version of Robson" (*SE* 140-41). The real reason for his death is his inability to face up to the coming baby, "the pram in the hall" (*SE* 141).[54] Later, when Tony finally learns of Adrian's relationship with Mrs Ford, he becomes aware of his indirect responsibility for Adrian's death.

At the end of the novel, responsibility becomes one part of Tony's summary of life: "There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest" (*SE* 150). Whereas the novel falls on the word "unrest" with the connotation of the uncertainty of life and meaning, responsibility is added to Tony's former lifestyle of accumulation in a way that makes it meaningful. By paralleling accumulation, responsibility and unrest, Barnes seems to suggest that only with responsibility can one face up to the unrest of time and tide and really appreciate the accumulation of life: "the new emotions that time brings" (*SE* 59).

Opening up to others is also the way towards truth. Levinas attributes the birth of truth to the commitment the *I* assumes towards the other, as he says, "Truth, therefore, is not grasped by a dispassionate subject who is a spectator of reality, but by a commitment in which the other remains in his otherness" (*The Levinas Reader 67*). The contrast between the symbolic scenes at the beginning and the end of the novel displays the difference brought about by this awareness of the Other. The novel starts with a montage of six pictures:

___ a shiny inner wrist;

___steam rising from a wet sink as a hot frying pan is laughingly tossed into it;

[54] Barnes here obviously alludes to Cyril Connolly's famous saying that "there is no more sombre enemy of good art than the pram in the hall" (127). The coming baby here is not a threat to art but a test of Adrian's responsibility, which he fails.

___ gouts of sperm circling a plughole, before being sluiced down the full length of a tall house;

___a river rushing nonsensically upstream, its wave and wash lit by half a dozen chasing torchbeams;

___ another river, broad and grey, the direction of its flow disguised by a stiff wind exciting the surface;

___bathwater long gone cold behind a locked door. (*SE* 3)

These pictures are characterized by their obvious "thingness". The things replace the relationships behind them and are more symbolic of Tony's past pattern of memory construction: the oblivion or erasure of other people in his life. Dominated by solipsistic thinking, he just erases those figures standing behind these things from his memory.

In contrast to these pictures is another group of images appearing in Tony's mind at the end of the novel:

> I thought of a young woman dancing, for once in her life. I thought of what I couldn't know or understand now, of all that couldn't ever be known or understood. I thought of Adrian's definition of history. I thought of his son cramming his face into a shelf of quilted toilet tissue to avoid me. I thought of a woman frying eggs in a carefree, slapdash way, untroubled when one of them broke in the pan; then the same woman, later, making a secret horizontal gesture beneath a sunlit wisteria. And I thought of a cresting wave of water, lit by a moon, rushing past and vanishing upstream, pursued by a band of yelping students whose torchbeams crisscrossed in the dark. (*SE* 163)

The latter images are much livelier than the first group, for they are dotted with human figures, some of whom have been erased from Tony's memories. The contrast of the two groups of images registers the man's transformation from early solipsism to the awareness of others in his later life. The human faces light up his past lifeless memories.

The progress of the novel indicates the book's ethical connotations. In spite of Tony's insensitivity and ignorance in his former life, he finally comes to the truth about most things. He finds out the real cause of Adrian's death, the identity of the

mentally challenged person, and, more importantly, his responsibility in Adrian's death. By presenting Tony's constant reconstruction of the past, Barnes illustrates that truth is a process of revision, and it is possible to come closer to the truth, even if it is not the final truth. Tony's recollection is not free from the twisting of his intention, but with the collaboration of others, it is at least closer to the original traces.

