UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
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“There is Something Behind It All”:
The Narrative Construction of Russian Cultural Memory in Julian Barnes

Elena Alexandrovna Malinovskaya Bollinger

Orientador(es): Prof.ª Doutora Luísa Maria Rodrigues Flora

Tese especialmente elaborada para obtenção do grau de Doutor no ramo de Estudos Ingleses e Americanos, na especialidade de Estudos Comparatistas

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the narrative construction of Russian Cultural Memory in the work of Julian Barnes. The literary analysis of the selected texts reflects upon the significance of blurred borders between cultural and communicative dimensions of memory, and a metonymic and metaphorical intertextuality, thus challenging the belief in a homogeneous national identity. Conveying the idea that memories are always constructed, *The Lemon Table* (2004) displays the memory process as a transcultural mode of the creation of identities. Sweeping across and beyond national boundaries, *England, England* (1998) reveals how frail the invention of tradition is when leading not only to a solid collective memory but also to its political legitimation. Focusing progressively on the retrieval of literary themes from Russian literature, *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) narrates an intertextual remembering by duplication, thus working on the prevention of forgetting through the recuperation of the otherwise forgotten meaning. Welcoming the need to constantly revisit canonical works, these texts represent the permanently moving architecture of cultural memory. *The Noise of Time* (2016) plays with intertextuality as an efficient tool of the displacement of memory. Grounded in the double meaning of a literary image as a mnemonic image of memory and a product of imagination, the so denominated creative stimulus of literature, this text seems to insist that biography can become a mode of fiction about life. *The Only Story* (2018) draws a parallel between what Lachmann designates the art of memory and writing as a mnemonic act. According to Barnes, this text consciously recovers a forgotten thematic dimension subtly introduced in *The Sense of an Ending*. Thus, a central relationship between a young man and a middle-aged woman acquires a new voice, becoming its strong moral and emotional dilemma. Alluding to Tolstoy's ethic and psychological quandary, and to

Gogol's sarcastic sense of humour, its narrative construction (re)defines the multiple ways in which mnemic imagination and poetic imagination interact in Barnes's fiction.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, Russian Nineteenth-Century Literature, Cultural Memory, Intertextuality, Communicative Memory.

Resumo

Esta dissertação pretende discorrer sobre a construção narrativa da memória cultural russa na obra de Julian Barnes. A análise literária dos textos seleccionados reflecte sobre o significado da interacção permanente entre a memória cultural e a memória comunicativa, assim como a intertextualidade metonímica e a intertextualidade metafórica, resisitindo assim ao conceito de uma memória nacional homogénea. Partindo do princípio de que as memórias são sempre construídas, *The Lemon Table* (2004) apresenta o processo de construção da memória como uma experiência transcultural na revelação de identidades individuais e colectivas. Transcendendo as limitações de interpretação da existência humana provenientes das imposições sócio-culturais pelas fronteiras nacionais, *England, England* (1998) revela a vulnerabilidade de qualquer tradição nacional que pretende manter-se inalterada com o passar do tempo, assim como da sua legitimação geo-política. Focando-se na recuperação de temas literários provenientes da literatura Russa dos séculos XIX e XX, *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) narra o processo de construção da memória cultural através da intertextualidade assente na duplicação de imagens, propondo assim a recuperação gradual do sentido como alternativa ao seu esquecimento. Acentuando a necessidade de revisitar constantemente obras canónicas, esses textos simbolizam a arquitetura itinerante da memória cultural. *The Noise of Time* (2016) explora criativamente as mais variadas vertentes estruturais e temáticas da intertextualidade como um instrumento narrativo eficiente na deslocação do processo da memória, personificando a matriz fictícia e criativa na qual a biografia factual frequentemente assenta. Sustentando o duplo sentido inerente à imagem literária que reside, por um lado, na natureza mnemónica da memória e, por outro, no mero produto da imaginação associada à recuperação das memórias, o chamado estímulo criativo da

literatura, este texto parece insistir na ideia que a biografia é sobretudo uma ficção sobre a vida. *The Only Story* (2018) pode ser considerado um bom exemplo daquilo que Renate Lachmann designa como um paralelo "entre a arte da memória e a escrita como um acto mnemónico". De acordo com Barnes, este texto recupera intencionalmente um dos temas mencionados, mas não desenvolvidos, em *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), debruçando- se sobre a relação entre um jovem e uma mulher de meia-idade, relação cuja construção narrativa ficara, na obra anteriormente publicada, nas suas margens temáticas. Em *The Only Story*, esta linha do enredo adquire uma nova voz, um argumento reflexivo e consistente, e torna-se num dos seus principais dilemas morais e emocionais. Aludindo simultaneamente aos questionamentos de raiz ética e psicológica revelados, por exemplo, na composição narrativa de *Anna Karenina* (1877), e ao sentido de humor sarcástico de Gogol que reflecte sobre a condição humana em *Almas Mortas* (1842) e, por último, intercala com a representação estética das vertentes existenciais da condição humana através da (inter)subjetividade e da incomunicabilidade em *Gooseberries* (1898), a construção narrativa desses textos (re)define as múltiplas maneiras pelas quais a imaginação mnémica e a imaginação poética interagem na ficção de Barnes.

Seguindo a definição do conceito de intertextualidade proposta por Julia Kristeva, cuja reflexão defende a forma dialógica e não linear através da qual as palavras e os textos frequentmente interagem, a dissertação segue a análise do texto sob a perspectiva da sua permeabilidade (inter)textual. O processo da abordagem comparativa dos textos seleccionados traz consigo a importância de considerar o dialogismo bakhtiniano como um princípio fundamental na sua organização temática e estrutural. Tanto o conceito dialógico de Bakhtin, inicialmente relacionado com a justaposição ambígua de duas ou mais expressões, como a ênfase de Kristeva na impactante

multiplicidade de significados observados num texto literário, que muitas vezes resulta da co-presença dos discursos do outro na construção narrativa de uma determinada personagem, propõem um dos fundamentos teóricos essenciais na construção narrativa do palimpsesto de memória nos textos de Barnes. Em *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (2013), Aleida Assmann reconhece a importância da memória cultural para o desenvolvimento da identidade, tanto nacional como individual. A perspectiva intertextual da presente investigação considera não apenas o processo dialógico teoricamente relacionado com a simultânea alteridade e singularidade dos textos seleccionados, mas tenciona igualmente propor um olhar crítico para a sua dimensão auto-reflexiva responsável pelo processo, não linear e ambivalente, envolvido na construção da memória literária e cultural russas nos textos de Barnes.

Considerando a importância da análise discursiva detalhada de várias referênciais temáticas da literatura russa, esta dissertação procura relacionar o processo narrativo da memória com a dimensão narrativa assente na recuperação dos terrenos imaginários esquecidos, sendo ambos os processos responsáveis pelo modo como o 'outro' (texto) surge reconstruído na narrativa de Barnes. Salientando a ideia de Bakhtin de que essa reconstrução pode refletir um "contacto dialógico entre várias obras de arte literária", a dissertação procura não apenas identificar as distintas fontes literárias russas articuladas nos textos propostos, mas também criticamente reflectir sobre as complexidades estéticas relacionadas com a tentativa de construção narrativa da memória cultural através das referências intertextuais.

Desta forma, os textos narrativos propostos para a análise literária no âmbito desta dissertação procuram demonstrar, por um lado, o modo hermético como as referências (inter)textuais estruturam a perspectiva sócio-histórica da memória cultural,

realçando a sua visibilidade extrínseca. Por outro lado, os mesmos textos debruçam-se, através das referências intertextuais cruzadas com os textos provenientes da literatura russa, sobre a problemática da representação estética da realidade sócio-cultural num texto literário que, em condições favoráveis ao "afecto emocional" do escritor, se converte num cruzamento semântico de ideias e de ideais cuja recuperação gradual permite encontar, por detrás da dimensão tendencionalmente hegemónica da memória factual, um patamar escondido de memórias que pode ser recolhido e recriado num período histórico e social diferentes. Os textos de Barnes, seleccionados para o presente trabalho, procuram explorar o repertório institucional da memória literária e cultural russas não somente como um guardião eficaz do pensamento e da expressão de ideias num certo período histórico, mas igualmente como um importante quadro referencial para uma nova e criativa representação de perspectivas culturais e dimensões temáticas armazenadas na literatura dos séculos XIX e XX, transformando-se numa reconstrução narrativa alternativa das memórias do passado. As dimensões do silêncio e da contradição na representação estética da realidade desempenham um papel de relevo no complexo sistema de reconfiguração (inter)textual da arquitectura da memória nas obras de Barnes aqui analisadas.

Ao recordar o contexto familiar, em *Nothing to be Frightened Of* (2008), Barnes revê criticamente a importância das memórias partilhadas, considerando-as como um instrumento narrativo de coesão entre "a terra da contradição e a terra do silêncio". Além disso, o escritor articula a sua perspectiva pessoal de experiência em recontar as memórias, realçando o efeito circular das mesmas, uma vez que a reconstrução narrativa de uma memória torna-se responsável por construir o processo de identidade humana, tal

como uma identidade individual ou colectiva é também determinada por uma selecção de memórias construídas.

No domínio da criatividade literária, o significado de alteridade na representação estética da realidade pode sofrer uma mudança funcional que pode igualmente ser condicionada, segundo Barnes, por uma tranformação das referências culturais, uma vez que nenhuma memória possui a sua própria finitude, mas depende essencialmente do diálogo intertextual, da interacção e da (re)confirmação com outras memórias. Enfatizando a importância crucial da dimensão do lado afectivo na recuperação ficcional das memórias, Barnes afirma, por exemplo, que "uma história sobre narrativa e memória" pode de facto se transformar numa "história mais, não menos interessante" (Barnes 2008: 231). Por esta razão, explorar lugares de memória na narrativa não se deve limitar a horizontes temporais ou espaciais específicos do passado, uma vez que a concretização narrativa e a (re)construção ficcional da memória podem ser metaforicamente consideradas como aberturas semânticas na estruturação cultural e histórico-social dos processos da memória cujos perfis críticos visam orientar a sua construção numa determinada direcção. Meditando sobre os diversos vínculos de carácter não linear estabelecidos entre a vida e a arte, a escrita de Barnes simultaneamente reflecte sobre a condição humana, a percepção colectiva e individual da história, e a verdade. "Para ser honesto, digo menos verdade quando escrevo jornalismo do que quando escrevo ficção. Pratico ambos e gosto de ambos, mas, para dizer isso de uma forma brusca, quando se escreve jornalismo a nossa tarefa é simplificar o mundo e torná-lo compreensível numa só leitura; ao escrever ficção a nossa tarefa é reflectir sobre as complicações mais intrínsecas da realidade, [...] e produzir algo que possui a capacidade de revelar outras camadas de verdade numa segunda leitura" (*Conversations with Julian Barnes*, 2009: 65).

Palavras-chave: Julian Barnes, Literatura Russa do Século XIX, Memória Cultural, Memória Comunicativa, Intertextualidade.

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List of Abbreviations used for Barnes's Works

EE – England, England

FP – Flaubert's Parrot

HW – A History of the world in 10 ½ Chapters

KEO – Keeping an Eye Open

LT – The Lemon Table

NF – Nothing to Be Frightened Of

OS – The Only Story

SE – The Sense of an Ending

NT – The Noise of Time

List of Abbreviations used for the Works of the Russian Classics

AK – Anna Karenina

DS – Dead Souls

GB – Gooseberries

GI – The Government Inspector

NT(b) – The Noise of Time

WA - What is Art?

Narratively, they survive in the memory, which some trust more than others.

— Julian Barnes, *Nothing to be Frightened Of*

Hermann shuddered; indeed, instead of an ace he held the queen of spades. He could not believe his eyes, nor understand how he could have made such a slip. At that moment he seemed to see the queen of spades winking and smiling at him.

— Alexander Pushkin, *The Queen of Spades*

Before my trip, *The Kreutzer Sonata* was a great event for me, but now I find it ridiculous and it seems quite absurd...To hell with the philosophy of the great men of this world! All great wise men are as despotic as generals and as rude and insensitive as generals, because they are confident of their impunity.

— Leo Tolstoy, on the composition of *The Kreutzer Sonata*

The true story no one knows; the curious reader would be best advised to complete it for himself.

— Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls*

The bookcase of early childhood is a man's companion for life. The arrangement of its shelves, the choice of books, the colours of the spines are for him the colour, height, and arrangement of world literature itself.

— Osip Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time*

Introduction

"I Have a Collecting Nature to Me"

At the end of *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008), Julian Barnes challenges his reader "to make usefully vivid [...] the contradiction, and to make the silence eloquent" (*NF*: 240), as he introduces the theme of the "interstices of ignorance", which is both the novelist's task and the essence of truth:

> We all – their grandson (me), the reader (you), even my last reader (yes, you, you bastard) – are confident that the truth lies somewhere in between. But the novelist (me again) is less interested in the exact nature of that truth, more in the nature of the believers, the manner in which they hold their beliefs, and the texture of the ground between the competing narratives. (*NF*: 240)

Reflecting upon his family context, Barnes comes to consider the importance of shared memories as a narrative instrument of cohesion between the 'land of contradiction and [the land of] silence' (*NF*: 240). Moreover, from a personally stated perspective, the writer describes the circular effect of memories which construct human identity just as an individual or collective identity is also responsible for the selection of constructed memories:

> I once spent many years failing to save a friend from a long alcoholic decline. I watched her, from close at hand, lose her short-term memory, and then her long-term, and with them most of everything in between. It was a terrifying example of what Lawrence Durrell in a poem called 'the slow disgracing of the mind': the mind's fall from grace. And with that fall – the loss of specific and general memories being patched over by absurd feats of fabulation, as the mind reassured itself and her but no one else – there was a comparable fall for those who knew and loved her. We were trying to hold on to our memories of her – and thus, quite simply, to her – telling ourselves that 'she' was still there, clouded over but occasionally visible in sudden moments of truth and clarity. Protestingly, I would repeat, in an attempt to convince myself as much as those I was addressing. 'She's just the same underneath.' Later I realized that I had always been fooling myself, and the 'underneath' was being – had been – destroyed at the same rate as the visible surface. She had gone, and was off in a world that convinced only herself – except that, from her panic, it was clear that such conviction was only occasional. (*NF*: 141)

In the realm of writer's creativity, a functionalist change of what lies 'underneath' may equally be conditioned, according to Barnes, by an exchange of references in the cultural framework, since no memories possess sticking emphasis of their own, but depend essentially on intertextual dialogue, interaction and mutual (re)confirmation. Focusing on the importance of affect and the dimension of a culturally constructed identity in the fictional retrieval of memories, Barnes for instance states that 'a story about narrative and memory' turns into a 'more, not less, interesting story' (*NF*: 231). Exploring places of memory in the narrative should not be limited to temporal and spatial horizons of the past, as its narratively fabricated concretizations may metaphorically be regarded as semantically mobile insights into the selection processes that aim to direct the construction of cultural memory:

> Narrative: the truth of a novelist's story is the truth of its final form, not that of its initial version. Memory: we should believe that Beyle was equally sincere, whether writing at a few hours' distance from events, or fifteen years later. [...] Time brings not just narrative variation but emotional increase. (*NF*: 231)

Thus, as externally visible means of cultural storage, the narrative equally becomes, under favourable conditions of a writer's 'emotional increase', an enabling semantic system for gradual retrieval of materials lying 'underneath' the accepted network of memories, creating a renewed semantic dimension that can be collected and recollected in a later period[1]. Instead of being regarded as an instrument of institutional repertoire that tends to restrict the scope of thought and expression, a depository of

[1]For more information about academic research in emotion and memory, see for instance, Fiedler, K. (2001), "Affective states trigger processes of assimilation and accommodation", in L. L. Martin and G. L. Clore (Eds.), *Theories of mood and cognition: A user's guidebook* (pp. 86–98). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Though the term emotional memory is frequently applied throughout this dissertation, its structural implications for the narrative construction of memory in the selected Barnes's works will be approached, with more details, in The Integrative Chapter.

cultural data stored in literature turns into the powerful referential framework for the new structures of thought capable to readdress critically the memories of the past. This point of view is particularly well articulated by Birgit Neumann in "The Functions of Literature in the Formation of Memory" (2010), as she exemplifies several ways in which "literature – through its aesthetic structure – paves the way for cultural change" (Neumann, 341). She owes this to the fact that literature enables us to construct an interesting dialogue between speech and silence throughout the narrative representations of consciousness, even if those are not restricted to fictions of memory:

> Narrative psychologists have pointed out that novels, with their conventionalized plot-lines and highly suggestive myths, provide powerful, often normative models for our own self-narration and interpretation of the past [...]. Apparently, when interpreting our own experience, we constantly, and often unconsciously, draw on pre-existing narrative patterns as supplied by literature. Thus, by disseminating new interpretation of the past and new models of identity, fictions of memory may also influence how we, as readers, narrate our pasts and ourselves into existence. Fictions of memory may symbolically empower the culturally marginalized or forgotten and thus figure as an imaginative counter-discourse. By bringing together multiple, even incompatible versions of the past, they can keep alive conflict about what exactly the collective past stands for and how it should be remembered. Moreover, to the extent that many fictions of memory link the hegemonic discourse to the unrealized and inexpressible possibilities of the past, they can become a force of continual innovation and cultural self-renewal. Thus, far from merely perpetuating culturally pre-existing memories, fictions of memory have a considerable share in reinforcing new concepts of memory. (Neumann, 341)

When we turn to the relation between Barnes's several reflections on the ongoing connection between life and literature, we encounter the unique contribution of his wise acknowledgement, in *The Lemon Table* (2004), that the endeavour to create a story is much more than a significant ordering of words, since the meaning mostly translates itself into an emotional affect of a play between the words[2].

[2] See, for instance, the thematic intricacies of the narrative construction of memory in the short story "Appetite" (in *The Lemon Table*, 2004). Even though the leitmotif of the 'listening silence' prevails in the whole process of communication, it comes to display, ironically, not only the paradox of a self-conscious realization that the characters are no longer capable of communicating anything meaningful to each other,

The dimensions of undifferentiated silence and unprepossessing absence play a special role in a complex system of (inter)textual redistribution of meaning in Barnes's task as a writer, as he acknowledges in *Nothing to be Frightened Of:* "Because what you can't find out, and where that leaves you, is one of the places where the novelist starts. We (by which I mean 'I') need a little, not a lot; a lot is too much. We begin with a silence, a mystery, an absence, a contradiction" (*NF*: 238).

"The land of contradiction and silence" gradually acquires a great aesthetic value in Barnes's reflections on the art of writing, as far as "contradiction" may refer to an external means of storage of cultural and literary references, whereas silence creatively activates the multiple memory processes, able to "tell all stories, in all their contrariness, ...and irresolvability" (*NF*: 241). The question of the representational irresolvability of the "vivid contradictions", whose purpose is, according to the writer, the art of fiction, contributes to rethink a plethora of literary devices and narrative mechanisms of memory. Mostly, their critical perspective is directed, in Barnes's words, towards "the one true story, [but] the one that [equally] smelts and refines and resolves all the other stories" (*NF*: 241).

Research on the narrative mechanisms of memory in Barnes's work invites us to consider not only the device of irresolvability in the process of the retrieval of Russian literary canon or of the juxtaposition of the manifest and the latent narrative levels. In addition, there is actually a need to examine the extent to which subjectivity and emotion may determine distinctive perspectives on the particular text or life experience embodied in it, and to consider a controversial narrative approach to the various patterns of

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but also the fact that it is the words themselves, as well as their absence, which are controlling the semantic waves of an apparently pre-existing fixed meaning.

recollection. The realm of silences and contradictions, leading to the creative articulation of the dimension of irresolvability in Barnes's texts, helps underline the importance of his reflections on the art of writing registered in the Interviews, frequently referred to in the scope of this dissertation. Besides throwing some light on the thematic and structural conception of several of Barnes's works, they present us with the intricate juxtaposition of existential contradictions and the lively debate on the relationship between public memory and private memory which proves to be valuable for the analysed texts in many ways. Several of the chapters of this dissertation will articulate both the points of etymological proximity and critical distance between the conceptions of literature, culture and memory proposed in the Interviews and in the author's works, thus arguing that the process of the narrative construction of memory is mostly a result of an irresolvable and contradictional interaction between Barnes's texts and *other* texts' memories.

The importance of bearing in mind a sense of representational irresolvability of the 'vivid contradictions' seems to reside at the heart of the narrative construction of memory in Barnes's texts. Moreover, Barnes's reflection on silence and contradiction challenges an attentive reader to no longer perpetuate the dimension of forgetting, but to probe into those (inter)textual territories in which the semantic obliteration of meaning becomes the essential part of the process of the narration of cultural memory. As an example, those silently present (inter)textual dimensions are reflected in Barnes's contradictory recreation, in the course of *The Only Story* (2018), of the expression observed in Gogol's *The Government Inspector* (1836), which simultaneously is the title of this dissertation.

"There is something behind it all"[3] articulates the presence of a complex mnemotechnical construct capable, on the one hand, to provide access to and participate in the literary work of the past, and, on the other hand, to transform, from the 'underneath',

the means of storage of cultural knowledge preserved in this quote. As an intertextual reference with extensively metaphorical meaning, this narrative element provides a favourable background for evoking other intertextual allusions controversially displayed in the temporal and spatial sequence of both *The Government Inspector* and *The Only Story.* The question of etymological irresolvablity of shared memories, as addressed in Gogol's text, acquires an unexpected emotional development in Susan's critical approach to the necessity of reconstruction of cultural borders between the newly inspired modern consciousness and the 'interstices of ignorance' of a remembered past. The question of a self-definition by means of the (re)turn of memories becomes a leading structural dimension in both texts, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters of this research work.

Born in Leicester on January 19, 1946, Julian Barnes was educated at the City London School and at Magdalen College, Oxford. Both parents were schoolteachers, and so the arts – or as he properly notes, "the idea of the arts" – were respected in the house. The principle of the accumulation of cultural experience as a narrated memory process is well expressed in Barnes's recollections of his life course at Oxford, emphasizing once again the homology between "one true story" and cultural practices addressed in "all the other stories":

> At Oxford, I read Montaigne for the first time. He is where our modern thinking about death begins; he is the link between the wise exemplars of the Ancient

[3] N. Gogol, *The Government Inspector,* in *Plays and Petersburg Tales*, p.250;
J. Barnes, *The Only Story*, p.124.

> World and our attempt to find a modern, grown-up, non-religious acceptance of our inevitable end. [...] Montaigne is quoting Cicero, who is in turn referring to Socrates. His learned and famous pages on death are stoical, bookish, anecdotal, epigrammatic and consoling (in purpose, anyway); they are also urgent. (*NF*: 39)

After graduating, he worked as a lexicographer for the Oxford English Dictionary supplement for three years. In 1977, Barnes began working as a reviewer and literary editor for the *New Statesman* and the *New Review*. From 1979 to 1986 he worked as a television critic, first for the *New Statesman* and then for the *Observer*.

Julian Barnes is the author of novels, short stories and essays.

Barnes has received the 2011 Man Booker Prize for *The Sense of an Ending*. Three additional novels were shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize (*Flaubert's Parrot* 1984, *England, England* 1998, and *Arthur & George* 2005). Barnes's other awards include the Somerset Maugham Award (*Metroland* 1981), Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize (FP 1985), Prix Médicis (FP 1986). Also in 2016, Barnes was selected as the second recipient of the Siegfried Lenz Prize for his outstanding contributions as European narrator and essayist. His *Levels of Life*, published in 2013 and reflecting on how life and death are intertwined through the narrative process of memory was a *Sunday Times* number one bestseller. On 25 January 2017, the French President appointed Julian Barnes to the rank of Officer in the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur. The citation from the French Ambassador in London, Sylvie Bermann, reads: 'Through this award, France wants to recognize your immense talent and your contribution to raising the profile of French culture abroad, as well as your love of France.' (www.julianbarnes.com)

Defending the idea that there is a perpetual dialogical process in art, Barnes observes in *Keeping an Eye Open* (2015): "I didn't realise – couldn't yet see – how in all the arts there are usually two things going on at the same time: the desire to make it new, and a continuing conversation with the past. All the great innovators look to previous innovators, to the ones who gave them permission to go and do otherwise, and painted homages to predecessors are a frequent trope" (*KEO*: 9).

Recalling childhood, Barnes acknowledges his unconsciously growing emotional relationship with literature as a part of 'real' life, since he considers it as such in the excerpt quoted below:

> [...] there were proper books on the shelves; and there was even a piano in the sitting room [...]. By the age of twelve or thirteen, I was a healthy little philistine of the kind the British are so good at producing, keen on sports and comics. Though I was introduced to literature as part of my schoolwork, and was beginning to see how it might have connections to real life, I thought of it mainly as a subject on which I would have to pass examination. (*KEO*: 3-4)

Exploring complex nonlinear connections established between life and art, Barnes's writing reflects on human condition, collective and personal sense of history, memory and truth. He reiterates,

> to be honest I tell less truth when I write journalism than when I write fiction. I practice both those media, and enjoy both, but, to put it crudely, when you are writing journalism your task is to simplify the world and to render it comprehensible in one reading; whereas when you are writing fiction your task is to reflect the fullest complications of the world, [...] and to produce something that you hope will reveal further layers of truth on a second reading. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 65)

His recently published book, *The Man in the Red Coat* (2019), addresses an attempt to challenge the strict thematic lines offered by the official historical accounts of a controversial Pozzi's biography, whose reputation has been congealed into a man who

constantly attempted to seduce his female patients. The sense of alienation towards the difficulties of accessing the past accurately, portrayed in this text, finally derives from the love of reading seen as the copyist's / writer's creative dissipation of the precursor's piece of writing. Following Renate Lachmann's research into intertextuality, the reading process of this text invites us to examine how the semiotic process of textual doubling operates in the narrative through a variety of literary techniques such as quotation, inversion and transposition. It contributes to conceal, rather than to reveal, the existence of a silenced secret in the continuous deferral of the process of writing: the agony of copying is a simultaneous rebellion against the meaning of the precursor's text, as recognized by Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence*[4]. Recognizing that the process of copying continuously reinterprets the writer's condition, the failed attempts to copy correctly the original past conceals a rebellion against the source meaning that cannot be recovered: it acts only as an illusion of truth.

Julian Barnes's allusion to Logan Pearsall Smith (1865-1946) "some people think that life is the thing; but I prefer reading" (Barnes 2012: xviii-xix) subtly reminds us that any sense of reality, consciously assembled by the human mind, rests upon the intricate narrative processes, which structure and regulate its content and thus become essential for the construction of the meaning. Barnes's "collecting nature" is properly confessed in the already referred *Nothing to be Frightened Of,* since he classifies memory as the primary condition in the construction of identity:

[4] In his study, Bloom states the theoretical importance of the concept of *kenosis*, whose articulation may be defined the repetition in discontinuity, mostly related to S. Freud's description of the 'uncanny'. Namely, Bloom refers that "among cases of anxiety, Freud finds the class of the uncanny, "in which the anxiety can be shown to come from something repressed which recurs. […] this uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged by the process of repression" (Bloom: 77).

> Though science and self-knowledge have led us to doubt what our individuality consists of, we still want to remain in that character which we have perhaps deceived ourselves into believing is ours, and ours alone. […] Memory is identity. I have believed this since – oh, since I can remember. You are what you have done; what you have done is in your memory; what you remember defines who you are; when you forget your life you cease to be, even before your death. […] Identity is memory, I told myself; memory is identity. (*NF*: 140-141)

Focusing on the existing connection between the construction of memory and a process of identity, Barnes simultaneously describes cultural and literary practices in which this interpretation of an ambivalent sense of a self emerges. According to the writer, the experience of the ambivalence of a self is emphasized by means of a creative moment paradoxically revealed in a textualized dimension of the forgotten, since he critically observes that "we talk about our memories, but should perhaps talk more about our forgettings, even if that is a more difficult – or logically impossible – feat" (*NF*: 38).

The 'restorative tendency' (Lachmann 1997: 183) of congealed memories in literature is theoretically approached by Julie Sanders in *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006). The author discusses critical perspectives on intra- and intertextuality in the sphere of literary studies, acknowledging the existence of the narrative strategies and the aesthetical arrangements of texts which distinguish the literary work from the non-literary discourse[5]. The venture to establish theoretical boundaries which differentiate literary discourse from the non-literary representations of reality is, as the author argues, currently at odds with "the radical changes which have taken place in the study of literature during the last decades of the twentieth century" (Sanders 2006: 1-2). Among the changes in the (re)structuring of the critical frame of references in the discipline of literary studies, Sanders focalizes "the position of literature within a larger sphere of culture; the

[5] For more details, see Part 1 of *Adaptation and Appropriation*.

relationship between literatures of different cultures; and questions concerning the relation of literary to other cultural forms within the context of interdisciplinary studies" (Sanders 2006: 2). Questioning how often the author may indeed exercise an indisputable control over the text, Sanders examines the foundational importance of "the inherent intertextuality of literature [encouraging] the ongoing, evolving production of meaning, and an ever-expanding network of textual relations" (Sanders 2006: 3), whose concretization lies at the heart of the reading experience. More precisely, Sanders observes the processing activation, in a reader's mind, of those "pleasurable aspects of reading into such texts [that] their intertextual and allusive relationship with other texts" traces and brings into existence the networks of association of renewed and forgotten meanings. Those have been foundational aspects in the currently acclaimed position of literary studies in the larger sphere of culture. In line with Sander's critical position, Astrid Erll defends that the attempts to establish a connection between the sense of reality represented in a literary text and its extratextual context is supported mostly by the reader's ability to (re)connect the discursively constructed experience of the text with the boundary-crossing dimensions of cultural frameworks originated by different mnemonic realities. To be more precise, Erll states that the

> […] elements of external 'reality' are usually repeated in the literary text", [even if such] a repetition does not occur simply for its own sake. In the context of the fictional world, the repeated reality becomes a sign and takes on other meanings. […] The result is that 'extratextual reality merges into the imaginary, and the imaginary merges into reality'. Through this interplay between the real and the imaginary, fictional texts restructure cultural perception. (2011: 150)

In a similar stance, Barnes's process of reading creates the possibility of a constructive dialogue between the nuances of a lived life with a multi-layered set of the fictionally represented experiences rendered in a literary text. The following question

addressed to Barnes the novelist describes the writer's constant concern not only with literature, but also with the 'stuff of life':

> Guppy: Do you think you have to choose between literature and life?
>
> Barnes: No, I don't think we do or can. […] But art comes out of life: how can the artist continue to exist without a constant re-immersion in the normality of living? There's a question of how far you plunge. […] The creative to-and-fro of the collaborative arts has to happen internally for a novelist. But at the same time it's to fiction that we regularly and gratefully turn for the truest picture of life, isn't it? (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 80).

The writer's emphasis on reading partially recalls Paul Ricœur's philosophical thoughts on time and narrative registered in *Time and Narrative* (1984). In this treatise, the author reveals how the reading process of a fictional narrative contributes to dismantle the culturally established prefiguration of a literary text, juxtaposing the symbolically configurated semantic arrangement of the sociocultural contexts of remembering with the reader's poetical, mostly imaginative, reception and (re)figuration of the culturally constructed versions of the past, thus disrupting the linearity of the symbolically mediated representations of the human experience of reality. Erll's thesis that fictional texts may actually restructure cultural perception and delineate new memory narratives insists on the dynamic transformational process of the literary (re)creation of reality, defining literature as "an active, constructive process, in which cultural systems of meaning, narrative operations, and reception participate equally… […] Text and contexts, the symbolic order of extratextual reality and the fictional worlds created within the medium of literature, enter into a relationship of mutual influence and change" (Erll 2011: 152).

In Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), the reference to the emotionally sustained appropriation of the process of reading as a reliable voice of reality almost immediately recalls Tony's controversial act of remembering his past as a

creative and constructive journey into the realm of the fictional world constructed by a fragment from his friend's diary, 'version of a version' in which circular and intertwining life experiences of the three characters are synthetized into the cultural objectification of memory. The interdiscursive negotiation of competing narratives of memories which necessarily converts the whole process of memory into a constant polyphonic flux of conflicting ideas, experiences and images of a self, (re)figured into a rather unstable sense of identity, endows the narrative construction of *The Sense of an Ending* with a reflexive approach towards literature which, as Astrid Erll mentions in *Memory in Culture*[6], "is a medium which simultaneously builds and observes memory" (Erll 2011: 159). Defining that the narrative construction of cultural memory in literature manifests textual characteristics which are ontologically distinctive from other mnemonic processes of rendering memories, Erll reflects, in accordance with Barnes, upon the paramount significance of a boundary-crossing position of every literary representation, enabling its fictional discourse on memory to become a trigger for other discourse(s) of memory. To be more precise, in a history of cultural memory studies, Erll distinguishes literature as a semantically complex symbolic medium capable of remembering and reconnecting in a single text, the otherwise disperse and ontologically unrelated experiences of the past. Thus, for instance, the reading process of *The Sense of an Ending* exemplifies Erll's above-stated assumption about the ability of a literary text to render the past with a "semantic complexity foreign to other media of cultural memory" (Erll 2011: 151). Indeed, Tony's 'refigured' reading of his past symbolically portrays the potential of

[6] In "Literature as a Medium of Cultural Memory", Erll discusses the possible theoretical dimensions related to the question of a narratology of cultural memory. Her approach to a narratology of cultural memory is thematically connected to the notion of the 'rhetoric of collective memory', which she defines as an ensemble of narrative forms which provokes the naturalization of a literary text as a medium of memory" (2011: 159).

fictional narrative in conceiving a dynamic transformational process of memory, self-reflexively oscillating between extratextual references to life experiences, the textual (un)reliable configuration of a fragment of Adrian's diary and Tony's the reader ambiguous refiguration of his personal relationship with the past. The theoretical dimension related to literature's specific role in simultaneously addressing the production of memory and the reflection on memory processes constitutes, according to Erll, its distinctive feature. Erll refers, for instance, that "on the one hand, literary works construct versions of the past: affirmative and subversive, traditional and new ones. On the other hand, they make exactly this process of construction observable, and thus also criticizable. Literary works are memory-productive and memory-reflexive, and often, like a reversible figure, simultaneously" (2011: 151).

It would be interesting to notice that Barnes's texts tend to address the process of (cultural) memory simultaneously in the productive and the reflexive modes, since their transcultural mnemonic frameworks motivate our capacity to examine the text's cultural configuration of meaning as well as to stimulate critical reflection upon the constructive refiguration of the semantic horizons within which it functions in both source and reception culture(s). Such a reflexive feature is referred to as the "narrative potential" of a literary text, "which can provide clues to the pre- and refiguration of the text in memory culture" (Erll 2011: 157). From a narratological perspective, Erll distinguishes the reflexive mode[7] as one of the most considered discursive skills of representing the past in a literary text, stating:

[7] Besides the reflexive mode, Erll mentions several other modes through which the process of memory can be constituted in a literary text. Mostly, she refers to 'experiential mode' and to 'antagonistic mode'. According to the author, the experiential mode "is constituted by literary forms which represent the past as lived-through experience. Experiential modes evoke the 'living memory' of contemporary history, generational or family memories. […] Typical forms of this mode of literary remembering are the 'personal

> Literature always allows its readers both a first- and a second-order observation. It gives us the illusion of glimpsing the past and is, often simultaneously, a major medium of critical reflection upon such processes of representation. […] Prominent reflexive modes are constituted by narrative forms which draw attention to processes and problems of remembering, for instance by explicit narratorial comments on the workings of memory, the juxtaposition of the different versions of the past (narrated or focalized), and also by highly experimental narrative forms […]. (2011: 159)

The reading process of Barnes's novels, charging the literary text with meaning and simultaneously unfolding the mnemonic potential of literature as a medium of cultural memory, becomes a main vehicle not only to the observation of a manifold structural and thematic construction of cultural memory, but carries meaning itself as a (re)creative act of narrating Russian cultural memory. Once memory studies have progressively been described as a transdisciplinary problem[8], the connection between Russian cultural memory and its literary (re)fabrication in the work of Julian Barnes encourages an interdisciplinary approach even when its methodological articulation benefits from the more restricted theoretical scope of literary studies on which the present dissertation rests. As Erll refers "what is nowadays called 'memory studies', or 'cultural memory studies' has therefore emerged as a multidisciplinary field. And it is essentially an interdisciplinary project: 'memory' both renders possible and requires dialogue" (Erll 2011: 2).

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voice' generated by first-person narration; addressing the reader in the intimate way typical of face-to-face communication; the use of the more immediate present tense; lengthy passages focalised by an 'experiencing I' in order to convey embodied, seemingly immediate experience; circumstantial realism, a very detailed presentation of everyday life in the past". The antagonistic mode is defined as "literary forms which help to promote one version of the past and reject another […] This mode of remembering tends to infuse literary woks which represent identity-groups and their versions of the past, for example, feminist or postcolonial writing. […] More elaborate is the resort to biased perspective structures: only the memories of a certain group are presented as true, while those versions articulated by members of conflicting memory cultures are deconstructed as false. 'We-narration' may underscore this claim" (2011: 159).

[8] See the arguments proposed respectively by Astrid Erll *Memory in Culture* (2011) and by Aleida Assmann in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (2013) through their interdisciplinary approach to the research in cultural memory.

Following Erll's argument, it would be interesting to observe that several of Barnes's novels explore the multidimensional connections between culture and memory not only from the perspective of art and literature, but also of sociology, philosophy and history. The reflexive preoccupation with findings of neighbouring disciplines, mainly history and philosophy, are imaginatively intertwined with the literary constructions of multi-layered discourses on cultural memory, frequently embedded in the discursive artifacts that are historically and spatially distant. Barnes's texts corroborate to confirm Erll's academic thesis that the interdisciplinary preoccupation with "memory is by no means restricted to any one country, but is an international phenomenon" (Erll 2011: 2).

Barnes's novels, analysed in this dissertation, are mostly concerned with a complex and non-linear process in which a psychology of retrospection is shaped by a continuously changing combination of traditions, (re)readings, (re)writings, and creativity. Its main challenge consists, nevertheless, in finding way to a valuable theoretical equilibrium between the concepts which address ontological categories and disciplinary approaches to memory, since it would not be wise to ignore or deny important distinctions among different kinds of retrospection. Moreover, Barnes's fiction tends to demonstrate that it is not possible to produce, even at the onset of aesthetic communication among distinct texts, a true and absolute version of the past. For instance, in "Cultural Memory: A European Perspective", Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti agree that

> The breaking of all canons, the juxtaposition of macro and micro history, the questioning of the ideas of objectivity and subjectivity in the historiographic rendering, as well as in literature, have taught us all to be prudent observers and to use the plural instead of the singular: no longer a unique "memory", but many "memories", many traces left by the same event which in time sediment in the individual consciousness, as well as in the collective consciousness, and that are often – consciously or unconsciously – hidden or removed; traces that nevertheless stay and that suddenly or predictably re-emerge each time the historical, political or cultural context changes. [...] It is memory as a process (over the course of time) which is

> reshaped according to the present – hence its pivotal role in interdisciplinary studies of both the notion of historical context and that of the context of the dialectics of temporality. (Fortunati and Lamberti, in Erll 2010: 128)

In the present case, it would be necessary to acknowledge, from the beginning, that Barnes's novels' narrative approach to memory comes close to the above-stated argument on the legitimacy of using "memories" instead of a seemingly overreaching term "memory". Indeed, "memories" may apply better and clearer to the splitting nature presented by the narrative reconstruction of Russian cultural summa offered by his work, therefore this kind of approach may well accomplish, from both the theoretical and the practical perspectives, some of the discursively conceived, intertextual dimensions, proposed for the present research. Nevertheless, in order to stress the ambiguity of Barnes's novels when they function as a culturally reconstructive and summational work on memory, it is also necessary try to establish a clear conceptual framework for the process of the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's work. Moreover, the crucial aesthetic factors in the overall representation of Russian cultural memory as exposed in Barnes's texts and analysed in this dissertation derive from the assimilation of a synthesis between rewritings and textual manipulations of memories encoded within the works of some 19th and 20th century Russian authors. Even though the presence of the narrative manifestations of changes and cultural discontinuities within Russian identity should necessarily be involved in the study of intertextually conceived references to its literature, which are further differentiated in their respective national-historical contexts, the academic research of aesthetic discontinuities within the Russian literary sphere would certainly be worthy of an autonomous project. The purpose of this study is to pursue the thematic and structural significance of the ontological connections established within aesthetic border transgressions and cultural mixtures observed in the

textual dimension of Russian texts and revalued in Barnes's work. For this reason, referring to cultural memory, the dissertation will follow Erll's definition of the concept, stating that "the term "cultural *memory*" accentuates the connection of memory on the one hand and socio-cultural contexts on the other (2010: 4). Here, Erll focuses on "culture as a community's specific way of life, led within its self-spun webs of meaning" (2010: 4).

In the chapter on memory and writing, of *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* A. Assmann reflects upon the significance of fragments, of the so-called "textual traces" coming from the past and probing into a variety of connections established between cultural memory and its narrative representation in the literary work of art. She acknowledges the importance of the continuous (re)constitution of a link between present and past in cross-fertilizing discourses on literary transmission, recovering its forgotten dimension which circulates from one cultural context to another. Addressing memory and writing, the author affirms:

> This statement is a reminder to his colleagues – that is, the salaried professional readers and professors of literature – of something they have completely forgotten: that deep down they are shamans who are holding a continual conversation with the voices of their ancestors and with ghosts from the past (2013: 170).

