

ARTISTIC DYNAMICS OF HUMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES IN JULIAN BARNES'S PROSE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22763151>

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada taniqli ingliz adibi Djulian Barns nasrida inson ruhiy kechinmalari va uning badiiy tasvir dinamikasi " Oxirat hissi " ("The Sense of an Ending") romani misolida chuqur tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda yozuvchining narrativ strategiyalari, xususan, "ishonchsiz roviy" (unreliable narrator) usulidan foydalanishi, xotiraning subyektivligi va ruhiy jarohatlarning vaqt o'tishi bilan o'zgarishi badiiy-psixologik jihatdan o'rganilgan. Barns nasridagi ramzlar, jumladan, Severn daryosidagi toqin hodisasi va o'tmish xat gipotezalari orqali insondagi vijdon azobi va mas'uliyat hissining poetik dinamikasi ochib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Djulian Barns, psixologizm, xotira, ishonchsiz roviy, badiiy dinamika, ruhiy kechinma, "Oxirat hissi".

Аннотация. В данной статье глубоко анализируется динамика художественного изображения психологических переживаний человека в прозе Джулиана Барнса на примере романа «Предчувствие конца» ("The Sense of an Ending"). В исследовании рассмотрены повествовательные стратегии писателя, в частности применение приема «ненадежного нарратора», субъективность памяти и трансформация психологических травм сквозь призму времени. Поэтическая динамика чувства вины и ответственности раскрывается через ключевые художественные символы прозы Барнса, включая явление борра на реке Северн и эго-документы прошлого.

Ключевые слова: Джулиан Барнс, психологизм, память, ненадежный нарратор, художественная динамика, психологические переживания, «Предчувствие конца».

Annotation. This article examines the artistic dynamics of human psychological experiences in the prose of renowned British author Julian Barnes, focusing specifically on his Booker Prize-winning novel *The Sense of an Ending*. The study explores Barnes's narrative strategies, particularly the deployment of the "unreliable narrator" technique, the subjectivity of human memory, and the temporal transformation of psychological trauma. Through a detailed literary analysis of core symbolic motifs-such as the Severn Bore phenomenon and historical epistles-the paper illuminates how Barnes synthesizes psychological depth with complex narrative architecture to explore themes of guilt, remorse, and historical responsibility.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, psychological realism, subjective memory, unreliable narrator, artistic dynamics, *The Sense of an Ending*, remorse.

Contemporary Western postmodernism and post-postmodernist prose have undergone a notable paradigm shift: from purely metafictional play and textual deconstruction toward a renewed commitment to human interiority and psychological authenticity. At the forefront of this philosophical-literary turn stands Julian Barnes, whose masterpiece *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) presents an extraordinary convergence of intellectual rigor and emotional acuity.

The novel, which earned Barnes the Man Booker Prize, serves as an exemplary case study for analyzing how psychological states-specifically guilt, nostalgia, self-deception, and existential remorse-are dynamically rendered through sophisticated narrative mechanisms. Literary scholarship has long grappled with the representation of internal consciousness. While nineteenth century realism relied heavily on omniscient narration to externalize interior monologues, and early twentieth-century modernism utilized stream-of-consciousness techniques, Julian Barnes constructs a distinctive post-postmodern psychological framework. In Barnes’s prose, psychological reality is not merely displayed; it is filtered through the fallible, reconstructive machinery of human memory. The core proposition of this article is that the dynamic of psychological experience in Barnes’s prose is intrinsically bound to narrative unreliability and temporal distance. By analyzing *The Sense of an Ending*, this study highlights how interior emotional crises are externalized through symbolic imagery, stylistic ellipses, and structural shifts.

The psychological depth of *The Sense of an Ending* relies critically on its first-person narrator, Anthony (Tony) Webster. Now in his sixties, Tony attempts to recount his youth during the 1960s, his relationship with his enigmatic university friend Adrian Finn, and his first love, Veronica Ford. The novel is explicitly split into two distinct structural halves: Part One represents Tony’s calm, curated, and self-serving memory of the past, while Part Two documents the dramatic rupture of this curated narrative under the weight of archival evidence. From a psychological perspective, Tony Webster embodies what Wayne C. Booth famously categorized as the "unreliable narrator," but with a vital nuanced distinction. Tony is not a malicious liar; rather, he is an average individual engaged in unconscious psychological defense mechanisms-specifically rationalization, suppression, and self-protective revisionism. Barnes utilizes Tony’s internal voice to demonstrate how human memory acts not as a faithful recording device, but as a creative, defensive institution. As Tony himself observes early in the novel:

“Memory equals what we think we’ve remembered. What you end up remembering isn’t always the same as what you have witnessed.” (Barnes, 2011, p. 14)

The artistic dynamic unfolds precisely in the gap between what Tony remembers and what actually occurred. In Part One, Tony presents himself as a harmless, slightly aggrieved victim of circumstances-a man who suffered a standard romantic rejection when Veronica left him for Adrian. His emotional state is depicted as settled, mild, and resigned to comfortable mediocrity.