To summarize, in this chapter, I have analyzed the complex interrelationship between memory, identity and truth in Barnes's works. While registering the elusiveness of memory caused by cognitive and psychological factors, Barnes highlights the inevitable manipulation in any memory construction and reveals the ethical connotations of memory construction. In this process, Barnes shows both his resonance with and deviation from postmodernism. He shares the postmodern awareness of the mediation of narrative and language in the construction of memory, history and all ethical values, including truth and authenticity, but he does not go so far as to deny their existence or reject the significance of ethical values in memory construction. In this respect, Barnes resonates with the humanistic views held by Ricoeur and Levinas. Like Ricoeur, he believes there are original traces of memory and regards them as the locus of truths and authentic human contact. In *England, England*, Martha's belief in the "capacity of seriousness" leads the direction of her heart, which functions as a counterforce to fabulation and simulation. Echoing Levinas, Barnes emphasizes the importance of the epiphany of the face in the personal transformation from solipsism to the ethics of the Other in *The Sense of an Ending*. Tony's courage to face up to past illusions, and his sincere contact with others, are ways of breaking the cocoon of solipsism and arriving at the truth about both the self and others. Barnes's focus on truth, authenticity and responsibility for others in these two novels is another illustration of his consistent humanistic concerns discussed in previous chapters.

Conclusion

In his interview with *The Observer*, when being asked about the purpose of fiction, Barnes answered, "It's to tell the truth. It's to tell beautiful, exact, and well-constructed lies which enclosed hard and shimmering truths" ("He's Turned Towards Python" 15). This view echoes Shakespeare's saying that "the truest poetry is the most feigning" (*AYL.* 3.3.16-18). It conveys both Barnes's affirmation of the ethical function of literature, and a dialectical understanding of literary truths. His ethical standing is further underscored by the complexity and multiplicity of truths that his novels have conveyed. Truths often emerge in the multilevel dialogues between the fictional and the real; typically between art and life, such as in *Metroland* and *Flaubert's Parrot*. They are displayed in the cross-examination of different versions of history and memory, such as in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* and *The Sense of an Ending*. Accordingly, the form of Barnes's novels is dialogic, dynamic and performative. The postmodern humanism this thesis has defined is an attempt to examine how literary truths are generated in this dynamic interaction between form and content in the selected five novels of Barnes.

This research is a revision of Barnes's position as a postmodernist. As the progression of the thesis indicates, Barnes's attitude towards postmodernism is, in fact, a negotiation. I started with the initiation of Barnes's humanism in his first novel *Metroland*. By teasing out the changing attitudes towards art that the protagonist Chris and his friend Toni display in their development from adolescence to early adulthood, I investigated how Barnes's humanist position—his insistence on the ethical relationship implicit in art and language and belief in the experiential truth—emerges in their negotiation between the humanistic and aesthetic functions of art. I stressed that Barnes's choice of individual experience and perspective in this novel sets the tone for his later novels and is the initiation of his humanism. Although writing in the traditional form of the *bildungsroman,* Barnes has displayed his awareness of the postmodern turn towards the mundane and the prosaic and reacted to it. Therefore, it is the prelude to his postmodern humanism.

I then analyzed Barnes's typical negotiation between postmodernism and humanism in his third novel, *Flaubert's Parrot*. I examined how Barnes integrates postmodern investigation of identity, intertextuality and fictionality into the

humanistic pursuit of love and truth in the novel. I defined Barnes's recreation of Flaubert's life and art as a performative construction, which is capable of both presenting Flaubert's multiple identities simultaneously and expressing a postmodern sense of the multiplicity and mutability of identity. In this way, Barnes creates successfully the image by which Flaubert wants to be remembered but in a way quite different from that of his predecessor. I further examined this sense of "faithful betrayal" in Barnes's intertextual use of parrotry and pastiche. I put Barnes in the in-between area of Flaubert's modernist exploration of the possibility of language as a representation of truth, and the poststructuralist claim that language mediates all value-constructions and determines their essences. Barnes's playful treatment of concepts like "the death of the author" and "the birth of the reader" put forward by Roland Barthes was taken as another dimension to explore his in-between position. Barnes confirms authorial agency in the production of texts, but retains postmodern playfulness by blurring the distinction between author and narrator. I attributed the power and efficacy of the novel to the intricate balance that Barnes maintains between postmodern playfulness and the serious humanistic pursuit of truth and love.