Conversation with the enabling multiplicity of voices coming from the literary past becomes an important structural element in addressing Barnes's literary production from within its complex narrative processes. Regarding the art of fiction as an endeavour to discover what lies beyond the archive or, more precisely, a storage dimension of memory, Barnes's characters seek to catch the meaning and express the significance of the effect of an intertextual play between words, textual silent spaces and metaphorical allusions. In such a way, the narrative construction of memory in Barnes's selected texts resists to coagulate into any fixed narrative construction with definitive meaning, doing justice to

A. Assmann's below quoted observation on the interplay between writing and the cultural dimension of memory:

> […] reference to the conversation with the dead involves not only the arts but culture in general: the channels of communication and mediation, the anatomy of tradition, and the structure of cultural memory. […] Any study of the media of memory must start out with writing, not just in its social and technical context, but also in the context of what it achieves for memory, which of course will be judged differently from one culture and one era to another (2013:170).

This reflection clearly articulates the continuous interdependence between cultural memory and its narrative representation in literature, addressing simultaneously R. Lachmann's approach to literature as cultural memory and Erll's definition of literature as a medium for cultural memory, registered in *Memory in Culture* (2011). In Erll's view, literary discourse becomes one of the most significant narrative devices of conceiving of memory on both cultural and communicative dimensions. Undertaking a greater look into a multiplicity of its aesthetic functions and narrative processes, the author concludes that literature actively participates in the ontological construction of cultural memory. Being controversial, Erll's approach towards literature and writing proves to be productive when applied to the literary analysis of Julian Barnes's selected texts in light of the intertextually established communication with Russian classical authors, located between an enriching experience of reading and collaborative (re)writing of their texts from within.

Recovering this controversial line of thought by evoking the quotation from Logan Pearsall Smith, whose intertextual network alludes to Osip Mandelstam's concept of the *world culture*, Barnes simultaneously epitomizes his own attitude towards reading and writing registered, for instance, in the following statement:

> Writers should have the highest ambition: not just for themselves, but for the form they work in. Flaubert once rebuked Louise Colet for having the love of art yet lacking 'the religion of art': she fancied its rituals, the vestments and the incense, but did not finally believe in its revealed truths. I am a writer for an accumulation of lesser reasons (love of words, fear of death, hope of fame, delight in creation, distaste for office hours) and for one presiding major reason: *because I believe that the best art tells the most truth about life. Listen to the competing lies: to the tatty rhetoric of politics, the false promises of religion, the contaminated voices of television and journalism. Whereas the novel tells the beautiful, shapely lies which enclose hard, exact truth. This is its paradox, its grandeur, its seductive dangerousness.* Two famous deaths have been intermittently proclaimed for some time now: the death of God and the death of the novel. Both are exaggerated. And since God was one of the fictional impulse's earliest and finest creations, I'll bet on the novel - in however mutated a

version - to outlast even God. (British Council, my italics).

The above quoted reflection on the art of writing mirrors a split within itself and carries out an interesting dialogic conversation of at least two voices in a mutual contact. Its last paragraph, calling attention to the important analytical concepts of modernity – the death of God and the death of the novel - may function here as a site of cultural (self)- reflection and renewal. On the one hand, it articulates displacement, crisis, and the collapse of the established cultural and aesthetic patterns, leading to the disruption of conventional arrangement of textual genres and, subsequently, of its aesthetic function in a cultural context. On the other hand, the displacement of the hierarchical ordering of textual types nurtures the necessary rearrangement and the creative (re)vision of this hierarchy, which goes along the attempt to perceive such a disruption not as a semantical break or discontinuity, but rather as a collecting point of accumulation of cultural experience embodied in writing. Instead of considering the death of God and the death of the novel only as the historically conceived, temporal markers of the new modern era, Barnes's meditation on writing invites the reader to engage in the perpetual circular movement of cultural experiences, either by (re)covering past conceptions of culture, or participating in a constructive dialogue between writing, text and memory. Barnes's "retrospective culturosophy with a distinctly prospective character" (Lachmann 1997: 231), registered in the above quoted excerpt, conceives literary writing as a process of (re)collecting of the literary texts coming from the past. Barnes's novels remember the cultural past not only by means of summational, synchronic retrospection, but also in terms of an unceasing dialogue they establish with the texts from other cultures, by (re)calling and (re)figuring, in the act of writing, the literary texts originated in different historical and cultural contexts.

The 'retrospective culturosophy' embodied in the statement which articulates the death of God and the death of the novel, demonstrated by Barnes, seems, for instance, to

construct an interesting dialogue with Osip Mandestam's statement on memory in writing: "Memory triumphs even at the price of death! To die is to remember, to remember is to die!" (Mandelstam, 1979: 93-94). Voicing metonymically the main thematic lines raised in Pushkin's poem Exegi Monumentum (1836), Mandelstam's reflection on memory and writing reinvents, according to Lachmann's investigation into

> intertextuality in Russian Modernism, the idea of contextual temporality of cultural experience(s) and its consequent displacement from the inheritable realm of memory. In other words, the aesthetic dimension of cultural memory made explicit in the literary text constitutes a textual engraving of cultural sign(s) - the palimpsest of heterogeneous layers of meaning - that transcend the past by recreating it in the act of writing.

Seen as a whole, both excerpts offer evidence of the existence of a double narrative orientation: the first is linear and sequential, while the second is semantic and reiterative. One may claim that the manifest meaning of the statement itself, registered on the primary narrative level, hardly matters. Barnes's certification of art's ability to tell "the beautiful, shapely lies which enclose hard, exact truth" constitutes indeed the surface narrative, whereas in the act of reading one can become aware of at least two more thematic levels that transcend it: that of Gogolean reflection on art and that of the Russian literary tradition of syncretism frequently used by Dostoevsky in his novels. In its cyclical focus, the manifest narrative orientation allows the latent semantic orientation to develop its own voice. Bearing in mind this multiple coding, Barnes's statement on art transcends its literal meaning by merging it into the intertextual system of boundary-crossings, semantic overlappings and repetitions. For instance, in Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842) the narrator develops a reflection on the art of writing, which to a certain extent both anticipates and echoes Barnes's philosophy of creating a novel:

> *Such were the lives led in their peaceful little corner by these two inhabitants, who have so unexpectedly popped up at the end of our poem in order to furnish a modest reply to the accusation of certain ardent patriots, who hitherto have been quietly occupied with some philosophical pursuit or the amassing of wealth for the good of their dearly beloved country, who are concerned not that they should do no wrong, but only that no one should say they are doing wrong. No, it is not patriotism, not some basic instinct, which lies behind these accusations, there is something else concealed there. And why should we not admit it? Who, if not the author, is to utter the sacred truth? You fear the deeply searching stare, you are loath to gaze too deeply into things yourself, you prefer to glance over the surface of things with unquestioning eyes. [...]. But is there any one among you who, full of Christian humility and alone, in a moment of solitary self-examination, will direct this disturbing question, not aloud, but in silence, deep into your own soul: "But might there not be some little bit of Chichikov in me too?* (*DS*: 252-253, my italics)

The apparently trivial conversational style, also associated with some of Pushkin's works, dominates the macrotextual dimension of the above quoted excerpt, as well as of Gogol's poem as a whole, gradually revealing its rich microtextual dimension affected by a rather polyphonic train of thought merging allusions, metaphorical constructions and descriptive narrative techniques that establish an interesting intertextual dialogue with Barnes's reflection on literature. Although both Gogol's narrator and Barnes seem to recall a specific literary tradition of considering a literary work of art as a vehicle of fame and glory as well as of remembering the dead (Assmann 2013: 26), they simultaneously extend its meaning towards contemporary modes of critical questioning of the narrative's ability to "tell the truth". Both quotations retrieve the past meanings ascribed to the ethical purpose of literature, simultaneously making them multi-layered declarations of the renewed ramifying growth of meaning. Both quotations provide their reflections on writing by participating in the manifold overlapping of syncretic connotations coming from the past, which remain in antinomic, conflicting positions. Curiously, even if Barnes's reflection on literature participates retrospectively in Gogol's philosophical thoughts on the author's skill in revealing the 'sacred truth', none of the quotations emerges as a single articulation of truth.

Lachmann's definition of participation attempts to establish a dialogical interaction between memory and culture. It seems also to suggest a further interrelation between memory, culture and writing on which Barnes, Gogol and Mandelstam reflect in the above-examined quotations. As already mentioned, these writers accomplish the construction of an ambivalent relation between the texts retrieved from the past, recognizing, on the one hand, its chronological distance and, on the other hand, the aspiration of experiencing anew the far-removed cultural constructions. Moreover, the narrative framing of cultural memory as depicted in Barnes's and Gogol's quotations do justice to Dostoevsky's poetics of syncretism, whose merging of different literary traditions from both Russian and Western European cultural contexts with, as Lachmann notes, "parodying serious genres and ennobling trivial ones" (Lachmann 1997: 130) turns into one of the dominant techniques registered by Julian Barnes's in the art of writing. Similarly to the image of "stone" (Mandelstam) and of "monument" (Pushkin), which are metaphorically employed in order to bring to light a creative participation in the meanings of the cultural past, Barnes's predisposition to (re)-create the forgotten semantic and aesthetic dimensions articulated by previously written texts contributes to fabricate a transtemporal narrative fiction of cultural memory, thus stimulating the ramifying growth of meaning embedded in the other, than his own, text.

As a consequence, the intertextual syncretic touch towards unstable semantics together with a deliberately stated transgression of conventionally imposed boundaries endows Barnes's writing with a constructive motion of ambivalence entangled in the restorative tendency towards a nonspace and a nontime. In several of Barnes's novels, the experience of transgressing boundaries appears simultaneously as an obliteration of meaning and as a longing for meaning. It would be worth to recall his well-known statement "I don't believe in God but I miss him" which may in fact demonstrate once again how the motion of reflexive ambivalence observable in his writing prevents any fixed cultural memory constructs. One can argue that the latent semantic layer of meaning, incorporated in the gradual (re)covering of Russian classical literature, contributes to display a complex dimension where its cultural memory is shaped and preserved, and consequently averts the manifest layer of meaning – the contemporary articulation of religious, political, and psychological models – from becoming methodologically over-determined and theoretically reductive. Such interconnectedness between inside and outside or, in other words, between the manifest and the latent layers of meaning depicted in some of Barnes's novels, establishes an interesting conceptual parallel with the phenomenon of the 'grotesque mind' developed in Dostoevsky's poetics. Lachmann defines it as "always emergent, transitory, and open, in its unfinished state, [presenting] the "germ" of another mind" (Lachmann 1997: 173). The motion of ambivalence, present in Barnes's novels by means of intertextual dialogue with some works of Russian literature, not only questions what precisely constitutes the classical cultural heritage, but also challenges the attempt to portray Barnes himself as one

postmodernist author who has contributed actively to the deconstruction of the master narratives of classical literature[10]. If the basis of both canonization and deconstruction is exclusion, Barnes's (re)interpretation of the canonized texts from the Russian literary heritage may help to understand how such an exclusion takes shape. Instead of regarding Russian classical literature as its culture's centripetal model, tending towards closure and homogenization, Barnes's fiction invites the reader to contemplate a decentering pluralism of meaning, depicted in his tendency towards boundary transgression and generic mixtures, perceived as the aesthetic manifestation of the cultural mobilization of literary memory.

Doing justice to Aleida Assmann's view of literary memory, Barnes's novels examined in this dissertation exemplify several ways in which palimpsestic memory communes with the art of writing and reading. In *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, Assmann acknowledges the importance of memory for the development of identity, both national and individual, distinguishing between the "storage and the identity functions of memory" (Assmann 2013: 9). Relating the process of memory to the faculty of forgetting, the author addresses the issue of a creative process by which memory is (re)constructed, focusing attention on several examples of literature coming from different historical contexts. Thus, she observes that whereas "Shakespeare's *Histories* construct a national identity by way of historical memories, Wordsworth's *The Prelude* fashions an individual identity through biographical memories" (Assmann 2013: 10). The symbiosis between the above mentioned works suggests one possible way by which literature, labelled by Assmann as "a material support" of the process of cultural memory, frames the very construction of cultural memory through the creative interaction between

[10] See Childs, Peter. *Contemporary British Novelists. Julian Barnes.* Introduction.

collected and *collective*[11] memories embodied in the metaphorical language and employed by individual writers to narrate the mechanisms of memory. Recognizing that modern writing is growing more and more in the direction of connections (11), Assmann subtly observes that interior (emotional) and exterior (contextual) levels of the text, as well as of the artists' and the readers' mind, becomes blurred. Moving towards the discussion of the material support underlying the concept of cultural memory, in which she distinguishes the role of literature, Assmann considers the question of how writing and permanent rewriting comes to condition the narrative (re)construction of memory. Recovering the initially stated theoretical issue of the storage and functions of memory, the author focuses on exploring literary writing not so much in terms of storage of cultural memory, as in terms of its permanent reconstruction through connections between the identity functions of memory. As a result, she affirms that "we are now experiencing a change of paradigm, by which the concept of a lasting written record is being replaced by the principle of continuous rewritings" (Assmann 2013: 11).

The reading process of Julian Barnes's novel *England, England* (1998) has provided an initial interest in exploring the aesthetically interactive type of the literary memory on which this text rests. The dissertation argues that the process of construction of cultural memory depicted in this novel is conditioned by specific (inter)textual practices. These intertextual devices do not come into existence merely as fixed written records of the cultural past referred to in the novel, being instead created, established,

[11] Distinguishing, theoretically, between 'Metonymy', "when cultural remembering is conceived of as an individual act, when the focus is on the shaping force that sociocultural surroundings exert on organic memory" and 'Metaphor', or "metaphorization of the term 'memory' when we speak of the 'memory of culture', 'a society remembering', or the 'memory of literature', Erll equally defines two fundamentally different ways of conceiving of the relationship between culture and memory. She distinguishes between 'collected memory' as the socially and culturally formed individual memory and 'collective memory' which refers to the symbols, media, social institutions, and practices which are used to construct, maintain, and represent versions of a shared past" (2011: 97-98).

communicated, continued, reconstructed and appropriated through *England, England*'s permanent dialogue with other works of literature framing, in Lachmann's terms, its intertextual architecture of memory. Similarly to Assmann's theoretical lines, the narrator in *England, England* articulates the symbolic fusion between what Renate Lachmann designates as *artes combinatoriae* and *ars memoriae* (Lachmann 1997: 15). Both concepts collaborate to construct an architecture of memory of a text which lies in its intertextuality, or, as Lachmann alludes to, in "the complex arrangement of intertextual memory spaces" (15). Considering that "the memory of a text is its intertextuality" (15), Lachmann reminds the reader of the existence of an open space lying between two modes of memory – storage and function – referred to by Assmann as a distinction between *inhabited memory* and *uninhabited memory* (Assmann 2013: 123). According to Assmann, inhabited memory "proceeds selectively by remembering and forgetting", whereas uninhabited memory "is interested in everything, and everything is equally important" (123). The first contact with Barnes's *England, England* has triggered an interest in examining a literary process by which the art of architecture of memory, or a creative reconstruction of memory, takes place in the text. Ironically, Martha's emotional difficulty to retrieve the past memories with precision inevitably expands even more the territory of forgetting, resting upon the question of how an apparently unconscious, concealed literary techniques are subtly developing within the text, destabilizing an apparently memorable cultural records of English history. Martha's vision of her first memory progressively builds itself into an organic structure situated somewhere between storage and function, as a semiotic process of balance and tension between inhabited, manifest and uninhabited, latent, memories. Martha's (re)construction of memory rests upon the inquiry of what is actually significant or insignificant for her identity, but also

of how and why the so denominated significant can be perpetuated for posterity? This continuous movement between the fixed in the archive memories and their shared simulations of missing parts lying beyond the archive seem to inform the narrative composition of the novel, confirming Lachmann's idea of the importance to observe the intertextual space existing between and within the texts:

> Is not the space between texts, in fact, the authentic space for memory? Does not every text also alter that memory space, by altering the architecture in which it inscribes itself? […]. The space of memory is inscribed in a text in the same way that a text inscribes itself in a memory space. The memory of a text is its intertextuality. (Lachmann 1997: 15)

Martha's inquiry into her first memory derives from the fusion between exteriorized and materialized memory of her parents, symbolically represented by a puzzle, and the concealed, latent function of memory, continuously redefining itself through her emotional reconstruction of the invisible, missing, piece of a puzzle. In Lachmann's theoretical terms, Martha's attempt to reconstruct her puzzle of memories comes to represent "writing as both an act of memory and a new interpretation. Every concrete text, as a sketched-out memory space, connotes the macrospace of memory that either represents a culture or appears as that culture. It should therefore be repeated that the memory of the text is formed by the intertextuality of its references. This intertextuality, in turn, arises in the act of writing considered as a traversal of the space between texts" (Lachmann 1997: 16).

The intertextual space between and within the texts registered by Lachmann turns into the initial intellectual challenge residing in the reading process of the novel. If, actually, Martha's puzzle comes to represent an exteriorized and materialized memory, or, in another words, a concrete memory space that has been materialized in the manifest

sign of a puzzle and also in its overtly missing piece, then the triggered process by which she records such a memory, exteriorly imperceptible, becomes an invisible generator of the destabilizing movement developing within the text. The relevance of this movement developing within the text is central for the intertextual connections established inside the text. Those connections become the foundation stone for Lachmann's theoretical account of literature as the memory site for the culture:

> When literature is considered, in what follows, in the light of memory, it appears as the mnemonic art par excellence. Literature supplies the memory for a culture and records such a memory. It is itself an act of memory. Literature inscribes itself in a memory space made up of texts, and it sketches out a memory space into which earlier texts are gradually absorbed and transformed. Texts represent an exteriorized and materialized memory – that is, a memory that has been materialized in manifest signs, in "exterior" writing. (Lachmann 1997: 15)

In "A Life with Books", Julian Barnes reflects upon the symbiosis between life, writing and memory, considering a printed book as a subtle yet infallible connecting point between "an absent author and entranced, present reader" (Barnes 2012: xviii). Further, he emphasizes that the "minority art" of reading, resting upon an alive dialogue among old and new books, contributes to uncover the profound intersections of the individual levels of memory, frequently embodied in a personal recollection of a private experience, and the collective levels of cultural memory, regularly expressed in a group memory (of family, friends, veterans) and in a national memory with its "invented traditions"[12]. It is

[12] For detailed description of the theoretical background of the term, see Hobsbawm, E. (2012). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Canto Classics, pp. 1-14). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781107295636.001. For the purpose of constructing an introductory argument to Barnes's creative process of composing fiction, I propose to consider also one of his reflections upon the composition of *England, England* (1998), in which he connects "...authenticity, the search for truth, the invention of tradition, and the way we forget our own history" to "the idea of England that the nation is being boiled down to..." (*Conversations with Julian Barnes,* 2009: 27). Moreover, he further affirms that "the way we see ourselves as English people is very different from how we are seen" (ibid., 27), demonstrating the way in which cultural memory envisages multiple practices in which national identities are constructed and formally instituted.

notable how significant – for a construction of a memory of a self in a social context – a printed book becomes in Barnes's work. It is precisely the physical book, and emotionally conceived memories associated to it in the form of smells, pencil notes and missing parts, that is and remains, according to Barnes, a perfect symbol of this symbiosis between reading, memory and life. Answering to the question of whether or not he is influenced by Russian literature, Barnes again accentuates the importance of reading, upon which the process of recollection – through the symbiosis between prefigured memory and refiguring imagination - is constructed: "The Russia I think of is mainly fictional Russia – it's more of a fantasy emotional relationship, being that I was there only once in 1965" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 25).

In addition, the writer distinguishes between numerically condensed information contained in an electronic version of a book and an alive and deep process of memory – both on the individual and the collective levels – perceived in a physical book. The exercise of self-definition rests on a living sense of communion with the other, revealed in a contact with a book, staying quietly on a shelf: "I have no Luddite prejudice against new technology; it's just that e-books look as if they contain knowledge; while e-readers look as if they contain information. My father's school prizes are nowadays on my shelves, ninety years after he first won them. I'd rather read Goldsmith's poems in this form than online" (Barnes 2012: xviii).

Barnes's distinction between a physical book and its electronic version sheds light on the theoretical distinction between two functions of memory – *vis* memory and *ars* memory – provided by Aleida Assmann in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (2013). According to Assmann, "*ars* may be called *storage*, by which I mean every mechanical process that aims at the identity between recording and retrieving" (Assmann

2013: 18). Going back to classical Roman tradition of mnemothechnics, the process of storage focuses on an exact correspondence between knowledge, memorizing, rote learning and its direct output. The *vis* function of memory becomes, by contrast, acute to the problem of time, change and transformation, being directly connected to the psychological process of identity. It focuses primarily on a process of remembering, which, as Assmann states, "is basically a reconstructive process; it always starts in the present, and so...there will be shifting, distortion, revaluation, reshaping" (Assmann 2013: 19).

The concern for memory as an art of transferring images from individual psychology to the level of the collective, or, as defined by Barnes, a "minority art" of reading furthering the process of self-discovery through a motivating escape into different countries, mores and speech patterns, seems to be a foundational stone of the writer's imaginative energy fully revealed in his fictional undertaking. As already mentioned, in "A Life with Books", an introductory part of *Through the Window,* he provides a kind of a *memoire* relating his life-long engagement with books and with a reading process: "I have lived in books, for books, by and with books. And it was through books that I first realized there were other worlds beyond my own; first imagined what it might be like to be another person; first encountered that deeply intimate bond made when a writer's voice gets inside the reader's head" (Barnes 2012: ix).

Moreover, the writer refers to the deepest sense of a communion between culture and memory lying beyond each reading process. Thus, for instance, he states:

> By now, I probably preferred second-hand books to new ones. In America such items were disparagingly referred to as 'previously owned'; but this very continuity of ownership was part of their charm. A book dispensed its explanation of the world to one person, then another, and so on down the generations; different hands held the same book and drew sometimes the same, sometimes a different wisdom from it. Old

> books showed their age: they had fox-marks the way old people had liver-spots. (Barnes 2012: xiii)

It is notable how the above-quoted reflection contributes to produce a motivating dialogue between the intimate recollection of personal experience and the peculiar examination of implicit ways by which cultural remembering is constituted and epitomized through generational approach to memory, and provides one of the most fertile theoretical frameworks for the exploration of the theme of the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's work. In "A Life with Books", the writer mentions, explicitly, his background as a passionate reader of Russian literature, still collecting and recollecting printed copies of its classic authors. In addition, he claims that the (re)reading process of these books has provided him with the essential tools for a self-definition:

> By now, I was beginning to view books as more than just utilitarian: sources of information, instruction, delight or titillation… To own a certain book – and to choose it without help – was to define yourself. And that self-definition had to be protected, physically. So I would cover my favourite books (paperbacks, inevitably, out of financial constraint) with transparent Fablon. The Fablon would then be cut and fitted so that it also covered and protected the ownership signature. Some of these books – for instance, David Magarshak's Penguin translations of the Russian classics – are still on my shelves. (Barnes 2012: xi)

Later, the book-collecting experience supplemented this writer's memories regarding the publication of his first novel[13]. The alterity of a writer's self, still profoundly

[13] In "Julian Barnes in Interview", Ronald Hayman recalls the following interesting details about the writing and publishing process of Barnes's first novel, *Metroland*: "One advantage of reading bad fiction in quantity, as a novel reviewer must, is that he comes to feel more confident about his own work. Another effect that a stint for the *New Statesman* had on Julian Barnes was to make him want to preempt the worst of the available obloquy: "I thought, 'There's only one way I can prepare myself for publication, and that's by writing the worst review I'm likely to get myself.' So I wrote it, and really slanged the book, and in the course of the review said the obvious influences are the following, and then gave lots of names". He wouldn't tell me the names he'd listed. They may have included an Amis or two, but in fact *Metroland*

connected with memories of the physical book and the physical bookshop, reveals itself in a quest for the emotionally significant process of a cognitive taxonomy of collective, and cultural, memory. Different shapes of cultural memories turn, for instance, into an ever-present leitmotif in the narrative construction of memory – on the personal and the collective levels – in several of his texts. As mentioned before in this Introduction, *England, England* probes into exhaustive attempts to define memory, which go hand in hand with an aim to define the self and its position in the memory practices a nation undertakes to describe itself:

> 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. So people assertively remembered a face, a knee that bounced them, a springtime meadow; a dog, a granny, a woolen animal whose ear disintegrated after wet chewing; they remembered a pram, falling out of a pram and striking their head on an upturned flower-pot which their brother had placed to climb up on and view the new arrival... They remembered all this confidently, uncontradictably, but whether it was the report of others, a fond imagining, or the softly calculated attempt to take the listener's heart between finger and thumb and give it a tweak whose spreading bruise would last until love had struck – whatever its source and its intent, she mistrusted it. (*EE*: 3-4)

Similarly, in *The Sense of an Ending*, Adrian's reflection on memory restores a certain tendency towards functional binarism which nevertheless represents two ontologically contrary but metaphorically complementary ideological drives within a given culture. On the one hand, there is an objective inclination towards the consistency of the archive while, on the other hand, there is also a predisposition to promote displacement, disconnection and disruption from the fixity of memory structures embodied in culture:

> But of course, my desire to ascribe responsibility might be more a reflection of my own cast of mind than a fair analysis of what happened. That's one of the central problems of history, isn't it, sir? The question of subjective versus objective

doesn't obtrude evidence of influences: it's a literary novel, but the literature behind it is well digested" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 3).

> interpretation, the fact that we need to know the history of the historian in order to understand the version that is being put in front of us. (*SE*: 12)

Even if it is generally agreed that the canon legitimizes to a certain extent the means it employs for including or excluding the works of art[14], Adrian's meditation on the relationship between objective and subjective levels of cultural consciousness throw light on how Barnes's fiction contributes to disrupt the notion of achieving consensus in the process of canonization. While its classical concept as such retrieves an "evaluatory authority of totalizing proportions" (Lachmann 1997: 179), Barnes's semantic manipulation of its intertextual links through (re)writing and (re)creation provides his fiction with the ability to revise the operational functionalism of the process of establishing and constant (re)evaluation of the Russian literary canon[15]. Regarded as external, institutionally established means of a collective store of cultural knowledge, the Russian literary canon has been preserved through centuries and for a more or less indefinite future. Nonetheless, the recently conducted research into foundational texts enabling the nation to define itself both internally and externally tends to question three main aspects which support its functional preservation through time: selection, conservation, and accessibility. This deconstructive line of thought is broadly developed in A. Assmann's *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, and will receive attention in the next chapter. For the sake of clarity, it would be worth mentioning the issue of accessibility which etymologically connects Barnes's fiction with Russian classical literature. The focus is on the selection processes which govern the collection and preserving of Russian cultural texts as well as the politics of their reception, translation and circulation in contemporary England, located between functional continuity but also unavoidable acts of internal disposal resulting into invaluable informational gaps. In such a way, Barnes's inquisitive reception of Russian classical authors, probing into multiple

creative ways of reading and interpreting them, brings the cultural archive of the written tradition toward vivid life imaginatively reactivated through memory. Barnes's reflections on the narrative art reminds his reader of a significant shift from the conventional, premeditated purpose of traditional writing which seeks to be communicative, clear in form and self-expressive, and toward a new aesthetic 'truth of its final form', which brings elements of the creative alternation of emotion and thematic indeterminacy into the world of literary discourse. As mentioned before, the title of this dissertation seeks to communicate the existence of the 'emotional memory gap' revisited in Barnes's fiction between a distance from a variety of literary predecessors and the discursively challenging nature of 'truth of its final form'.

Diachronically communicating, for instance, with the concept of pre-history which dominates Susan's reflections on time and memory in *The Only Story*, Tony's struggle to define his identity through memory intensifies the gradual decentering of a self, embodied in its centrifugal countermodel:

> We live with such easy assumptions, don't we? For instance, that memory equals events plus time. But it's all much odder than this. Who was it said that memory is

[14] See Aleida Assmann (2013), Renate Lachmann (1997) and Mary Orr (2003), for more detailed description of the processes of canonization and its theoretical implications and challenges for the (re)construction of cultural memory in a literary text.

[15] The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines, for example, the following Russian authors as the key figures of Russian Literature: Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Isaac Babel, Aleksandr Pushkin, Ivan Turgenev, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, Nikolay Gogol, Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam, Boris Leonidovich Pasternak (https://www.britannica.com/art/Russian-literature). Besides those, *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, edited by Charles Moser, discusses the literary production of many female writers, who have been long unacknowledged. Although a process of canonization in Russian Literature and its functional impact on Russian Cultural Memory is considerably researched, still remaining thought-provoking and worth of further research, the discussion of the essential characteristics of the Russian literary canon and of the politics of exclusion and inclusion of its authors does not constitute the main purpose of this dissertation; thus, the brief reference to whom is considered to partake of the key figures in Russian Literature by the above mentioned academic source coincides with Julian Barnes's readings into what he denominates as 'Russian Classics'.

> what we thought we'd forgotten? And it ought to be obvious to us that time doesn't act as a fixative, rather as a solvent. But it's not convenient – it's not useful – to believe this; it doesn't help us get on with our lives; so we ignore it. (*SE*: 63)

Defining literary studies, and by extension its critical approach to the processes of canonization of the selected literary works, as the foundational and integrative part of memory studies, Erll distinguishes literature as an effective medium of cultural memory. Even though identifying terminology is one of the most complicated issues in memory studies, as argued in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (2010), Astrid Erll's *Memory in Culture* (2011) simultaneously proposes to consider, in a chronological order, the most influential terms and critical attempts to define memory throughout the 20th century to today, as follows: "*mémoire collective*, Mnemosyne, *storia e memoria, liexde mémoire* sites, or realms, of memory, cultural memory versus communicative memory, social memory, memory cultures, cultural remembrance, social forgetting, the cultural brain, memory in the global age, and transcultural memory" (2011: 6).

First, it is evident that the above-cited quotation echoes the conceptual definition of cultural memory proposed by Astrid Erll (2010). To begin with, the notion of culture explored in the Introduction to her volume is based on the German tradition of the study of cultures[16]. The dissertation will follow the theoretical background provided by Astrid Erll, with the intention to settle, from the very beginning, the critical frame for the analysis

[16] In an Introduction to *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, Astrid Erll proposes a definition of cultural memory studies as follows: "...the term 'cultural' does not designate a specific affinity to Cultural Studies as conceived and practiced by the Birmingham School (although this discipline has certainly contributed to cultural memory studies). Our notion of culture is instead more rooted in the German tradition of the study of cultures (*Kulturwissenschaft*) and in anthropology, where culture is defined as a community's specific way of life, led within its self-spun webs of meaning. According to anthropological and semiotic theories, culture can be seen as a three-dimensional framework, comprising social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artifacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities)" (2010: 5).

of some of Julian Barnes's works. In order to put forward a short clarification of the main definitions and conceptual keywords associated with the concept of cultural memory, the dissertation will partially consider one of Erll's functional suggestions for the interpretation of cultural memory as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" (2010: 2). Erll perceives this interplay on the three-dimensional framework. First, she argues that '"*cultural* memory" can serve as an umbrella term which comprises "*social* memory" (the starting point for memory research in the social sciences), "*material* or *medial* memory" (the focus of interest in literary and media studies), and "*mental* or *cognitive* memory" (the field of expertise in psychology and the neurosciences)" (2010: 4).

She then exemplifies the interplay of present and past on two different levels on which culture and memory intersect. According to Erll,

> the first level of cultural memory is concerned with biological memory. It draws attention to the fact that no memory is ever purely individual, but always inherently shaped by collective contexts. From the people we live with and from the media we use, we acquire schemata which help us recall the past and encode new experience;
>
> the second level of cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past. "Memory", here, is used metaphorically. Societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity inherent in the creation of the versions of the past […]. (2010: 7)

In the third place, Erll alludes to the way we experience memory, working primarily on a technique of how the past is constructed in the present. This approach to memory envisages the third theoretical dimension mentioned by Erll in her study – the distinction between different modes of remembering, or, the how of remembering. Erll states that,

> This approach proceeds from the basic insight that the past is not given, but must instead continually be re-constructed and re-presented... As a result, there are different modes of remembering identical past events. A war, for example, can be remembered as a mythic event ("the war as apocalypse"), as part of political history ("the war my great-uncle served in"), as a focus of bitter contestation ("the war which was waged by the old generation, by the fascists, by men"). Myth, religious memory, political history, trauma, family remembrance, or generational memory are different modes of referring to the past. (2010: 7)

Examining the (un)reliable way of the narrative (re)construction of Russian cultural past in Barnes's work, the above-mentioned depiction of several aspects, related to the methodological framework for cultural memory studies, proves to be of considerable importance. Even if it comes to be expected, from the suggested passages from *England, England*, that such a neat distinction constitutes of course a merely conventional, artificial tool, and that all three dimensions are susceptible to be involved in the making of cultural memories in Barnes's novels, it would nevertheless be advisable to select from these theoretical lines the most convenient ones for a discussion of the main argument proposed by this dissertation. Consequently, the selection of the corpus to be analysed in the dissertation under the perspective of the (re)construction of Russian cultural memory invites us to consider the *material* dimension of memory (literary studies), the *collective* level of memory (the symbolic order of memory) and some aspects of Barnes's *narrative* as a mode of (re)constructing Russian cultural memory. However, as the relationship between culture and memory has been establishing itself as a key issue of interdisciplinary research, connecting academic fields as diverse as history, sociology, art, literary and media studies, philosophy, psychology and neurosciences (Erll 2010: 1), this dissertation proposes to consider, as a form of conclusion, how Barnes's work on cultural memory may indeed position his fiction at the centre of different research traditions.

Therefore, it would be convenient to examine, as a second example of the interplay between writing and memory, the following quotation from *The Sense of an Ending*. It provides an imaginary gap filling in the communicative action between its main characters, namely Veronica, Adrian and Tony. Presuming that the thematic core of the text may, among several other important philosophical issues, be concerned with a level of individual responsibility in the construction of the collective level of memory, the figurative allusion to a linking process of memory becomes an emotional trigger for its detailed scrutiny:

> Or is 'link' a false metaphor?
>
> But allowing that it is not, if a link breaks, wherein lies the responsibility for such breaking? On the links immediately on either side, or on the whole chain? But what do we mean by 'the whole chain'? How far do the limits of responsibility extend?. So, for instance, if Tony
>
> And there the photocopy – this version of a version – stopped. 'So, for instance, if Tony': end of line, bottom of the page. If I hadn't immediately recognised Adrian's handwriting, I might have thought this cliffhanger a part of some elaborate fakery concocted by Veronica. (*SE*: 86)

Tony's awareness of selfhood is perceived as a process of merging between two levels of memory – individual and collective. This intersection does not seem to fit, however, into a linear, chronologically conceived narrative construction of the life course he has first designed. Instead, the structural framework of this text provides an excellent example of the interplay of the present and the past in socio-cultural context. Demonstrating how personal memories are recurrently subjected to transformation due to social influences, ranging from conversation among friends to books and to geographical places, the pursuit of memory depicted in the above-cited quotation establishes several points of contact between two levels of memory proposed by Jan Assmann in "Communicative and Cultural Memory": "Memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and the collective level. On the

inner level, memory is a matter of our neuro-mental system. This is our personal memory, the only form of memory that had been recognized as such until the 1920s. On the social level, memory is a matter of communication and social interaction" (in Erll, 2010: 109).

The "version of a version" of Adrian's letter focuses on revisiting the past on a limited time depth, encompassing the time span of two generations trying to come to terms with their memories originated by former experiences. This dimension of memory targets a theoretical branch of what J. Assmann denominates as a communicative memory:

> Communicative memory is non-institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions;...it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no further back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations. (In Erll, 2010: 111)

Moreover, the sense of individual responsibility in the (re)construction of the collective perception of memory, illustrated in the previous quotation, works on a deeper narrative level, endowing several points of contact with the 19th century Russian literary legacies. It is presumably a sketched-out space for memory, defined by Lachmann as intertextual space for cultural memory, that becomes responsible for the thematic appropriation of several philosophical traces and psychological issues articulated in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878) by Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending*. Thus, two levels of memory, communicative and cultural, are semantically intertwined on the textual deeper narrative level. To be more precise, the communicative level of memory, as metonymically represented by the competing memories of the three friends in *The Sense of an Ending*, is metaphorically challenged by an allusion to a larger philosophical context embedded in the narrative representation of Russian cultural memory, circulating in *Anna*

Karenina. Indeed, similarly to Tony's quests for memory and identity, which metaphorically question the accuracy of the collective sense of a shared past, the collaboration between individual and collective responsibility in the process of memory is also very well explored in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* through Levin's quest for a self-definition, the issue which will receive further development in the Results and Discussion chapter:

> So, what is it that is bothering me?' Levin said to himself, feeling in advance that the solution to his doubts, although he did not know it yet, was already in his soul.
>
> Yes, the one clear, unquestionable manifestation of divinity are the laws of goodness, which have been presented to the world through revelation, which I feel within myself, and through recognition of which I do not so much unite, but am united with, other people. (*AK*: 820)

Levin's thoughts on the process of identity through memory assume the existence of a collaboration between two levels of memory – individual and collective. Moreover, establishing a literary dialogue with the previously cited quotation from *The Sense of an Ending*, it focuses on the mediated intersection between two faculties of memory, doing justice to J. Assmann's reflection of how the communicative level of memory is frequently synthesized by the cultural level of memory. Assmann defines cultural memory as

> a kind of institution. It is exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that, unlike the sounds of words or the sight of gestures, are stable and situation-transcendent: they may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another. In order to be able to be (re)embodied in the sequence of generations, cultural memory, unlike communicative memory, exists also in disembodied form and requires institutions of preservation and re-embodiment. (In Erll 2010: 110-111)

Both quotations explore the interconnectedness between two levels of a self-perception – a collected and a collective, and two levels of memory – communicative and

cultural - through the narrative development of the theme of a chain of responsibility. It becomes an important structuring element in the detailed description of an interior emotional process of memory directed towards self-discovery and undertaken by their main characters. The acute collaboration between texts' intertextual references notably articulates Renate Lachmann's thesis that the creative writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into the *lieu de mémoire*[17]**.** Reflecting upon the literary representation of memory in "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature", Lachmann designates literature as "culture's memory, not as a simple recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by a culture" (in Erll, 2010: 301). Proposing interesting parallels between memory and writing, Lachmann focuses, primarily, on the establishing of a permanent bond between mnemotechniques and literature, or between mnemic imagination and poetic imagination. The retrieval of images from the literary past stimulates, according to this author, the creative impetus of literature, thus contributing to the prevention of forgetting through the constant recuperation of multiple aesthetic and thematic dimensions explored in previous literary works.

The attempt to define the ways in which mnemic imagination and poetic imagination interact in Barnes's fiction, mirroring each other and commenting on each other, is one of the points of this dissertation. Following Lachmann's conception of intertextuality as a cultural memory, which focuses on the double meaning attached to writing as a mnemonic act and as the product of imagination, this dissertation proposes

[17] The concept of the sites of memory derives from Cicero's and Quintilian's *Loci memoriae,* based on a distinction between two kinds of memory, one natural, the other artificial. Further, it develops into Pierre Nora's conception of *Lieux de mémoire*, resting upon ideological connotations responsible for the collective construction of national identity. For further information on this issue, see the 1st Chapter of *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Erll, 2010).

to take a closer look at some intertextual processes by which Russian cultural memory is discursively constructed in Barnes's selected texts. Proceeding from Lachmann's assumption that the memory of the text is formed by the intertextuality of its references, the analysis of the selected texts concentrates on displaying a narratively constructed framework by which a given text enters the domain of other texts. According to Lachmann's model of intertextuality, the dissertation offers, when possible, the analysis of references to entire texts, to a textual paradigm, to a genre, to a stylistic device, to narrative techniques and to motifs. The aim of this inquiry into (inter)textual references to Russian cultural heritage is to (re)construct Barnes's texts as a sketched-out memory space that metaphorically represents Russian cultural memory.

As Peter Childs notices, "Barnes has said that with each novel he aims to write not just fiction that seems fresh to him but fiction which reinvents the novel itself" (Childs, 2011: 9). Focusing on five selected novels from Barnes's rich *repertoire*, the dissertation is divided into three chapters. Such structure attempts to counterbalance 'the sceptical, pragmatic and untheoretical strand' mentioned by Childs as the main distinctive mark of Barnes's fiction. Consequently, the Literature Review chapter displays a concise presentation of the main theoretical concepts, ranging from Erll's and Assmann's reflections on the conception of cultural memory to Lachmann's and Kristeva's models of intertextuality which this study proposes to apply to the literary analysis of Barnes's works. The Integrative Chapter examines an ambiguous manner in which several different interpretations of the process of writing appear discussed by Russian authors of the 19th century and by Barnes's reflections on linking processes of historical and cultural change in contemporary society. The main emphasis is placed on the narrative articulation of cultural memory as a complex and multilayered dimension, ontologically connected not

only to the collective history or the individual experience of the past, but also to the manner in which they are approached in contemporary society. It also meditates, with recourse to a close reading, on the narrative arrangement of several dimensions of intertextual references responsible for the (re)construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's works. The Results and Discussion chapter moves towards the cross-referential overview of the themes proposed in the Integrative Chapter by means of reconnecting the selected articles, followed by a discussion of the limitations, results and the available sources for further work on the theme of Russian and/or Transcultural Intertextuality in Julian Barnes's work. Completing and amplifying the main arguments and concepts presented in the Integrative chapter, it concentrates on the analysis of the interplay between theoretical concepts, underlined in the first chapter, and a narratively constructed cultural memory in Barnes's texts, as provided in the second chapter. The Conclusion addresses possible other questions about the intertextual dimensions of remembering in Barnes's texts, conceiving of memory as a transculturally malleable process, rather than as a phenomenon fixed in time and space.