However, the narrative trajectory in Part Two destabilizes this emotional equilibrium. When Veronica’s mother leaves Tony Adrian's diary in her will, and Veronica provides Tony with the actual letter he wrote to Adrian decades earlier, the psychological landscape transforms violently.

Narrative Axis	Part One: Curated Memory (Static State)	Part Two: Uncovered Reality (Dynamic Rupture)
Self-Perception	Peaceful, innocent, victim of adolescent rejection.	Complicit, emotionally stunted, cause of tragedy.
Tone & Rhetoric	Nostalgic, detached, philosophical, measured.	Fragmented, anxious, interrogated, destabilized.

Perception of Time	Linear, chronological, safely archived.	Cyclical, intrusive, emotionally immediate.
Psychological Defense	Repression and narrative editing.	Collapse of ego defense and ethical reckoning.

The letter, which Tony remembered as a slightly bitter but dignified sign-off wishing the new couple well, is revealed to be a venomous, malicious tirade urging Adrian to consult Veronica's mother and predicting psychological destruction. The physical manifestation of this text shatters Tony's carefully constructed ego ideal. The artistic dynamic here is one of psychological shock: the prose moves from smooth, reflective essayism to terse, fractured, and anxious queries.

Barnes demonstrates that human emotions are not static traits but dynamic, volatile constructs capable of undergoing radical reinterpretation decades after the initial events took place.

In Barnes's prose, psychological interiority is rarely expressed through direct sentimental exposition; instead, it is mediated through potent symbolic structures that encode internal turmoil into physical phenomena. The primary natural motif in *The Sense of an Ending* is the Severn Bore—a tidal wave that travels upstream against the river's natural current. In his youth, Tony and his friends travel to witness the Severn Bore in the middle of the night. In the memory of the aged Tony, this hydrological anomaly becomes an extended metaphor for the unnatural, reverse movement of time and memory. Naturally, rivers flow forward into the sea, symbolizing the forward march of linear time. The Severn Bore, however, represents the intrusive wave of the past crashing back into the present. Psychologically, it signifies the return of the repressed—how forgotten trauma and suppressed guilt can travel back upstream through consciousness, overturning decades of psychological complacency.

Another crucial artistic device is the motif of mathematical equations and historical philosophy introduced by Adrian Finn. During high school history lessons under Mr. Oldford, Adrian asserts that history is "that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation." Later, Adrian writes a complex mathematical formula on his chalkboard prior to committing suicide:

$a + b = c$ or $x + y = z$; where emotional responsibility accumulates exponentially over temporal distance.

This integration of philosophical formulas within a narrative of personal drama illustrates Barnes's unique poetic technique. Emotional states are elevated from subjective grievances to universal epistemological inquiries. The dynamic interplay between documentation (the physical letter, the diary) and memory (Tony's subjective recollections) creates a tension where the protagonist must confront his own moral cowardice.

A critical thematic distinction made in the novel—and one that is essential to understanding the evolution of psychological experience in Barnes's work—is the difference between regret and remorse.

Regret is passive, looking back at unfavorable outcomes with mild sorrow for oneself; remorse is active, ethical, and devastating, recognizing one's direct agency in causing harm to others.

Throughout Part One, Tony feels mild regret about how his youth unfolded. However, as the revelation of his past letter coincides with his discovery of Adrian and Veronica's disabled son (born from a tragic chain of events initiated by his cursed advice), Tony is forced out of comfortable regret into profound remorse. Barnes captures this transition through a shift in sentence structure and rhythmic cadence. The prose loses its ironic distance and assumes an urgent, raw, and unresolved ethical weight.

Tony's final psychological state is characterized by the phrase "a great unrest." This unrest is not a temporary state of mind, but a permanent transformation of his identity. He realizes that his lifelong pursuit of safety, moderation, and emotional self-preservation was, in reality, a form of emotional cowardice that contributed to the destruction of brilliant lives. Julian Barnes does not offer a comfortable catharsis or neat closure; instead, the dynamic of psychological experience remains open-ended, compelling both the character and the reader to inhabit the uncomfortable space of existential accountability.

Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* represents a pinnacle in modern psychological prose. By employing an unreliable narrator, sophisticated temporal structures, and evocative natural symbolism, Barnes transforms the traditional novel of psychological realism into a dynamic exploration of memory, guilt, and identity.

The artistic dynamics of human psychological experiences in Barnes's prose are defined not by static characterization, but by continuous transformation. Emotions in his world are evolutionary: a forgotten grievance from youth metastasizes over forty years into a devastating moral awakening in old age. Through the figure of Tony Webster, Barnes demonstrates that human beings constantly edit their psychological pasts to protect their fragile present egos. However, when objective reality ruptures this narrative self-deception, the resulting collision generates a profound poetic force—a "great unrest" that reaffirms the centrality of ethical responsibility in human existence.

Ultimately, this research underlines that Barnes's contribution to world literature lies in his ability to harmonize formal narrative innovation with deep emotional authenticity, establishing a masterclass in how modern fiction can portray the intricate, fluid, and often painful dynamics of the human heart.

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