Barnes's exploration of the relationship between art and life in these two novels is also evident in his reflection on the modernist pursuit of the dynamic unity of form and content, as represented by the figures of Baudelaire and Flaubert. Barnes, however, differs from their aesthetic focus on art's autonomy by stressing the ethical implications of art as an expression of truth. His postmodern humanism tempers this aesthetic principle with postmodern reality and reaffirms the ethical concerns of literature. In the two types of negotiation—between aesthetic and humanistic functions of art, as well as between postmodernism and humanism, Barnes recognizes the referential significance that art offers for aesthetic self-formation in identity construction. In addition, he stresses the difference between art and life and considers them as the distance between ideal and real. He valorises the experiential truth realized in this interaction and regards it as the foundation of identity formation or self-identification. With the human heart as its locus, this sense of truth is different from both realistic objective truth and modern psychological truth.

My investigation of Barnes's ecological thinking based on his novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* was intended to reflect on his postmodern humanism in its pertinence to contemporary ecologism and animal studies. Taking the human-animal

relationship as a crucial part of world history has indicated Barnes's clear ecological awareness. His rewriting of world history highlights the historical and ideological root of certain recurrent patterns and the variations of this relationship throughout history. I defined his ecological thinking as ecological humanism based on its affinity to the ecological humanism identified by Brian Morris in the thinking of three scholars Lewis Mumford, Ren E Dubos and Morris Bookchin. It is an integration of Darwinian naturalism with humanism. I examined both Barnes's criticism of anthropocentrism implicated in the different kinds of human-animal relationship presented in the novel and his affirmation of human transcendence realized through morality, art and love with their varying degrees of validity. The latter part, I argued, distinguishes Barnes's ecological thinking from biocentric ecologism. As my analysis demonstrates, Barnes both shares Darwinian understanding of the human-animal difference as an evolutionary outcome and acknowledges human autonomy and responsibility for animals. When analyzing Barnes's treatment of animals as an inseparable Other in defining man's identity, I highlighted his resonance with Levinas's stress on the alterity of the Other rather than submitting the Other to the self as practiced in traditional totalizing thinking. This insistence on alterity of animals goes beyond the controversy over their intrinsic values in biocentrism.

Barnes's sense of human heart as mediation between instinct and mind was further strengthened as a balance between instinctual longings and moral judgments. It deviates from the domination of reason in philosophical humanism established by Descartes and Kant. Barnes's concept of love with its two prerequisites of "imaginative sympathy" and "beginning to see the world from another point of view" was extended to the human-animal relationship. It is a valid foundation for the relational or symbiotic ecological relationship projected by ecological humanism. In this way, I established love as another key aspect of Barnes's postmodern humanism.

The last axis around which I have developed Barnes's postmodern humanism is the fallibility of memory in its relationship to identity and truth. Deviating from the more popular construction of public memory of certain controversial historical events, which involves the ethics of memory and justice, Barnes mainly explores the individual memory construction in daily life. However, this does not prevent him from integrating the macro level of memory and history construction into the micro level. He makes individual and collective memory construction imbue each other in his novels and reveals their common features. I investigated both Barnes's resonance

with postmodern exploration of memory's elusiveness and constructedness, and his stress on the ethical connotations of memory construction based mainly on his two novels *England, England* and *The Sense of an Ending*. I examined the cognitive, psychological, and political mechanisms and ethical connotations behind memory construction. While recognizing the working of the first two factors in the inevitable fiction of memory, he discloses the manipulation of memory with the demand of an identity and underscores the ethical connotations of memory construction. I detected the latter in his sharing of Ricoeur's trust in "good" memory as the only locus of truth and Levinas's belief in the epiphany brought by the face of the Other. These ethical connotations constitute another aspect of his postmodern humanism.

Through this analysis, we can see Barnes's fictional world focuses on the lived experiences of those average people: their reach and grasp and moral choice in life. Barnes exhibits a sober awareness of the postmodern reality. The character Tony in *The Sense of an Ending* interprets life as "the accumulation, of loss, and of failure" (113), which summarizes the new existential condition of our age with no grand narratives and great heroes. Mediocrity is the normal state of most people's life, particularly that of the English middle-class, to which Barnes's characters belong. However, will this mediocrity cancel all dreams that had been cherished or struggles to make meaning out of life, or out of the history of the world? Barnes's novels display how his characters reconcile themselves to such failed life or chaotic state of history and make sense out of them. He shows more the active pursuit of meaning, truth and love of these average people and their constant transcendence in negotiations with others and the world at large, in spite of their limited or even flawed perceptions. He stresses the importance of art, morality and love in this transcendence and the epiphanies brought about by the encounter with others for the solipsistic self. As a writer, he presents this journey from the limited but evolving perspective of the characters and makes no condescending comment or judgment, which implicates openness towards different interpretations.