As the theme of intertextually constructed literary memory plays a crucial role on various narrative levels in the *corpus* selected for this dissertation, and renders itself as a multi-layered inspirational force for new textual (re)connections, there will emerge deliberate repetitions of the core narrative devices, quotations and passages which would provide a fertile background for the constructive juxtaposition of (intertextually constructed) cultural memories in Barnes's work.

The research project, carried out in this dissertation, collects in five articles the detailed analysis of the fragmented intertextual references to several Russian literary works in the selected texts from Barnes's *repertoire*. It completes the proposed arguments

by the additional insights into the textualized fictional realms of intertextual connections between Barnes's *England, England* and Chekhov's *Gooseberries*, and briefly refers to the literary references, allusions and metaphorical connections existing between several of Barnes's texts and Gogol's *Dead Souls.*

The alternative research model and expositional framework chosen for this dissertation are regarded as beneficial for the chapter of the thesis which focuses on the detailed literary analysis of Barnes's works. Its main articulation does not rely on a cumulative argument, even if the theoretical framework of the dissertation does. Rather, the literary analysis of the texts seems to benefit from the cross-sectional and cross-referential research processes, embodied in backward and forward thematic and structural flashes and incorporated in a constructive dialogue among the texts. In other words, the study structure proposed for and by this dissertation depends greatly on the dialogical nature of the research question: different narrative levels on which culture writing and memory writing intersect, emphasizing the importance of multidimensional theoretical accounts on cultural memory studies, as developed by Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann, Astrid Erll and R. Lachmann. These then help underline the value of a literary analysis. The kind of new findings the research proposes to achieve considerably determines the dialogically conceived way in which the literary analysis will be carried out and presented by the way of changing from monographic format to thesis by publication format. The multiple project format (theoretical exposition followed by multilayered analysis of the texts) allows for a closer relationship with the permanent appropriation andreassessment of images and ideas across Barnes's texts, addressing the complex process in which this writer's work proposes to reshape the concept of cultural memory. His texts open up new

horizons of research in literary studies, thus accomplishing new paths for exploring the concept of cultural memory as a transcultural practice.[18]

[18] See Erll's article entitled "Travelling Memory", 2011.

Literature Review

"Let Him Have a Little Bit of Privacy, and Let Him Keep His Secrets, I Say"

> I don't believe in God but I miss him is how I would put it because…because I think that His absence makes life less grand.
>
> Julian Barnes

Already in *England, England*, the polemics involved in by Martha Cochrane's reflections over a contemporary sense of a displaced self has called attention to the issue of a dialogic conception of modern identity. Particularly, the thematic development of the text oscillates between the impulse to reconstruct retrospectively the dispassionate individual memories and the aspiration towards the unconsciously perceived communion with otherness that makes possible Martha's awareness of wholeness in her conception of a self. Visiting a disused, though fixed in a *solid* place, church, the feeling of a discontent with "the life as she had [...] chosen it" overcomes her. Echoing Barnes's above articulated statement, Martha's process of finding herself in another by finding another in herself is narratively emphasized by recognizing that "life [becomes] more serious, and therefore better [...] if there is some larger context" (*EE*: 243).

The intention to reconnect the conceptual methodology proposed for the critical discussion of this dissertation in The Literature Review chapter with Barnes's cumulative interest in the topic of cultural memory as well as with the enthusiastic depth of cultural approaches to remembering in his works frames a favourable background for the

establishing of a close interplay between, on the one hand, aspirations towards accurate academic research into terminology and, on the other hand, the author's controversial statements on the written performance of memory registered mostly in his essays, the already mentioned *Conversations with Julian Barnes*, autobiographical accounts and novels. For instance, the reflection on God's existence vocalized in the epigraph and referring to one of the most philosophically complex Barnes's statements on life[19], may be considered as a valid point of departure for the theoretical approach of cultural memory studies in Barnes's work. To describe the process of how theoretical concepts on memory are performed in Barnes's texts constitutes a challenge for the articulation of the conceptually extricate expression of the dynamic movement of cultural remembering and forgetting forged in his work. It happens precisely because, as mentioned in the Introduction, several of Barnes's texts incorporate complex reflexive dimensions for the inquiry into how collected and collective dimensions of memory are intertwined, foregrounding renewed theoretical perspectives on how the cultural past can be continuously reconstructed and dialogically revisited in the present and in the future. As a consequence, the choice is to deliberately juxtapose theoretical concepts on memory and intertextuality as developed by Renate Lachmann, Astrid Erll, Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann and Julia Kristeva with Barnes's personal reflections on art, writing and the performance of memory displayed in his works. For instance, his reflection on God's existence revealed in *Conversations with Julian Barnes* brings us back not only to Aleida Assmann's theorization of the concept of a memory box[20], but also to Leo Tolstoy's

[19] See, for instance, the writer's reflections on life, death and God registered throughout *Nothing to be Frightened of* (2008).

[20] Assmann, Aleida (2013).

consideration of art, thus demonstrating Lachmann's concept of intertextuality as a cultural memory[21].

Those so far referred to foundational concepts constitute an important theoretical clue for the boundary-crossing articulation between Tolstoy's and Barnes's perceptions of the art of writing. Although Tolstoy understands art as a totally human activity, with all the inherent limitations and shortcomings naturally derived from this recognition, he nevertheless insists on the necessity of art's communion with a Christian Church in order to achieve its overreaching expression and the connecting wholeness. In *What is Art?* (1897), Tolstoy states that "since the upper classes of European society, having lost faith in the Church teaching, did not accept real Christianity but remained without any faith, one can no longer speak of an art of the Christian nations in the sense of the whole art" (*WA*: 80). Later, he establishes an interesting metaphorical connection between man's separation from Christianity and art's internal division into separate, non-communicative, individually conceived arts supplied by dispassionate diacritic expression, thus arguing how "the art of those upper classes has separated itself from the art of the rest of the people, and there have been two arts: the art of the people and genteel art" (80). Martha's incessant search into the hidden, latent acknowledgement of her own self as one of the jigsaw pieces in the whole of memory of a memory of a human puzzle is thematically reconstructed too in Tolstoy's existential inquiry into the impossibility of the existence of a unique, true and universal art. In his treatise, the writer mentions that

> All the confused, unintelligible theories of art, all the false and contradictory judgements on art, and particularly the self-confident stagnation of our art in its false path, all arise from the assertion, which has come into common use and is accepted as an unquestioned truth, but is yet amazingly and palpably false, that the art of our upper classes is the whole of art – the true, the only, the universal art. (*WA*:80)

[21] Lachmann, Renate (1997). *Memory and Literature. Intertextuality in Russian Modernism.*

Accordingly, Barnes's attitude towards writing is located in between the individual expression of a self and the larger context of humanity, as already mentioned in the Introduction. The necessity to reconnect is manifested in several of the writer's reflections on art, being emphasized in the series of essays entitled *Through the Window*: "And it was through books that I first realized there were other worlds beyond my own; first imagined what it might be like to be another person; first encountered that deeply intimate bond made when a writer's voice gets inside the reader's head" (Barnes, 2012: ix).

Tolstoy goes even further in his argument against the self-totalizing conception of art, as observed in the following quotation:

> But if art is a human activity… how could it be that humanity, for a certain rather considerable period of its existence (from the time people ceased to believe in Church doctrine down to the present day), should exist without this important activity? […]. In order to answer this question, it is necessary, first of all, to correct the current error people make in attributing to our art the significance of true, universal art. We are so accustomed, not only to naively consider the Caucasian family the best stock of people, but also the Anglo-Saxon race the best race if we are Englishmen or Americans, or the Teutonic if we are Germans, […] or the Slavic if we are Russians, that when speaking of our own art we feel fully convinced not only that our art is true art, but even that it is the best and only true art. In reality our art is not only the only art (as the Bible was once held to be the only book); it is not even the art of the whole of Christendom, it is only of a small section of that part of humanity. (*WA*: 79)

By the same token, Renate Lachmann mentions the importance of taking into account the multi-layered ramifications of a single text's meaning existing between the organization of the manifest textual surface and its latent underlying structure: "Only the text that exclusively allows for textual referentiality can function as memory and storage area, where cultural and semiotic knowledge, experienced by means of texts, is deposited.

It is only in intertextuality, in the zone of interference between texts, that textual culture, or rather culture as such, is present" (1997: 69).

This reflection on the symbiosis between culture and literature is remarkably connected with Julian Barnes's understanding of the writing process, that he refers to in the interview regarding the novel *England, England*, later registered in *Conversations with Julian Barnes:*

> Observer: Do you admit to influence?
>
> Barnes: Yes and no. The "yes" part is that objectively you know you are living and writing in a cultural continuum, and that anyone looking at your work in fifty or a hundred years will see you as part of a movement, a scheme, a moment, most likely an example of peculiar antiquarianism that has been replaced by post-post-post-post-postmodernism. But in order to work, in order to make something that is individual to yourself and yet a created object out there, you have to persuade yourself that what you are doing is completely original.
>
> At the local level, this means that if you write a sentence which in any way sounds like someone else, you strike it out. Though that doesn't happen very often. On the wider level, it means you persuade yourself that you're completely uninfluenced. The other part of "yes" is that the great writers you admire have an influence on you which is, to use that horrible word, enabling. By creating their own stuff and pushing what they do to the limit and going out on their limb, they don't make you want to crawl along the same branch, but they do free you by saying, "Yea, you can do that". So obviously to some extent I'm a European writer while being a very English writer. And so I would read Tournier or Calvino and other European writers. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 28-29)

Besides constituting an interesting turning point in the initially conceived dissertation project[22], the reading process of Julian Barnes's novel *England, England* has motivated me to research further into the unconsciously perceived feeling of empathy between this author's literary style and Tolstoy's aesthetical process of portraying the sense of a disconnected self in *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) and later in *The Death of Ivan Ilych* (1886). Moreover, on a deeper narrative level, it appears to establish an intertextual

[22] The Comparative Cultural Approach to Death Symbology in the novels of Virginia Woolf and Leo Tolstoy (working title), dated October 2016.

connection with Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* (1840). This Russian text, which can be characterized as a composite novel[23], is multi-voiced, multi-cultured, multi-layered and uses a polyphonic approach to the presentation of its "hero". The narrative keeps indirectly questioning who the "hero" of this work really is, and what is meant by the acute reference to the "time" provocatively proposed as its title? Martha's recollective experience of (re)composing her family memories puzzle in *England, England* echoes *A Hero of Our Time*'s narrative devices by means of which we meet Pechorin little by little through the prisms, constantly inquiring how reliable these are, of various narrators who use memory, recollection, their own psychologically confined point of view to present him. Although the 'true' story is narrated only when Pechorin "presents himself" through his diary - but even though, is he its reliable voice?

England, England has encouraged me to quest deeper into the multi-layered and sophisticated semantic frames embodied in the aesthetic representation of Martha Cochrane's architecture of memory and identity. The novel's seemingly homogeneous and consistent storyline has instead revealed the presence of several (inter)textual elements present in the backdrop of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and in the narrative construction of human consciousness described in Chekhov's *Gooseberries*, both echoing and challenging Barnes's above stated intention 'to strike out a sentence which in any way sounds like someone else'. The question of a transformative communication between the main thematical lines reworked in the previously mentioned texts will duly be developed in the next chapter, dealing with the detailed literary analysis of Barnes's

[23] In *The Composite Novel, The Short Story Cycle in Transition* (1995), M. Dunn and A. Morris propose the following definition of the composite novel: "The composite novel is a literary work composed of shorter texts that – though individually complete and autonomous – are interrelated in a coherent whole according to one or more organizing principles" (2).

works. Nevertheless, in the scope of this chapter it would be worth to emphasize a connection between Lachmann's concept of intertextuality as a cultural memory and the performative process of the literary architecture of memory established between the already referred to narratives.

It can be argued that reading Barnes's novel favours the way of seeing Martha's complex development of a self not only in terms of the individually conceived literary character, but rather as a product of a reflection coming from wider mnemonic contexts forging restored philosophical dimensions related to the construction of human consciousness. In the process of the initial contact with Barnes's novel, the critical attention has mostly been paid to those philosophically stated levels of meaning which also appear systematically sketched by Russian Classics of the 19th and 20th centuries in their works. In the interview, Barnes relates that when he was a schoolboy, he studied French and Russian.

"So', he states, 'I've got a strong attachment to those cultures: Turgenev, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Voltaire, Flaubert, Montesquieu, Rimbaud, and so on" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 29). This narrative double play, or the intertextual presence of the doubles coming from the 19th and 20th centuries Russian literature and rehearsed in the aesthetic representation of the condition of England in Barnes's novel has originated the motivation to proceed with a more detailed study of the author's other novels. As a result of such a reading, the research has been directed towards the analysis of intertextual references alluding to some literary works from 19th and 20th century Russian Literature. Interpreting fictional figures portrayed in Barnes's novels thus became inseparable from the analysis of the collections of intertextual references and quotations derived from several Russian literary texts. Frequently, in Barnes and in the Russian classics alike, they are articulated

as existentially stated, and mostly unanswerable, unresolvable, questions on life's dialectics. Consequently, the literary analysis of the (intertextual) play has motivated a necessity to proceed with a deeper critical input into the theoretical realm of the intertextual approach to the literary text. As Renate Lachmann has noticed, regarding the reading process of Vladimir Kazakov's novel *Mistake of the Living* (1970), "I have not undertaken the task of unmasking some social order. I have not undertaken any task at all. I just wanted to express my own self" (Kazakov in Lachmann 1997: 315). Martha's expression of a self is frequently portrayed through the process of alienation from the (pre)-established contemporary models of identity[24], somehow appropriating the psychological richness of several stylistic devices employed also in the above mentioned Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* in his portrayal of a literary figure of a superfluous man whose aspiration to a fixed sense of identity has been progressively displaced. Following Pechorin's disconnected perception of a self, whose attempts to (re)connect with the other constantly fail, Martha's silent quest into the architecture of her identity is regularly described as a set of controversial conversations with several other selves, progressively leading her to question a memory of a memory of what she regards to be her identity. Lachmann describes this process of alienation in a literary text as a perpetual motion between the author's voice and the work of art produced, this being a necessary instrument for a motivating reading. Quoting Aleksandr Potebnia (1862), she mentions that

> The listener can understand far better than the speaker what is hidden behind a word, and the reader can ascertain even better than the poet himself the idea of a work. The force and essence of such a work lie not in what the author understands, but in the

[24] See Guignery, *Conversations with Julian Barnes,* (57-58), particularly when Barnes refers to *A Hero of Our Time* as follows: "It's a wonderful book. It's his only novel, and it was my favourite book when I was about sixteen or seventeen, the time when Russian melancholy is absolutely in tune with your soul, when you suddenly realize you're Russian".

> effect of the work on the reader and spectator, and consequently in the inexhaustible potentiality of its content. (Lachmann 1997: 83)

In *Memory and Literature*, Renate Lachmann theoretically explores such an "inexhaustible potentiality" of a literary text, and conceives the idea of literature made of literature, conceptualizing the process of creation of a literary text as continuation, rejoinder or rewriting of the previously published texts. She defines literary discourse through the idea of intertextual interferences which stress the idea of a constructive relationship between the texts as a dominant factor in the constitution of a unique text's meaning. Instead of considering a literary text as a ready-made work of art with an implication of closure and "totality", Lachmann develops a notion of a text as a heterogeneous multitude of intertextual relations creating the unending ramifying growth of meaning[25]. She concludes that, by entering at a crossroads where contrastive semantic codes come into one another's presence, the text's meaning becomes uncontrollably complex, its thematic and structural boundaries are transgressed and it is a small piece not only of the complete works of a single author, or of a concrete historical period, but also of an entire culture. This theoretical statement is very well articulated through Lachmann's argument that

> […] this particular way of conceptualizing literature has achieved great prominence. It stresses the idea that patterns of intertextual interference must be taken as a dominant factor in any description of how a text makes meaning. In other words, we must remember that the constitution of a text's meaning cannot be accounted for merely on the basis of its individual structure. This view naturally gives rise to a shift in descriptive emphasis: structure, as a self-referential systematic monad, is no longer the sole object of description. Structure is now joined by that very dimension or quality of texts that results from the contact of one text with others. (Lachmann 1997: 37)

[25] ~~At this point, Lachmann's theor~~etical perspective follows the arguments and establishes interesting methodological connections with Julia Kristeva's articulation of the concept of intertextuality, T.S Eliot's ideas on literary influences and borrowings developed in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), as well as in Bloom's "Anxiety of Influence" (1973).

Moreover, Lachmann describes the aesthetics of a literary discourse on the basis of an analogy with Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetics of the discursive word, which denies a monologic conception of language and a possibility of a linear meaning produced by it. Instead, she defines the complexity of the intertextual relationships between the texts as a true innovative point in a conception of literature, perceiving the relationship between the old and the new as a constructive process. It would be interesting to mention, from the beginning, Julian Barnes's similarly stated reflection on the (re)creative power of art: "I didn't realise – couldn't yet see – how in all the arts there are usually two things going on at the same time: the desire to make it new, and a continuous conversation with the past. All the great innovators look to previous innovators, to the ones who gave them permission to go and do otherwise, and painted homages to predecessors are a frequent trope" (Barnes 2015: 9).

In *Keeping an Eye Open*, Julian Barnes continues to establish a creative dialogue between past and present in art and in life. More precisely, the writer focuses on exploring the metaphorical way in which art actually becomes "the echo of an echo... with truth to life" (23-24). Extending further the subtle connection between reality and art, Barnes focuses on the aesthetic process by which we are withdrawn from the obvious focus of attention towards what he denominates as "submarinous emotions, currents of hope and despair, elation, panic and resignation" (39). Naming this aesthetic process, characteristically present in all forms of art, including the narrative art, turns into one of the most demanding critical tasks. Nonetheless, the writer manages to arrive at an assertive definition, stating overtly "truth to life, at the start, to be sure; yet once the progress gets under way, truth to art is the greater allegiance" (37).

Remarkably, the above stated attempt to define art or, more precisely, the multiple ways in which art communicates with life, provides us with one of the possible intertextual approaches toward his work as an essayist. In his treatise on art, entitled *What is Art?* Tolstoy similarly reflects on an inaccurate yet profoundly revealing connection established between art and a reality depicted in it. Disclosing several modes in which art communes with life, Tolstoy states that art "is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards the well-being of individuals and of humanity" (63). He reiterates,

> As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts in words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can, in the present, thanks to this capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity, and can himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others, as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others. (*WA*: 63-64)

Commenting on the process of writing of *Anna Karenina*, the writer further extends his meditation on art to the process of composing a literary work, referring to a discouraging yet also stimulating gap between a moment lived and a moment imaginatively recreated in fiction. According to Irina Paperno's view, the below quoted statement has been considered as Tolstoy's aesthetic credo, and a valuable contribution to the complex intertextual dialogue established between his arguments on words' evasive nature and Barnes's reflection on the intricacies of the process of reconstruction of a symbiosis between life and memory in writing:

> But if I were to try to say in words everything that I intended to express in my novel, I would have to write the same novel I wrote from the beginning… In everything, or nearly everything I have written, I have been guided by the need to gather together ideas which for the purpose of self-expression were interconnected; but every idea expressed separately in words loses its meaning and is terribly impoverished when

> taken by itself out of the connection in which it occurs. The connection itself is made up, I think, not by the idea, but by something else, and it is impossible to express the basis of this connection directly in words. It can only be expressed indirectly – by words describing characters, actions and situations. (Tolstoy quoted in Paperno 2014: 44-45)

The narrative quest for a meaningful connection, expressed in Tolstoy's approach to the art of writing, seems to reflect the motivating attempts to express the inexpressible, registered in *Keeping an Eye Open*, as Barnes confirms that in order to appreciate the emotions revealed in and by art, "we must try to allow for hazard, for lucky discovery, even for bluff. We can only explain it in words, yet we must also try to forget words" (37).

The intertextual link between Tolstoy's and Barnes's reflections on the creative dimension of art can actually be regarded as the foregrounding conceptual approach towards what Renate Lachmann defines as the prevention of forgetting through the retrieval of images, envisaged by *mnemotechniques*, or the memorization of texts. Suggesting a very inspiring interpretation of interconnection between the art of memory and the art of writing, or between culture and mnemonics, Lachmann's analysis focuses on the three models of intertextuality briefly addressed in the Introduction: participation, troping and transformation. Following the chronology of intertextual interferences of Tolstoy's reflections on fiction, depicted in *What is Art?* into Barnes's meditations on the creative power of art approached in *Keeping an Eye Open*, the interrelation between mnemonics and Russian cultural heritage seems to be established on the narrative level of a dialogical sharing in the texts of one culture that occurs in writing about another culture and which Lachmann denominates as *participation*. Thus, Barnes's appeal to mnemic imagination, possibly directed towards the constant recuperation of the already

distanced meaning of Tolstoy's reflections on art in *What is Art?* incorporates and mirrors his own poetic imagination, revealed in the literary representation of Russian cultural memory as the source of intertextual play established in the English writer's works. It would be a necessary turning point in which, according to Lachmann, the intertextual process of *participation* permeates the intertextual process of *transformation*, or involving the appropriation of other texts through a process of distancing them. It would be interesting to mention how the narrative construction of art's communion with life, depicted in Tolstoy's *What is Art?* and focused on the central idea of communication between human beings, filters through the following Barnes's description of art's ability to reconstruct life in a broader, and aesthetically unstable, masterpiece which, once completed, does not totalize: it continues in motion, downhill. Commenting on Géricault's *Meduse*, Barnes questions, for instance, as does Tolstoy in *What is Art?,* how art's ability to transform reality provides its work with a neither reducing nor simplifying, but rather freeing and stimulating (re)connection with life itself:

> And what splendidly muscular backs they are. We feel embarrassed at this point, yet we shouldn't be. The naive question often proves to be a central one. So go on, let's ask. *Why do the survivors look so healthy?* ... But why does everyone – even the corpses – look so muscled, so healthy? Where are the wounds, the scars, the haggardness, the disease? These are men who have drunk their own urine, gnawed the leather from their hats, consumed their own comrades. Five of the fifteen did not survive their rescue very long. So why do they look as if they have just come from a body-building class? (*KEO*: 38)

An attempt to answer this *naive* question inevitably evokes Barnes's emotionally predicted sympathy towards Tolstoy's affirmation that art's ability to infect us with a still living sense of a strong emotion lies behind the creatively employed creative imagination, as stated by him in *What is Art?*:

> To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling – this is the activity of art. Art is a human activity, consisting in this: that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them. (*WA*: 63)

It is exactly at this point that the above-mentioned intertextual process of participation, theorized by Lachmann, permeates the intertextual process of transformation, as an indispensable tool of establishing a bond between the art of memory and literature. At this moment, Lachmann's conception of literature, springing from the relationship between the old and the new, as well as her conception of a text as an integrative part not only of the complete works of an author but also of an entire culture, confirms Barnes's idea of art:

> It is because the figures are sturdy enough to transmit such power that the canvas unlooses in us deeper, submarinous emotions, can shift us through currents of hope and despair, elation, panic and resignation. What has happened? The painting has slipped history's anchor. ... Catastrophe has become art; but this is no reducing process. It is freeing, enlarging, explaining. Catastrophe has become art: that is, after all, what it is for. (*KEO*: 40)

Indeed, the second chapter of *Keeping an Eye Open* introduces a question which could be regarded as a suggestive device of establishing further intertextual links between Barnes's reflections on art and some of Russian 19th century writers' thoughts on an aesthetic process by which reality is (re)created in art. Thus, Barnes inquires how

> Do you turn catastrophe into art? Nowadays the process is automatic. A nuclear plant explores? We'll have a play on the London stage within the year. A president is assassinated? You can have a book or the film or the filmed book or the booked film. War? Send in the novelists. A series of gruesome murders? Listen for the tramp of the poets. We have to understand it, of course, this catastrophe; to understand it, we have to imagine it, so we need the imaginative arts. But we also need to justify it and forgive it, this catastrophe, however minimally. Why did it happen, this mad act of nature, this crazed human moment? Well, at least it produced art. Perhaps, in the end, that's what catastrophe is *for*. (*KEO*: 23)

Following Lachmann's line of thought on intertextuality, which rests upon her acclaimed assumption that "writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space" (Lachmann 1997: 301), the below-stated pronouncement on Gogol's writing technique seeks to establish a productive literary dialogue with Barnes's thoughts on art, or on how catastrophe is (re)imagined into art:

> Realmente, a contemplação de Gogol é tal (sem falar, em suma, de seu caráter), que o objecto aparece nele sem perder um só de seus direitos, aparece com todo o mistério de sua vida, acessível apenas a Gogol; ... aqui ele vive em liberdade, elevado ainda mais; não são visíveis nele as marcas da mão que o transferiu, e por isso a reconhecemos. Todas as coisas que existem, justamente por isso, possuem uma vida, um interesse de vida, por menor que sejam, mas apreender isso está ao alcance de um artista como Gógol; e realmente: tudo, seja a mosca que importuna Tchitchikov, os cães, a chuva....tudo isso, em todo o mistério de sua vida, é alcançado por ele e transportado para o mundo da arte (entenda-se: artisticamente criado, e não descrito, Deus nos livre; as descrições apenas roçam a superfície do objecto). (Aksákov, em Barreto Gomide 2013: 105)[26]

If Lachmann considers literature as a primary tool of writing, recovering and preserving cultural memory, either like an apparatus for remembering by duplication, or by the prevention of forgetting through the constant recuperation of the lost meaning, Barnes's ability to (re)imagine life into art becomes a kind of a double-shift retrieval into the Russian literary and cultural past. Given that Barnes's much admired communication on the creatively employed stylistic skills in turning catastrophe into art acquires a

[26] [Truly, the contemplation of Gogol is such (not to mention, in conclusion, of his character), that the object appears in him without losing its essence, it appears with the whole mystery of life, accessible only to Gogol; ... here, it exists in freedom, elevated even more; the marks of the hand that created it are not visible, therefore we recognize them; precisely for this reason, all existing elements possess life, a life interest, no matter how tiny it is, but an artist as Gogol has the ability to seize it; actually, be it a fly that annoys Chichikov, the dogs, the rain…all of this, the whole mystery of life, is grasped by him and moved into the world of art (understood as artistically created, and not merely described, God forbid); descriptions only rub the surface of the object].

powerful voice in his appreciation of Gericault's picture as exemplified in *Keeping an Eye Open*, it nonetheless becomes suggestively resonant of Aksakov's admiration of Gogol's poetics, which is abounding of a complex intertextual content in each unique word. Once more, Lachmann's theory on intertextuality in literature, as both a (re)creation and a preservation of a country's cultural heritage, informs the constructive interaction between mnemonics and culture on more than one level. More precisely, the following example from Aksakov's reflections on Gogol establishes an intertextual connection with Barnes's thoughts on art in *Keeping an Eye Open* on a symbolic level of *participation* (the dialogical sharing) and *transformation* (the appropriation of other texts through a process of distancing them):

> Provavelmente alguns virão com ataques ao estilo, mas isso será um grande erro; o estilo de Gogol não é exemplar, graças a Deus; isso seria um defeito. O estílo de Gogol é parte de sua criação; ele está sujeito àquele mesmo ato artístico, áquela mesma mão criadora que lhe dá tanto as formas , quanto a própria obra, e é justamente por não ser possível separar o estilo e a própria criação que ele se mostra excelente;... estílo não é algo belo nem confeccionado, não é um traje; é algo vivo, nele atua a vida da própria língua; o que pode fundi-lo com o pensamento não são formulas nem procedimentos decorados, mas sim o espírito; ainda mais quando falamos do estílo da língua russa, que possui em si inexauríveis fontes de forças, uma infinidade de matrizes capturáveis e uma sintaxe completamente livre, mas não arbitrária. Faz-se necessário apenas alcançar o espírito e as leis da língua..."(Aksakov, em Barreto Gomide, 2013: 107-108)[27]

The emphasis on the intensity of literary style produced by the inexhaustible linguistic and syntactic sources of the Russian language turns into one of the most notable intertextual devices in establishing links between Barnes's emotional connection to

[27] [Probably, some will attack his style, but this is a great mistake; Thanks God, Gogol's style is not exemplary, for this would be rather a fault; Gogol's style is part of his creation; he depends on that same artistic act, on that same creative hand which concedes him both the forms and the contents, and it is precisely the impossibility to separate style from content that proves him to be excellent. The style should not be something beautiful or well-constructed, for it is not a costume; it is something alive, because it incorporates the life of its own language; it is not rules or decorated processes that merge it with thoughts, but rather a spirit; particularly, when we talk about Russian language, which possesses the inexhaustible sources, the infinity of possible arrangements and a completely free but not arbitrary syntax. Thus, it should only be necessary to embrace a spirit and the [inner] laws of language].

Russian fiction and his own literary creations. As already mentioned in the Introduction, the writer's emotional attachment to Russian fiction and its literary and cultural past becomes materialized through his constant attempts to bring together Russian and English vocabulary in order to give a renewed meaning to his own work as a space stimulating the emergence of transcultural consciousness in his readers. More than *troping* or *participation,* which inform the text on an external narrative level, the consciously employed Russian expressions create an authentically transcultural space in Barnes's fiction, which becomes much more perceptible on an internal narrative level:

> The two passengers had a bottle of vodka. They descended from the train. The beggar stopped singing his filthy song. Dmitri Dmitrievich held the bottle, he the glasses. […]. So when the three glasses with their different levels came together in a single chink, he had smiled, and put his head on one side so that the sunlight flashed briefly off his spectacles, and murmured,
>
> 'A triad'.
>
> And that was what the one who remembered had remembered. War, fear, poverty, typhus and filth, yet in the middle of it, above it and beneath it and through it all, Dmitri Dmitrievich had heard a perfect triad. The war would end, no doubt – unless it never did. Fear would continue, and unwarranted death, and poverty and filth – perhaps they too would continue for ever, who could tell. And yet a triad put together by three not very clean vodka glasses and their contents was a sound that rang clear of the noise of time, and would outlive everyone and everything. And perhaps, finally, this was all that mattered. (*NT*: 179)

It would be interesting to mention how Barnes's meditation on the novels' narrative construction which frequently comes to display several narrative levels finds an echo in Aksakov's appreciation of Gogol's poetics. Moreover, the writers agree that those narrative levels, which inform the stylistic construction of a novel, remain interactive, in order to provoke a long-lasting aesthetic impression on their readers. Thus, in one of the interviews with Vanessa Guignery, Barnes comes to state:

> Well, to be honest I think I tell less truth when I write journalism than when I write fiction. I practice both those media, and enjoy both, but to put it crudely, when you are writing journalism your task is to simplify the world and render it comprehensible in *one* reading. Whereas when you are writing fiction your task is to reflect on fullest

> complications of the world...and to produce something that you hope will reveal further layers of truth on a *second* reading. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 65, my italics)

Consequently, *further layers of truth* become, according to Barnes, an acknowledged aesthetic tool partly responsible for the perpetuation of a work of art beyond the temporal and historical contexts from which it arises.

Similarly, Aksakov emphasizes Gogol's mastery in narrating life on its fullest meaning, by bringing together memories of the past that form with the present a harmonious diversity of the human condition: "[...] aqui não há porque temer pela memória, não há porque temer a perda da unidade: ela não é externa, ela está sempre presente; ela liga todos os objectos entre si não externa, mas internamente; tudo é vivificado num único espírito, que repousa profundamente no interior e se manifesta numa diversidade harmónica, como no mundo de Deus" (Aksakov, em Barreto Gomide, 2013: 197)[28].

Barnes's intention to disclose "further layers of truth on a second reading" harmoniously merged with the above stated Gogol's ability to (re)integrate past memories into the present state of the art, will become the fulcrum of the literary analysis of Barnes's selected works addressed in this dissertation. Thus, the literary analysis of the narrative construction of Russian Cultural Memory proposed in the Integrative Chapter preceding the collection of articles will follow, on the one hand, the theoretical lines of intertextuality proposed by Lachmann and, on the other hand, Jan Assmann's theory of the interaction between cultural and communicative memory, finally demonstrating how both of these dimensions integrate the complexity of what Erll denominates as a

[28] […here, there is no reason to fear for memory, there is no reason to fear the loss of unity: it is not external, but is always present; it connects all objects not externally, but internally; everything is revived in one spirit, which rests deeply within the interior and reveals itself in a harmonious diversity, as in the world of God].

transcultural space of memory. In order to achieve one accurate literary analysis of Barnes's fictional works in interaction with the theoretical premises on which this dissertation rests, the analysis will follow the fragmentary, from the chronological point of view, order in which Barnes's works establish a creative interaction with Russian literature and culture. The theoretical framing put forward in the present chapter will be completed by the references to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and to Julia Kristeva's understanding of intertextuality, which in their turn support some central theoretical aspects of a research study considered in some of the articles. Together with Lachmann's theory on intertextuality and Assmann's conceptualization of cultural memory, their analytical articulation proposes to disclose "further layers of truth on a second reading", on which manifold intertextual references to Russian 19th and 20th century writers and their works lay. The bottom line of the literary analysis proposed in the articles attempts to demonstrate the intertextual processes by which contemporary day-to-day situations, from common love affairs to serious family traumas and a lack of communication among human beings in a modern society, are portrayed in Barnes's fiction. As a consequence, the communicative and the cultural memory, thus respectively represented on the manifest and the 'submarinous' narrative levels[29], interact in Barnes's fiction, thus enhancing the transcultural reading of memory in his works. This transcultural approach towards memory is repeated in the narrative double play of Martha's (*England, England*) consciousness towards her own sense of identity, which creates interesting correspondences not only with the representational key figures of

[29] In *Memory and Literature*, Lachmann stays that each single literary text demonstrates the narrative intertwining of two distinct levels. She says that "one could say that a split has occurred in the very narrative of the text, a division into a fictional and a hallucinatory line. Here the hallucinatory strand is stored in the fictional, crosses with the latter, and invades it in a way that leaves us with the impression that, in this narrative discourse, there is an alternative domination of one line over the other" (Lachmann 1997: 50).

Englishness, but also with the multiplicity of the intertextual insights into the correspondences between her moments of being and Tolstoyan subtexts disclosing the problematics of memory of a self. Thus, as stated in *England, England*: "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 then" (*EE*: 3).

'The fantasy is manageable, his gift a false memory', concludes the narrator of the short story "The Revival", in *The Lemon Table* (2004). Such a conclusion inevitably leads its reader to (re)evaluate the organic relationship between the aesthetical and the ethical dimensions displayed by a literary work of art. If the fantasy, being one aesthetic feature of a literary work, is manageable because of a constant interference from a false memory, how should the narrative construction of the cultural memory, defined by Jan Assmann as an institutional and objectified, stored away in symbolic forms, stable and situation-transcendent, be accessed in Barnes's texts? In order to answer this question, it would be compelling to look, as an example, at some of Barnes's works. In *Nothing to be Frightened of*, for instance, the narrator argues that truth and its consequent displacement in art frequently go hand in hand: "Fiction is made by a process which combines total freedom and utter control, which balances precise observation with the free play of imagination, which uses lies to tell the truth and truth to tell lies. It is both centripetal and centrifugal" (*NF*: 240).

Echoing Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism[30], focusing on a text's semantic ambivalence, it is interesting to notice how the apparently opposite dimensions, such as

[30] In his theorization on prose discourse, Mikhail Bakhtin introduces the concept of dialogism, that functions against a binary semiotic process (signifier-signified). He develops a conception of a word which emphasizes the double-voiced ability of each single word granted a sideward glance. Bakhtinian dialogic word is developed in its permanent contact with otherness. As Lachmann reiterates in *Memory and Literature*, "this dialogic word disrupts the sign's binary functioning by working against both the closure

lie and truth, as well as precision and imagination, interact in fiction, according to Barnes's thoughts. The reading process of the selected literary works constituting the thematic and the structural core of this dissertation shows how these seemingly opposite dimensions mirror and complete each other. The idea of ambivalence, embodied in Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, can only be expressed through the ability of a word to recall a memory of other semantic contexts. Far from being organically separated, the diversified semantic contexts embedded in a word's typology become each other's reflecting surface, contradicting any single meaning and bringing us even closer to further layers of truth acclaimed by Barnes as a distinctive feature of a literary work of art. Working together, precision and imagination, as exposed in the above-quoted reference, give voice to the narrator's "fantasy [which is] manageable", as depicted in Barnes's story "The Revival".

Moreover, the aesthetically perceived alliance between "precision" and "imagination" evidently grants Barnes's fiction at least two structural dimensions which at first glance seem of a contrary kind. On one hand, the selected texts from Barnes's *repertoire* often display what Neumann denominates, in "The Literary Representation of Memory", "the nature and functions of memory" within the literary representation of memory (Erll 2010: 333). On the other hand, they visibly focus on exploring what Jurgen Link calls a "reintegrative interdiscourse", a literary process of structuring memories on the basis of affiliating a literary discourse with other systems of knowledge such as history, psychology, and sociology (336). To be more precise, Birgit Neumann argues

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of the signifying process and the definitive nature of the signifier's relationship with its signified. Meaning is thus opened up by dialogism's unfinalizable semiotic. [...] According to Bakhtin, the aesthetics of dialogism can only be realized from within the language of prose. First, it is novelistic prose that comes to embody the dialogism of a language game that has been freed from monologism, from monovalence, and from the hegemonic space of a "single truth". Here we are led toward the boundary between [at least] two consciousnesses, two meaning positions, and two evaluatory accents" (Lachmann 1997: 101).

that, by drawing attention to the extra-textual reality, literature "creates its own memory worlds with specifically literary techniques" (334). Barnes's fiction selected for the current dissertation seems to follow, both theoretically and formally, the literary plot-lines commonly employed in fictions of memory. Its aesthetic techniques, "mimesis of memory", are not exactly employed in order to "imitate existing versions of memory, but produce, in the act of discourse, that very past which they purport to describe" (334). In "The Literary Representation of Memory", for instance, Birgit Neumann argues that in literature memories fulfil the manifold functions of the constitution of identity, both on individual and cultural levels. Focusing on the fact that writing memories is a highly selective process, telling us much more about the rememberer's present rather than his or her past, she argues that portraying cultural memories always imply "intentional fashioning to a greater extent than individual memories" (333). She concludes, consequently, that the narrative techniques employed in the literary representation of cultural memory are semantically multi-dimensional and frequently function as independent (fictionally recreated) carriers of meaning (333).

Following Lachmann's theory on intertextuality as a cultural memory, the literary analysis aiming at the study of intertextual connections in Barnes's texts can be addressed in two methodological ways: a metonymic one and a metaphorical one. She refers to metonymic and metaphorical types of evaluating intertextual references as two distinctive principles of a critical analysis of a literary text, as registered in the following statement:

> In order to describe intertextual reference to elements of other texts, a metonymic type would have to be distinguished from a metaphorical one, with the help of rhetorical categories. The appropriation of texts occurs differently according to whether they are in a relation of contiguity or that of similarity. Here it seems evident that a tendency toward the metonymic should be ascribed to the model of participation. In quotations, anagrams, and syllepsis, the borders between the previous text and the new text are

> shifted; the texts, in a sense, enter into one another. Metaphoric reference allows the preceding text to appear as an image within the new one; it similarly evokes the original but at the same time veils and distorts it. (Erll 2010: 305)

If, on one hand, the exploration of the literary representation of memory in Barnes's fiction does justice to what Nunning calls the "semanticization of literary forms" (in Erll, 2010), or its evidently stated allegiance to (re)create its own world of memory employing the specifically literary techniques of the constitution of meaning, on the other hand its marked susceptibility to focus on the precise description of extra-textual reality, frequently embodied in the systematic exploration of the historical and social contexts, seems to be much more than a (re)construction of the past according to the rememberer's state of mind. Jurgen Link's "reintegrative interdiscourse" provides us with the necessary analytical tool engaged in the complex comprehension of Barnes's fiction. It is evident that a greater extent of external referentiality creatively employed in several of Barnes's works provides its readers with the perception that "cultural performation of literature... implies that narrative techniques are not transhistorical constants, but rather historically variable strategies which offer interpretive patterns specific to particular epochs" (Erll 2010: 335).

Similarly to Astrid Erll's perception of literature, as a cultural space per excellence, Barnes's fiction inclines towards a nuanced appreciation of the interaction between what Jan Assmann refers to as an interchange between cultural and communicative memory. Erll argues that,

> A formação dos cânones e a história literária são mecanismos e meios centrais através dos quais a memória da literatura é preservada na sociedade. […]. As culturas recorrem ao seu corpus […] para se descreverem a si próprias e, à medida que os conceitos de identidade e as estruturas de valor das culturas mudam, altera-se também

o seu cânone. Assim, a memória do sistema social "literatura" é cultural e historicamente variável. (Astrid Erll e Ansgar Nünning 2006: 255-256)[31]

By focusing on (re)integrating a significant number of references to Russian literature and to its cultural heritage, in Lachmann's terms as "an image of memory and the product of imagination", Barnes's fiction emphatically engages in establishing a dialogic interaction between the structural dimensions in a literary representation of memory and such thematic processes of remembering as those observed above. Neumann organically relates "fictions of memory" to the double meaning unveiled by their narrative process. She further exemplifies her reflections on the connection between memory and narratology, stating that "fictions of memory" may focus, simultaneously, on literary, aesthetic techniques which portray the workings of memory and on exploring extra-textual personal and social reality, frequently embedded in the question of identity, both on individual and collective levels. Such double meaning, systematically articulated in the narrative construction of cultural memory, encloses a considerable number of Barnes's works researched in the dissertation.

Thus, the initially provided chronological ordering of his texts, selected for the purpose of this dissertation, gives way to the fragmentarily perceived chronology that reveals blurred borders between cultural and communicative memory on the one hand (Jan Assmann), and a metonymic and metaphorical intertextuality on the other (Renate Lachmann). The inverted chronology of Barnes's writing, depicted in the literary analysis proposed in the Integrative Chapter, will help his readers glance at the predominance of

[31] [The formation of canons and of literary history are central mechanisms and means by which the memory of literature is preserved in a society. [...] Cultures call upon their corpus to describe themselves and, as the concepts of identity and the value systems of those cultures change, their canons are also modified. Thus, the memory of the social system "literature" is culturally and historically variable].

one or other structural principle, ascribed to the double meaning attached to the narrative construction of memory, discussed above. Hence, as Neumann critically states, "the intentional fashioning", frequently involved in the transmission of cultural memories, makes "literary fictions to disseminate influential models of both individual and cultural memories as well as of the nature and functions of memory" (Erll 2010: 333), a mimesis of memory, it becomes true that the core question stated in the background of such a transmission critically alludes to the constant interaction between cultural and communicative memory. It is also perceived in Barnes's apology for the "further layers of truth [depicted] on a second reading".

As has been acknowledged in the Introduction, this dissertation argues that the literary representation of the (re)collected memories of the past turns into a dominant theme in a great number of Julian Barnes's literary works. This chapter focuses on the critical analysis of a complex aesthetic way in which a memory process appears depicted in Barnes's selected texts. To disclose it, the dissertation is addressing those texts from the point of view of their intertextual interaction with Russian literature of the 19th century, paying a particular attention to the narrative techniques by which they are constructed. As mentioned above, the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's literary works becomes perceptible, at first glance, due to the intersection among several narrative levels – the so called external level, depicting a common daily life situation and the internal, the so called second, concealed, level depicting *further layers of truth* and conducting the readers to discover their significance in (re)constructing cultural memories. As a consequence, the first attempt to uncover this kind of interaction between two narrative levels follow Jan Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memories. The first argument of this chapter relates

to the fact that in Barnes's texts such methodological distinction becomes blurred; alluding to Russian 19th century literature when exploring a quotidian, contemporary, scenario of action, or, in Assmann's terms, a semantic realm of communicative memory, most of Barnes's texts allude, indirectly, to the necessity of a deeper reading, constructed around further layers of truth and perceived in the intertextual depiction of Russian cultural memory, leading toward a complex transcultural meeting point at which processes of remembering should be appreciated. This second argument is related to Lachmann's already mentioned theory on intertextuality, paying attention to the structural construction of the memory processes in Barnes's fiction: there, it is addressed the dialogical interaction between metonymic and metaphorical aesthetic ways in which the multiple references to Russian literature of the 19th century interact with Barnes's narrative construction of a common, daily life situation of a contemporary society.

It has often been defended that the issue of memory constitutes one of the central thematic and structural frames in Julian Barnes's novels[32]. Often focusing on exploring specific places of memory, such as the parrot's cage in *Flaubert's Parrot* or Noah's Ark in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters,* Barnes's fictional work also examines the timeless essence of the past, which becomes relevant for the present state of mind of his characters. For instance, the image of Noah's Ark comprises, according to Aleida Assmann's detailed study of memory boxes[33] (Assmann 2013: 101) a "microcosm of the world at large" (101), considered as a mobile place of memory and a portable container

[32] See, for instance, "Memory in Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* by Palani Kumar, *Journal of Humanism and Social Science,* pp.64-67, accessed January 8th, 2020; "Who is the Man in the Red Coat?' Rosemary Goring on Julian Barnes's new book about the Belle Epoque", *The Herald* (Scotland), November 2019.

[33] Aleida Assmann defines memory boxes as "spatial concretizations of memory", arguing that "places of memory are not limited to temporal horizons of the past" (Assmann 2013: 101).

for the contraction of cultural memory. Distinguishing between mobile and immobile places of memory, Aleida Assmann acknowledges that the former act as mutable "containers of memory [giving] us insights into the selection processes that govern the construction of cultural memory" (102). Furthermore, she considers memory as an ark, stating that "the Latin word for box or chest is *arca*, from which "ark" is derived, as in Noah's Ark" (101). Later, A. Assmann establishes a close link between reading, book and a box, claiming that *arca* becomes a metaphor for memory. The recollection of human knowledge, experience and wisdom in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* is symbolized by the image of the ark. Metaphorically transposed to the present, it becomes a composite mnemotechnical reconstruction of cultural memory providing an access to the selection of relevant names, places, and historical times registered in the past. Contrary to the biblical version of the past, where Noah's Ark represents safety and survival, Noah's Ark memory in Barnes's text fabricates a subverted version of history composed in a multi-dimensional, chronologically disordered framework. Instead of protection and safety as offered by the biblical image of the ark, Barnes's text examines the image of a woodworm as the destabilizing element in its narrative arrangement, aiming at its thematic and structural ordering. The metaphor of a woodworm participates also in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, symbolically surviving even the lack of rain:

> 'But then why has it turned out so badly?' he persisted.
>
> 'Heaven knows! Maybe worms ate through the roots, and then, it's been that sort of summer: no rains at all.'
>
> 'But the master could see that on the peasants' plots the worms had not eaten through the roots, and even the rain seemed to be falling in a strange, piecemeal pattern: plenty for the peasants and nary a drop on the master's fields.' (*DS*: 271)

Although the symbology of a woodworm provides both texts with the overtly disconnected narrative structure, it also symbolizes the persistence and the survival of cultural memory. The metaphorical recuperation of the image of a woodworm in Barnes's text establishes a cross-cultural dialogue on the narrative functions of cultural memory in this text's structure. In both texts, the presence of a woodworm subtly subverts several processes of social and political legitimization having control over the written performance of the institutional memory associated to detailed historical knowledge. Moreover, the image of a woodworm in Gogol's text is, similarly to Barnes's text, ironically constructed in the context of the biblical version of the world's creation: "[…] and, like the peal of trumpets, the air fills with the cries of cranes, sweeping by in long, V-shaped formations, high in the heavens above. Everything around turns to sound and sends back its response. O, Creator! How splendid is Your world, deep in the countryside, far from the vile highroads and towns" (*DS*: 272).

In a similar stance, the thematic and structural idiosyncrasy provided by the image of the Noah's Ark in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Barnes's *England, England* seriously engages with an issue of cultural memory. A missing piece of a jigsaw causes a chronologically disordered perception of memory in Martha's process of identity. Moreover, in the 1998 novel there is established a crucial distinction between factual memory and an unprocessed memory, that, even if wrong, is "less untrue":

> Three days after the Agricultural Show – and this was a true, single, unprocessed memory, she was almost sure of that – Martha was at the kitchen table; her mother was cooking, though not singing, she remembered – no, she knew, she had reached the age where memories harden into facts – her mother was cooking and not singing, that was a fact, Martha had finished her jigsaw, that was a fact, there was a hole the size of Nottinghamshire showing the grain of the kitchen table, that was a fact..." (*EE*: 15)

Besides the literary representation of Martha's latent memory with the stylistic recourse to the uncompleted jigsaw, the allusion to "memories [which] harden into facts" proves to be of a decisive importance for the purpose of this dissertation. It relates itself metonymically to Tolstoy's reflection on the complex process of memory, stating the impossibility of any narrative to provide a coherent description of events and states of mind, thus alluding that the organization of memories in accordance with the spatial and temporal patterns is a merely conventional illusion: "I have abandoned the chronological form of narrating" (Paperno 2014: 91). Previously, commenting on his working upon "Reminiscences", the writer confesses: "The further I proceed in my 'Reminiscences', the more indecisive I feel about how to write them. I cannot provide a coherent description of events and states of mind, because I do not remember the interconnection and the order of these states of mind" (Paperno 2014: 90).

It seems reasonable to acknowledge that the literary relationship between some of Barnes's fictional works and 19th and 20th century Russian literature rests upon the metaphorical play between a disordered jigsaw of the emotionally constructed memories and an illusion of "memories harden[ed] into facts" derived from the Russian canonical archive. The intertextual dialogue established between Barnes's texts and 19th and 20th century Russian literature informs the structural and thematic contours of several of Barnes's works, demonstrating how cultural memory remains the source of an intertextual play (Erll 2010: 301).

In order to examine, in detail, several aspects of an intertextual conversation established between some of Barnes's novels and several fictional works coming from Russian literature, this dissertation takes into consideration the following selection of texts:

England, England (1998), J. Barnes

The Lemon Table (2004), J. Barnes

The Sense of an Ending (2011), J. Barnes

The Noise of Time (2016), J. Barnes

The Only Story (2018), J. Barnes

Dead Souls (1842), N. Gogol

Anna Karenina (1878), L. Tolstoy

Gooseberries (1898). A. Chekhov

As already mentioned, the literary analysis of the selected texts is focused on their intertextual interaction, thus addressing a variety of dialogues established between communicative and cultural dimensions of memory and mainly contributing to Erll's argument that the interpretation of memory is always a transcultural issue.

In structural terms, the intertextual articulation of such a variety of dialogues, as well as brief references to the art of the narrative construction of cultural memory, will follow the theoretical model provided by Renate Lachmann in *Memory and Literature* and in "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature".

In "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature", Lachmann suggests three models of intertextuality concisely mentioned in the Introduction, which this dissertation proposes to apply to the selected corpus of texts. Its practical application will be provided in the next chapter and it attempts to take into account the already mentioned interrelation between mnemonics and cultural exchange. Framing her model of

intertextuality, Lachmann distinguishes, as formerly referred to, between participation, troping and transformation. “In these models,” – Lachmann states – “writing as continuation, writing as repetition, writing as rejoinder, and writing are concealed” (in Erll 2010: 304). Establishing close parallels between the art of memory and a literary writing, Lachmann underlines that

> All texts participate, repeat, and constitute acts of memory; all are products of their distancing and surpassing of precursor texts. In addition to manifest traces of other texts and obvious forms of transformation, all contain cryptic elements. All texts are stamped by the doubling of manifest and latent, whether consciously or unconsciously. All texts make use of mnemotechnic procedures, in sketching out spaces, *imagines,* and *imagines agentes.* As a collection of intertexts, the text itself is a memory place; (Erll 2010: 305)

For the sake of analytical clarity, Lachmann's model of intertextuality will be completed by references to the main theoretical concepts, such as cultural and communicative memory, provided by Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann. Participating, on the one hand, in the narrator’s controversial approach to the attempt to define love, registered in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, Paul’s rationally stated attachment to reality by means of loving Martha in *England, England* metaphorically evokes, on the other hand, a complex retrospective insight into the straightforwardly announced philosophical incompatibility between reality and love upon which the narrative construction of *The Kreutzer Sonata* rests:

> He couldn’t believe how falling in love with Martha made things simpler. No, that wasn’t the right word, unless ‘simpler’ also included the sense of richer, denser, more complicated, with focus and echo. Half his brain pulsed with gawking incredulity at his luck; the other half was filled with a sense of long-sought, flaming reality. That was the word: falling in love with Martha made things real. (*EE*: 107)

In *Arts of Memory*, Aleida Assmann acknowledges the presence of a methodological shift in contemporary scholarship dealing with the concept of cultural memory. In theoretical terms, this shift is unfolded through the gradual devaluation of several forms of cultural memory conceived on an institutional level and constructed within the borders of a legitimizing policy of remembering and forgetting. Therefore, the institutional frameworks of cultural memory have been replaced by an ever-growing involvement with / access to the living memory nourished by emotions, personal recollections, individually reconstructed claims and objections to academically abstract perspectives. Further, she notices how the "new forms of memory are reconstructed within a transgenerational framework, and on an institutional level, within a *deliberate* policy of remembering and forgetting" (Assmann 2013: 6, my italics). Aleida Assmann recognizes the constituent importance of a living memory in the process of establishing the theoretical outfits of cultural memory. Her approach positions the process of cultural memory as an institution laying in the close proximity to the process of a living memory. Highlighting the productive exchange of synergies between two concepts, A. Assmann observes that

> There is no self-organization and self-regulation of cultural memory – it always depends on personal decisions and selections, on institutions and media. The transposition of individual living to artificial cultural memory and thus from short-term to long-term memory is a highly complex process fraught with problems: it brings together temporal extension with the threat of distortion, reduction and manipulation that can only be averted through continuous public criticism, reflection, and discussion. (Assmann 2013: 6)

The passage from Julian Barnes's *England, England,* quoted before, draws attention towards a similar dialogue between reasonable, objective perception of reality and a densely felt emotion which gives way to the appreciation of reality in more

complex, richer colours; the interplay between these perspectives provides his character with an attention to 'focus and echo', considered by A. Assmann as significant images in the process of (re)construction of the written 'arts of memory' (Assmann 2013: 154-155).

In Barnes's *England, England*, the individually perceived, emotional attachment of the characters to the construction of cultural memory is conceived as the central thematic issue in the novel's plot. Their personal recollections, filled with emotions, delusions and objections are artfully mingled with the delusions of their country's cultural past. Both processes of memory – cultural and communicative - become unreliable, though emotionally exhaustive, manifestations of reality. Furthermore, the characters' inner tools for mastering their present existence are filled with anxiety about the complex cultural processes shaping their country's past. For instance, Martha's moral engagement with the evaluation of the shared values derived from the artful (re)construction of cultural memory discloses the presence of the hidden protective mechanisms stored in her personal memory. The rationalization of the factual research and the abstract implementation of historical evidences coming from the institutional past are constantly balanced by the emotionally shaped personal experiences recollected by Martha.

The theoretical distinction between cultural memory and communicative memory has been acknowledged by several contemporary scholars working on the concept of memory both in literature and in social sciences. For instance, as has been referred to in the Introduction, Jan Assmann prescribes distinctive methodological functions to both concepts, stating that cultural memory "is an institutional memory", whereas communicative memory focuses on addressing personal recollections of past events on an individual level. Following Jan Assmann's theoretical distinction and therefore acknowledging two different functions of memory – *ars* and *vis* – in *Arts of*

Memory, Aleida Assmann insists on the mutual dependence and collaboration between a *memory as function* and a *memory as storage*, as well as between *memory as ars* and a *memory as vis*.

Taking into consideration the analytical distinction between the concept of cultural memory and the concept of communicative memory as theorized by Jan Assmann, on the one hand, and between memory as function and memory as storage developed by Aleida Assmann on the other, this dissertation aims to examine the extent to which both theoretical articulations meet in a process of (re)construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's fiction. It is necessary to acknowledge again that several texts from Barnes's repertoire seem to evoke writing techniques, thematic lines and literary traditions coming from 19th and 20th century Russian literature. As has already been argued, by referring to several authors and works of art coming from the 19th century Russian social and historical context, Barnes's fictional work constructs a motivating narrative dialogue between an institutionally conceived Russian cultural memory registered in its literature, on the one hand and, on the other hand, his characters' emotional attachment to the described events, thus creating a renewed reading of some Russian canonical authors. Consequently, the collaboration between these theoretical dimensions provides Barnes's work with an artistic ability to forward new interpretative insights into the concept of the construction of cultural memory, but also to revise several aesthetical principles and thematic nuances which come to constitute Russian literary heritage of the 19th and 20th centuries. In order to connect theory and practice, the chapter provides brief examples of the interaction between Aleida Assmann's two functions of memory and Jan Assmann's two dimensions of memory. The analysis of the interaction between the selected Barnes's works is addressed through a theoretical connection

between the concept of cultural memory as presented by Jan and Aleida Assmann, Astrid Erll´s concept of a *travelling memory* and Renate Lachmann's concept of a *literary memory*. Their critical evaluation and practical application to the literary analysis of Barnes's texts is disclosed in the Integrative Chapter preceding the collection of articles. In this chapter, brief examples of such an interaction will be considered in order to illustrate concisely multi-layered ways in which the selected theoretical concepts on cultural memory commune with the textual performance of Barnes's literary works.

For instance, in 'The Revival', one of the stories of *The Lemon Table*, the narrator tries to grasp the philosophical meaning of a non-linear relationship between life and writing: "Like most of his life's writing, the play was concerned with love. And as in his life, so in his writing: love did not work" (*LT:*87).

Further, the narrator elaborates a very brief reflection on the issue of an (un)reliable memory attached to the aesthetical characterization of its main character, the famous 19th century writer, Ivan Turgenev. He questions not only the reliability of memory in reconstructing the distinctive features of his character, but also provides his reader with the doubt whether this writer's literary activity is genuinely preserved throughout the centuries. Moreover, he states that in Turgenev's writings an unreliable imagination is nevertheless capable of telling the truth, whereas memory's gift is false. Thus, the evocation of the liability of memory becomes one of the central themes reworked in 'The Revival'.

Similarly, in 1909 Leo Tolstoy, whose literary image has also been aesthetically recovered in 'The Revival', reflects upon the deep philosophical intersections established between life, time and writing:

> There is no time. There is my life. Only it's written on time. There is a composition, but not characters, lines. It's only written by means of characters and lines. And the fact that a good composition is written with characters and lines does not prove that further lines and characters in the book will continue the same composition or will make a similar composition. (Paperno 2014: 152)

Tolstoy's statement on the illusory nature of life narrated in time seems to constitute a distinctive thematic line of *The Lemon Table*. Similarly to Tolstoy who, according to Paperno, "thinks that time is like paper and that his life is written on the paper of time" (Paperno 2014: 152), Barnes (re)creates his characters mirroring each other's life experiences registered on the paper of time. Their symbolic interaction through distinct historical epochs and different life contexts addresses the issue of interaction of individual memories with a vastly depicted territory of an institutionally processed cultural memory.

According to Aleida Assmann, the variety of literary metaphors for depicting memory could be organized in two groups: "metaphors of space and metaphors of time" (Assmann 2013: 137). Here, she draws attention to the existence of "structured" and "unstructured" spaces underlining the arts of cultural memory. Their interaction acquires a paramount importance in both Tolstoy's and Barnes's literary works, frequently focusing on their character's involuntary actions and thoughts which subvert social and political constructions provided by the officially narrated historical context. A. Assmann emphasizes that for the written art of representation of cultural memory, "remembering is an essentially temporal phenomenon, it can scarcely be defined without taking into consideration the dimension of time. It is impossible to capture the transience, elusiveness, and constitutive time lag with purely spatial metaphors" (Assmann 2013: 137-138)

Moreover, she makes a point of the fact that space metaphors attached to memory draw attention to the importance of "what is hidden and out of reach rather than what is revealed and available" (138). She further argues that "this new notion of hidden depths brings the spatial metaphors very close to the temporal notion of latency and thereby creates a bridge from spatial to temporal metaphors of memory" (138).

It is important to notice that A. Assmann's allusion to the productive interaction between spatial and temporal metaphors of memory provides a firm theoretical background for Paperno's reflection on the nature of Tolstoy's writing. Summarizing the author's narrative techniques, she frequently states that Tolstoy acknowledges the triggered in memory connection between spatial and temporal metaphors of memory revealed in narrating a story. Thus, she argues that during the course of his life Tolstoy "reworked the book of life metaphor in the context of his end-of-life reflections on the illusory nature of time" (Paperno 2014: 152).

"The book of life" metaphor, as disclosed by Paperno, arises several possibilities of approaching the strategic collaboration between the repository of cultural memories, depicted in Barnes's work, and the narratively constructed act of remembering provided by several of his novels. Tolstoy's thought on a universally available and a never-ending book edition echoes Barnes's fascination with (re)imagining memories coming from different historical and temporal contexts, as he assembles in "The Revival", giving renewed existence to the patterns of meaning by those revealed. Establishing a relationship between the spatial metaphor of memory designed in nature and a temporal metaphor of memory articulated in the image of a written book, Tolstoy states:

> I thought: life, not my life, but the life of the whole world, which, with the renewal of Christianity, comes as spring comes, from all sides, in trees, in grass, and in waters, becomes incredibly interesting. In this alone lies the interest of my life, too, and, at

> the same time, my earthly life is over. It's as if you kept reading a book, which became more and more interesting, and suddenly, at the most interesting moment, the book comes to an end, and it turns out that this is only the first volume of a many-volume edition, and that one cannot get hold of the sequel. One could only read it abroad, in a foreign language. But one would certainly read it. (November 24, 1888; quoted in Paperno 2014: 151)

Taking into account the theoretical approaches regarding the concept of cultural memory applied to a literary text, it does not seem merely unintentional that Tolstoy's deep insight into a metaphorical reading of his book is taken ahead "abroad, in a foreign language". His book of life "written on time" by "tracing characters on paper" (Paperno 2014: 151) recalls Aleida Assmann's representation of cultural memory through the written representation of a symbolic blending of the metaphors of space with the metaphors of time. Applying A. Assmann's theory, the former actually includes "two-dimensional carriers", visible in the literary dialogue between a statement on art coming from 19th century Russia and its contemporary English reader, personified in Barnes's "The Revival", as well as "three-dimensional places", personified by an image of the creative act of remembering the past, thus representing the concept of a non-linear recovery of the presence of the past in a literary text. Curiously, A. Assmann also associates the temporal metaphors of memory as "revolving around images of sleep / awakening and death / rebirth, and presenting the complex models of latency" (Assmann 2013: 138), to the motif of forgetting and remembering in the (re)construction of cultural memory. She notes that the theme of forgetting associated to the latent remembering comes first from fairy tales and folklore, where "the danger of forgetting is caused by a demonic enemy power who uses it as a cunning strategy...Hope resides in the possibility that the noise itself will rouse the victim from his lethargy and force him to wake up" (158). For instance, the scenario of a productive exchange between remembering and

forgetting remains a central theme in Barnes's (re)creation of an ancient Swedish legend which constitutes the crucial structural and thematic narrative strategy of "The Story of Mats Israelson". The failure of communication between its two main characters arises from a failure of accomplishing an imaginative journey into the realm of a legend, whose symbolic representation works as an image of the complementary duality of the concept of cultural memory depicted by A. Assmann: the repository of memories, associated with a metaphor of a storage of the past becomes a collaborative and a necessary aspect of a complex process of the creative act of remembering, its present function. Similarly, in Tolstoy's work the interspace between sleeping / awakening, and between death / rebirth, is fulfilled by his writings on a memory process – both on the individual and the cultural level. According to Paperno, "a complex analogy that linked the cycle of sleeping and waking, as well as life and death...into different patterns, but the idea that death is both falling asleep and awakening to a new life, and a new consciousness, had a special hold over him" (Paperno, 2014: 141-142). Metaphorically, A. Assmann ascribes sleep and awakening to the intersections between temporal and spatial metaphors of memory, because "the more prominent time element becomes, the greater grows the emphasis on forgetting, discontinuity, decay, and reconstruction. This means that the focus shifts increasingly to the basic unavailability and suddenness of memory – qualities that also link memory to the perception of the new" (Assmann 2013: 154). Both in "The Story of Mats Israelson" and in Tolstoy's diaries, the image of sleep / awakening as well as death / rebirth is reworked though the creative (re)construction of a legend and a dream, respectively, for the present articulation of latent human feelings. By analogy, the legend in the former story remains a symbolic mirror to a dream. Death as an awakening of the consciousness of his own self, most profoundly stored, plays a crucial role in the narrative

construction of the main character in Barnes's story, while in Tolstoy's dream death actually is awakening, as stated by Paperno (142). Similarly, reflecting upon the narrative means of representation of the temporal and spatial metaphors of memory, A. Assmann regards the motifs of forgetting and remembering, of sleeping and waking, of death and life as an archetypal background to the modern tale of alienation (Assmann 2013: 158), so carefully depicted in Barnes's collection of stories in *The Lemon Table*. The unconsciously perceived existence of disturbing feelings, stored deep inside, appear to constitute the distinctive structural sequence elaborated in *The Lemon Table.* Moreover, their subtle yet continuous revelation seems to compose the unfulfilled gap between the characters' life experiences and those narratively communicated experiences which constitute the access to their latent memories. Pursuing A. Assmann's theoretical distinction, concisely addressed in the Introduction, between the concept of storage memory, symbolically connected to an *inhabited memory* which, proceeding selectively by remembering and forgetting, "builds a bridge between past, present and the future, and a function memory, associated to an *uninhabited memory* which, being "interested in everything and [acknowledging] everything as equally important, splits past from present and future, and the author's following conclusion that "inhabited memory and uninhabited memory are [indeed] complementary and not contradictory" (Assmann 2013: 123), the narrative construction of *The Lemon Table* demonstrates how the *functional mode of memory*, characterized as group related and future-oriented, collaborates with and becomes neutralized by the constant access to the "memories of past memories" envisaged by the *storage memory* (Assmann 2013: 123-124).

Conceiving the narrative construction of *The Lemon Table*, Julian Barnes undertakes a captivating journey into a set of discursive and thematic variations which

seem to disclose the author's fascination with a yet hidden creative potential of a literary form. In one of the interviews, the author notes that '*The Lemon Table* is perhaps not as evidently a themed set of stories, but I did absolutely plan it as a book.'[34] Following the creative path suggested by postmodern narrative techniques and with a disturbing playfulness of style contemplated in the creative realm of psychological realism, *The Lemon Table* evokes the existence of an interspace between an alive life experience and the unreliability of memory that attempts to (re)construct it narratively. For instance, reflecting on the process of ageing, the writer conjures the presence of a gap between a socially constructed form of convention, the above-mentioned dimension of A. Assmann's *inhabited memory* and a disturbing 'reality' of the human heart, or its *functional, uninhabited memory*:

> It's a book whose hidden subtitle is, "Against Serenity," because I never believed that old age was a condition in which most people come to peace with themselves and the rest of the world. I think that most people's experience is that the heart and the emotions continue long, often embarrassingly long, after they're expected to, and, after other people, younger people, expect them to. It's a sort of social convention to believe that the fires have damped down, order comes into life, the heart shuts down. All rubbish, I think. *The Lemon Table* is about the last strugglings and failings of the emotional life as the end nears.[35]

Following the main theoretical lines provided by Aleida Assmann's approach to memory, this dissertation pursues the literary analysis of the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory in Barnes's work through an exchange of synergies between *storage memory* and *functional memory*, frequently revealed in his texts' structure by way of the productive interchange between its *spatial* and *temporal* metaphors associated with

[34] In https://brooklynrail.org/2005/09/books/julian-barnes-in-conversation-with-james. Accessed March 20th, 2019, 14:21.

[35] Ibid.

the (re)workings of memory. The theoretical duality of these concepts and its practical collaboration invite us to reflect, even if superficially, on the relationship between the narrative essence of memory and its aesthetic expression in the text.

Curiously, the theme of the relationship between memory and its aesthetic expression receives a considerable attention in Leo Tolstoy's reflections on literary art, as well as in Gogol's attempts to come to terms with the slippery nature of a literary word, revealed in his quest for authenticity and spiritual purity of expression: "It is necessary to deal honestly with the word. It is God's highest gift to man. Woe unto the writer who utters it... before his own soul has achieved harmony: the word that emerges from him will be loathsome to all. And then, however pure his intention of doing good, he may well do evil" (*Selected Passages from Correspondence with my Friends*, 1847).

Reading Barnes's fiction, and particularly *The Lemon Table,* challenges its readers to question the slippery nature of the concept of truth, as well as to address the illusory nature of memory, both on personal and collective levels. Thus, the interspace between life and its narrative expression in literature, as well as between memory and writing, a recurrent theme in Barnes's work, appears to be paradoxically fulfilled by fiction itself – and in Barnes's case – by a novel, as stated in a more detailed way in the Introduction:

> Writers should have the highest ambition: not just for themselves, but for the form they work in. […]. I am a writer for an accumulation of lesser reasons (love of words, fear of death, hope of fame, delight in creation, distaste for office hours) and for one presiding major reason: because I believe that the best art tells the most truth about life.[36]

[36] https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/julian-barnes

Barnes's premise on art's ability to tell "hard, exact truth" with the recourse to "the beautiful, shapely lies" provides the attentive reader with a possibility to establish an alive dialogue not only with Gogol's approach to the literary art and to the language which shapes it, but also to address a theme of a 'travelling' literary memory upon which the concept of cultural memory rests, according to several studies.[37]

For instance, in the article 'Travelling Memory', Astrid Erll calls the reader's attention to the existence of tough intersections between the belief in a comprised, nation-state collective memory and the concept of travelling memory which focuses on the idea of a constant movement across temporal, historical and cultural boundaries. Contrary to Halbwachs's view of *cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, the concept which implies a certain stability of the cultural formations associated with the fixed, socially established frameworks directed to the definition of the collective memory of a nation, Erll invites her reader to embrace the concept of the transcultural memory, posing that "memory is first and foremost not bound to the frame of a place, a region, a social group, a religious community or a nation, but is truly transcultural, continually moving across and beyond such territorial and social borders" (10). Moreover, she recognizes the presence of interconnectivity between the constant, unceasing motion established between individual minds and the production of cultural memory on a collective level. According to Erll's argument vastly developed in 'Travelling memory' and emphasized in 'Transcultural Memory', memory – either on collective or individual levels - ceases to be perceived as a product of a stable, nation-bounded cultural production, but should instead be apprehended in terms of the dynamic connection of memories primarily affiliated with

[37] See, for instance, Preliminary Material in Diane Molloy's *Cultural Memory and Literature*, 2017.

distinct social, historical and cultural contexts, thus promoting a thesis of mixing of memories resulting from the constant movement of mnemonic archives across historical time, territorial space, and also linguistic and cultural borders. Thus, for example, she states that "the travel of mnemonic practices is not a purely modern phenomenon, but has a long history. It goes back to the migration of Greek cults to Rome, the diffusion of Buddhist practices along the Silk Road, or to the spread of medieval memoria, the liturgical cult of the dead, across Europe"(13). Subsequently, defining the concept of a travelling memory, Erll systematically connects its theoretical framing with the defining features of the concept of cultural memory, insisting that in order to stay alive "cultural memory must travel, be kept in motion […]" (12). Additionally, working upon the motion of mnemonic archives, she emphasizes the existing connection between culture and memory, claiming that the understanding of cultural memory can be enriched by between-cultures approaches:

> Such travel consists only partly in movement across and beyond territorial and social boundaries. On a more fundamental level, it is the ongoing exchange of information between individuals and the motion between minds and media which first generates what Halbwachs terms collective memory. Travel is therefore an expression of the principal logic of memory: its genesis and existence through movement. (Erll, 2011(b): 12)

Consequently, she establishes a connection between the historical, social and cognitive processes by which the concept of memory is shaped over time. Her emphasis on the constructive movement between cultural boundaries and literature as an expression of the principal logic of memory could be applied to the aesthetic process by which Russian cultural memory is articulated in Barnes's work. First, it would be useful to mention that the multiplicity of references to Russian culture and literature forms only one, though a very significant, aesthetic approach to Barnes's fiction. As already

mentioned in the Introduction, Barnes's fiction frequently builds upon an evocation of references from French culture and literature, as well as from Chinese symbology and the mythology originated in Swedish and Norwegian cultures[38].

The aesthetic dimension of incorporation of the multiplicity of memories coming from distinct cultural, historical and social contexts seems to provide Barnes's fiction with what Erll denominates as the "complicating of 'single memory cultures' (Erll 2011(b): 8). In her approach to the concept of cultural memory, she frequently exemplifies the transcultural perspective which creates "the complex realities of remembering in culture" (8). Thus, she refers that

> For memory studies, the old-fashioned container-culture approach is not only somewhat ideologically suspect. It is also epistemologically flawed, because there are too many mnemonic phenomena that do not come into our field of vision with the 'default' combination of territorial, ethnic and national collectivism as the main framework of cultural memory – but which may be seen with the transcultural lens. There are the many fuzzy edges of national memory, for example, the sheer plethora of shared *lieux de mémoire* that have emerged through travel, trade, war, and colonialism. There is the great internal heterogeneity of cultural remembering within the nation-state. (Erll 2011(b): 8)

In this quotation, it would be useful to distinguish, for the purpose of the analysis of the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory the dissertation pursues, Erll's emphasis on "the mnemonic phenomena...which may be seen with the transcultural lens". Indeed, Barnes's fiction frequently shows how the belief in the "national collectivity as the main framework of cultural memory" becomes narratively challenged by the transcultural approach to the process of revealing the emotional life of his characters through the process of remembering. For instance, in *The Only Story* Susan's dialogue

[38] See, for instance, *Conversations with Julian Barnes,* edited by Vanessa Guignery. From the literary perspective, the transcultural conception of memory as referred to in this study is partially articulated in Barnes's *The Lemon Table.*

with Paul facing generational conflict, is constructed upon two relevant references to *Russkis:*

> 'Casey Paul,' she begins, in an affectionate, puzzled tone, 'I've decided that there's something seriously wrong.'
>
> 'I think you may be right', you answer quietly.
>
> 'Oh, you're always going on about that', she replies, as if this were some tedious and pedantic obsession of yours, nothing really to do with her. '...Maybe I occasionally take a drop or two more than is good for me.' She goes on, 'I'm talking about something much bigger than that. I think there's something seriously wrong.'
>
> 'You mean, something that causes you drinking? Something I do not know about?' Your mind heads towards some terrible, defining event in her childhood...
>
> 'Oh, you really can be a Great Bore at times', she says mockingly. 'No, much more important than that. What's behind it all.'
>
> 'You are already losing a little patience. 'And what do you think might be behind it all?'
>
> 'Maybe it's the Russkis.'
>
> 'The Russkis?' You – well, yes – you yelp.
>
> 'Oh Paul, do try and keep up. I don't mean the actual Russkis. *They are just a figure of speech.'*
>
> 'Like, say, the Klu Klux Klan or the KGB or the CIA...You suspect that this one brief chance is slipping away, and you don't know if it is your fault, her fault, or nobody's fault.
>
> 'It's no good if you can't follow. There's something behind it all, just out of sight. Something which holds it all together. Something that, if we put it back together, would mend it all, would mend us all, don't you see?' (*OS*: 123-124) (My italics).

The above-quoted dialogue between two central characters of *The Only Story*, Paul and Susan, subtly evokes Renate Lachmann's conception of "literature made from literature" (37), in which she argues that a text's production does not depend only on the aesthetic processes of selection of its narrative techniques and thematic devices, but also on the manner in which they are connected and (re)connected within the text. Probing into complex and non-linear intertextual processes responsible for the constitution of both form and meaning of a given text, Lachmann nevertheless affirms that "the constitution of a text's meaning cannot be accounted for merely on the basis of its individual structure", since the semantic relationship between a 'referential texture' of one particular

text and the textual layer of other texts, perceived mostly on a second reading, on which it stands and refers to, becomes itself a central factor in the concretization of meaning.

Taking into account Lachamann's conception of "literature made from literature", we can observe how the narrative development of a dialogue between Paul and Susan progressively grows into the intertextual space where meaning becomes tensely complex. Referring to *Russkis* as a figure of speech settles the yet isolated *The Only Story* within a multitude of intertextual relations, considering it as the literary work which finds itself standing on a threshold where multiple semantic codes meet and also where cultural and temporal boundaries are trespassed. *Russkis* are seen by Susan as a figure of speech capable of revealing that "there's something behind it all", constituting a direct intertextual reference to Gogol's passage from *The Government Inspector*, in which the darkest site of both physical and psychological oppression is satirically portrayed as a microcosm of the Russian State, while 'something which holds it all together' seeks not only to revisit, by means of Lachmann's *participation*, the controversial theme of a mistaken identity, frequently reworked in the 19th century Russian literary and cultural spheres[39], but also seeks to (re)construct, critically, the forgotten semantic content of the existing literary canon, by mobilizing its semantic potential in a new text.

Following Erll's argument on transcultural memory and the quoted passage from *The Only Story*, we may presume that Barnes's novel, engaging with "many of the 'hard

[39] See, for instance, A. Pushkin's "The Blizzard" (1830), which metaphorically interlaces a traditional Russian motif of disconcerting snow storm with the process of identity misinterpretation and its mystifying reconstruction. Further recovered by Tolstoy in *War and Piece* (1869) by means of a different aesthetic process, throughout the portrayal of the historic and social contexts of the French Invasion of Russia in 1812. See also N. Gogol's frame tale "The Tale of Captain Kopeikin" contemplated inside the narrative composition of *Dead Souls* (1842) and which also establishes a deep intertextual connection with the narrative representation of Napoleonic Campaign of 1812, depicted in *War and Piece*.

facts' of what we encounter as 'economy', 'power politics' or 'environmental issues' are at least partly the result of 'soft factors', of cultural processes grounded in cultural memory" (Erll 2011(b): 5).

Erll's theoretical consideration of the mnemonic phenomena seen with transcultural lens partly meets the theoretical perspective on literature as culture's memory proposed by Renate Lachmann in her work on intertextuality registered in "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature". Addressing literature from the point of view of memory, Lachmann's study concentrates on exploring a literary text as a mnemonic art per excellence and on contemplating writing as a vehicle to cultural memory, thus establishing interesting synergies between culture, memory and literature. Her theoretical approach to the literary text as a microspace of memory related to and nourished by the macrospace of memory representing a culture itself denotes an existing parallel between Jan Assmann's concept of the cultural memory that is supported by normative texts and thus transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, and the concept of the communicative memory, which is directed to establishing links between at least three generations by means of memories reconstructed through alive communication. Thus, for example, Lachmann states:

> When literature is considered in the light of memory, it appears as a mnemonic art per excellence. Literature is culture's memory, not as a single recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by a culture, and virtually all texts a culture has produced and by which a culture is constituted. Writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space. Every concrete text, as a sketched-out memory space, connotes the macrospace of memory that either represents a culture or appears as that culture. (Erll 2010: 301)

As we have already observed in the reading process of *The Only Story*, the bond between an act of memory or, in Lachmann's definition, a mnemonic aspect of literature,

and a new interpretation, displayed as the imaginative, creative, aspect of literature, turns into one of the crucial narrative elements in Barnes's work. Let us consider, for the sake of an example, the following excerpt from Barnes's *The Noise of Time*, which can equally be regarded, from Lachmann's perspective on a literary text, as a memory space:

> One to hear, one to remember, and one to drink—as the saying went. He doubted he could stop drinking, whatever the doctors advised; he could not stop hearing; and worst of all, he could not stop remembering. He so wished that the memory could be disengaged at will, like putting a car into neutral… But he could never do that with his memory. His brain was stubborn at giving house-room to his failings, his humiliations, his self-disgust, his bad decisions. (*NT*: 168)

In this text, the narrative construction of the argument arises from what Lachmann denominates as remembering by duplication, accomplished by the representation of the absent through the image. The evocation of "one to hear, one to remember, and one to drink" which opens this quotation, recovers the aesthetic power of an art of remembering. Lachmann's emphasis on the so-called image-producing activity of memory displays, once again, the already mentioned by Barnes ability of literature to preserve cultural memory from forgetting through the creative retrieval of images coming from the past. The retrieval of literary images by means of manifold appropriations of intertextual references from Russian literary past does not constitute, however, a linear narrative process. As we have seen, the narrative construction of the process of cultural memory in 'The Revival' benefits from the evidence that the mnemonic retrieval of Turgenev's biographical data is creatively reworked by the narrator's mind, thus disclosing an existence of a gap between a process of remembering and a process of forgetting. Refiguring from the past strong emotional aspects of what could be constituted as a forgotten or latent memory related to Turgenev's life-course, the narrator both

imagines and comments on the unreliability of the very process that lies at the basis of such a retrieval:

> This is safe. 'The fantasy is manageable, his gift a false memory.' A few decades later, the political leaders of his country would specialize in airbrushing the downfallen from history, in removing their photographic traces. Now here he is, bent over his album of memories, meticulously inserting the figure of a past companion. Paste it in, that photograph of the timid, appealing Verochka, while the lamplight rejuvenates your white hair into black shadow. (*LT*: 98)

Thus, the attempt to look at a multiplicity of ways in which mnemic imagination and poetic imagination interact in Barnes's fiction is an important point of this dissertation. The brief analysis of the texts' excerpts given so far reveals how mnemonics and a creative imagination mirror and comment on each other in Barnes's work, thus reflecting on the existence of a bond, in Lachmann's words, between "mnemotechnics and literature [which is] grounded in the double meaning of image as an image of memory and as the product of imagination, the creative stimulus of literature" (in Erll2010: 302).

The Integrative Chapter

"I Have a Vivid Memory of Pulling Out *Crime and Punishment* Along with My Sandwiches on a Field day"

> In Russian, a deed may be kind and good, or unkind and bad.
> Music may be pleasant and good, or unpleasant and bad;
> but there can be no such thing as 'beautiful' or 'ugly' music.
>
> Leo Tolstoy

> It's as if all writers stand at different
> points on a great circle and we relate across it at
> different angles towards different writers. But the great
> writers of the past are always your contemporaries.
>
> Julian Barnes

Leo Tolstoy's quest for a constructive dialogue with culture, suggested in the above quoted passage, attempts to newly introduce semantic conceptions of 'beautiful' into the modern cultural and linguistic context, through the intertextual strategy of doubling perceived as a main principle of narration[40]. What Renate Lachmann defines as a ramifying growth and dispersal of meaning[41], in Tolstoy's *What is Art?* is articulated

[40] For more details see Renate Lachmann's Preface to *Memory and Literature* (1997). Basically, Lachmann defines the *Doppelgänger* as one in "whom the desire for indivisibility and integration is tragically, fantastically, and grotesquely confounded [and who] exposes the subtext from which it was ultimately derived: the anthropogenic myth of the human being as a dual being. [...] The implicit idea – "I am entirely myself, but also the other" – appears to be a play on the semantic nuances of 'self-other' (etymologically, "I am myself the other, the second"). The essence of *Dopplegänger* relationships proves to be a 'self-otherness' in which the other supersedes the self. [...] The undecidability of perspective – something that presented a considerable annoyance for contemporary realist criticism – is based on a technique of semantic doubling that organizes the text as a whole" (Lachmann 1997: 303, 304, 305).
[41] In Lachmann (1997: 36-37).

through the dialogic confrontation of multiple cultural, temporal and historical contexts, European and Russian, bringing together the widening range of narrative procedures aiming at disruption, difference, discontinuity and playfulness with the consensual structures of meaning. The semantic encounter between 'beautiful' and 'good' music emerges here as the dialogic crossing of two culturally endowed communicational codes, which enable the reader to grasp further layers of either manifest or latent structures of meaning. Moreover, the narrative strategy of doubling turns into a main constitutive narrative device in Tolstoy's reflection on art addressed in his treatise, focusing on a controversial combination of the playful composition and decomposition of meaning which becomes the author's primary tool in achieving the immanence of the future-oriented recollection of the past in his work.