By defining the typical feature embodied in Barnes's works as postmodern humanism, I sought to explore the possibility of bridging the two seemingly conflicting concepts of postmodernism and humanism. As my analysis shows, there is a possibility of such a combination in these selected works. Barnes further implies the necessity or even inevitability of such a combination in a postmodern age. As the previous analysis shows, Barnes, in most cases, departs from the radical postmodern

scepticism and reverts to humanistic values, but he at the same time breaks with traditional totalizing grand narrative schemes. In his reflection on the issues of (re)presentation and truth, he shares the postmodern awareness of the mediation of language in meaning-making and value construction, but he also stresses the necessity and validity of such traditional humanistic values as truth and love, as the counterforce against postmodern relativism and radical scepticism, which form the foundation of an ethical life. Barnes's illustration of truth and love echoes the early sceptical humanism advocated by Montaigne, and resonates with the propositions of three contemporary French scholars Levinas, Ricoeur and Todorov. In these works, the traditional humanistic values are in dialogue with postmodern social reality and postmodern theory. His works underline the persistent presence of ethical values in both life and literature. This reverberates with the broader return to humanist ethics in literary, cultural and historical studies in the 1990s. Barnes's extension of the modernist pursuit of the unity of form and content echoes these scholars' efforts to reestablish the connection between ethics and aesthetics.

As a combination of two of the most controversial terms, postmodern humanism may seem to be too sweeping, but it fits well with Barnes's literary choices and the scope of his writing. As Holmes observes, "Barnes's novels do not aspire to the status of sanctified aesthetic icons", instead, he seeks to "write with more breadth about human experience" than is usually contained within the category of "literary fiction" (*Julian Barnes* 13-14). Postmodern humanism captures exactly the artistic feature of Barnes's works embodied in the five selected novels. The four chapters centring on three themes cover the initiation and major dimensions of Barnes's negotiation between postmodernism and humanism. While demonstrating his resonance with postmodern scepticism of traditional axiological systems and the awareness of the mediation of language in their construction, Barnes reconstructs the humanistic values of truth and love, and holds on to them as being necessary for a meaningful and ethical life.

Postmodern humanism better conveys the general trend of perfect unity of form and content that Barnes endeavours to achieve behind all his various concerns – namely, with the formation of individual identity, establishing contact with others, and human-animal relationships, as well as memory- and identity-construction at both individual and collective levels. It is a mediation between the postmodern desire to deconstruct the traditional "grand narratives", and an awareness of the necessity of

preserving certain traditional humanistic values. This is typified in Barnes's emphasis on the ethical connotations implicated in literature and language, in his advocating a more harmonious human-animal relationship as an extension of the ethics of the Other, and in his belief in the existence of original memory traces, on which truth and identity are built, despite the treacherous machinations of memory. What he has presented in his novels is truth in between: a unity of formal juxtaposition of different genres and styles and thematic dialogues between different concepts, views and traditions.

When commenting on a good book, Barnes once said, "When you read a great book, you don't escape from life, you plunge deeper into it. There may be a superficial escape—into different countries, mores, speech patterns—but what you are essentially doing is furthering your understanding of life's subtleties, paradoxes, joys, pains and truths" ("My life as a Bibliophile"). We capture such subtleties through his exploration of the interaction between art and life, reflection on the essence of love and marriage, as well as the deconstruction and reconstruction of traditional concepts like truth, history, memory and identity.

As a demonstrably versatile writer, Barnes offers enormous potential for future studies. Since Barnes's works are characterized by heterogeneity, it is impossible to put all his works under one rubric. The humanistic elements in his works—such as his concern with death and grief—are worthy of further exploration. Barnes's two recently published novels, *The Noise of Time* and *The Only Story* (2018) present new perspectives on humanity and love. In addition to his novels, Barnes's short stories and his non-fictional writing are valuable sources for investigating his narrative skills and artistic principles. The diversified genres in his novels and his essayistic writing style require more systematic scholarly investigation.

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