In Tolstoy's view, the controversial articulation of meaning disclosed in the discursive combination of 'beautiful music' is naturally encouraged by the renewed affluence of meaning produced by means of a new intertextual reference and of a new sense of style introduced into Russian cultural context through its communicational practice with European aesthetic energies. In the endeavour to establish an eclectic dialogue with different European cultural contexts and therefore to enable his own (re)creative performance in literature, the author achieves a productive tension between decomposition and (re)composition of meaning capable to uncover latent semantic traces also revealed in Julian Barnes's reflection on the psychologically experienced presence of the past in the contemporary literary discourse, addressed in the above stated second epigraph. The idea of a continual circularity of the aesthetic performance of art is also addressed in Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time*, which works against a monologic concept of both language and literature, creating a rather indeterminate cultural context resting

upon a dialogic interfacing of manifold poetic voices, a multiplicity of narrative fragments of different literary texts and of formerly silenced authors' words from the past. Barnes's motivating image of a fictional circle comprising different poetic voices from the literary past connotes not only the liberating sense of poetic creativity registered in the simultaneous condensation and dispersal of meaning, but also the constructive participation in and the future-oriented dialogue with the literary past resulting from its intertextual practice.

Semantic differentiation embodied in the discursive combination of 'beautiful music' observed in Tolstoy's excerpt becomes itself a complex intertextual reference to the ramifying architecture of literary memory concealed in a deeply entangled Barnes's image of a 'great circle' of writers. On the one hand, the theoretical concept of participation in semiotic practices registered in the texts from the past develops in Barnes's as well as in Tolstoy's writing an awareness of conceptual contiguity among different cultural and historical contexts. On the other hand, both writers essentially employ the sophisticated techniques of narrative contiguity in order to expand further the semantically fractured and structurally diversified evocation of recollected intertextual layers of meaning, thus supporting Simon Malpas's thesis that contemporary discourse is mainly composed by "fracturing, fragmentation, indeterminacy and plurality" (Malpas 2005: 5). If, in the first place, both writers address a theme of conceptual contiguity in their passages, and to a certain extent confirm their emotional belonging to the cultural and literary classical heritage[42] of the past, it is also true that the narrative construction of

[42] In the chapter "Memory and *Imitatio*" (*Memory and Literature*), Lachmann refers to some possible ways of considering the culturally and historically complex concept of "classical heritage", as follows: "The issue of Russian classicism not only encompasses the problem of canonization as it materialized in the literary histories of the nineteenth century. In addition, this issue includes a discussion of what constitutes the classical heritage, a matter at the heart of cultural debates since the Revolution. Indeed, with all its unsettling undecidability, the question of knowing what precisely constitutes cultural heritage forms a central part of

the past sought in their works looks forward to playful dismantling of a complex heterogeneity of cultural signs and their meanings, which leads to the deconstructive participation in past experiences by means of a recollecting dialogue.

With the expressions of 'different points', 'different angles' and 'different writers', Barnes's 'great circle' evokes a figurative meaning of fictional remembering as a process of writing, in which there is a ceaseless metonymic parallel between the fictional fascination with the traditional myth of culture and a controversial, disruptively perceived treatment of past literary traditions, capable of challenging established aesthetic preferences, forms and styles. Moreover, 'different points' of contact between 'different writers' semantically associates with Tolstoy's (re)composed mixing of discursively incompatible words such as, for instance, 'ugly' music in order to produce a renewed connotation of meaning resulting from its intertextual cross-reference with other cultures. Tolstoy's detailed analysis of the discursive combination of 'beautiful music' and the far-reaching implication for the writer's creativity of the adoption into Russian literary and artistic language of this new aesthetic style foreshadows Barnes's reflection upon the inherent cultural complexity of English literature, when he states:

> [...]. Shakespeare is our great writer and Shakespeare is nothing if not a mixer of genres, and a mixer of forms of rhetoric, and a mixer of prose and poetry, and a mixer of high and low, and a mixer of farce and tragedy. So it's always been there in our literary culture; some of it is obviously personal to the writer and some of it is deeply

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both the official and the unofficial ways in which Russian culture sees itself. It is a question that is asked over and over again right up to the present day. [...] At issue here are discrepancies that arose from the contradictory interpretations found in criticism written at the time of these authors and differences that became sharper and more profound as a result of the varying emphases placed by readers following those first critics. [...] The process of canonization resembles a struggle to establish a particular interpretation, and both writers of literary history and literary critics participate in this struggle just as actively as do newly emerging authors whom one might describe as the active readers of their predecessors" (177). Lachmann's closing statement, here referred, establishes a very interesting culturally interactive dialogue not only with Barnes's approach to his predecessors, but also with Julie Sander's detailed investigation into different symbolic ways in which English classical heritage has been constantly revisited and subjected to unceasing rewritings from either feminist or postcolonial perspectives, thus providing the classical works with new critical voice and renewed, mostly unsettling, interpretations of the received idea of the country's cultural past (Sanders 2006: 43-51).

> intrinsic to the culture. It's very interesting to read Voltaire on Shakespeare and see what a sort of utter barbarian he really regards him as: a genius but completely undisciplined. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 47)

By the same token, this point of view permeates Julie Sanders's study entitled *Adaptation and Appropriation*, in which the author investigates into the complex process of (re)membering Shakespeare through cultures and centuries, demonstrating in detail how

> the Shakespearean canon has provided a crucial touchstone for the scholarship of appropriation as a literary practice and form. [...] The adaptation of Shakespeare invariably makes him 'fit' for new cultural contexts and different political ideologies to those of his own age. As a result, a historiographical approach to Shakespearian appropriation becomes in many respects a study of theoretical movements; (2006: 46)

Assuming that the creative predisposition for mixing of different styles and narrative practices has been one of the important structural devices of many literary periods in English literature constitutes one of the important elements in the process of the analytical application of Lachmann's concept of participation. Another is intrinsically connected to the foundational presence of the metonymic performance of intertextuality addressed in Barnes's above stated observation and directed towards the critical questioning of meaning connoted in 'completely undisciplined genius' residing in its figurative implication for the narrative construction of cultural memory by means of 'undisciplined', dispersed and differed narrative strategies of mixing.

According to Ihab Hassan, the categories of participation, antiform, dispersal, intertext, combination and metonymy come to characterize postmodern art in terms of the wider complexities of language, culture and consciousness (Hassan, 1987). Those wider questions may reside in the narrative construction of the productive literary dialogues

between literatures and between cultures, which stimulate writers' and readers' imaginations to probe into new semantic contexts and enable them to appreciate a ramifying growth of meaning contemplated in the appreciation of a literary text. Conceptually separated from the idea of continuing progress nurtured by reasonable thinking and solid human foundations established since the Enlightenment and widely developed in 'Grand Narratives', postmodern fiction seeks to question the coherent strategies of comprehending the world and a human self. As Malpas notices, the postmodern anti-foundational thinking, along with innovation and development in its cultural and artistic spheres, can hardly be identified with progress (2005: 43). In a very similar stance, Randall Stevenson discusses the way by which postmodern construing of the world and of the human condition separates itself from the linear and unfolding validity of 'Grand Narratives', "determinedly denying the validity of thinking and analysis, even in the course of its own analysis and thinking" (Stevenson 2004: 71). The deferred critical approach towards consensually established norms and aspects of thinking and of conceiving reality, together with a stylistic and thematic departure from conventional narrative strategies of interpreting it, becomes apparent not only in the attempt to develop new subjects and themes of writing, but also in the experience of employing new styles, narrative techniques and memory structures to convey the fragmented and diffused nature of modern life.

In his study, Stevenson also draws attention to the ontological importance of literary history in the aesthetic consideration of manifold writing traditions, styles and narrative strategies which come to inhabit English literature from the 1960s onwards. In line with Barnes's above quoted observation, the argument in favour of a constructive sense of mixing between tradition and innovation acquires a noticeable position in

Randall Stevenson's critical approach to Postmodernism in English literature. Reflecting on the expanding interaction between literature, culture and society unfolded in England from at least the 1960s, the author establishes significantly implicative connections between social events of postmodernity and aesthetically conceived artistic practices of postmodernism. He argues that the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the decline in the traditional English life and the changing boundaries in the class system, together with the increasing democratization of culture encouraged by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and Arts Council, on the one hand, and the expanding influence of cinema, television and other modern forms of marketing and social interaction, on the other, have contributed to the increasing diversification of English society, which continues to address the suitability of the traditionally conceived way of life as well as its self-conception as a single nation. Quoting Greenblatt, Stevenson notices how English literature "ceased to be the product of the identity of a single nation" (2004: 6). Along with reinforced attention to how linguistic and literary discourses frame and mediate the human perception of time and memory structures, postmodern writers question the validity and representational appropriateness of language in order to truthfully convey reality. As Stevenson insightfully affirms, "this recognition [about the autonomy of language] seemed to many later critics to mark a decisive transition between modernist interests and postmodernist writing – often defined in terms of its self-reflexive concern with the 'autonomy of language', the 'problem of the word', and the nature of literary representation generally (79).

The polemical issue of the autonomy of language, raised by several postmodern critics and philosophers of language[43], may in fact be etymologically broadened by

[43] See Derrida, for instance, *Writing and Difference,* 1978.

Malpas's addressing of the emancipation of postmodern thinking into 'a vast field of competing projects and narratives' with no possible existential or semantic reconciliations. Such a perspective, though already anticipated by Leo Tolstoy in his reflections on the highly unstable nature of language mostly registered in his attempts to transmit into words an outlived experience[44], also frames the main controversies about writing observable in Barnes's poetics. If, on the one hand, according to the writer, fiction conveys the most truth about life composed by means of a poetic word, on the other hand, its thematic strains and compositional tensions frequently perceived through intertextual combinations contribute to the semantic deferral of meaning continuously present in the efforts to find and to declare that truth. It will be interesting to mention, briefly, Julia Kristeva's critical attention to the concept of the "translinguistic transfer"[45], which she describes as a main linguistic device responsible for the constantly progressive production and permutation of meaning in the literary text. Emphasizing the aesthetic function of a literary text which arises from its inherent capacity to construct and deconstruct the received interpretation of meanings, Kristeva considers the importance of the continuous self-reflexivity of a literary text responsible for the unceasing neutralization of any endeavour to prescribe a fixed meaning or a single interpretation:

> To make language an operator at work in the materiality of that which, for society, is a means of contact and understanding, does this not make of it immediately an outsider to language? The so-called literary act, by dint of its not admitting to an ideal distance in relation to that which it signifies, introduces radical otherness in relation to what language is claimed to be: a bearer of meanings. Strangely close and intimately foreign to the substance of our discourse and dreams, literature today appears to be the very act which grasps how language works and signals what it has the power tomorrow to transform. (Kristeva 1969: 9)

[44] For more details, see *The Diaries of Leo Tolstoy,* Boston Public Library https://archive.org/details/diariesofleotols00tols/page/n3/mode/2up, accessed on 29.05.2020; pp.34-45
[45] In Orr, Mary (2008).

Kristeva's perspective on the continuous revival of meaning by means of what she consequently denominates as a "literary word", distinguished by its capability to transcend the ideological and conceptual restrictions imposed by the particular cultural context, confirms the dialogical essence of a literary text, stating that "the literary word is an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (Kristeva 1980: 65).

It is important to observe how Kristeva's complex theoretical articulation of a literary word echoes Tolstoy's dialogic approach towards the creation of meaning through the interconnection of words. This recalls also another of Kristeva's descriptions of the particular function of a word, when she suggests that the significance of textuality arises from the correlation of words or texts with other words and texts: "[…] each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read (Kristeva 1980: 66).

This point of view may in fact constitute a theoretical bridge between postmodern scepticism towards the ability of a word to truly represent either reality or human condition, and its semantically deep process of decontextualization and recontextualization of the received discourses, characterized by Bauman as "the linked processes of decontextualizing and recontextualizing discourse – of extracting ready-made discourse from one context and fitting it to another – are ubiquitous in social life, essential mechanisms of social and cultural continuity" (Bauman 2004: 8).

In a similar stance, Malpas further argues how

> The difficulty here, of course, is what space this leaves for critique and transformation, as, without rules or the possibility of consensus, what grounds are there (apart from mere anarchist delight in disruption) to challenge the values of the culture we inhabit? If we have lost touch with reason and reality entirely, what is the point of substituting one set of arbitrary theories and practices with another? (2005: 43)

Malpas's reflection on the availability of critical space for transformation may become a functional tool in the attempt to (re)appreciate his argument in the light of Barnes's (re)search into alternative methods of seeing and conceptualizing reality embodied in his fiction. The writer's longing for his 'past' contemporaries opens new critical ways of dealing with the idea of transformation and deferral of meaning endeavoured in his narrative. One of the arguments supporting this thesis is equally mentioned by Malpas in his analysis of Jean-Francois Lyotard's essay "An Answer to the question, what is the Postmodern?" (1992), thus confirming the idea that the range of formal devices mostly associated with postmodern narrative practice, such as a performative plurality and a fragmentation of points of view, stylistic and structural disruption of totalising narrative discourses, or a progressive multiplication of the attempts to represent the unrepresentable, can actually be observed throughout literary history, thus seriously undermining a sense of historically oriented periodisation of a literary work of art. Indeed, Barnes as a writer frequently comes to contest the determinacy of any critical attempt to classify his works according to the sense of historical periodisation, raising equally complex questions regarding the aesthetic nature of literary representations. Similarly to Lyotard, Julian Barnes sees the conceptual connection between realism, modernism and postmodernism not so much from the point of view of "a gradual progress from the restrictions of the first to the freedom and experimentation of the last" (Malpas 2005: 28), but rather as different aesthetic ways of challenging the discursive totalities imposed on the human experience of reality, derived from and nourished by the accepted practices of representation of the real by the narrative. Lyotard's reflection on the alternative methods to narrate reality supports his before stated view on the provocative aesthetic reworkings of the notion of the sublime in the literary

text[46], which contributes to disturb and to critically challenge a number of different structures of historical and social foundations seeking to produce the totalising collection of finite narratives in the field of culture:

> The postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by preestablished rules and cannot be judged ...by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating". (Lyotard, quoted in Malpas, 30)[47]

Such a transformative account of narrative expectations of a given culture, performed in both form and content of a literary work of art, comes to shatter the processes of progressive understanding directed to the sense of historical periodisation invoked in the relationship between realism and postmodernism, outlined earlier. What Malpas finally defines as "postmodern critique" in the cultural field, the reading process of Barnes's narratives tentatively asserts to be an essential part of the stylistically brilliant *The Golden Notebook*[48] of memory, intertextuality and dialogism between the possibilities of the performative plurality in contemporary narrative and the (re)collective fragmentation of cultural consciousness born from past literature(s):

> For both Laclau and Lyotard, then, the postmodern is not simply a move beyond the modern but is rather a mode of critique that is immanent to it. It does not provide final answers or set up alternative grand narratives. Instead, postmodernism in art, theory or culture generally sets out to demonstrate the fractures and silences that have always been part of the grand narratives, to present the violence that emerges from foundational thinking as its categories are imposed on the refractory world of experience, to find means to give voice to those subjects or aspects of subjectivity whose uniqueness is occluded or silenced by the discursive totalities of the modern. (Malpas 2005: 131)

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[46]Jakobson, Roman. "Subliminal Verbal Patterning in Poetry". *Selected Writings*, 1981. Jakobson's definition of the sublime is closely connected to the critical understanding of his concepts of ambivalence and polyvalence displayed beyond externally manifest phonological and grammatical levels in the structure of a poetic text.

[47] Due to restrictions and limitations imposed by Covid-19, some of the complementary references quoted in this dissertation may not derive from the original sources, being instead reintegrated in this research from the works written by the acknowledged scholars in the field.

[48] Doris Lessing, 1962.

The (re)reading activity which Barnes confesses to be an integral part of his writing[49] becomes capable of transmitting, through a deeper communicative process established with his works, rich dialogic patterns of interpretation that subliminally rework the taken for granted traditional sense of history, reality and the world, liberating a reader from the foundational absolute substrata shaping modern human life. It can be further argued that in Barnes's texts the re-reading continuity established between several works of art coming from the past constitutes in itself what Malpas denominates as a performance of a "continual rereading and critique of modern values and projects" (44). What Malpas catches in his description as (post)modern narrative construct, manifested in "the ways in which one links together the events, people and ideas of the past to produce an account of the meaning of the present [determining] the ways in which that present can be seen as an outcome of the past and a precursor to the sort of future that forms the basis of one's projects" (49), might be equally associated with the complex architecture of memory in the non-linear relationship between the range of narrative experiences nourished by Russian realism and the variety of the self-reflexive gestures which resist the rather automatised and unreflexive commodities of contemporary life in Barnes's fiction. Such a textually performed resistance to modern depthlessness of thought is mostly expressed on the microtextual dimension of Barnes's narratives and is conditioned by the fragmentary train of thought composed of the most varied narrative modes – a contemporary tenuous exploration of the multiplicity of memories inherent in all identities, sentimentally realistic accounts of the frailness of social and political foundations and the irrationally conceived obsolete turns of human consciousness naturally pertaining to Freud's psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious. The idea of

[49] See Guignery & Roberts, 2009, *Conversations with Julian Barnes*.

"identity as a performance" (Malpas 2005: 73), so much discussed in Barnes's work, may equally be applied to the notion of a text as performance, in which the entangled cultural multiple coding is able to challenge the contemporary sense-making activity by dispersing the variety of religious, political and social foundations without surpassing any of them. Barnes's text as a performance of a multiplicity of cultural experiences hyperbolizes the dialogic principle of modern polyphony, and contributes to the attempt to transcend the straightforward literary and chronological periodisation. The text in itself therefore becomes an aesthetically mutable intertextual structure which enables its reader to partake in a literary journey through "a continual renegotiation and disruption of subjective identity, a process that Lyotard recognizes 'has been at work, for a long time now, in modernity itself' (Malpas 2005: 79). It can be added, though, that a continual renegotiation and disruption of subjective text's structures is perceived through the narrative evaluation of mutually enriching intertextual interconnection of macrotextual and microtextual dimensions in Barnes's fiction. The well acknowledged resistance to position Barnes's literary production in the critical scope of postmodernism[50] may partly be justified by his firmly stated principle of regarding the novel as a very generous literary genre, allowing for the writer's almost unlimited experimentation with different modes of composing a work of art. Though there are many valuable theoretical foundations which place Barnes's fiction in the experimental realm of postmodernism[51], it might also be interesting to consider his mode of writing in broader aesthetic terms observable in its refined extension towards a polemical montage of intertextual references composing a Realist tradition of Russian Literature. For instance, in the Introduction to *Worlds within*

[50] See Guignery, Vanessa. *Conversations with Julian Barnes,* and Childs, Peter. *Julian Barnes.*
[51] Ibid.

Words: Twenty-first Century Visions on the Work of Julian Barnes (2009), Vanessa Guignery defends the undoubtedly ambivalent approach to what concerns Barnes's stylistic, generic and aesthetic creative output, which highly compromises the classification of his work according to a 'neat literary category'. Thus, she justly notices that

> On the contrary, Barnes always seems to surprise his reader with an unexpected genre, subject matter, atmosphere or treatment, so that there is no blatantly recognisable Barnesian style or touch. 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. (Guignery 2009:16)

In order to develop this argument, one might reconsider in a wider scope Hayden White's definition of history as a text mentioned in Malpas's study of postmodernity. Malpas argues that "what White is getting at here is that historical events do not mean things in themselves but, rather, their meanings are generated by the ways in which they are described and linked together to form a historical narrative, and the resonances produced by that narrative depend on the recognition by its audience of the familiar story-telling devices it employs" (98).

The emphasis on 'the ways in which [meanings] are described and linked together' opens several pertinent narratological perspectives which would allow to (re)consider, in line with Lachmann's intertextual theory, a literary text as a historically mutable performance of cultural experience embodied in the narration of collective memories. The already referred Lachmann's thesis on intertextuality as an act of memory may as well receive a theoretical support from Hutcheon's thesis on historiographic metafiction in which she recognizes the controversial presence of ontologically

contradictional, contextually oriented cultural devices, created by the textualized accessibility to the reality of the past (Hutcheon 1988: 105-124) and as such responsible for the unverifiability of the relation between fiction, reality and truth. Hutcheon's reflection on the (re)creative and transformative power endeavoured by historiographic metafiction, mostly comprised in its ability to challenge consensual framings of the narrative constructions of truth may equally be applied to Lachmann's notion of a literary text which tells a fictionally conceived life experience as a narrative construction of a cultural memory. If, as Malpas fairly notices, postmodern fiction may actually employ the aesthetically wide range of psychologically destabilizing narrative devices such as 'unreliable narrators, multiple frames for the narrative, stylistic transformations, mixtures of magical and realistic events, and parodies of earlier literary and historical works" (101), it would also be interesting to mention that such a constructive mixing of different narrative modes may in fact refer to a sublime semiotic order[52] observable in Barnes's texts whose manifold intertextual references suggestively conceal a memory that participates in a memory of a foreign cultural past. The multiplicity of cultural references aims, on the one hand, to explore the ways in which the historical truth is manipulated in the story, while on the other hand it seeks to trace the scattered throughout the text recurrences and correspondences of a thematic narrative unit. Thus, the manifest stylistic transformations observable on the external narrative level betray the existence of other,

[52] It is interesting to establish an aesthetic parallel between the sublime semiotic order displayed in some of Barnes's texts and Edmund Burke's essential distinction between the categories of the beautiful and the sublime, expressed in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). While the category of beauty accomplishes the function to provide pleasure and aesthetical contemplation, the category of sublime brings to evidence the obscure, uncertain and apprehensive dimensions of human existence, especially in its confrontation with death. In Barnes's narratives, the dichotomy between the visible and obscure dimensions is mostly represented by means of the intertwining of manifest and latent narrative levels.
For more definitions of the sublime, see Emmanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979).

latent narrative frames or textualized structures that may only be revealed in the deeper, explanatory analysis of a text. The subliminally established meaning oscillates between manifest and latent narrative levels, thus creating an ambiguously abstract space for the enabling interaction between contradictions and controversies, uncovering several versions of truth. While the majority of Barnes's texts seem to reject Hutcheon's notion of postmodern narrative which "is a contradictory cultural enterprise, one that is heavily implicated in that which it seeks to contest" (Hutcheon, 1988: 106), it might also be legitimate to observe how the plurality of intertextual references to Russian cultural past, embedded in the thematic and stylistic works from 19th century Russian literature, allows them to map and to (re)map cultural memory, metaphorically representing it as a rather conceptually interactive - cross-cultural and cross-historical - narrative device. Thus, in the scope of this dissertation, the stylistic auto-representation of the selected Barnesian texts supports from within the multiplicity of intertextual references to several historical contexts of the Russian past, mapping and remapping structural and foundational contradictions between them. It would be interesting to mention that in this process neither Russian nor Barnesian texts do deny internal contradictions, but rather evoke the alternative ways of representing the competing narrative voices and intertextual devices as dialogic versions of the same unrepresentable realm of truth, without necessarily agreeing upon a universal, absolutist and totalising vision of it. As Malpas mentions, Jameson's concept of "cognitive mapping" which involves the reconquest of a sense of place in the construction and reconstruction of memory (120) contributes to provide firm, but not totalising, foundations for thought through the representation of a travelling fragmentation of meaning. Its 'subliminally functioning riddle' (Jakobson, 1981) which holds the story together becomes perceptible through the notion of a ceaseless fabulation

of the fragmented sense of reality derived from the intertextual references to the texts from a foreign culture. Such a travelling fabulation through the multiplicity of stories and the narrative frames seems to provide Barnes's texts with a challenging gesture to disrupt and to diffuse the rhetoric of truth implied in the theories of simulation and simulacra consuming contemporary society[53].

Stevenson also contributes to the thesis of the importance of travelling memory[54] in the narratively constructed cultural space for dialogue, when he observes that "the consequences of historical forces, in the aftermath of empire, [...] inserted large sections of the world's population - quite literally, as immigrants – into new realities, countries and cultures" (2004: 478). In postcolonial textual production which legitimately constitutes one of the framing devices of a postmodern discourse of identity, Stevenson registers both feelings of 'loss and regret occasioned by the end of empire' and a recollective scepticism directed towards vanishing ideals. He also acknowledges the importance of a dialogic contact between mutually unfamiliar cultures and their values for the inventive outlook of postmodern fiction, contributing to the synergy between tradition and innovation, renewed literary style and a range of aesthetic influences from the past. In the author's point of view, the narrative (re)covery of the past is comprehended, nevertheless, between two conflicting inner forces, whose fruitful interaction features at least two important dimensions, a manifest and a latent one: while "the loneliness of extended exile offered deeper challenges to characters' sense of self, values and identity", it also illustrated that "self-discovery in the novel is not a matter of

[53] For more details on the theories of simulacra, see Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, [1981], 1994.
[54] See Erll, Astrid. "Travelling Memory", 2011.

fulfilling desire, but of painfully recognizing the impossibility of its fulfilment, or of any real freedom for the individual" (Stevenson 2004: 488).

The existence of wider questions about representation in postmodern literature outlined by Malpas encounters its semantic correspondence in Stevenson's reflection on 'endless circuitousness' of the postmodern debate (2004: 71), embedded in the impossibility of fulfilment of self-discovery, and becomes partly addressed in the intertextually constructed cultural dialogues of its texts.

In *The Last of England?* (2004), Stevenson observes the existence of a gradual widening of narrative styles and cultural perspectives dwelling into English literature in the period from 1960 to 2000, proposing a rather challenging inquiry into

> How far writing of this kind might be defined as 'English', in the sense of belonging to a single nation – even just to a land mass north of the Channel, south of the Tweed, and east of Offa's Dyke – is another question. 'Traditions slide over borders', Malcolm Bradbury suggested in 1996, and 'national cultures reach seamlessly one into another'. Broadening forms of Bradbury's 'world pluri-culture' may leave future histories of 'English' literature less confident even than the present one about nationhood, or even just geographical area, as a basis for literary analysis. Though perplexing for critics – perhaps marking the last of a specifically English literary history – this openness and indeterminacy nevertheless appeared likely to remain productive for literary imagination itself, broadening still further the democratization of voice and vision so evident in the period just considered. The last of England? Perhaps some of the most interesting years, for writing about these parts, were still to come. (Stevenson 2004: 521-522)

Though Renate Lachmann's argument against postmodern capability to dismantle intertextual connections established between texts is supported by her thesis that in general terms postmodern critical theories build on the continual denial of meaning, whereas intertextuality builds on the search for meaning, it would nevertheless be interesting to investigate how Barnes's narrative fiction (re)searches and reconfigures past meanings by questioning their etymological validity. In *Memory and Literature,*

Lachmann argues that "in my reading, intertextuality does not, or at least not yet, participate in postmodern literary discourse. Intertextuality has not given up the search for meaning, even where meaning is denied, just as it has not given up the guarantor of meaning, memory. The struggle to uncover traces, or to uncover their erasure, does not allow them to become indifferent" (1997: 338).

From the theoretical point of view, Lachmann's above-stated argument is fully supported by Mary Orr in her critical approach towards the concept of intertextuality, when she assumes that "postmodern intertextuality pertains to be all-inclusive of text, including the Bible. Yet its anti-religious spirit of interpretation, that all texts are text, in fact delivers tokenism and taboo packaged together" (Orr 2008: 177). In Orr's critical position, 'intertextuality' is mostly defined by means of recovering of the culturally and historically articulated continuity and not so much disruption of meanings created in the literary texts, emphasizing the academic statement that as a concept it should not ever be approached without taking into consideration the specific cultural and historical context in which it has emerged. As an example, Orr comments on the unceasing manipulation of meanings derived from the continuous rewritings and the literary appropriations of Shakespeare, in which the philosophically articulated idea that 'nothing comes out of nothing' provides a fertile theoretical framework for the broader analysis of intertextuality:

> However, if 'nothing only comes of nothing', goes endlessly round and round or empties out, how can intertextuality's parameters be ascertained? Rather than defining intertextuality by what it is not, for example, against nonsense (the via negativa), or, indeed, by a double negative (a deconstruction of deconstruction), this study, like Lear, will press it further for what it is. Lear's personal tragedy in so doing, however, also constitutes a warning. From the outset, his error was to take at face value the wordy reformulations of 'love' of his elder daughters Goneril and Regan, whereas it was his youngest daughter Cordelia's more profound silence that spoke the more. His failure to discern between her 'nothing' as no response, and nothing as something infinitely more than was expressible, is the ultimate tragedy of the play and a timely reminder to debates grounded in linguistics. Terms such as 'love' or 'intertextuality'

> can be nothing without the qualifiers and contexts in which they can speak again. (Orr 2008: 4-5)

The invitation to discuss the presence of intertextuality in postmodern literary practices suggested by Lachmann's argument may constitute a necessary trigger to look at literary dialogues and non-linear aesthetic interactions established between literary texts coming from distinct historical and ideological contexts. In the first place, this kind of theoretical approach will necessarily require some crucial aspects that would contribute to the definitions of literary movements which culturally and ideologically shape the texts. In *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature* (2008), John Mersereau recognizes, for instance, that we cannot conceive of literary studies without using periodization. In fact, throughout literary history, the tendency to categorize literary works in terms of their aesthetic function has itself generated a lot of controversies in the field of literary studies. Thus, in case of 19th century Russian literature Mersereau alludes instead to the notion of intertextual communicability among different literary movements, identifying interesting points of contact between Russian Romanticism and the early attempts to create a cycle of works which constituted an aesthetical background for the development of psychological Realism, mostly oriented towards the detailed depiction of its central character, the so called extraordinary individual, a "superfluous man". As follows, a change in a social and a cultural context of representation has constituted a very fruitful framework for the unfolding of new hybrid genres. As Mersereau observes, "Russian Romanticism [commenced] with a strong emphasis on poetry (it is appropriate that *Ruslan and Lyudmila* of 1820 should be a narrative poem), but in the course of its development shifted toward prose" (Moser 2008: 136). A shift from poetry to prose, in which the flowering of a hybrid genre occurs, turns into a very significant cultural and

social trace of Russian Romanticism, characterizing its smooth transition toward Realism which became dominant during the second half of the century. The collaborative synthesis between Romanticism and early Realism is very well introduced by the scholar:

> Our tendency to think in terms of schools and movements suggests that literature consists of discrete blocks of artistically homogeneous works. Of course, that is not the case, since literature is constantly evolving, and every period, in addition to its exemplary figures, has its epigones from past movements and precursors of things to come. Thus, it is difficult to place even approximate limits on a movement or a school. Given this caveat, we may say that Russian Romanticism begins to emerge from sentimentalism around 1815, that it gains the high ground in the 1820s and 1830s, and by the early 1840s is on the verge of displacement by realism, whose harbingers have appeared over the previous decade. (Moser 2008: 138)

It would be interesting to mention, for instance, Linda Hutcheon's attention to the crucial importance of culturally and ideologically conceived margins and boundaries imposed on literary works. According to the author's point of view, the textual valorization of conceptual intertwining of difference and uniqueness constitutes the distinctive aesthetical mark of postmodern literature. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), Hutcheon notices that "cultural homogenization too reveals its fissures, but the heterogeneity that is asserted in the face of that totalizing (yet pluralizing) culture does not take the form of many fixed individual subjects [...]" (59). In this context, it is remarkable how Hutcheon's characterization of culturally conceived heterogeneity is (re)constructed through the nuanced analysis of 'fissures' contemplated inside the apparently 'fixed', eternal and transcendental concepts of truth about human condition in general, and individual subjects in particular. When Stevenson refers, in the above mentioned quote, to 'openness and indeterminacy' of discourses which are 'productive for literary imagination' by in its turn contributing to 'still further democratization of voice and [world] vision', it might be suggested that his conception of postmodernism, defined through openness and indeterminacy, has been examined not so much from the

critical perspective of strict historical periodization, with specific starting and ending points, but is instead perceived and tentatively received as "a flux of contextualized [cultural] identities" (Hutcheon 1988: 59). The concluding thesis of his study, advocating for 'openness and indeterminacy' of postmodern literary discourses, may in itself constitute an intellectual opportunity to (re)evaluate critically Lachmann's argument about the supposed inadequacy of postmodern literary practices for the research in intertextuality primarily perceived as a cultural act of meaning. Though Lachmann's point can indeed be considered as an important one regarding the apology for the retracing of cultural processes by whose means a cultural meaning is constituted and therefore playing not against, but in favour of the recuperation of meaning, it would be also interesting to dissociate the postmodern literary practice from the process of a self-conscious meaning denial affirmed by the author. Instead, we may complete Lachmann's argument in favour of intertextual search for meaning in postmodern writing, by changing slightly a dominant in her study critical perspective. Thus, instead of speaking about memory of a literary text, articulated through the intertextual reference, as a guarantor of meaning, it would also be productive to refer to the textualizations of memory[55] of meaning conceived, first, in the text and second, through its incessant dialogue with other texts. For instance, in the previously mentioned *Keeping an Eye Open*, Barnes acknowledges the existence of polemical and provisional theoretical framing of the philosophical conceptual systems accounting for the real, pointing out that each etymological certitude can only remain authentic by virtue of the existence of a supporting ground that remains unexplored. Instead of conceiving the critical approach to literary periodization as a centered epistemological subject, with diachronically delimited conceptual boundaries, Barnes

[55] See White, Hayden, and Barthes, Roland. *Postmodernism*, *Key Figures.*

advocates in favour of giving voice to the space of the text, or more precisely, to what lies inside the disjunctive synthesis[56] of the text. More precisely, it ceases to be perceived exclusively as being written and fixed in a certain temporal context, but instead iterates textually what is inscribed within the transcultural dialogue among different texts and literary movements. Thus, Barnes provides a rather nonhierarchical and decentered reading and comprehension of the defining aesthetical traces and modes of expression observable in different artistic movements, whose heterogeneous confluence gives rise to creative fictional transformations of cultural memory circulating in the works of art of the past:

> As for the wider, longer history of painting, of course I could see that Durer and Memling and Mategna were brilliant, but I tended to feel that Realism was a kind of default setting for art. This was a normal, and normally romantic, approach. It took me a lot of looking before I understood that Realism, far from being just the base camp for high-altitude adventure by others, could be just as truthful, and even just as strange - that it too involved choice, organization and imagination, so in its own way might be equally transformative. (*KEO*: 7)

Similarly, the semantic fluidity of the dimension of difference applied to literary periodization is formulated by Hugh Silverman in his analysis of Jacques Derrida's understanding of deconstructive reading, when he states that "what is postmodern about these [Derrida's] readings, as well as being deconstructive, is that they are typically juxtaposed with other texts, other writings from different contexts, in such a way that they mark the places of difference between, where it is the marks of their alternative formulations that are specified and formulated" (*Postmodernism, The Key Figures*, 2002: 116).

[56] See Deleuze, Gilles. *Postmodernism, Key Figures* (2002).

Moreover, Barnes's reflection on aesthetical fluidity and conceptual interchangeability between different literary movements is further developed in *Keeping an Eye Open*, when the writer proposes to embrace the creative advantages of 'a continuing conversation with the past':

> This sense of my life (just) overlapping with theirs was important in a way I didn't fully recognise at the time, because I had no notion as yet that I would become a writer. But anyone setting out to practise any of the arts in the second half of the twentieth century had to take on Modernism (...). You might (and should) choose to go your own way, but it was not an option simply to ignore the movement, to pretend that it had never happened. Besides, by the Sixties the next generation and more had been at work – there was Postmodernism, and later post-Postmodernism, and so on until eventually the labels ran out. A literary critic in New York was later to call me a "pre-Postmodernist", a moniker I am still working on. (*KEO*: 8)

In this quote, Barnes tries to communicate to his reader the necessity to situate a fictional text on a liminal trajectory between the said and the unsaid, the literal and the metaphorical, the evident and the hidden, being such a critical attitude possible not exclusively but mostly through transcultural approach to reading, achieved by means of contemplating the dialogical communication between textually iterated cultural spaces. To make justice to this argument, we may refer to the character's Braithwaite ability, registered in *Flaubert's Parrot*, not simply to quote, but incorporate references from other texts within itself, as if trying to submit to irony and challenge, critically, the performative strictness of representational devices employed by distinct, both culturally and historically, literary movements:

> I'll remember instead another lecture I once attended, some years ago at the Cheltenham Literary Festival. It was given by a professor from Cambridge, Christopher Ricks, and it was a very shiny performance. His bald head was shiny; his black shoes were shiny; and his lecture was very shiny indeed. Its theme was Mistakes in Literature and Whether They Matter. Yevtushenko, for example, apparently made a howler in one of his poems about the American nightingale. Pushkin was quite wrong about the sort of military dress worn at balls. John Wain was wrong about the Hiroshima pilot. Nabokov was wrong – rather surprising this – about the phonetics of the name Lolita. There were other examples: Coleridge, Yeats and Browning were

> some of those caught out not knowing a hawk from a handsaw, or not even knowing what a handsaw was in the first place. (*FP*: 76)

In *Realism and Power* (1990), Alison Lee considers the above-mentioned quotation in a context of Postmodernism, addressing a theme of how postmodern literature questions political and cultural structures of authority nurtured by influential discourses of the liberal humanist ideology embedded in the representational literary techniques of Realism. For instance, the author examines a complex way in which Realist allegiance to experiential reality provided by documentation has been constantly subverted from within Realist conventions. She argues that

> Through metafictional techniques the novel creates levels of fiction and "reality" and questions the Realist assumption that truth and reality are absolutes. *Flaubert's Parrot* is typical of contemporary metafictional texts in that, while it challenges Realist conventions, it does so, paradoxically, from within precisely those same conventions. Metafiction often contains its own criticism, and the novels which play with Realist codes criticize, as this one does, their own use of them. More generally, they call into question the basic suppositions made popular by nineteenth-century Realism. (Lee 1990: 3)

Lee's critical appreciation of different ways in which postmodern literary discourse suspends the veracity of the facts upon which the Realist text rests and effectively demonstrates through the author's nuanced research how it questions Realist conventions from within. The paradoxical reading process of the above-mentioned passage from *Flaubert's Parrot*, pointed out by Lee, can nonetheless be further extended in order to embrace other possibilities of approaching culturally framed fictional constructs concealed within the novel. To begin with, the multivocal scene of writing evoked in the quotation of *Flaubert's Parrot* invites its reader to reflect upon the ironical treatment of reality connected with the presence of at least two literary figures who are

not exactly, or mostly, realists: Evtushenko and Pushkin. Moreover, their discursive juxtaposition in Barnes's text motivates us to consider an ever-expanding intertextual network that mocks any notion of a single origin, from both cultural and chronological perspectives. Though both poets – Pushkin and Evtushenko – endeavour to play seriously with the linear notion of history and tradition, trying to convey instead the dialectical movements of the human condition expressed by means of fluid performances of textualized tensions between characters' true self and misleading role-playing, nevertheless it would be interesting to mention that they belong to different cultural, ideological and historical contexts. According to John Mersereau, Aleksandr Pushkin's (1799 – 1837) poetic and narrative literary production witnesses the cultural period comprehended between 1820 – 1840, being defined as "simultaneously the zenith of Russian Romanticism and the first stages of Russian literature's greatest period" (Moser 2008: 136) further addressed as Psychological Realism which becomes a very important aesthetic dimension for the structural development of the 19th century Russian novel[57]. According to the scholar's point of view, the syncretic confluence between Byronic romanticism and realist traces are primarily conceived in Pushkin's novel in verse entitled *Evgeny Onegin* (1837) since it subtly introduces the typical for the developing Russian novel of psychological realism theme of the "superfluous man" – "an individual who can find no productive role in society despite intellect, education and even wealth" (Moser 2008: 143). Pushkin's mastery in exploring such ontologically complex themes as memory, remembering and mistaken identity is framed by a hybrid genre packed with the use of parody, irony, authorial distancing and psychological mystification in the use of characters. Evgeny Evtushenko (1933-2017), working and writing under the normative

[57] See *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, 2008:143.

Socialist Realism, subtly (re)covers the theme of the "superfluous man" embedded in the concealed ironical treatment of its aesthetic intensity. According to *The Paris Review*, Evtushenko's "literary scene is marked by a superficial calm, due to the oppressive (but not repressive) tactics of the authorities; beneath this calm there are men of talent and passion producing often unpublished, but fortunately not always unread, manuscripts". Doing justice to Lachmann's trope of metaphorical participation, Pushkin's superfluous man, a Russian intellectual who theoretically addresses progressive thoughts and liberal ideas about Russian political atmosphere and society of the beginning of the 19th century but fails to act and to materialise his ideas, has been conceptually remembered by Evtushenko's characters who actively and heroically "believe that the present system (stifling Socialist Realism) is not incompatible with human and artistic growth". Thus, Evtushenko's poetry advocates for the unceasing research into truth, which is metaphorically addressed as "as delicate as a tender plant. It has survived a harsh winter and now will grow" (*The Paris Review*)[58]. Evtushenko's never-ending attempt of "looking for truth – in ourselves, in others" may be perceived as a connecting intertextual space – an unfulfilled space in Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* - between Pushkin's problematization of Russian cultural identity in *Evgeniy Onegin* and Evtushenko's multi-layered poetic voice embodied in a traditional Russian realist conviction of exploring the concept of truth from the elaborated psychological perspective. Alluding to both poets, Pushkin and Evtushenko, thus combining fragments of social and cultural history, the passage from Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* contributes to undo the binary oppositions of contextual and cultural codes, making possible the invention of new forms of thought and interaction in a postmodern text.

[58] https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4443/the-art-of-poetry-no-7-yevgeny-yevtushenko.

Following Lee's critical stance, advocating for the ineffability of truth since the intertextual reference to the poets from the past – as a hybrid, dialogical form – not only restrains a reader from speaking about the concrete reality of the past, but also prevents him or her from creating semantic monads about the textualizations of this past in fiction. The multiple cultural coding, reflected in the composition of *Flaubert's Parrot* and interpreted as boundary transgression and mixing in both structural and thematic terms, seeks to proliferate the postmodern idea of a constantly floating, slippery meaning, questioning the very attempt to textually construct an unrepresentable reality and truth.

According to Lee, the pursuit to explore the provisional, slippery and floating status of the conceptual systems accounting for the real and for truth does characterize the postmodern literary discourse and endeavours to critically perceive the reality of thoughts and written descriptions of past textualizations, which can be positioned outside the conventional frame of meaning. In general terms, the postmodern tendency to creatively (re)construct the ex-centricity of meaning by playfully challenging the points of disequilibrium and ideological instability that constitute the social and cultural framework of a given text becomes perceived, particularly in Barnes's writing, as a surface for a creative transformation of life concepts from within. As we have seen, the narratively constructed dispersion of singular meaning attached to either Pushkin's or Evtushenko's representational skills caused by specific configuration of discursive and not discursive, concealed on a second layer, meaning of Realism's pretending for truth, is valid for *Flaubert's Parrot* as a whole. The intertextual reference to the above- mentioned Russian poets also means that the cultural act of memory never ceases, never comes to a rest: by restraining itself from the otherwise straightforward reproducing of a cultural past, registered in Russian Literature, it demonstrates instead that culture cannot

be ever congealed or assume definite contours. It is set in an ambiguous, ex-centric movement by means of Barnes's discursive mixing of historically separated cultural realities. In *Memory in Culture*, Astrid Erll recognizes literature as a medium of cultural memory, stating

> […] literature is omnipresent: the lyrical poem, the dime novel, the historical novel, fantasy fiction, romantic comedies, war movies, soap operas and digital stories - literature manifested in all genres and media technologies, both popular and trivial literature as well as canonized and high literature have served – and continue to serve – as media of memory. They fulfil a multitude of mnemonic functions, such as the imaginative creation of past life-worlds, the transmission of images of history, the negotiation of competing memories, and the reflection about processes and problems of cultural memory. (Erll, 2011: 144)

The complex, diachronically disconnected, intertextual play established between Pushkin and Evtushenko and discursively (re)constructed in Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* functions as one cultural bearer of memory, since the ambiguously constructed juxtaposition between distinct fictional genres and aesthetic movements represented by those poets does not allow for the unquestionable preservation of the obsolete memory of their original communicative context and creative period. It certainly corresponds to what Richard Freeborn mentions as one of the defining features of Russian realism, in which Pushkin's pursuit of new genres and genre mixing plays a paramount role, as already referred. Freeborn connects the 'national' issue and the search for identity to the creative flowering of Russian realism, the multiplicity of its aesthetic dimensions of representation, rich thematic and philosophical contours:

> In cultural terms it was an age dominated by ideas. Ideas were not only accepted, enthused over and endlessly discussed, they were lived. It was in the living enactment of ideas that the Russian intelligentsia discovered its purpose and achieved its greatest influence. [...] The national issue was of course paramount. Russian literature of the period was a self-examining, self-defining literature, concerned to explore the roots of national experience. [...] Consequently, there is in the "realism" an assumption of multiplicity, of spaciousness and depth, to be seen in the sheer plenitude of words or the sheer multitude of persons, lives, relationships and places which the foreground

> of the fiction subsumes. Hierarchies, or even class differences, seem blurred or diminished to the point of caricature through the literature's profound concern to enfranchise all conditions of humanity, from the highest to the humblest. Freedom, equality and brotherhood may not have existed in the reality of Russian life, but in the "realism" of Russian literature they were the motive forces which determined the veracity of the realism. (Moser 2008: 257)

The above mentioned representational discrepancy between what is real and what is not real, though (re)imagined and constructed in the Russian literary field of the 19th century, reinforces the postmodernist idea of how the slippery and conceptually unstable contemporary social sphere may become exacerbated, discursively changed, (re)fabulated and converted into the ultimate area of creative transformation. Its attempt to (re)discover fragments of social and cultural past becomes an unfinished composition of multiple perspectives of truth originated by distinct cultural contexts, converting history and tradition into intensive research material and verbalising the pursuit of new stylistic and narrative techniques. Thus, the struggle between ideas and forms of thought which characterizes Russian intellectual society of the 19th century resonates in the postmodern spirit of anxiety and uncertainty about the conventionally designed constructions of the idea of reality. Similarly to Freeborn, Linkov refers, for instance, Dostoevsky's incessant questioning of the concept of truth and its articulation in the 19th century Russian context, marked by exacerbating proliferation of ideas about scientific progress and empiricism. According to the author, being sceptical about the very nature of the accepted scientific dogmas and progressively oriented ideas about human condition, supported by the theories of liberal humanism, Dostoevsky points out the crucial difference about textual representation of reality, constructed by means of a word, and the psychologically complex conception of 'true' reality intimately conceived by the

human mind[59]. In a similar stance, Freeborn notices that Dostoevsky refuses the dogmatic orientation provided by his contemporary fellow critic Dobrolyubov, toward the creation of the national literature concerned only with the ideological set of new, progressively oriented, ideas, or political and social life of a country. In Dostoevsky's critical perspective, instead of portraying a dominating political and civic matter, literary discourse should reflect the idea of beauty perceived by each individual's mind in its direct, natural, and unmediated contact with reality. According to the writer, true reality consists in the psychological perception of a self, which ultimately constitutes one of the crucial dimensions of Russian psychological realism:

> The more freely it grows, the more normally it'll develop and the quicker it'll find a real and useful way forward [...]. It has always been true and has always gone hand in hand with the progress and development of man. The ideal of beauty and normality cannot perish in a healthy society. Beauty is useful because it is beauty, because in humanity there has always been a demand for beauty and its higher ideal. If the ideal of beauty and the need for it are preserved within a people, so is the need for health and normality, and by that means there is a guarantee of that people's higher development. (Quoted in Moser 2008: 261)

Reflecting upon the significance of art, defined as one of the conditions of human life and the essential tool of intercourse between man and man (*WA*: 63) Leo Tolstoy shares Dostoevsky's concern with the essence of beauty in art and specifies his ideas regarding intertextual communication in a literary text which goes beyond mere double voicedness[60] and turns toward a rather unceasing, perpetual dialogue within and between culture(s). Anticipating several important linguistic and semiotic theories on language of

[59] Linkov, *The History of Russian Literature* [*Istoria Russkoy Literaturi],* 24.

[60] Bakhtin defines double-voiced word as "the word with a sideward glance. [...] The other's word does not need to be actually present in order to be heard, for it has an implicit existence that is understood "against" other utterances, and it is active in forms such as stylization, parody, polemics, and so forth" (Lachmann 1997: 101).

the 20th century[61], Tolstoy questions the possibility to achieve the singularly defined, universal meaning of what art is, since the process of communication among human beings on which a work of art relies, always requires the perceptiveness of distinct cultural and temporal contexts. To begin with, he acknowledges the existence of several conceptual shortcomings which arise from the definition of art as an activity which produces beauty (26), since the cross-cultural understanding of beauty generates in itself a constant deferral of meaning: "what is this strange conception 'beauty', which seems so simple to those who talk without thinking, but for which all the philosophers of various tendencies and different nationalities can come to no agreement about defining during the century and a half? What is this conception of beauty, on which the dominant doctrine of art rests?" (*WA*: 30)

Tolstoy notices semiotic differences in how the construction of the meaning of beauty may become controversial in its passage from Russian to European languages. The writer equally questions if art´s meaning can ever be conceptualized, since 'beauty' associated to it keeps travelling from one culture to another:

> In Russian, by the word *krasota* (beauty) we mean only that which pleases the sight. [...]. Beautiful may relate to a man, a horse, a house, a view, or a movement. Of actions, thoughts, character, or music, if they please us, we may say that they are good, or, if they do not please us, that they are not good. But 'beautiful' can be used only concerning that which pleases the sight. So that the word and conception 'good' includes the conception of 'beautiful', but the reverse is not the case; the conception 'beauty' does not include the conception 'good. (*WA*: 30)

[61] See, for instance, Mikhail Bakhtin, who analyses the aesthetic articulations of dialogical interaction provided by multivoicedness in a novel, as following: "For the word in not a material thing but rather the eternally mobile, eternally fickle medium of dialogic interaction. It never gravitates toward a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of these concrete contexts into which it has entered." (Bakhtin 1984: 202)

Tolstoy's deep meditation on cross-cultural mixing of meaning may conceptually reflect Barnes's point of view on a process of writing. Thus, in one of the interviews the author connects etymologically the process of reading with the process of writing, testifying that self-conscious reading almost always precedes a good reflexive writing. If, thinking about the novel generally presumes to appreciate it first in the emotionally committed process of reading, then Barnes's following account on the symbiosis between writing and thinking about the novel makes sense:

> Observer: This is your first novel for six years. Why the delay?
>
> Barnes: I took seven years to write the first one, and then each time, as a sort of defence mechanism, and also out of natural interest and desire, I would always have started the next book by the time the previous one came out. That was just a rule. When I finished *The Porcupine*, that was nearly a twenty-year period when I had always been at work on a novel. I thought, why don't I step back from it for a bit and refresh my thoughts about the novel, what I can do, and what the novel can do? It didn't work. A novelist does his or her thinking about a novel when writing it. The same goes for your thinking about the novel generally. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 30)

Similarly to Tolstoy's exhaustive search for each detail that composes the narrative construction of his plots and characters[62], Barnes acknowledges the importance of cross-temporal and cross-cultural research into the thematic dimension of his novels, while recognizing that too much inquiry may damage the overall aesthetical impression of the book:

> I have only had a researcher on one book and that was on *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* where I did use someone to research things that I couldn't be bothered with finding out myself [...]. And that was O.K., but on the whole, I think, a writer of

[62] This point of view can be found in *What is art?* in Tolstoy's analysis of the subject matter of art, which allows him to distinguish as well between the exclusive upper-class art and the universal art:
"The impoverishment of the subject matter of upper-class art was further increased by the fact that, ceasing to be religious, it ceased also to be popular, and this again diminished the range of feelings which is transmitted. [...] We think the feelings experienced by people of our day and our class are very important and varied, but in reality, almost all the feelings of people of our class amount to but three very insignificant and simple feelings" (pp. 87-89). The laboriousness of the art of fiction and its figurative connection to the physical labour is also recognized by Barnes, stating "I believe in a certain amount of physical labour; novel-writing should feel like a version – however distant – of traditional work" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 81).

> the sort of books that I write should do his own research. The detail that is in them is the result of my own passion for whatever subject I'm writing about. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 32)

In this passage, the significant conceptual counterpoint balances the rational partiality of the scholar's research into the narrative detail, capable of transmitting the writer's own passion for the subject matter, reworked in the novel. The predisposition to be guided by passion seems to constitute an important creative device in Barnes's works, for it justifies the writer's desire to establish both the deliberate dialogue with his reader and the emotional connection with the literary heritage from the past, as he himself acknowledges regarding, for instance, the previously referred emotional connection with Russian writers: "The Russia I think of is mainly fictional Russia – it's more of a fantasy emotional relationship" [...] (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 25).

The emotional remembering of what would have been previously written melted with a rigorous, though not exhaustive, research into the fictionally represented theme, in some measure dictates Barnes's definition of a good fiction, when he says [the purpose of fiction] is "to tell the truth. It's to tell beautiful, exact, and well-constructed lies which enclose hard and shimmering truths" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 30). Thus, the exteriorized angle of the objectified research is aesthetically reworked through the emotional remembering of the narrative detail coming from the past, thus completing the main, in Barnes's point of view, intention of fiction: to manufacture the perception of truth through the narratively constructed lies[63]. This argument also sustains the writer's

[63]In "Memory and Emotion" (2013), Klaus Fiedler and Mandy Hütter present diverse theoretical insights into the research on emotion and memory. Their study is concentrated, on the one hand, on "those aspects of applied memory that reflect the adaptive functions of the individual affective states", whereas on the other hand they also argue that "applied memory studies provide impressive convergent evidence for the notion that the complementary functions of assimilation and accommodation afford a sensible

self-consciousness about the aesthetical destructiveness of over-researching in fiction, advocating instead for its (re)creative dimension: "research *can* be creative, yes! I mean I certainly don't believe in research except when you're writing. Popular novelists research banking for two years and then they write a novel in three months. But I don't know what I need until I start writing the novel, and I also think there's a danger of over-researching, there's a danger of putting all your research into the book" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 32).

The figurative connecting bridge between research and creativeness in Barnes's fiction is equally acknowledged by Peter Childs in his interpretative analysis of this writer's works. *Fabulation*, the designation Childs[64] applies to Barnes's writing process, reveals the above-mentioned constructional twist between the objectively stated

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theoretical framework for the integration of research on emotion, memory and behaviour regulation" (18). Their interpretation of emotion and memory in terms of two complementary adaptive functions, assimilation and accommodation, may constitute one of the possible theoretical approaches to a broader understanding of Barnes's statement on a 'fantasy emotional relationship' with Russian literature, revealed in its intricate narrative representation in some of his works. Accommodation is defined as a "stimulus-driven bottom function that updates internal structures to cope with environmental chances" and surrounding contextual reality while "assimilation […] is a knowledge-driven top-down function that imposes internal structures (knowledge, inferences, goals) onto the external world, regardless of normative […] constraints" (5). Barnes's apology for the (re)creative "emotional increase" produced by the reading process of works of literature, temporally and contextually distant, seems to confirm Fiedler's and Hütter's theoretical suggestion that in dealing with the practical application of emotional memory a "more assimilative, holistic, and top-down driven processing style [is able to] produce more false memories" (13), "intuitive processing, unorthodox creativity, […] memory organization and intuitive inferences from small amounts of information" (15). On the other hand, the function of accommodation, that requires "careful assessment of stimulus details, attention and thorough processing, correlation judgements from scatter diagrams, recognition accuracy, and careful consideration of all possibilities in reasoning tasks" (15) also comes to constitute an important stylistic device in the narrative representation of Russian cultural memory in the selected Barnes's texts.

[64]In Childs, Peter. *Contemporary British Novelists. Julian Barnes* (2011). Childs makes several references to Robert Scholes's term 'fabulation' which arises from the attempts of postmodernist writers to experiment with genre, form, and style, blurring distinctions between categories of writing rather than between, for example, reality and fantasy (7).

knowledge and the creative reflection on that kind of knowledge of reality in the art of composing a novel.

Further in *What is Art?*, Tolstoy probes into European cultural contexts in which the concept of beauty is aesthetically consumed, thus providing a theoretical ground for the assumption that its multivoicedness may not be universal, but culturally binding: "in all the European languages, i.e. the languages of those nations among whom the doctrine has spread that beauty is the essential thing in art, the words '*beau', 'shon', 'beautiful', 'bello',* etc., while keeping their meaning of beautiful in form, have come to also express 'goodness', 'kindness'; that is, they have come to act as substitutes for the word 'good'" (*WA*: 30-31).

Claiming the existence of referential differences in how Russian and European languages approach, culturally, the idea of beauty, Tolstoy nevertheless aims at (re)constructing the theoretical ground of his primarily developed conception of art as "a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of [...] feelings to which men have risen" (79), and "that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them" (63). In this way, the sharing participation in someone else's feeling or experience, nourished by the perception of art as a form of communication among human beings, brings together the ideas of 'beauty' scattered among cultures into the regenerative chain of references with promising semantic explosions:

> What is remarkable, moreover, is that since we Russians have begun more and more to adopt the European view of art, the same evolution has begun to show itself in our language also, and some people speak and write quite confidently, and without causing surprise, of beautiful music and ugly actions, or even thoughts; whereas forty years ago, when I was young, the expressions 'beautiful music' and 'ugly actions' were not only unusual but incomprehensible. (*WA*: 31)

Tolstoy's analysis of communicational interaction between diverse cultural references regarding the concept of 'beauty' partly supports the development of the idea of double voicedness and multivoicedness of the works of art. This idea raises not only from the unceasing deferral of their meaning, but also from the travelling contiguity between different works of art, thus favouring anagrammatic, implicative and cross-fertilizing art forms 'achieved by the creation of new cultural hieroglyphs reaching back into the past and ahead into the future' (Lachmann 1997: 245). The metaphorical or metonymic contiguity of art forms seen as a participation in the cultural past are not, according to Lachmann's point of view, just 'a summational recapitulation but, rather, the postponed response of those born later, who continue writing and who fulfil meaning" (245).

By the same token, Barnes recognizes that "appetite comes with eating and ideas come with writing" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 42). Later, the writer etymologically connects his ability to create a new story with reverence for the existence of something significant which has come before, recovering Mary Orr's academically supported thesis that "nothing comes out of nothing"[65]. The interest in the historical past is similar to the interest in how cross-cultural dialogues among fiction work:

> Any story or telling that takes place in history, you have to locate in a particular time or in a particular civilisation. I think it's also the case that when you write fiction, even if part of it is tied to history, it's no different from when you're writing completely imaginary fiction. It all has to come from somewhere, it all has to have some basis. You never purely invent; every book has to come out of something that you've heard or seen or experienced or read about or whatever. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 59)

[65] In Orr, Mary. *Intertextuality, Debates and Contexts* (2008: 4-5).

The consideration of the past in Barnes's writing does not seem to be a purely reiterative account of the literary heritage that has been created before. Mostly, it reveals the attempt to reconnect the aesthetic principles upon which the work of art is constructed with the ceaselessly abounding cross-cultural dialogues aimed at the constant philosophical revision and deferral of its meaning. Moreover, it encourages his reader to acknowledge how "we make our *new* traditions" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 62, my italics). Barnes's position towards the mutual enrichment derived from the constructive cross-referential dialogues among cultures is similar to Tolstoy's above registered idea of both enabling and detrimental to one's own individuality cross-cultural communication. Thus, Barnes's evaluation of international sharing in literature and in culture is both constraining and liberating:

> The young are more international with each generation. I'm very divided about the whole question. I don't know the answer. On the one hand, I like the idea of individual national cultures and what they have built up over the years, but they are so often used as an excuse for narrow-mindedness and chauvinism and aggression. [...] I have a sense of regret that languages disappear, cultures disappear, and whether at some point there'll be some sort of strange little vestige of people pretending to be English [...]. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 142)

The significance of 'world's variety and richness' is reflected, for instance, in Barnes's account of the conceptual relationship between time and a perception of a fictional work through time. Thus, thinking about Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Barnes acknowledges Flaubert's ability to touch emotionally his readers, being such an emotional connection perceived as a key moment of intimate interaction between writer and reader, which transcends time. Not only does it locate Barnes in the position of an interested and a responsive reader, it also connotes a desire to pay homage to Flaubert perpetuating his mode of writing through time:

> And you are so often surprised by what people praise you for, but as long as they are praising you for something that actually is in one of your books that's fine, because it's about that moment of contact and that moment of exchange of truth between writer and reader. It may be the case that what you think of as a sort of banality, strikes someone as wonderfully fresh and what you think of as the most important insight of a book, someone either pays no attention to or knew already. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 43)

The perpetual deferral of meaning is not acknowledged only as a cross-cultural but also as a cross-temporal, (re)connecting with both Tolstoy's and Barnes's reflections on art as registered in the epigraphs for this chapter.

Considering the importance of the notion of time in the art of fiction, Tolstoy interprets the modern aesthetical poetics as an attempt to reconcile memory, voice/writing and dialogue. The polyphonic reconstruction of a distant cultural dimension engages in at least a double recoding of the past meanings into the present and the future. Being its foundational stone, the process of communication in art regards the materially absent addressee mainly with the purpose of projecting the still unrevealed thoughts into the present or the future. Therefore, the communicational chain established between a present and an absent piece of work is constructed by the dialogical arrangement of metaphorical connections and culturally binding cross-references of meaning:

> As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts in words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can, in the present, thanks to his capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity, and can himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others, as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others. (*WA:* 63-64)

Exploring the essence of art beyond its temporal and historical borders, Tolstoy considers the creative process of literature as a vehicle to contextual diversity echoed and

perpetuated in a work of art, anticipating forthcoming intertextual dialogues among the literary texts from the distant past, with both strange and familiar phenomena reflected in them. Tolstoy's emphasis on performative repetition, reconstruction, assimilation and transformation of meaning in literature encourages the conceptual building of intertextuality as memory[66]. Seen as a constructive participation in the texts of the past, Tolstoy's reflection on art's ability to (re)invent the communicative itinerary of intertextual cultural signs suggests the presence of a rather ambivalent relationship between the alienating awareness of distance of his precursors' works and the inspiration to share in the (re)construction of the experiences revealed in it. Travelling across centuries, Tolstoy's reflection on art acknowledges the unceasing communicative performance of the literary texts, semantically related to one another. The ability to experience anew, in a transformational mode, far-removed cultures and their thought models accomplishes the development of the ramifying growth of meaning[67] which neither faithfully repeats nor totally surpasses its predecessors. As Lachmann puts it, from a slightly different perspective directed towards a diachronic intertextuality, "time as it is conceived here is no longer chronological. It causes the superimposed layers of signs to become transparent, as it interprets every form syncretistic synchrony as encompassing a

[66] In Renate Lachmann, intertextuality as an act of memory emerges in a dialogue with the texts of the past and in all the acts of continued writing that outdo the pretexts. She says, for instance, that "in the act of surpassing the other, the formal and semantic achievements of two texts are confronted with one another as the relationship between primaries and secondariness is thereby reflected. [...]. Indeed, this outdoing depends on the recognizable layer of meaning provided by the source text. Such a procedure of enhancement depends on the imitator's ability to "overshoot" the original thanks to an advantage obtained in types of experience – a refinement of literary technique, for example – available in the cultural and aesthetic domains during later times" (1997: 194 and 197).

[67] Lachmann argues that "literature is made from literature": "Indeed, this particular way of conceptualizing literature has achieved great prominence. It stresses the idea that patterns of intertextual interference must be taken as the dominant factor in any description of how a text makes meaning" (1997: 37).

double absence, the absent element from the past and the absent one from the future" (1997: 245).

Tolstoy's conception of art conceived as the indispensable means of communication among human beings echoes the capacity to transcend and challenge the conventionally established theoretical patterns of meaning by which works of art are addressed in a particular epoch. Such an emancipatory, to Tolstoy's own time, release of a work of art from its conventional judgements uncovers this author's self-conscious belief in art's ability to effectively communicate idiosyncratic revelations of life. Associated to the context of the living communication, art in itself becomes all human life. More precisely, it becomes life's renewed expression, in which every word and every voice awakens others' words and voices:

> We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theatres, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels... But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind, from cradle song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity. So by art, in the limited sense of the word, we do not mean all human activity transmitting feelings, but only that part which we for some reason select from it and to which we attach special importance. (*WA*: 64)

One of the possibilities to unfold the semantic potential of Tolstoy's above mentioned reflection and to set it in a productive motion with the cultural (re)constructions of the past meanings may in fact be suggested by the critical appreciation of intertextual connections between Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending*, analysed in the first article:

"Intertextuality and Dialectics of the Self in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* and in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*".

Regarding the communicational dimension of art as capable to transcend conventionally established patterns of meaning, Tolstoy further unchains works of art from their fixed repository place in the traditionally constructed cultural storehouse. As already mentioned, the author's thorough examination of the above-stated concept of 'beauty' establishes an interesting intertextual dialogue with his consideration of the foundational significance of the culturally perceived communicational context. If, on the one hand, Tolstoy considers the conception of beauty in art as culturally bounded and contextually restrained expression of artistic creativity, on the other hand he nevertheless warns his reader against any consensual fixation of art's meaning, calling attention to the simultaneously transcultural and transhistorical appreciation of the still (un)fulfilled movement of the artistic sign. The writer suggests art's aesthetical predisposition to revive anew fixed in time and mostly forgotten meanings, by setting different works in motion and thus favouring their ramifying growth of meaning. Challenging the conceptual shortcomings derived from the long-acclaimed definition of art as beauty and placing instead its authentic expressions in a rather small and seemingly insignificant details of everyday living, the writer deeply reflects upon the moving ambivalence of the cultural sign. The ambivalence prevents the fixation of meaning in a work of art, constituting instead the cultural dimension as a dominating factor in its aesthetic deferral. The open-ended semantic potential directed towards the past and deferred into the future becomes an act of expression of the multi-layered cultural experience. This idea becomes very well reflected in Osip Mandelstam's consideration of the ambivalent and therefore unrestrained function of a word:

> Is the thing really the master of the word? ... The living word does not designate an object, but freely chooses for its dwelling place, as it were, same objective significance, material thing, or beloved body. And the word wanders freely around

> the thing, like the soul around an abandoned, but not forgotten body" (Mandelstam in Lachmann, 1997: 241)

The idea of stepping beyond the word and misrepresenting its conventional semantic boundaries, reflected in Mandelstam's quotation, is similarly considered by Julian Barnes in his interpretive dialogue with 'bits of memory' dialogically assembled in several of his novels. This dialogic performance becomes perceptible in the still further thematic fragmentation of the already deferred meaning, as registered in the following reflection on the fictional representation of cultural memory by means of word:

> We create something from fragments and bits of memory, national memory, and we stick it together with a very rough glue and then once it's been there for a certain time, like a year, we think this is real, this is authentic, and then we celebrate it. It's fabulation all over again – convincing ourselves of a coherence between things that are largely true and things that are wholly imagined. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 63)

Barnes's notion of deferred fabulation which happens all over again suggestively reflects his interpretive tendency to disassemble and to reassemble diversified textual references from the literary past through the intertextual process of transformation and creative assimilation within his text. Thus, in several of Barnes's texts the aesthetic variety of referential intertextual elements function as the double encoding of alterity: on the one hand, they behave as autoreferential textual elements on the superficial (manifest) narrative level; on the other hand, their semantic reassembling performs a heteroreferential[68] function on the deeper (latent) narrative level, thus putting forward a culturally constructive dialogue between present and absent textual structures. The

[68]In *Memory and Literature*, R. Lachmann distinguishes between two textual functions which are concentrated in a literary text: "By an appeal to another text, we mean first of all that the author uses textual elements in such a way that they function simultaneously as integral parts in the manifest texts coherent structure and as elements that disturb its surface coherence by referring to absent structures. Combining as it does an autoreferential with a heteroreferential function, this double encoding makes use of certain referential signals where the work of reference is concentrated" (1997: 319).

dialogical synergy between the autoreferential and the heteroreferential textual functions which cooperate in the text's narrative structure may symbolically be reflected in Barnes's philosophical assumption that "what is constant is the human heart and human passions, [while] the change in who does what with whom – that's a superficial change" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 11). Figuratively, this point of view might demonstrate an aesthetical pattern of the intertextual play observable in many of Barnes's novels, by which the author introduces creatively arranged associations of previously existing meanings, as long as he reassembles the already known narrative elements into a fresh communicational performance. Thus, the absent dimension of a text, particularly compressed in what is considered to be a constant manifestation of the narrative structure, becomes blended with the manifest textual layer, legitimizing the revisionary change, considered as an essential creative instrument in the fictional representation of the narratively constructed cultural memory. As a result, Barnes's acclaimed devotion to Flaubert's literary genius and a simultaneous innovative restructuring of this writer's words in *Flaubert's Parrot* suggest the necessity to broaden the intertextual scope of semantic and structural references that develop a synergy among absent and present texts. By not necessarily looking forward an accurately (re)constructed narrative pattern from the past, Barnes nevertheless tries to accomplish the emotionally convincing combinatory decoding of Flaubert's moments of being as a writer psychologically close to his reader, stating how […] "he [Flaubert] is a writer whose words I most carefully tend to weigh, who I think has spoken the most truth about writing. And it's odd to have a foreign genius for whom you feel a direct love...He is obviously a tricky bastard in some ways, but I find when I'm reading his letters I just want to go and make him a cup of hot chocolate, light his cigarette" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 15).

Similarly, the idea of alterity of a living communication in art reflects Mandelstam's notion of the cultural construction of a literary word as a continuously changing phenomenon in time. Following Tolstoy's line of thought, Mandelstam's urging for the alienating experience of otherness, nourished by his demanding inquiry into the historical past and by the overwhelming awareness of the existence of forgotten cultural models, provides an effective theoretical background for the attempt to surpass the seemingly inaccessible semantic discontinuity separating contemporary culture from the past representations of reality. Thus, Mandelstam's poetics establishes a constructive dialogue with both Tolstoy's and Barnes's reflections on the essence of art: although those writers also critically question the convenience of cultural and literary models coming from the past[69], their incessant literary attempts to comprehend, to restore and to creatively transform their predecessors' works seem to transcend the techniques of pure assimilation. Instead, the self-conscious perception of historical distance which also may imply conceptual difference of former literary works, both European and Russian, becomes a writer's essential instrument in the imaginative performance of the (re)constructive motion of a literary act of memory. As Mandelstam's narrator states in *The Noise of Time* (1925), memory is an ambivalent act, 'inimical to all that is personal':

> My desire is not to speak about myself but to track down the age, the noise and the germination of time. My memory is inimical to all that is personal. If it depended on me, I should only make a wry face in remembering the past. I was never able to understand the Tolstoys and Aksakovs, all those grandson Bagrovs, enamoured of family archives with their epic domestic memoirs. I repeat – my memory is not loving but inimical, and it labours not to reproduce but to distance the past. A *raznochinets* needs no memory – it is enough for him to tell of the books he has read, and his biography is done. Where for happy generations the epic speaks in hexameters and chronicles I have merely the sign of the hiatus, and between me and the age there lies a pit, a moat, filled with clamorous time, the place where a family and reminiscences of a family ought to have been. What was it my family wished to say? I do not know. It was tongue-tied from birth – but it had, nevertheless, something that it might have said. Over my head and over the head of many of my contemporaries there hangs

[69]See, for instance, Barnes's ironic approach towards the received idea of Englishness examined in his novel *England, England*.

> congenital tongue-tie. We were not taught to speak but to babble – and only by listening to the swelling noise of the age and bleached by the foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language. (*NT* (b): 110)

As the above-referred quotation reveals, the notion of ambivalence operates within both aesthetical and cultural dimensions of Mandelstam's text. The opening sentence of the above quoted excerpt constructs a thesis for the semantic validity of a significant rivalry between voice and writing, personal and collective, memory and forgetting. The conscious reshaping, erasure and compression of a meaning derived from personal memories also evinces a highly organized semantic structure for the aesthetic apprehension of the opposition between the silenced poetic voice and the disturbing resonance of the noise of time which metaphorically arises from the (present) past. The critically established, self-conscious perception of historical distance and of the paralyzing conceptual difference of classical literature, subtly introduced by mentioning 'Tolstoys and Aksakovs', reveals not only the wish to secure classical authors in the semantically consolidated theoretical structure, but also to distance one's personal experience of reading from reading them.

The ambivalent motion toward other writers' stylistic and thematic devices can equally be grasped in Barnes's polemical affirmation that "books always reflect your conscious intentions, as well as your unaware obsessions" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 24). The disquieting memory construction in his *The Noise of Time* (2016) reverberates the backward semantic presence of absent texts and literary devices allegorically looking forward into the future. The literary technique of thematic dismantling and (re)creative redistribution of meaning can be restored during the reading process which in several occasions echoes Russian Symbolist play with a literary word, the metaphoric usage of

Gogolian absurd word and puns, Mandelstam's dialogical relation with the absent communicational other of the future and Akhmatova's rhetoric of silence. The semantic circumference of the novel covers much further afield than the mnemonic competence that an individual reader can probably ever possess. As the creative answers to what is considered to be lost and forgotten can achieve a deferred condition of limitless, the revisionary process of what constitutes the classical meaning directly corresponds to the reader's skill of responding to the semantic differentiation the concept of 'classical' represents. As Lachmann puts it,

> The classical is the place where, from the interplay between remembering and forgetting, everything that seems to confirm the identity of a group interested in building models is retained, nurtured, and carefully preserved. The mechanisms controlling exclusion and inclusion, as well as those governing suppression and emphasis, are geared toward axiological positions whose signifiers form the explicit concepts of culture. (Lachmann 2009: 176)

If Mandelstam's quotation suggests an interesting turning point in the way how a congealed set of works, metaphorically represented by 'Toslotoy's and Aksakov's', moves towards the (re)creative amplification of its culturally quintessential handlings, Barnes's evasiveness to talk about literary influences introduces an outline of semantic potential for a new text:

> March: Are you influenced by Russian literature?
>
> Barnes: It's always hard to say about influences. Most writers I know would probably deny influences. That's a necessary denial, even though it's often false. If you see anything which looks like an influence, you try and rub it out straight away. The Russia I think of is mainly fictional Russia – it's more of a fantasy emotional relationship, being that I was there only once in 1965. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 25)

Barnes's emotional affection for Russian literature echoes in both the structural and the thematic arrangement of his novel *The Noise of Time*, constructed by means of

intertextual transformation of the collected and stored past experiences into a newly created reinvented interpretation of its contents, thus stimulating a deferred narration of memory that replaces the fixed written word in Mandelstam's quotation. Reflecting upon the process of memory, in which the narrator 'labours not to reproduce but to distance the past', Mandelstam's text introduces a notion of how the literary heritage can be revisited and extended beyond its temporally and conceptually fixed semantic structures. The somehow reductive reading process and consumed stylizing of classical authors becomes progressively deconstructed by the following line in which the narrator connects the biographical account of his life with the reading process, acknowledging that 'a *raznochinets* needs no memory – it is enough for him to tell of the books he has read, and his biography is done'. The apparently restrained to the particular historical time and thus rendered incomprehensible tradition of writing practiced by classical authors is revisited and written over again. The literary heritage of the past is reflected upon and continued on into the future by the thematic and structural articulation of Mandelstam's text, thus providing its reader with a different thematic focus and a renewed aesthetic perception of its qualities. Once again, it subtly introduces a shift in its thematic emphasis by considering the structural importance that the symbiosis between the construction of personal biography and the acts of memory embodied in the works of classical authors. The semantic motion of ambivalence, registered in the first sentence, continues to operate through the whole quotation, providing a necessarily destabilizing opposition between the 'tongue-tied' and 'had, nevertheless, something that it might have said'. The intertextual reference to 'Tolstoy's and Aksakov's', followed by a symbolically constructed image of the 'tongue-tie' generation hearing the noise of time, delicately demonstrates how the aesthetic elements from classical authors may seriously contribute

to break down the silence imposed on the author's voice of the present. In her account of Russian Classical Literature, Lachmann develops a thesis of a restorative tendency towards the classical authors as following:

> The tabula rasa cleared by the cultural revolution is quickly set again. A cult of great poets is once again authorized just as a trust in the value of the museum (one that seems to include a mausoleum) is indeed fostered by the post-revolutionary period of restoration, which attempted to satisfy the needs of a culture that had been split wide open and that had always been able to assure its own continuity by relying on the identification with cult figures. (1997: 183-184)

Echoing Tolstoy's recognition of the process of communication as one of the essential characteristics of the work of art, Mandelstam's intertextual revision of Tolstoy's poetics in *The Noise of Time* followed by Barnes's assimilative emotional reconstruction of literary memory in his novel are grounded on what Lachmann denominates 'a specialized poetics of answering' (1997: 73). The semantic orientation of such a poetics determines an ambivalent relationship between a simultaneous withdrawal from and an appeal to the previously developed literary models and encourages, at least, the double inquiry in the reading process, perceived as a (re)constructive interaction between an outer manifest layer of meaning and an inner layer of meaning. The dialogic reciprocity of meaning allocated between the manifest and the latent semiotic presences in the textual structure is mostly revealed through the communicational confrontation of the 'epic [that] speaks in hexameters and chronicles [...] and between me and the age there lies a pit, a moat, filled with clamorous time...' whose noisy resonance concerns both the recovery of an abandoned, forgotten cultural heritage and the newly created poetic forms potentially ensued from the communication with the forgotten. The semantic dwelling place of ambivalence or ambiguity which divides the poetic 'I' from the 'age' is symbolically represented by such metaphors as 'a pit' and 'a moat' and becomes

creatively filled with the innovative metaphoric constructions drawn from other semantic contexts. Therefore, any single meaning becomes structurally and semantically deferred in the process of a dialogue among different cultural and temporal contexts. The idea of the etymological importance of otherness for Mandelstam's poetics, denying any possible enclosure into the singular and fixed structure of meaning, is very well developed by Lachmann in her study of Acmeism[70]. For instance, reflecting about Mandelstam and Akhmatova, Lachmann considers dialogue as a crucial element of their poetics:

> This dimension comprised by answers is radicalized by the Acmeists, especially by Akhmatova and Mandelstam. An answer is produced across historical space: we pass from Mandelstam and Akhmatova back to Dante. Even in such a case, an answer is still part of a dialogue, a central and constructive factor within the text itself. Acmeist poetry adds something new: the direct, or concretely realized dialogue carried on among poets. [...] There develops an orientation toward other precursor texts, an orientation best described as a focus on the other's word. More precisely, every existing text (or pretext) can potentially take on the role played by the other's word. (1997: 73)

One way of approaching the intertextual presence of Acmeist poetics in Barnes's text would be to interpret the (re)constructive importance of silence in Julian Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time* (2016), from both structural and thematic perspectives. For instance, the self-conscious absence of a verbal communication between Shostakovich and Akhmatova intertextually echoes the etymological significance of Acmeist'spolitics

[70] In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism* (2018), Acmeism is defined as "a major literary movement of the Russian Silver Age. Although difficult to date precisely, scholars generally agree that Acmeism unofficially began with the closing of the major Symbolist publication Vesy [The Scales], coinciding with the appearance of the journal Apollon in 1909, and ended with the execution of its nominal founder, the poet Nikolay Gumilyev (1886–1921), shortly after the Russian Civil War. Conceptualized as a new school of poetry by two disaffected poets from the Tsekh Poetov [Poets' Guild], Gumilyev and Sergey Gorodetsky, Acmeism became one of the major currents in the post-Symbolist Russian literary avant-garde, competing with the more vociferous Futurism for advancing contemporary Russian poetry into the future. Despite the movement's brief history and its seemingly conformist alignment with Symbolism, major Acmeist poets such as Anna Akhmatova (1889–1938) and Osip Mandelstam (1891–1938) placed Acmeism firmly on the map of both Russian and European modernism, on a par with Aleksandr Blok's Symbolism and Vladimir Mayakovsky's Futurism".
For more details, see the article by Goloubeva, Irina, DOI: 10.4324/9781135000356-REM1-1.

of dialogue and answering, referred by Lachmann. The paralysing consciousness of ideological restrictions imposed on the artist's creativity in Soviet Russia is suggestively disrupted by the competing movement of Shostakovich's silent and silenced conversation with Akhmatova. Although directed in silence, their dialogue is fully embedded in the metonymic dimension of intertextuality comprised by the multiplicity of voices from the past conceived as being in a constant flux. This point of view is demonstrated in the second article:

"Life comes as Spring comes from all Sides: Constructing and Reconstructing Silence in *The Noise of Time*".

The move towards an incessant conversation with the past, mentioned by Lachmann, is very well illustrated in Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time*, in which the multiple references to his cultural precursors certainly favour polyphony and the semantic dispersal of meaning, reconceptualizing any work of art into an extensive transcultural store of many different voices. Lachmann metaphorically designates this kind of store as a "threshold [which] should not be seen as a break or discontinuity, but as a collecting point, as an accumulation of cultural experience" (231). It not only establishes a dialogue with the literary models of the past, but in addition anticipates future interaction with the forthcoming works. Lachmann refers, for instance, that

> Decisive for the Acmeist conception of culture is its lack of a consciousness of thresholds; accumulation and points of collection are conceived as being in flux... For the Acmeists, duration is the present state of a continually new merging of the horizon of the past into the horizon of the future. Here, thresholds and discontinuities cannot be thought of as markers, as in this conception such temporal markers do not exist. The Acmeist entry into a new chronotope aims above all to recall past culture, to traverse its stratifications, and to conceive this process of recalling and traversing as a new stratum itself. (1997: 231)

Lachmann's idea of *participation* in the other writers' texts focuses on several theoretical points of intertextuality and the refined narrative techniques of semantic contiguity, observed in Mandelstam's and Barnes's writing. Both writers' triggering participation in the semiotic practice of the past waves between their self-critical reworking of the temporally distant thematic experiences and the simultaneous acknowledgement of aesthetic proximity to their precursors, thus surpassing the existing historical and contextual bias. As in Mandelstam, the performance of writing as reading and as a reflection on what has been read governs, as formerly shown, Barnes's dialogic relationship with the literary past and its cultural experiences: in his text's structure, any question directed to his precursor may act as an attempt of answering to the future writers and readers, thus approaching in a very delicate way the still unfamiliar dimension of the revisited semiotic territory. Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time* is oriented towards the thematic (re)construction of mnemonic image of noise in Barnes's *The Noise of Time, thus* building its intertextual narrative structuring upon the challenging cross-referential architecture of cultural memories, placed between what Lachmann denominates as "the positing of manifest and latent referential structures" (Lachmann 1997: 257). The attentive uncovering of the black holes of the mnemonic constructions of memory constitutes in itself a cultural approach to intertextuality:

> I remember well the remote and desolate years of Russia, the decade of the Nineties, slowly slipping past in their unhealthy tranquillity and deep provincialism – a quiet backwater: the last refuge of a dying age. At morning tea there would be talk about Dreyfus, there were the names of Colonels Esterhazy and Picquart, vague disputes about some "Kreutzer Sonata" and, behind the high podium of the glass railroad station in Pavlovsk, the change of conductors, which seemed to me a change of dynasties. [...]. When carefully bound volumes of *The Field, Universal Virgin Soil,* and the *Foreign Literature Herald*, crushing book stands and card tables beneath their weight, were to constitute for a long time to come the basis of the libraries of the petty bourgeoisie. [...]. Our interests were, in general, identical, and at the age of seven or eight I was fully abreast of the century. More and more often I heard the expression *fin de siecle*, the end of the century, repeated with frivolous hauteur and with a sort of coquettish melancholy. It was as if, having acquitted Dreyfus and settled accounts with Devil's Island, that strange century had lost all meaning. (*NT* (b): 69-70)

In the Introduction to the translation of Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time*, Clarence Brown distinguishes Mandelstam's prose as one with a "recognite verbal elegance and the chaste architecture of [a] form" (Brown 2002: 24), as well as one standing "apart from that of his associates by virtue of its reputation for being extraordinarily difficult" (24). As the previously quoted excerpt extensively demonstrates, the main laboriousness of Mandelstam's text consists precisely in what Lachmann defines as a thematic boundary transgression and a stylistic mixing. More precisely, the confrontation of antithetical stylistic and narrative principles unavoidably calls for a deep further inquiry into the vast field of cultural experiences that contextually frame their existence. Though, in greater extent, the narrative employment of the literary syncretism applies to Dostoevsky, Bely, and Mayakovsky[71], the reading process of Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time* reveals the presence of several literary techniques which allow for the processes of amalgamation and of mixing of different literary styles, the narrative predominance of thematic conceptualizations from the previously published literary texts, the anagrammatical words and foreign lexemes, all of which contributing not only to the ramifying heterogenization of writing, but also to the diversification of the cultural system. Playing with alien literary styles and erudite meanings derived from different cultural and social contexts becomes frequently juxtaposed with the prosaically executed description of provincial Russian life at the end of the century. Clarence Brown accurately attributes the difficulty of Mandelstam's prose to "the categorical expectations which readers bring to his work. [...]. He is difficult in part because he refers to an immensely broad spectrum of culture and history as familiarly as a journalist might refer

[71] See Lachmann's chapter on Syncretism and Carnivalization, in *Memory and Literature* (1997:122-136).

to the common news of the day. It may also be true that he is obscure to some because he requires of his reader ... not only that culture which is acquired from books and museums but also that which is transmitted from father to son" (24).

Similarly, Barnes's ability to seek new meanings out of the stored knowledge of the past mostly consists in 'getting the balance and also the point of adhesion'[72] between the process of remembering that can be exceedingly manipulated by fixed rules and the reinvigorating interpretation of the events stored and condensed in memory as fixed patterns of meaning. Even if the process of remembering aesthetically represented in the fictional narrative can transcend the restrictions imposed by the historically and ideologically constructed storage systems of memory, Barnes nevertheless consciously recognizes the importance of the tradition and of the ghost ancestors, since they represent a capacity to trigger artistic imagination and restore something invisible and ungraspable of what has been suppressed in a writer's identity process:

> I'll just give you a bit of autobiography: I [...] had a difficult and distant relationship with my parents, and then later a sort of distantly accepting relationship – a very English relationship - with them. [...] I could say, "I'm not like you!" and now they have disappeared, I feel as if there are wires running through me still from the generations past and I think, "My ability to be free and discover some particular individual essence, was not entirely a foolish hope but it was bound around by all sorts of governing conditions laid down by my ancestors. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 35)

It is curious and thought-provoking how the final paragraphs of the first chapter of *The Noise of Time* in both Mandelstam and Barnes proliferate even more the growing diffusion of meaning, deciphered through a dialogical cross-reference of different

[72] In Guignery and Roberts, when Barnes talks about the narrative structuring of his novel *England, England*, saying: "Well, that was one of the hardest things, getting the balance and also the point of adhesion between the personal intimate life realistically treated, and the large, semi-farcical story of the island" (2009: 29).

semantic positions and of a variety of cultural contexts. 'Once again', in Mandelstam's text and 'They called it his Fifth 'an optimistic tragedy' in Barnes's novel slightly introduce the theme of a constantly moving architecture of memory. In Mandelstam's text, the notes of rhetoric ambiguity are situated in a threshold between the evocation of the foundational importance of great literary buildings of the world and the trivial 'kerosene lamps' or the archaic 'karetka', metonymically addressing Gogol's sarcastic irony in depicting Russian travelling character from *Dead Souls*. The creative representation of the ineffability of truth and of the possibility to achieve the totality of meaning translates itself into the scrupulous dissipation of reality into the (re)membering and the (re)construction of a specific work from a fragmentary variety of other works of literature emerged from distinct cultural contexts. It will be worth quoting at least one of the passages at some length:

> Once again, I glance back at Pavlovsk and take morning strolls through all the walks and parquets of the station, where over a foot of confetti and serpentine has collected overnight – remnants of the storm which used to be called a "benefit performance". Kerosene lamps were being converted to electricity. The horsecars still ran along the streets of Petersburg behind stumbling nags out of *Don Quixote*. Along Goroxovaya as far as the Alexander Garden one could see the *karetka*, the most ancient form of public vehicle in Petersburg. Only on the Nevsky could one hear the clanging bells of the new express trams, painted yellow rather than usual dirty wine colour, and drawn by enormous, sleek horses. (*NT* (b): 71)

Bakhtin's well-acknowledged principle of polyphony, which brings to light multiple cultural encodings and sets in motion a diversity of semiotic contexts, operates on both manifest and latent structural layers of the work. Being a series of autobiographical sketches, Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time* performs a delicate montage of the varied intertextual references and narrative modes such as a memoir, an autobiographical writing, a metatextual self-reflexive narrative, or a contemporary realistic sketch. In Barnes's *The Noise of Time*, the accumulation of a variety of

intertextual references seizes a syncretic amalgamation of distinct cultural experiences connected to the growing dispersal and dissolution of meaning. Such an amalgamation results from the confrontation of different narrative themes and of distinct discursive practices from the past. Furthermore, it contributes to set a meaning in unceasing motion and thus prevents it from fixed structural and thematic congealment. In Lachmann's view, Mandelstam's syncretism might not be defined as purely additive but rather as implicative, and can metonymically be extended to Barnes's ability to fabulate the past in his novel. Thus, the discursive memory constructs become intertextually intertwined through the dialogical interaction between Barnes's and Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time,* both metonymically and metaphorically, thus confirming Lachmann's idea that

> [...] one can discern a concept that valorises the ability of texts to be projected onto texts, of cultures onto cultures. To put it another way, the experience encoded in texts and the various ways of encoding that store this experience build up an expanding textual dimension that allows the older, so to speak, moribund texts to be rewritten and revived in each new text. Each sign introduced into cultural circulation enters cultural memory and, in the process, makes itself available for further use. (Lachmann 1997: 132)

The culturally ambiguous projection of one text into other benefits not only the aesthetic motivation to reconstruct the discrepancy between manifest and latent layer of meaning in both texts. Additionally, it introduces a new storyline in which the renewed semantic condensation of meaning can be contemplated, as well as ramified into manifold discursive directions. The opposite glance on the process is also possible: it is only through the attentive deciphering of the multiplicity of cultural encodings present in the individually conceived intertextual references that one may uncover the multiple layers of accumulated meanings. In this process, the writer is not only a reader who establishes a deep communicational channel with his predecessors, he is also someone who would

be read and (re)constructed, (re)visited or even (re)imagined by further generations of writers. This double voicedness intertwined with ambiguity constitutes an act of memory from both cultural and temporal perspectives and may actually play against the canonized histories of literature invested with fixed, firmly settled criteria of theoretical approach[73]. In *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization,* A. Assmann constructs an interesting functional analogy between the supportive quality of the canonized histories of literature and the suppressive reworkings of memory by the archive. She claims, for instance, that

> in contrast to the sensually concrete memory linked to bodies and places, the archive exists independently of both, and so remains abstract and general. A precondition for its existence as a collective store of knowledge is a material data-carrier that must function as a support, above all, for the written word. [...] The archive is not just a place in which documents from the past are preserved; it is also a place where the past is constructed and produced. The latter process depends partly on social, political, and cultural interests, but it is determined as well by the prevailing media and technologies. The archive first came into being through the material, fixed form of writing that codified information for later usage and thus laid the foundations for extended bureaucracies of power. (2013: 12-13)

Alongside bureaucratic confinements of the archive, the process of (re)creative deviation from the abstract restrictions of the fixed forms of writing occupies a special place in the narrative construction of memory in Barnes's writing. The aesthetically regulated transformation of the written word dynamically modifies the process of cultural remembering and forgetting, developing new fictional ways of constructing the narrative

[73] Exemplifying manifold aesthetic ways in which Shakespearean literary works have been appropriated in the Western modern and postmodern culture, J. Sanders refers the crucial significance of a cross-cultural and cross-historical approach to a literary text in a process of its adaptation or appropriation: "Adaptation and appropriation are dependent on the literary canon for the provision of a shared body of storylines, themes, characters, and ideas upon which their creative variations can be made. The spectator or reader must be able to participate in the play of similarity and difference perceived between the original, source, or inspiration to appreciate fully the reshaping or rewriting undertaken by the adaptive text. [...] These forms and genres have cross-cultural, often cross-historical, readerships; they are stories and tales which appear across the boundaries of cultural difference and which are handed on, albeit in transmuted and translated forms, through the generations. In this sense they participate in a very active way in a shared community of knowledge, and they have therefore proved particularly rich sources for adaptation and appropriation (Sanders 2006: 45).

mechanisms of amplification and concentration of meaning focusing on cultural memory. This point of view is reinforced in Barnes's reflection on the intertextual relationship between documentary writing and fictional writing, arguing for instance that "I'm not a documentary writer, it [*England, England*] quickly established itself in my mind as an "idea of England" novel rather than a "state of England" novel" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 27). Later, when he considers a book as "a moment of contact and that moment of exchange of truth between writer and reader" (ibid., 43) the writer equally acknowledges an essential emphatic difference between the communicative process conceived in a literary text and the process of sharing of evidences registered in a historical document:

> I suppose one of the things I meant there was that most of the evidence of history, most of the evidence of lives of people who have lived and what they did and what happened to them, has disappeared, that what we think of as historical evidence is a very, very tiny fragment of all the total evidence that was there during the lifetime of most of humanity. And therefore, inevitably there is bias; there are one or two sorts of bias. Either you only write the history for which there is evidence, or, if you try to write more than that, if you try to write a more complete history, then you have to fictionalise or imagine. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 53)

The desire to establish a moment of an authentic contact between a book and a reader, involved in the attempt to fictionally complete the biases left by history, is theoretically very well sustained by A. Assmann's interpretation of the self-reflexive creative output of the artists (re)working a shattered cultural memory in the aftermath of World War II. Assmann defends that "artistic memory in this instance does not function as storage, but as an index, a reference to a human "depot of suffering" that is retranslated into communication. Thus, the artists' work becomes a mirror or, as Heiner Muller puts it, a "gauge" to measure the current amount of oblivion and suppression within the collective consciousness. Today, the arts have developed new and emphatic ways of

focusing on the memory crisis at their theme, and they are finding new forms to express the dynamic movement of cultural remembering and forgetting" (Assmann, 2013: 13)

Assmann's apology for the new art forms capable of interpreting the black holes of human experience unregistered by official history establishes an interesting theoretical connection to Lachmann's view of the (re)creative capacity of the literary canon. Similarly, Barnes's emotionally stimulating remembering, directed toward the latent recovery of the congealed in a cultural storage system image of the Russian authors, articulates Lachmann's idea of the compelling triggering faculty of classical literature. Thus, the organically unanimous structure of aesthetic orientations directed towards a consensus about how a particular classical work of art should be perceived may be neutralized by the ideologically divergent spirit of the historical and temporal contexts in which it is approached. As a consequence, Lachmann puts forward an argument in favour of the ambivalence of classical literature which arises from its unceasing inspirational aesthetic resources as "cultural heritage is in no way a congealed set of texts, but, rather, it moves between processes of reduction and amplification, between culturally representative usages and culturally repressive ones, between inclusion and exclusion" (Lachmann 1997: 180).

The predominance of the stabilizing interpretive function imposed over a rather unpredictable intertextual practice of a text is very well supported by Julian Barnes's view of contemporary literary criticism analysing his novels. In one of the interviews, when asked of how he approaches the academic attempts to address his work, the writer states that

> With sort of benign indifference [...]. I mean, Vanessa quite understands that I'm not going to read what she writes about me. Not that I don't think it wouldn't be interesting and true, but that I don't want to know the stuff that people say about my

> work. [...] Not because I'd expect it to be unsympathetic, but because I don't want to think of other people thinking in broader terms about my work. Because it doesn't help me write the next book. As I said earlier, I only ever write one book at a time, so I rarely think in terms of revisiting a theme I've visited before, or how this ties in with that from many years ago. The concentration on the single item in front of you is absolute. And so I think it would not help to read an article or a book in which this novel is related to that novel or which specifies these recurrent themes in Barnes's work and stuff like that. (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 180-181)

The academic attempts to approach his work might in fact constitute a self-conscious reflection on a way a literary text is perceived not only among academics, but also among general readership. Barnes's multivocal response challenges the creative approach to literature provided not only by an interpretive perspective but also by a theoretical one. There are at least three moments which would deserve further consideration as far as they seem to constitute a stimulating exercise of looking critically at some interesting points of conceptual interference between Barnes's affirmation and his novels.

In this way, the first challenge which Barnes's opinion about academic writing presents to his readers consists in regarding his assertion "because I don't want to think of other people thinking in broader terms about my work" as an inexhaustible storehouse for a living cultural memory. It functions as a particularly demanding bearer of memory, from both cultural and communicational, individual and collective perspectives. 'Broader terms' may in fact be recognized as an attempt to transpose, dialogically, the congealed traces of cultural memory to the renewed interpretive realm constructed by a living communicational memory. Also, etymologically it triggers a requirement to go deeper into the appreciation of the double narrative orientation which structurally defines several of his novels. More precisely, the external (manifest) narrative level pursues a story in a seemingly sequential, linear narrative line, while the internal (latent) narrative level is

rendered as semantic, reiterative and cyclical. Both are dialogically interconnected and therefore allow one another to manifest their meaning.

The second moment to be outlined is Barnes's defence of a dictum that "I rarely think in terms of revisiting a theme I've visited before, or how this ties in with that from many years ago. The concentration on the single item in front of you is absolute". The semantic confrontation of these seemingly conflicting declarations, one staying for visiting and / or revisiting a long forgotten theme and the other appealing to the absolute concentration on a single item provokes an attempt to regard Barnes as an at least very interested and attentive reader, whom he properly affirms to be: "in literary terms, I suppose I wanted to be a good reader. I thought that was the highest I'd get" (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 29). Moreover, the semantic combination between the effort not to visit or to revisit a theme from the past as something which restrains creativity instead of liberating it and the absolute concentration on a single item dialogically addresses, for instance, his character's reflection on what art is in *The Noise of Time* (2016):

> Art belongs to everybody and nobody. Art belongs to all time and no time. Art belongs to those who create it and those who savour it. [...]. He wrote music for the ears that could hear. And he knew, therefore, that all true definitions of art are circular, and all untrue definitions of art ascribe to it a specific function. (*NT*: 91-92)

In such a way, if 'all true definitions of art are circular', then it would be almost impossible to concentrate on a single item in a singularly sketched historical time. Aesthetic circularity of the work of art comes gradually to undermine its affirmative function associated with a particular literary tradition, as we can also observe in the following quotation from Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time*:

> Literary spite! [...] You are the seasoning for the unleavened bread of understanding, you are the joyful consciousness of injustice, you are the conspiratorial salt which is

> transmitted with a malicious bow from decade to decade, in a cut glass salt cellar, with a serving cloth! That is why I so love to extinguish the heat of literature with frost and the barbed stars. Will it crunch like the crust of snow? [...]. To remember not living people but the plaster casts struck from their voices. To go blind. To feel and recognize by hearing. (*NT* (b): 113)

Here, 'voices' and the ability of 'hearing' acquires a capacity to transcend temporal and historical boundaries, transposing an apparently fixed in time work of art into the circular movement comprised by living memories disseminated in and by other works. It is not necessarily addressed towards the contemplation of recurrent themes in Barnes's work which the writer consciously refuses. Instead, it places his works into an aesthetic domain of a never-ending participation in the recollecting dialogue with culture, derived from the past and anticipating the future.

Like in Mandelstam, Barnes's spontaneous predisposition to hear and to voice a culturally different work of art frequently masters the compositional singularity of his novels, yet throwing a glance of self-conscious recognition of his predecessors. This double coding constitutes, in fact, one of the essential narrative techniques observed in Barnes's writing. For instance, Barnes describes the thematic arrangement of his novel *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) from the perspective of someone who wishes to go beyond 'arbitrary conventions' and to *hear* Flaubert:

> There's this sort of huge tomb beneath which Flaubert is buried, and people come and look at it – there is an official entrance where you pay one and sixpence, and you get a ticket, you look round the corpse, and then you come out. My plan was to sink shafts in at different angles. So you say, "Well, let's take trains." It would have helped if I'd had it all on computer, I suppose. One could have gone through and got all the references in Flaubert to trains. Some things don't work, but trains work, the bestiary works, and even though it looks rather esoteric – you know, "What do we know about Flaubert and trains?" – If I couldn't produce something with a shape and movement to it as fiction, then it couldn't work. (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 14)

Further in the interview, Barnes relates how a particular language may influence the thoughts one may have, stating the importance of not only physical gestures, but also the mental ones[74]. Connecting this statement to his acknowledgement of an emotional involvement with Russian classical literature and the aesthetically manipulated recycling of its canonical authors, there could be an attempt to suggest the necessity to interpret those cross-cultural references in a broader context of the creative (re)construction of Russian cultural memory in his works.

The ambivalence of classical literature, related to the creative potential it displays in Barnes's (re)constructive employment of several artistic conceptions of its authors, is put forward in the third article. The attempt to review the unknowable, as well as to 'read between the lines' becomes a motivating encouragement to dialogically confront the power of remembering and memory as storage, related by Barnes in his reference to the composition of the short story "The Revival": "[...] in the Turgenev case I just wanted to take this incident of love and renunciation and spin something broader out of it" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 121). The wish to embrace 'something broader out of it' has foregrounded the conception of the deeper research into intertextual dialogue with Turgenev, which is explored in some detail in the article named

"The Plethora of Choice as a Double Shift Retrieval in Julian Barnes's *The Lemon Table*".

The third article demonstrates how "The Revival" pursuits, both stylistically and thematically, a far-reaching intertextual inquiry into memory and dialogism. Following Lachmann's extensive examination of intertextual practices in Modern

[74] In Guignery & Roberts (2009: 15).

Russian Literature, mostly described in terms of a dialogic contact between at least two different poetic voices, the narrative construction of cultural memory performed in "The Revival" might be considered as an alienated metaphoric construction of the relations of equivalence between a pre-text and a text. The dialogic conversation between proper and improper moral codes manages to construct a double-oriented narrative which probes into a semantic ambivalence of a great amount of consensual theories limiting either Turgenev's personality or his contemporary narrator's. The narrator's attempts to ironize over the unfamiliar inner qualities attached to Turgenev's biographical sources intensify even more his own feeling of alienation towards contemporary assimilation of existing moral codes of behaviour. The elliptical (re)construction of Turgenev's letters by the narrator, which he tries to provide with new semantic details, attests to the cross-cultural and cross-temporal combination between what Lachmann defines as a text and a pre-text. This thematically complex movement toward the increased problematics of double otherness allows the metonymic recognition of Turgenev's pre-text within Barnes's text, entailing a correlative recycling of the moral system of human values. With regard to this, Barnes's position as a novelist is well expressed in the interview with Patrick McCrath, in which he states:

> I think I'm a moralist, but you make me sound like a bit of an old hippy – "You do your thing, man, I'll do mine." 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. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 19)

This nearly philosophical reflection on human behaviour and the inherent inner complexity uncovered behind the arbitrariness of moral principles partly coheres with Barnes's meditation on the inner intricacy of the art of fiction. For instance, asked about

the purpose of fiction, the writer replies that, simply enough, "it's to tell the truth" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 30). Nonetheless, as formerly referred, the narrative process through which the truth is revealed proves to be a bit more complex, as Barnes reiterates: "It's to tell beautiful, exact, and well-constructed lies which enclose hard and shimmering truths" (ibid., 30).

Tracing back the intertextual architecture of memory disclosed in this reflection on the purpose of fiction would, in the first place, require what Greene calls "the invention of a constructed itinerary"[75]. For instance, addressing the theme of book endings, Barnes acknowledges the existence of the almost self-conscious inclination to finish his books "in a deliberately ambiguous or neutral way" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 32). On the manifest narrative level of a text, the ambiguously conceived conclusion of a story constitutes a possibility to experience the whole complicated pattern of thematic analogies and stylistic contrasts employed over the narrative. On its latent narrative level, a deliberate failure to provide a definitive answer to the described events may furnish a fertile theoretical background for the cross-referential aesthetic communication established between several 19th century writers whom Barnes refers to in different circumstances[76]. Echoing Lachmann's principle of the elasticity of the semantic framework seized by each individual text and defined as a "textual practice [that] tends to load the semantics of every textual element as much as possible, [expanding] the text's semantic borders beyond the author's intention" (Lachmann 1997: 248), Barnes's frequent refusal to arrange a conclusion for the narrative dialogically reframes both

[75]Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*, 171.
[76] See Guignery & Roberts (2009: 28 – 29).

Flaubert's self-reflexive assumption and Turgenev's critical contemplation of the art of fiction.[77]

The intention not to conclude, or to regard as being concluded, what has been previously said can be considered as one of the essential narrative devices employed by several Russian writers of the 19th century in their works[78]. Besides comprising the ramifying dimension of thematic ambivalence, comprehended within the simultaneous withdrawal and appeal for a meaning, the latency of the unsaid may refer to the congealed, forgotten sources of the poetic interaction. For instance, as Lachmann observes in *Memory and Literature*, the potential of poetic ambivalence is mostly conditioned by the reception side of literary communication (93). On a broader semantic level, the unceasing revisiting of the territory of the unsaid may create an aesthetic potential for a cross-cultural fertilization of meaning, thus refusing to confine it within a single theoretical framework. In a process of communication between either the texts or their readers, the source text becomes the other's text, while the present emotional state of mind is grasped as becoming, as a slippery moment projected into the future as a deferred past. Metaphorically, the further analysis of such a continually deferred interaction between literary texts additionally uncovers several possibilities of a cross-referential communication among cultures. Barnes explains the choice of not providing the endings for his books as an attempt to contemplate the way in which readers from different

[77] In one of the interviews, Barnes refers Flaubert's rough quote that sounds like "The desire to reach conclusions is a sign of human stupidity" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 18).

[78] In the Introduction to *The Lady with the Little Dog and Other Stories* (2002), Paul Debreczeny notices, for example, that in Chekhov's stories "one character's inattention to another's needs finds its analogy in the narrator's neglect of what the reader expects of him. We have seen the reader's frustration over the lack of explanation at the end of 'The House with Mezzanine", and the narrator's insensitive silence about Pedrogin's disregard of Nadezhda's plea in 'A Visit to Friends'.

cultures may disagree about the appropriate or inappropriate endings. Regarding his novel *Talking it Over*, the writer states:

> And so, to take an example: *Talking it Over*, English readers think that Gillian's ruse will succeed, that the marriage will continue, that Oliver will be cross for a few days, that Stuart will be purged, and that the Oliver-Gillian marriage will in some way be saved. French readers say, "Well, of course she will leave him, won't she? She wouldn't stay with a man like that!" And I say, "O.K., I invented her, so I think I ought to know." And they say, "No, no, you are quite wrong, she would leave him." And I say, "But in England you see, we tend to marry twice at the most," and they say, "No, no, no, she will be off..." and so on. But I like that [laughs]. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 33)

The above-mentioned reflection on the culturally conceived double-voiced communication, in which the process of identity is simultaneously validated and disclaimed, becomes a foundational stone for developing a narrative strategy by which the semantic intention of the text may be amplified. Echoing the previously examined Tolstoy's contribution to the cross-cultural comprehension of 'beauty', Barnes's consideration of culturally preconceived opinions of what may or not constitute his book ending may entail a broader reflection on literary intertextuality as an act of cultural memory. Precisely, Barnes's articulation of a deliberate failure to provide a single ending or a unified answer to the life riddle disclosed in his work brings to light several different perspectives on the architecture of literary memory creatively reworked in his narratives. If, on the one hand, it establishes a rather controversial semantic relationship with his previously acclaimed intention to use fiction as a vehicle for communicating the truth, on the other hand it still explores the suspended poetic realm of ineffability of truth or of the univocally articulated meaning. This ambiguously designed reflection on textual constructive principles includes the consideration of the fiction of conceptual continuity (Lachmann 1997: 317) in Barnes's *oeuvre.* More precisely, Barnes's fiction of conceptual continuity arises from his deliberate search for conceptual (dis)remembering of

references coming from his predecessors, as he properly acknowledges in one of the interviews: "[...] I think 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" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 45). Barnes's emotional recognition of writers from the past has already been referred to earlier; however, what becomes particularly remarkable in his figuratively conceived dialogues with the literary past is that this writer's aesthetic identification with others is not apprehended as a forceful entry which tends to form a foundation for the textual disruption of meaning. Instead, the remembered intrusion of others in his works entails the continuously cultivated conceptual integrity of his character's 'I' which both discovers and loses identity. One of the most illustrative examples of the parallel juxtaposition between the 'I' and the other is Barnes's recurrent usage of the Russian saying which he recognizes to be part of Shostakovich's memoirs: "He lies like an eyewitness."[79] Its deliberate elusiveness constructs a semantically fertile dialogue with Nabokov's reflection on the equally ambiguous function of a mirror image, registered in his novel *Despair*. According to Lachmann's point of view, in this novel "the function of the mirror image is made evident by the image that begins Hermann's doubling with the blurring of two pairs of eyes in a mirror used for shaving, as well as by his frantic covering up of all mirrors later on in the story" (Lachmann 1997: 313). Both references acknowledge the etymological importance of the absent other in the process of identity, reconstructed by means of splitting an eye witness into an inside and an outside, into one dimension that disguises and another that is disguised. Both quotations put forward the idea that the eye becomes a rather unreliable testimony of truth, which it is unable to

[79] In Guignery & Roberts (2002: 42).

communicate unless as a double-sensed message directed toward mocking decomposition of a single original self. In the context of ambivalence between being and appearance on which Nabokov's and Barnes's texts rest, the eye image functions as the figure of doubling which, by means of alienating metaphoric mixing between witness and mirror, encourages the narrative decomposition of the semantic relationship between self-other, or being-appearance. Hence, the intertextual connection between the 'copy' and the 'original' which, as a result of certain reading habits, has been congealed into literary consensus, becomes decomposed and critically revised, questioning the legitimacy of canonical hierarchy on the level of the original or on a single level of literary representation. Barnes's narrative intention to place his predecessors in the same focus as what he is writing about is undoubtedly in line with this inclination to achieve a dialogic simultaneity of cultural memory through the literary representation of a self-other, in which the splitting is metaphorically removed and the temporal distance between the narratives is suspended. Lachmann's reflection on the technical reproducibility and indistinguishability of copy theoretically supports this point of view, arguing that "on the level of my own copy, I can be repeated an infinite number of times, and the copies will remain indistinguishable as long as the photocopier continues to work well. But what relationship does the self have to its copies? In its serial manifestations, the self is dematerialized and disembodied" (Lachmann 1997: 313-314).

The philosophical complexity of Lachmann's reflection, emphasized in the last two lines, confers more intellectual challenges to the narrative analysis of a process of intertextual doubling that operates with a variety of referential devices in Barnes's novels. Barnes, I might add, not only ambiguously plays with the attempt to dematerialize or to disembody the self of his characters by means of mixing literary conventions of

representation, he also seems to probe into the relationship of similarity between a self and the other, or the self and his double, thereby questioning the behind-the-scenes delicacy of human essence. One of the examples might be his novel *The Noise of Time,* in which the ironic treatment of the literary tradition of the ornamental grotesque suggested by Gogol is intertextually (re)configured into narrative inconsistency of eccentric paralogisms:

> He thought of Gogol, standing in front of a mirror and from time to time calling out his own name in a tone of revulsion and alienation. This did not seem to him the act of a madman. (*NT* (a): 42)

In the context of extensive political pressure imposed on the composer's creativity, Shostakovich's splitting of identity is discursively represented by the process of textual doubling by means of metaphorical transposition of the congealed in the past meaning into the architecture of his memory of a self. Similarly, in Nabokov's *Despair*, the image of a mirror, associated to the reflected, double vision of a self, becomes the unreliable witness to the character's alienated revulsion. Like in Gogol's *Nose*, the mirror does not simply mirror identity but usurps it, obliterating the relationship of the emotional reciprocity between a character and his double, thus exposing their mutual lack of essence[80].

Barnes's (re)membering of Gogol, employed in the narrative construction of his character, might suggest the mutual disembodiment of the human and the inanimate, representing the gradual loss of a composer's identity in the context of the creative blindness in Soviet Russia. Lachmann equally recognizes Gogol as a writer who generally employs a common strategy of doubling[81] in his works. He not only addresses the

[80] For more details, see Lachmann's analysis of Gogol's works in *Memory and Literature* (1997: 301-305).
[81] In *Memory and Literature*, Lachmann defines the *Doppelgänger* as a simulacrum, describing *doppelgänger* relations as "an ambivalent site [...] created between being and appearance where, in each

hyperbolic unreliability of such literary images as the eye, the word and the mirror, he also puns the literary technique of the double encoding, for in the context of the majority of his works the human character – "doubled or undoubled", "divided" or "whole" exists without hope of ever finding his redemption and a true self. Gogol's word is evasive and eccentric, putting forward the effective narrative construction of his characters into the allegorical dimension of utopian deformation of the conventional meaning. The writer's account of the evasive futility inherent to the word is registered in several of his writings[82], and might conceptually connect with Barnes's discussion of the essence of the narrative taste, nourished by individual responsibility and revealed, for instance, in the following passage:

> Well, the way history is remembered and therefore to a certain extent the way history is written about is a matter of taste, but I certainly don't believe that all tastes are equal, or that taste is any substitute for truth. I'm Orwellian in this respect, in that I think that 100 percent truth is unreclaimable and unknowable, but that we must maintain the superiority of a 67 percent of truth. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 44)

The architecture of literary memory revealed by means of the conceptual surpassing of the temporal distance between Gogol and Barnes not only provides a palimpsestic sketch of Barnes's work. Its ramifying growth of meaning entailed in the extensive semantic potential also transcends the ambivalent relation between the recognition of distance and the wish to reconstruct it in order to perform the act of the narrative construction of cross-cultural memory.

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instance, writing not only continues but also surpasses its original pre-text and all those texts answering to it. The text and its simulacral double thus attain an increasingly complex form, as do the hero and his simulacral double" (1997: 298).

[82] Gogol's claim of the writer's responsibility in using words is illustrated by Robert Maguire in his Introduction to *Dead Souls*: "It is dangerous for a writer to trifle with the word" (xxxv).

Similarly to Gogol's ambivalent relationship to the aesthetic power of a word, registered for instance in his poem *Dead Souls*[83], Barnes proposes to narratively destabilize the creative fabulation of his alternative narrations, dislocated in time and place, thus undermining his reader's critical capacity to emotionally access the past memories. The transformational appropriation and assimilation of the self-reflexive attitude towards historical memory, represented in his novel *The Only Story*, might not constitute only the undermining revision of traditional history. Besides generational consciousness of discrepancy in dealing with the inaccessibility of memory and the attempt to surpass the unfamiliar, foreign quality attached to each individual's truth, *The Only Story* painfully revisits what Assmann denominates as "negative store" of waste memories located outside the archive: an absence of memory of a memory stands for a possibility to touch the shattered ground in "a no-man's land between presence and absence"[84], as the next article demonstrates:

"A Voice Speaking from The Heart": An Absence of Memory of a Memory in Julian Barnes's *The Only Story*".

The elliptical construction of Paul's and Susan's individual memories, represented by means of a textual movement between either the erasure or the condensation of a 'central' to each character's line of thought, structurally benefits the narrative development of the semantic dimension of human failure to communicate memories. Even if Bakhtin's theoretical description of the living word consists in his

[83] Gogol's narrator in *Dead Souls* acknowledges the distinction between two types of a writer, which could be considered as a critical reaffirmation of the essential devices later used as the most acknowledged aesthetic points of departure in the development of Russian realist novel. He says, for instance, that "happy the writer who bypasses those tedious and repulsive characters whose lives impress us only with their misery, to reach instead characters who embody the supreme merits of human creation, the writer who, out of the maelstrom of images that spin past him every day, has selected but those rare exceptions, who has never once departed from the sublime pitch of his lyre [...] (*DS*: 132).
[84] A. Assmann (2013:14).

acknowledgement of its natural susceptibility to be permeated or filled with the other human being's influence, Susan's representation of memory gradually transcends Paul's capacity to overlap with it and to dialogically share its contextual confinements. Barnes's idea of writing a fiction, partly concentrated in his recognition of a writer's task as "to reflect the fullest complications of the world, to say things that are not as straightforward [...] and to produce something that you hope will reveal further layers of truth on a second reading" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 65), seems to indirectly reflect some of the suggestions put forward by Tolstoy's account of the art of fiction. While both writers reiterate that truth is unattainable, evasive and subjectively conceived, they also recognize the importance of fiction as a vehicle for an authentic moment of communication between writer and reader. In *What is Art?*, for instance, Tolstoy argues in favour of the fictional creation of a character capable of infecting the reader with a feeling the character is experiencing, while Barnes claims that "creation of a character is, like much of fiction writing, a mixture of subjective feel and objective control" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 78). The emphatic communion between subjective and objective approaches in the literary construction of a character contributes to emphasize a fundamental dualistic pattern of splitting and doubling of memory in a process of identity. Playing against the image of a self, congealed in language, "the most powerful stabilizer of memory"[85], the narrative construction of a literary character in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* rests upon the ambiguously represented point of Tony's identity, which progressively deconstructs its meaning in the image of another self. Thus, the moment of revelation of a memory is perceived as a split-off moment of being in which the self doubles the

[85] In *Cultural memory and Western Civilization,* Assmann defines language as "the most powerful stabilizer of memory, for whatever we have captured in language is far easier to remember than something that has never been articulated. What we remember then is not the events themselves but our verbal account of them. Linguistic signs function like names through which we recall objects and facts" (2013: 239).

existence of a counter-self. Tony's primary conceived self has been gradually deconstructed by his occasional awareness that what he remembers is not the factual accuracy but the emotionally perceived account of the moment fixed in time.

In *The Sense of an Ending*, however, the written word discloses the skill to caricature the stabilizing capacity of memory by positioning anterior meaning in motion. The moment of an intertextual communication with the other's word exposes the ability to surpass, transform and alter the meaning of Tony's source text. Critically questioning the very possibility of achieving a reliable account of what has been remembered, the collaborative displacement of truth by means of a symbiosis between the subjective and objective memory dimensions extricates the text from any inclination to a preordained meaning. Moreover, in addition to the above-mentioned sense of destabilizing alterity of meaning, Barnes's combinatory play and a deferred recoding of a character contributes to cultivating a reader's capacity to separate the interpretive process from the process of identifying meaning. What becomes important, however, is a "project in which I could play off the real against the fictional and the contemporary against the nineteenth century in a productive way – and I went on to write it" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 104). The revelatory exploration of a moment in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* as in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* seems to confirm Barnes's idea of a challenging channelling process in the narrative construction of his characters by means of splitting, or emotionally perceived displacement, of their memories of a self. The writer believes in a stimulating deliverance of memory constructs from the stabilizing power of a word, claiming that "I don't think that, if you read the three chronologies, all the facts, all the statements are incompatible with one another in terms of human life and human psychology. I think it's like giving an extra dimension or extra depth of focus" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 107).

The fifth article aims at illustrating how the moment of being in memory is revealed through the dialogic intertextual cross-referential confrontation of two written accounts of the self-displacement perceived in time:

"Reading Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*".

The structure of foreign cultural memory in Barnes's texts constitutes by itself the revelatory character of intertextual reference, betraying the unreliable integrity ofthe linguistic sign and the impossibility to fix meaning. Aleida Assmann's analysis of writing in memory acts as a deliverance from death, defending for instance that a written word may act as a 'medium of immortalization and an aid to memory' (2013: 171). In a similar to Acmeists manner, Assmann believes that the ceaseless deferral of meaning achieved in the intertwined process of writing and (re)writing of other's text functions as an "effective weapon against the second or social death, which is general oblivion" (171). This system of correspondences between writing and immortality is in some measure also reflected in Barnes's consideration of a ceaseless correspondence between life and art, and particularly life and writing. Believing that "the best art tells the most truth about life" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 118), the writer continues to insist on the creative symbiosis between real things and their fictional representation, advocating for the indispensable functional ambivalence of a literary text. He reiterates, "I quite like putting facts and real things and real stories into my fiction. But when you do, they always have to do double work. They have to be true but they always have to be sort of radioactively relevant. They have to give off something which then infects and inhabits the rest of the story" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 119).

Asked about 'why you've always been obsessed with death', Julian Barnes replies:

> I know where this obsession comes from: it comes from not wanting to be dead and not liking the idea of being dead, and being frightened by the idea of not existing anymore for eternity. I don't really think of it as an obsession, but I realize it's an obsession compared to how other people don't think about the matter. [It] is a sort of low-to-medium level, practical, sensible fearing, but in the context of what seems to me widespread ignorance of and resistance to thinking about it, it probably does strike some people as an obsession. (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 161)

Examining the solemnity of Barnes's reflection, mostly articulated by the repetition of 'obsession', the reader may become perplexed whether its reiteration expresses his individual position about the subject of death or the objective acknowledgement of a collective resistance to think about it. Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and his theory of metalinguistics affirm that the 'alternative word, although not actually present is nevertheless heard, for it has an 'implicit resonance that is active in a form of polemics', (Bakhtin 1984: 199). To begin with, a possible way of interpreting the repetitive occurrence of 'obsession' as the word with a sideward glance, or a double-voiced word.

In the Medical Dictionary, 'obsession' is defined as "recurrent, persistent thought, image, or impulse that is unwanted and distressing (ego-dystonic) and comes involuntarily to mind despite attempts to ignore or suppress it. Common obsessions involve violence, contamination, and doubts" (https://medical-dictionary.thefreedisctionary.com/obsession), whereas in the Cambridge Dictionary it refers to "something or someone that you think about all the time, an unhealthy obsession with death" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ obsession).

In a sense, both definitions seem to understand 'obsession' as a concept with theoretically identifiable meaning, based on a binary semiotic process of thinking directly connected to signifier-signified. Against this framed conception of a word's meaning, derived from the identifiable relationship of the signifier with its signified, Bakhtin proposes a concept of a dialogical word emerging from its contact with the other's word. Bakhtin's theory of a word may help to understand Barnes's dialogical discussion of the obsession with death. This dialogism is mostly revealed in the semantic double-voicedness of his frequently employed word 'obsession'. Hence, the condition of being obsessed with death comes hand in hand with the strong articulation of deep human emotions related to what constitutes a condition of being alive: 'not wanting to be dead', 'not liking the idea of being dead', 'being frightened by the idea of not existing anymore', 'I don't really think', 'I realize', 'I was aware', as well as 'practical, sensible fearing', 'resistance to thinking'. As a consequence, 'obsession' with death calls into existence Bakhtin's principle of the unending dialogue with the discursively absent but semantically heard living voice, communicating to others an alternative state of mind.

The hidden polemic of Barnes's reflection on death comes to confirm, in many different ways, Bakhtin's concept of dialogism stressing the role of voice above that of writing. The dialogic relation between *praesentia* and *absentia* of meaning in the semantic configurations of life / death dichotomy emphasizes the audibly felt living voice which resists the constrictions of writing. Such aesthetic attitude epitomizes one of the main structural lines in Barnes's literary production, from the multiple intonations implicit within his plots to the unresolvable inner dialogues of his characters. For instance, his ability to generate ambivalent meanings and to break down the normativity imposed

by conventional discourse is very well illustrated in the interview with Vanessa Guignery. Barnes refers that

> What biography tends to do, understandably, is to unseal the entrance: it goes in, it finds the body, it finds all the artefacts that the great writer has been buried with, and it is re-creating him backwards from that moment of burial. And I thought – my semi-image in my head for what I was doing was, 'What happens if you sink in tunnels at lots of different unexpected angles into the burial chamber?' Perhaps this will result in some insights that you don't get by using the official entrance […]. (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 105)

The dismantling of the fixed in time written biography becomes a foundational stone in Barnes's account of what he calls "an unofficial and informal, non-conventional sort of novel – an upside-down novel" (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 105). Further, he tries actually to describe the attempt of composing this type of novel setting in motion the polyphony of a living voice perceived as an 'extra depth of focus' out of the chaos of a natural living communication. It balances "the narrative drive, narrative continuation, against the pleasures of going off the tangent [...]. And at that point, it's more a question of setting them [the chapters] against one another in terms of "tonality", than moving the story forward" (ibid., 112). Additionally, Barnes recognizes the importance of a living voice when he says "go in and feel it, rather than put it in a sort of glass wall, [...]. That seems to me the authentic chaos from which any work of art tends to be created" (Guignery and Roberts 2009: 111)

The intertextually perceived ambivalence of meaning may be critically applied to the literary analysis of the (dis)continuity of a living voice in Chekhov's *Gooseberries* and Barnes's *England, England.*

This (dis)continuity is revealed in the failure of their characters to engage in a meaningful life, constituting an important structural and an essential thematic device in both works.

The double-directed textual tension between the voice's illusion and a living one becomes fully expressed in the dichotomic activity shared by their characters of searching for "good" and postponing meaningful life action.

Published in 1898, Chekhov's *Gooseberries* is narrated as a frame story, in which the character Ivan relates to his friends a life experience of his brother Nikolay. Nikolay's obsession to save money in order to buy a nearby property which includes a gooseberry bush literally starves his wife to death. Condemning from within Nikolay's compulsive material action, Ivan undertakes an opportunity to examine the philosophical complexity of happiness and of a life meaning. Does happiness, as a purely arbitrary conception, coexist with a meaningful life experience? This dialectic becomes revealed, for instance, in Ivan's unconscious inclination to talk rather than to act. According to Ivan's philosophy of life, life meaning is not connected with personal happiness, but actually consists in 'something greater', more precisely, in doing good. However, the juxtaposition between his engaging discourse on life meaning and his practical inability of achieving it may be read in a theoretical light of Bakhtin's concept of voice. Ivan's incessant intellectual search to verbally define happiness oscillates between intellectual truths and a deep disappointment with the human condition, revealed in his reflection on human failure to share suffering of the other. Again, Bakhtin's concept of a voiced word, expressing a strong human emotion, infiltrates the semantic boundaries established by the arbitrary meaning of the concept of happiness:

> My thoughts about human happiness, for some peculiar reason, had always been tinged with a certain sadness. But now, seeing this happy man, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of despondency that was close to utter despair. [...] Everywhere there's unspeakable poverty, overcrowding, degeneracy, drunkenness, hypocrisy and stupid lies...And yet peace and quiet reign in every house and street. Out of fifty thousand people you won't find one who is prepared to shout out loud and to make a strong protest. (*GB:* 82)

As we have already stated, in *Memory and Literature*, Renate Lachmann describes several textual processes by which the communicative essence of the word is intrinsically connected with the living intonation of a voice. It coheres "the inner world of the psyche with the outer world of society" (Lachmann 1997: 112) and possesses a dialogical capacity of anticipating a nonpresence of the latent sedimentations of meaning. Thus, Ivan's voiced reflection on the inherent complexity of happiness leads him to split a meaning of goodness apart and to reveal its congealed message connected to the incapacity of communicating and receiving suffering:

> We see people buying food in the market, eating during the day, sleeping at night-time, talking nonsense, marrying, growing old and then contentedly carting their dead off to the cemetery. But we don't hear or see those who suffer: the real tragedies of life are enacted somewhere behind the scenes. Everything is calm and peaceful and the only protest comes from statistics – and they can't talk. (*GB:* 82)

As Ivan notices, the communication keeps silent and semantically centralized, enclosed in an abstract paradigm of truth. Nevertheless, its silence becomes dislocated by a paralyzing presence of an absent living voice. The constructive interference between the written and the spoken word, as well as the dialogical contact with the other's word is not heard. The silencing of someone else's suffering might be, as Ivan tries to interpret, an attempt for self-preservation:

> And clearly this kind of system is what people need. It's obvious that the happy man feels contented only because the unhappy ones bear their burden without saying a word: if it weren't for their silence, happiness would be quite impossible. (*GB:* 82)

England, England illustrates Martha's Cochrane disillusionment "with the thinness of life" which results from her unfulfilled efforts to establish an authentic communication with the other. The novel is structured into three thematic parts, which, along with a construction of a collective idea of England, deal with a (re)construction of Martha's personal life story and of her memories. In the first part of the novel, Martha's illusion of security present in her childish communication with the other is unexpectedly undermined by her father's sudden and quite unexplained leave. Symbolically, Martha connects her father's absence to a hole in her unfinished puzzle of the Counties of England. The text says, "later – and later came all too soon – a terrible feeling entered her life, a feeling she did not yet have words to describe. A sudden, logical, rhyming reason (clap clap) why Daddy had gone off. She had lost the piece, she had lost Nottinghamshire, put it somewhere she couldn't remember..." (*EE:* 15). The hole in the jigsaw represents the ambivalence of Martha's memory of herself constructed by an ambivalence of a combination between a living voice (rhyming reason, clap, clap) and writing performed by the framing image of the puzzle. Just as Bakhtin's dialogical word attempts to transcend the written normativity of a message by means of a living voice, Martha's search for self-criticism emphasizes the breaking down of silence of the voice locked in the official puzzle frame.

In the second part of the novel, Martha's engagement into Sir Jack Pitmann's project of a huge thematic park called "England, England", a symbolical recreation of the main cultural sights of England, goes hand in hand with her attempt to define a *real* life. Not occasionally, both of them fail. Her endeavour to approximate the psychological state of a self to the truth proves to be emotionally disconcerting and locked in the enclosed

framework of her memories. The gesture of decentering the factual surface meaning of the memories is materialized in Martha's visiting of a disused, though fixed in a *solid* place, church. There, the feeling of a discontent with "the life as she had [...] chosen it" (*EE*: 226) suddenly overcomes her. The dialogic process of finding herself in another by finding another in herself is emphasized by recognizing that the flowers she encounters in the church's graveyard may be an authentic expression of the alive feeling of the other human being:

> The flowers were a natural human offering, symbol of our own transience – and hers a quicker symbol given the lack of vase and water. And the story: an acceptable variant, even an improvement on the original. The glory is the story. Well, it would be, if only it were true. (*EE:* 225)

Martha's contact with a damp, and empty, stone church nourishes the process of her meaningful communication with the forgotten messages coming from the past. Her brief dialogue with the other is expressed in her constructive communion with the dead who become reliable in their communication, whereas the living ones are chased away. Martha's split moments of a dialogue with the past stimulate not only her curiosity, but also a renewed form of inquiry into her own identity process, constituting a move to decenter the finiteness of meaning imposed by a first and a last word in the arbitrary construction of her own self:

> What brought her here? She knew the negative answers: disappointment, age, a discontent with the thinness of life [...]. There was something else as well, though: a quiet curiosity bordering on envy. What did they know, these future companions of hers [...]? More than she knew, or less? Nothing? Something? Everything? (*EE:* 226)

In "Methodology for the Human Sciences", Bakhtin declares that "nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival" (in Lachmann 1997:

170). Ivan's and Martha's vast store of potential voices contributes to break down the silence imposed by any fixed in time meaning. As a vocal provocation of the dialogic contact with the other's word, Tolstoy's following reflection on the hidden suppression of selflessness may contribute to open up a storehouse for a living voice directed towards the above-mentioned conceptions of happiness, life and death:

> Every man lives only for his own happiness, for his well-being. When he ceases to look for well-being, he no longer feels himself alive. Living is to every man synonymous with seeking for well-being and aiming at its possession; to seek for well-being, this is to live. Consequently, true life presents itself to him only under the form of his own life. If he does not wish evil to others, it is only because the sight of the sufferings of others troubles his well-being. If he wishes good to others, it is also for himself; it is not that those to whom he wishes well may be happy, but only that the good to others may augment the welfare of his own life. (*OL*: 23)

On a whole, Tolstoy's treatise *On Life* may in fact inspire several theoretical directions in the foundational frameworks of sociocultural contexts responsible for the ramifying semantic capacity of the aesthetic process of communication. Departing from the centripetal conception of a self, later condemned by Mikhail Bakhtin, Tolstoy's *On Life* gradually advocates for a rather centrifugal approach towards culture and literature, and subtly reminds its readers of the importance of the cultural context in the evaluation of a literary text, revealing essential perspectives in the complex politics of its transcultural (re)reading. As Lachmann justly observes, "different perspectives of reception actualize different attitudes toward the aesthetic sign [...]. The perspectives of reception motivate a spectrum of readings ranging from reconstitution, which takes into consideration the primary communicative situation, to deconstruction, which integrates a text into a new code. The range of difference between the originally produced text and the subsequent text produced in reading is determined by the context" (Lachmann 1997: 87)

Results and Discussion

"There is Probably a Pervasive Melancholy in a Lot of What I Write"

Julian Barnes's yearning to transpose concise facts and references germinated in real life into fiction, registered in the previous chapter, attests to the writer's ability to rethink critically those who construct cultural histories just as much as to his efforts to deeply comprehend the labour of those who compose literary texts about reality. In this creative process, to give off something which then infects and inhabits the rest of the story amounts to release the historical fact from the ideological restrains of an institutionalized canon by means of an artist's imagination which sets the work of literature in the productive motion. As previously mentioned in Peter Child's study about Barnes's fiction, the complex processes of fusion between fact and imagination in this writer's works offers a complementary perspective for considering how the literary tradition is constructed and narrated by means of fabulation. Barnes's projective quest to fill in the gaps of the 'official' story by virtue of narration is frequently achieved when he emotionally rewrites in a new light a literary text from the past and thus recreates its meaning. Renate Lachmann considers "this new way of seeing [as] the undogmatic deployment of the old in a new context. It is a revaluating gaze in which the disruption or continuous replacement of systems can appear as a moment that permits syncretic constructions and that makes use of styles filling in for one another as well as genres colliding with one another" (Lachmann 1997: 187).

Barnes's endeavour to inhabit the rest of the story frequently translates itself in his attempts to reconstruct "past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries" (Bakhtin 1986: 262-263), from the renewed perspective geared by contemporary transcultural practices. Bakhtin's polyphonic conception of a text, claimed in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986), emphasizes that in a novel meaning "can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent future development of the dialogue" (263), informs Barnes's fiction on different narrative, stylistic and thematic levels. The semantic connotation of an empty space existing between the writer's wish to bring in the realm of fiction 'facts and real things' and to split them into inhabited and void structures of meaning which coexist on the same narrative level, providing the fertile background for what Lachmann denominates "the ramifying growth of meaning (how meaning escalates) and to semantic pulverization (how meaning is broken up)" (70). Barnes further addresses his reader's emotional involvement with the narrative development of his plots and characters who metaphorically inhabit them, once again stating the importance of a participative interchange of experiences related in a ramifying gap established between text and reader. For instance, in the *Interviews* Barnes mentions the self-consciously conceived evaluation of the employed narrative strategy to make his character speak by and for himself, in order to achieve his reader's active participation in the (re)shaping of the meaning of a story:

> Barnes: One of the interesting things in this novel [...] is that because there is no author there mediating it, because there is no third-person narrator introducing Oliver as a character, readers tend to respond much more quickly to the characters in the book. [...] If it was a third-person narrator, people would probably think Oliver was pretentious and irritating. But he must be here for a purpose because he has been introduced to us and I'll wait and see...
>
> Birnbaum: "Are you saying that you couldn't do as well writing about him as he does for himself?

> Barnes: No. Because these characters are so close to you as a reader, instantly, you respond to them as you would if you met a guy like Oliver in a bookstore. And he was using fancy long words and looked a bit shabby and you thought he was pretentious. And you think, "I don't want to have anything to do with this guy." That is something you have to conquer as the writer. So, what's redemptive about him is even when he is irritating, he knows stuff and tells you stuff. Even when he's showing off. For example, in the first chapter he plays that game, you know, name me six famous Belgians. And then he gives you the answer. On the one hand you might think, "You show off". On the other hand, you might find it interesting. You might be entertained by him to a certain point. And then as the book goes on, I hope his plight as it develops...I hope it moves you. That's all I can say. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 86)

Even if long, the above referred dialogue is undoubtedly worth to be quoted in its full length, mostly for several questions it puts forward in the realm of artistic representation of memory, from both theoretical and analytical approach to the reading practice of a Barnesian text. Though the already stated issue of the blurring of fact and fiction is, according to Vanessa Guignery, one of the most important aesthetic features precisely because it appears "in one form or another in the majority of Barnes's work" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: xii), it will also be interesting to notice the ambivalently ramifying growth of meaning embodied in Barnes's juxtaposition of two apparently contradictory statements perceived in the narrative development of his character Oliver. The textual play established between "you might think, "You show off" though "you might find it interesting" subtly foregrounds the existence of what Lachmann names "the [simultaneous] propensity for summation and accumulation, on the one hand, and for negation, on the other, [having] far-reaching consequences for the ways in which meaning is constituted or, more precisely, for an interpretation of intertextual activities that is geared toward meaning" (70).

As has been examined in one of the articles, Tony Webster's quest for time-bounded and subject-bounded coherence in narrating the memory of his story constantly fails in spite of the narrator's self-conscious proposition towards summation and

accumulation of what he regards as 'real' facts composing the course of his life. The reality of his (un)precise memory is paradoxically subjected to the narrative impetus towards negation, ensued either by his interchange with other characters or the narrative (re)construction of Adrian's written diary. Even if Barnes refuses *a priori* any sense of a sequel between his single works, arguing instead that each of his texts are autonomous in their aesthetic conception, it would nevertheless be though-provoking to look at several ways in which his two novels – *The Only Story* and *The Sense of an Ending* establish intertextual connections and ramifying connotations of meaning not only between themselves, but also with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, on both manifest and latent narrative levels.

To begin with, it might be important to keep in mind that *The Only Story* is considered by Barnes's the author as a (chrono)logical continuation of a theme first referred to in *The Sense of an Ending.* Thus, Barnes argues that "the new novel is "about a relationship between a young man and a middle-aged woman, which was central to the other book but absolutely not described. The reader had to intuit what happened. It must be related to that, that I thought I would write about it more overtly this time" (quoted in *The New York Times,* https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/27/books/review/julian-barnes-on-the-only-story.html). Though the above-stated argument metonymically alludes to the semantic continuation of a memory process reconstructed by means of a self-conscious retrieval of the silenced thematic line from the past and relates, in the first place, to the renewed articulation of the side argument succinctly depicted in the narrative construction of *The Sense of an Ending*, it can nevertheless be argued that its narrative development pursues the deliberately conceived philosophical break from the existential paradigms proposed in the previously published text. The controversial narrative process of

(re)covering memories, thus oscillating between continuation and disruption, becomes particularly perceptible through the retrieval of the image of death, at the end of *The Only Story*:

> No: I don't believe in the cosy narratives of life some find necessary, just as I choke on comforting words like redemption and closure. Death is the only closure I believe in; and the wound will stay open until that final shutting of the doors. (*OS*: 212)

In order to continue, metonymically, a conversation with *The Sense of an Ending* in which one of the main thematic lines philosophically approaches the concept of death and questions its transcendental significance for the human condition, metaphorically *The Only Story* employs a non-sequential narrative structure which gradually accomplishes a symbolic disruption from the literary representation of death depicted either in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* or in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. If in *The Sense of an Ending* death is metaphorically represented as an unmediated way of providing foundational grounds for self-discovery and progressively leads its character towards the (re)construction of the coherence in Tony's perception of his responsibility in a memory process, in *The Only Story* death symbolically foregrounds an acute perception of an absence of a constructive dialogue among memories of its characters. If, as has been argued in the article, *The Sense of an Ending* evokes a theme of the essential importance of sharing personally perceived memory with the memories of the other, thus reconnecting the sense of responsibility coming from the individually constructed process of memory with the sense of an objective justice emphatically accessible on a collective level, *The Only Story* builds itself on the not-shared reconstruction of individual memory, guided by Paul's desire to retell his own version of a story and to render it with personally constructed memories, which at the end contribute to Susan's complete silencing of

identity. To make this argument clearer, let us consider the following passages from the texts dealing with the issues of death and memory. For instance, reflecting on the meaning of Adrian's death in *The Sense of an Ending*, Tony focuses primarily on the analysis of his own sense of responsibility evoked by the message addressed to his friend:

> Adrian's fragment also refers to the question of responsibility: whether there's a chain of it, or whether we draw the concept more narrowly. I'm all for drawing it narrowly. Sorry, no, you can't blame your dead parents, or having brothers and sisters, or not having them, or your genes, or society, or whatever – not in normal circumstances. Start with the notion that yours is the sole responsibility unless there's powerful evidence to the contrary. Adrian was much cleverer than me – he used logic where I use common sense – but we came, I think, to more or less the same conclusion. (*SE*: 104)

Instead of pursuing the narrative continuity implied in Tony's reconstruction of Adrian's memory which metaphorically addresses the prevalence of the universal contingency between one human being and another, the following quote from *The Only Story* evidences a clear sense of the disruption between memories. Moreover, it emphasizes the mutually perceived lack of sharing memories between characters, associated to the emotional break in their communicative process:

> I went to see her before she died. This was not long ago – at least, as time goes in a life. She didn't know that anyone was there, let alone that it might be me. [...]
>
> 'Susan', I said quietly.
>
> She didn't react, except to continue with her frown, and the obstinate jut of her jaw. Well, that was fair enough. I hadn't come with, or for, any message, let alone for any forgiveness. From love's absolutism to love's absolution? [...] And then, I would indeed lift back her hair, and whisper into her delicately helixed ear a final 'Goodby, Susan.'... Then, with the tears unwiped from my cheeks, I would rise slowly and leave her.
>
> None of this happened. I looked at her profile, and thought back to some moments from my own private cinema... So I stood up and looked at Susan one last time; no tear came to my eye. On my way out I stopped at the reception and asked where the nearest petrol station might be. The man was very helpful. (*SE:*213)

In Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, the process of death is portrayed distinctly on different narrative levels, both manifest and latent, which not only ambiguously mirror but also complement one another. Thus, Anna's forthcoming death is metaphorically announced at the very beginning of the novel, symbolically emphasizing the episode in which the man dies at the railway station upon Anna's arrival to Moscow. Further, Levin philosophically questions life meaning and the significance of his birth and existence in a process of confronting his brother's Nikolai's painful death. Finally, Anna's moment of death is metaphorically depicted as a path to repentance and a sudden regret of the intention of vengeance against Vronsky which seems to lead her to suicide. Once again, the Bakhtinian presence of otherness in sharing memories becomes an essential tool in the narrative construction not only of *Anna Karenina*'s characters, but also of the novel's plot lines. Similarly to what happens in *The Sense of an Ending,* the circularity of the *topos* of death becomes one of the most notable unifying devices in *Anna Karenina*'s narrative construction, once the memory of death turns metaphorically into the common foundational ground for Anna, Levin and Nikolai, despite of the strong emphasis on their individuation and existential difference. Thus, it would be interesting to notice that the element of mutual participation, considered as a semantic potential for communication and for sharing memories, and represented by the *topos* of death, is metonymically achieved on both manifest and latent narrative levels of the three texts, providing a common intertextual background on which semantic potentials foreign to one another begin to converge. This last aspect of metonymic intertextual proximity between the three texts nonetheless establishes, metaphorically, the groundwork for the renewed concretization of meaning explained by the mechanism of its semantic variability fully explored in *The Only Story*. Though both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending*

make the point that "the thought ceases to be the property of the speaker when it becomes a word and is invested with the possibility of life independent of its creator" (Lachmann 1997: 81), the image of death personified in the 'final shutting of the doors' of *The Only Story* displays as well a theoretically acclaimed possibility of the thought's incapacity to expand beyond the process of identity of each individual, or to construct itself as a means for understanding another person[86]. The absence of the idea of circularity in sharing death experience accomplished in *The Only Story* metaphorically alludes to the absence of communication between shared memories, on both textual and intertextual levels.

Resting upon a conceptual distinction between cultural, institutionally established, and communicative, non-institutional, memory, Assmann's definition of cultural memory suggests new ways of approaching Julian Barnes's attempt to (re)cover, in the scope of *The Only Story,* the already forgotten argument circulating in his previous novel. This renewed articulation of a forgotten theme metaphorically attests to what Renate Lachmann names as "a sketched-out memory space [which] connotes the macrospace of memory that either represents a culture or appears as that culture" (Erll, 2010: 301). Conceiving of literature as culture's memory, Lachmann proposes interesting semantic parallels between the act of preserving cultural memory and the intertextual aspects of literature consisting mostly in an "apparatus for remembering by duplication, by the representation of the absent through the image (phantasma or simulacrum), by the objectification of memory and the prevention of forgetting through the retrieval of images... or the constant recuperation of the lost meaning" (Erll 2010: 305).

[86] "To think the same thing as someone else with a given word would mean that one ceased to be oneself" (Lachmann 1997: 81).

Following Lachmann's definition of intertextuality stated above, the juxtaposed narrative assemblage of arguments from both *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina* demonstrates different aesthetic ways in which Barnes's *The Only Story* can be regarded as a narrative "apparatus for remembering by duplication". As mentioned above, this novel's narrative construction pursues the chronological recuperation of the forgotten memory alluded to, but not developed, in *The Sense of an Ending*. Nonetheless, as we have seen before, its thematic arrangement is constructed by means of a sharp philosophical distancing and variable semantic pulverization of former text.

Contrary to Tony's dialogical recollecting of memories of the past, in which his own account of events is gradually deconstructed due to the controversial (re)reading of Adrian's records, Paul's perception of the past rests upon the conceptual melting spot between an individually conceived memory and an autonomous rememberer who consciously restricts himself from participating in the memories of the other. Thus, he establishes a symbolical (re)connection between the individually recorded facts and a highly selective process which constantly underlines this recording:

> You understand, I hope, that I'm telling you everything as I remember it? I never kept a diary, and most of the participants in my story – my story! My life – are either dead or far dispersed. So I'm not necessarily putting it down in the order that it happened. I think there's a different authenticity to memory, and not an inferior one. Memory sorts and sifts according to the demands made on it by the rememberer. Do we have access to the algorithm of its priorities? But I would guess that memory prioritises whatever is most useful to help keep the bearer of those memories going. (*OS:* 16)

The complex merging of memory and a rememberer receives a key attention in Lachmann's critical reflection upon the textual corroboration between the metonymic and metaphorical intertextuality in the text's narrative structure, declaring that "the memory of the text is formed by the intertextuality of its references" (Erll 2010: 301). Similarly,

it could be seen, for instance, how Paul's reflections on memory, registered in *The Only Story*, metonymically incline towards conceptual identification with Tony's doubts on the non-shared reworkings of memory. The character evidences a complex process in which (un)reliable memory becomes a rather self-referencing narrative device for providing both factual and fabulated reconstruction of the past. As Tony critically observes: "[...] this is my principal factual memory. The rest consists of impressions and half-memories which may therefore be self-serving" (*SE:* 27-28).

Tony's interpretation of a self-serving act of memory becomes, for instance, an important conceptual tool in exploring metonymic line of intertextuality with Paul's critical account on the self-deceiving processes disclosed in his personal memories. He reflects on how the individual memory of facts and a self-fabulation actually (co)exist in the attempt to retrieve the past:

> 'Look, Casey Paul, I'm disappearing! I'm doing my disappearing act!'
>
> And, for a moment, as you look, you can see only her face and the stockinged part of her legs.
>
> Now she is doing another disappearing act. Her body is still there, but what lies inside – her mind, her memory, her heart – is slipping away. Her memory is obscured by darkness and untruth, and persuades itself towards coherence only by fabulation.... You no longer believe that she is still the same underneath. You believe that being 'not oneself' is her new self. You fear that she is, finally and utterly, doing her disappearing act. (*SO:* 143-144)

The narrative development of Susan's character culminating in her 'disappearing act' brings to the floor the issue of the importance of intertextual connections in the consideration of cultural memory as defined by Renate Lachmann in "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature". As argued above, Lachmann proposes to contemplate interesting conceptual parallels between the narrative construction of memory, or its

silenced expression by means of a void narrative space and the culturally established context from which it springs. For instance, she notices that

> Writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space. Involvement with the extant texts of a culture, which every new text reflects (whether as convergence or divergence, assimilation or repulsion), stands in a reciprocal relation to the conception of memory that this culture implies. The authors of texts draw on other texts, both ancient and recent, belonging to their own or another culture and refer to them in various ways. They allude to them, they quote and paraphrase them, they incorporate them. (In Erll 2010: 301)

Attesting to a cultural space, as stated by Lachmann, becomes of crucial theoretical importance in considering the non-linear intertextual practices by which the juxtaposed memory processes are narratively represented in *The Sense of an Ending* and *The Only Story.* Though displaying, by means of metonymic intertextual play established between two texts, the thematical continuity in perceiving the complex (re)workings of the individual memory, its narrative consistency gradually turns into discontinuity, laying beyond the manifest narrative level and mostly disclosed by what Lachmann denominates as metaphorical intertextuality. As a consequence, the literary interchange between continuity and discontinuity found in the apparently metonymic recovery in *The Only Story* of the forgotten story line featured in *The Sense of an Ending,* becomes a key reference in approaching *further layers of meaning* laying beyond the manifest narrative level of both texts.

Defining it as the critical revisiting of a previous text, Lachmann attests, in the first place, that metaphorical intertextuality both mirrors and reworks, in the new (con)text, the main conceptual features and thematical arrangements of the previously written texts. For instance, in "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature", she argues that "semantic repolarization, achieved through the figurative or "improper" text

(in the rhetorical sense of *improprie*), shifts the already present meaning of the text while simultaneously [proclaiming] another meaning. The simulacral character of metaphoric intertextuality lies in the double status of the intertextual text, being itself and another at once. Through the play of restructuring and dissimulating, it denies the presence of other texts that it nevertheless indicates at the same time" (in Erll 2010: 306).

To make Lachmann's argument even more precise, it would be interesting to evoke the following observation on metaphorical intertextual play registered in *The Sense of an Ending*. The gradual retrieval of forgotten things becomes at once a symbolical (re)connection point between both texts and its progressive (re)vision:

> I could only reply that I think – I theorise – that something – something else – happens to the memory over time. I press the button marked Adrian and Veronica, the tape runs, the usual stuff spools out. Then, no longer afterwards, I began remembering forgotten things. I don't know if there's a scientific explanation for this – to do with new affective states reopening blocked-off neural pathways. All I can say is that it happened, and that it astonished me. (*SE:* 120)

Precisely, "remembering forgotten things" informs the narrative construction of both *The Sense of an Ending* and *The Only Story* in more ways than one. If, on the one hand, the expression establishes a (chrono)logical connection between the story which has not been told in *The Sense of an Ending* and is intentionally (re)counted in *The Only Story*, it also opens disruptive reading perspectives of both texts by means of multiple intertextual references, on both metonymic and metaphorical levels, to 19th century Russian literature.

Several intertextual references to 19th century Russia and its literary and cultural background, displayed in the narrative construction of both *The Sense of an Ending* and *The Only Story* becomes perceptible through the critical analysis of the multiple, and fragmented, narrative lines in which the references to Russian literature occur, thus

disrupting the alleged narrative coherence between the "forgotten" and the "retrieved" stories.

To begin with, *The Sense of an Ending*'s allusion towards the love affair between Adrian and Veronica's mother is suggested from a brief, and at first glance, insignificant, reference to the growing mutual understanding and emotional complicity between Tony and Veronika's mother, reported at the beginning of the narrative:

> When I came down for breakfast, only Mrs. Ford was around. The others had gone for a walk, Veronica having assured everyone that I want to sleep in. I can't have disguised my reaction to this very well, as I could sense Mrs Ford examining me while she made bacon and eggs, frying things in a slapdash way and breaking one of the yolks. I wasn't experienced at talking to girlfriends' mothers.
>
> 'Have you lived here long?' I eventually asked, though I already knew the answer.
>
> She paused, poured herself a cup of tea, broke another egg into the pan, leant back against a dresser stacked with plates, and said,
>
> 'Don't let Veronica get away with too much.' [...]
>
> So in the end I was almost as much at sea with her as with the rest of them, though at least she appeared to like me. (*OS:* 28-29)

Further, the reference is symbolically recovered in the middle of the narrative, displaying a strong reconnection between Mrs. Ford's, Adrian's and, subsequently, Tony's individual memories. A connecting point between Mrs. Ford, Tony and Adrian, is first established by the stylistic recourse to Mrs. Ford's letter, which simultaneously turns into a polemical retrieval of the past and a critical evaluation of a memory process dictating the revisionary exercises overtaken by Tony in the present:

> Finally, I opened it and read. 'Dear Tony, I think it right you should have the attached. Adrian always spoke warmly of you, and perhaps you will find it an interesting, if painful, moment of long ago. I am also leaving you a little money. You may find this strange, and to tell the truth I am not quite sure of my own motives. In any case, I am sorry for the way my family treated you all those years ago, and wish you well, even from beyond the grave. Yours, Sarah Ford. P.S. It may sound odd, but I think the last months of his life were happy. (*SE:* 65)

In addition, reading Adrian's diary helps Tony critically (re)evaluate the process of memory by which he has been constructing the past. Consequently, the self-serving fabrication of memories, related to his relationship with Veronica, renders Tony's self-narration as the subjectively created rendering of his life-course. Theoretically based on what Aleida Assmann denominates as functional memory, Tony's quest for a self-discovery, metaphorically perceived as "a clearing off the past" (70), is ambiguously rendered by means of a biased reading of the past he has been convincing himself of over years, this being a mere device for self-preservation. The fragment of Adrian's diary, symbolically portrayed as a confessional narrative tool, becomes a crucial turning point in Tony's emotionally preconceived (re)vision of his life. Addressing memories registered in the diary commences Tony's own reworkings of memory to recover and to revise, dialogically, the forgotten details from the past. Reading Adrian's diary both assimilates and disrupts Tony's comfortable quest for a linear (re)construction of the past through memory: "The diary was evidence; it was – it might be – corroboration. It might disrupt the banal reiterations of memory. It might jump-start something – though I had no idea what" (*SE*: 77).

The theoretical importance of the principle of collaboration in structuring Tony's self-narration supplied by personal memory turns into one of the key narrative techniques employed in *The Sense of an Ending.* More precisely, the presence of otherness turns into a dialogically constructed narrative device emerged in factual accuracy in (re)telling the past.

Doing justice to Lachmann's theory on intertextuality, revealed in her critical appreciation of metonymic and metaphorical intertextual processes mainly responsible for preserving cultural memory and for the prevention of forgetting, the untold story

provides *The Sense of an Ending* with the narratively constructed capacity of (re)building its leading guidelines through the constant recuperation of the lost meaning. If, on the one hand, following the constructive principle of Lachmann's *transformation*, *The Sense of an Ending* establishes the metonymically employed intertextual relationship with the key plot lines developed in *The Only Story,* on the other hand, the openly stated predisposition towards *troping*, revealed in the disruptive, rather than collaborative, sharing of memories and mostly informed by Lachmann's definition of metaphorical intertextuality, renders *The Only Story*'s attempt in (re)covering a forgotten past "as the double meaning of the (un)told story as both an image of memory and as the product of the creative imagination" (Erll 2010: 301). As a consequence, the structural principles of both collaborative and disruptive nature that inform the main plot lines of *The Only Story* in its intertextual relationship with *The Sense of an Ending* go back to the narrative construction of Russian cultural memory present in both texts. As has already been argued before, Tony's alterity of a self is primarily developed through his constantly (re)constructed and dialogically stated collaborative reading of Adrian's diary, opening up rather challenging perspectives for a critical self-evaluation. Paying attention to the theoretical definition of metaphorical intertextuality articulated by Lachmann, Tony's quest for (re)evaluation of his individual and collective identity can thematically be completed by his philosophical reflections on the meaning of life and a self in life, metaphorically connected with Levin's sense of a self progressively developed in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Precisely, Levin's controversial journey towards self-identification with the collectively shared values of the past reveals itself in his constant philosophical inquiry into life's meaning, which according to his self-conception should be universally perceived. Thus, the predisposition towards individuality and idealistic autonomy of a self, aspired to by the character,

gradually becomes mastered by his laborious endeavour to (re)establish the lost connection with the human condition, mostly perceived in his ideologically polemical, though philosophically productive, collaboration with otherness. It would be worth to mention how, in both Tony's and Levin's narrative development, the image of memory is mostly revealed through the alterity of a self, and is produced by and producing the collaborative principle governing the narrative structures of both texts. As an example, there will follow the philosophical reflections on the sense of human existence registered in both *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina*. As has been demonstrated before, the turning point in Tony's biased reading of himself and of the past memories happens due to his emotional collaboration with Adrian's diary, also evoking the question of accumulation and collaboration:

> The question of accumulation. If life is a wager, what form does the bet take? At the racetrack, an accumulator is a bet which rolls on profits from the success of one horse to engross the stake on the next one ...
>
> To what extent might human relationships be expressed in a mathematical or logical formula? And ... if so, what signs might be placed between integers? [...]
>
> Or is that the wrong way to put the question and express the accumulation? Is the application of logic to the human condition in and of itself self-defeating? What becomes of a chain of argument when the links are made of different metals, each with a separate frangibility?
>
> Or is 'link' a false metaphor?
>
> But allowing that it is not, if a link breaks, wherein lies the responsibility for such breaking? On the links immediately on either side, or on the whole chain? But what do we mean by 'the whole chain'? How far do the limits of responsibility extend?
>
> Or we might try to draw the responsibility more narrowly and apportion it more exactly. And not to use equations and integers but instead express matters in traditional narrative terminology. So, for instance, if Tony. (*SE*: 85 - 86)

The enigmatic nature of the 'chain of responsibilities' evoked in the above-quoted diary's entrance suggests an existence of a blurred border between Tony's unprecise memory and his emotional involvement with Adrian's (re)telling of the story.

Significantly, the sense of the outgrowing (re)connection of memories between two friends is narratively constructed through the stylistic juxtaposition between the living memory process, conceptualized by Tony's biased perception of himself, and a rather counterbalancing 'version of a version' of a written memory, embodied in Adrian's reflexive diary statements. It could be argued that the neutralising function of the written word extends itself in several theoretical directions, previously discussed: on the one hand, it creates, thematically, the communicative and cultural dimensions of memory as defined by Jan Assmann, bringing together the presence of a shared memory process, symbolically represented by confronting Tony's rememberings of his process of identity with otherness. On the other hand, the written account of an almost (hi)storical evidence is accomplished by means of an intertextually stated reflection on the limits of human responsibility. Textually, the narrative play between memory and the (re)telling of a story is suggestively represented through the whimsical thematic instability related to the 'historical' accuracy of Adrian's diary: "I don't know how best to put this, but as I looked at that photocopied page I didn't feel as if I was examining some historical document – one, moreover, requiring considerable exegesis. No, I felt as if Adrian was present in the room again, beside me, breathing, thinking" (*SE:* 86).

The playful narrative alterity of the communicative and of the cultural dimensions of memory becomes evident in the above referred quotation. Moreover, it exemplifies Jan Assmann's theoretical statement that both memories – the communicative and the cultural – mirror and self-consciously reflect upon one another. The permeable articulation between these two dimensions is very well epitomized in Tony's reflection upon the importance of the undefinable territory of otherness – 'something' – which symbolically can portray the extent of his sharing the chain of

responsibilities simultaneously conditioned by and correlating to the constructive articulation of the idea of a larger self, perceived between an objective impetus towards chronological time and a subjective flow memory:

> What had begun as a determination to obtain property bequeathed to me had morphed into something much larger, something which bore on the whole of my life, on time and memory. And desire. I thought – at some level of my being, I actually thought – that I could go back to the beginning and change things. (*SE:* 130)

On the one hand, Tony's perception of the rationally stated truth of life and the mathematical calculation applied to self-knowledge, obtained from Adrian's diary, provides him with the ability to reconnect the personal memories with the controversial processes of memory nurtured by the other. On the other hand, it also constructively contributes to the (re)integration of his own self in the collectively perceived chain of memories, reciprocally influencing the novel's textual construction. This narratively constructed chain of memories, that mirror and neutralise each other, reveals its mastery in digging the externally designed contours of the novel and to probe into the intertextually established, further layers of truth, observable in the text's thematical and structural framing.

More precisely, the neutralising dialogue between the communicative and the cultural levels of memory, evoked in Tony's reading of Adrian's diary, actually brings together the historically, and institutionally, fixed propriety of a written word and its fluid, semantically unstable and permeable status acquired through its generational (re)reading. This argument can surely display more visibility when hypothetically confronted with Lachmann's observation on the valuable contribution of metaphorical intertextuality for the narrative construction of the cultural memory. Using participation as its main

discursive trope, the chain of responsibilities evoked in Adrian's diary intertextually (re)connects itself with Levin's reflections upon time, memory and a process of identity both conditioned by and transcendent of the particular historical time and place, as portrayed in *Anna Karenina*. The performative counterbalancing between the objective and the subjective perception of time and memory disclosed in Levin's perception of the contingency of being partly comes from his finally stated recognition of the existence of the universally constructed connectivity between all human beings, metaphorically perceived as a chain of mutual responsibilities that contribute to neutralize the limits of the individually conceived memories. Similarly to Tony in *The Sense of an Ending*, Levin in *Anna Karenina* reiterates that the quest for identity of a self, as well as its (re)position in time and place can only be recognized through the permeability of the philosophically constructed connection between human beings:

> Yes, the one clear, unquestionable manifestation of divinity are the laws of goodness, which have been presented to the world through revelation, which I feel within myself, and through recognition of which I do not so much unite, but am united with, other people... [...] And just as the conclusions of the astronomers would have been pointless and unreliable if they have not been based on observations of the visible sky in relation to one Meridien and one horizon, so my conclusions would be pointless and unreliable if they were not based on that understanding of goodness which always has been and always will be the same for everyone, which has been revealed to me through Christianity, and which can always be verified in my soul. (*AK:* 820-821)

Levin's perception of the self comes from his never ceasing dialogue between the personal shaping of memories and their universal (re)connection with otherness. Identically, Tony's alterity of a self is mostly conditioned by the critical (re)evaluation of the biased nature of his personal memories through the symbolic connection with Adrian and Veronica, provided by the diary's written word. Sharing of each other's memories and alluding to the sense of a self in time, both texts succeed in achieving a connection

between communicative and cultural levels in a complex process by which literary memory exploits the issue of cultural identity.

Contrary to Tony's emotional attachment to the collaborative principle in retrieving the memories of the past, analysed above, in *The Only Story* Paul's reflections on memory are characterized by the allegedly assertive conceptual association between an act of memory and a recuperation of rememberer's biased memory. Paul's individualized, non-collaborative, renderings of memories become perceived through the non-linear narrative processes by which the construction of memory, on both cultural and communicative level, are embodied in this novel.

As already mentioned, the text reiterates the conceptual importance of the rememberer in forging memories. More precisely, the rememberer's individualized position does not always charge memories with an impetus to authenticity or truth. Following Paul's line of thought, the reading process of *The Only Story* suggests a rather complex question: when it comes to the memories embodied in this literary text, should we invest its narrator with a dominant position of a main rememberer, or should we instead set on evaluating the significance of this text's intertextual dialogues, perceived on both metonymical and metaphorical levels?

It is interesting that the narrative construction of memory in *The Only Story* seems to rise, on the one hand, from the skilled combination between the attempt to probe into the formation of individual memory and, on the other hand, on its subtly pursued involvement in the institutional apparatus of cultural and historical forging of memories. For instance, Paul begins the retelling of his story by stating how his alleged love towards Susan may be conditioned by the rebellious necessity to give expression to a young self,

against traditionally established patriarchal values governing middle-class English society of the 1960s:

> We were together – and I mean together – for ten or a dozen years, depending on where you start and stop counting. And those years happened to coincide with what the newspapers liked to call the Sexual Revolution: a time of omni-fucking – or so we were led to believe – of instant pleasures, and loose, guilt-free liaisons, when deep lust and emotional lightness became the order of the day. So you could say that my relationship with Susan proved as offensive to the new norms as to the old ones. (*OS*:49)

In this passage, Paul's articulation of identity through memory metonymically merges with Anna's narrative development, contemplated in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, in multiple intertextual ways. The initially expressed reference to Anna's complex aesthetic portrait, progressively reintegrated through the narrative development of the text, is stated at the very beginning of the novel. The narrative construction of Anna's character is constantly oscillating between an authenticity of feeling towards Vronsky and a rather disruptive emotional attachment to the institutionally perceived ways of a correct behaviour, comprising the high aristocratic society of which she partakes. For instance, Kitty's admiration towards Anna gradually gives place to the significant degree of disillusionment related to the almost irrational perception of her split personality: "Who is it?' she wondered. 'Everyone or just one person?' (*AK:* 83). Further, Anna's own memory of herself is split, subtly featuring the powerful internal conflict between ethically perceived moral behaviour and an individually expressed emotional life of her individual self:

> The feeling of groundless shame she had experienced during the journey, as well as the anxiety, had completely disappeared. Back in her usual routine, she once more felt steadfast and beyond reproach.
>
> She recalled her state of mind the previous day with amazement. 'What exactly happened? Nothing. Vronsky said something foolish, which was easy to put a stop to,

> and I answered as I should have done. There is no need to tell my husband, nor should I. (*AK:*111)

On the one hand, Paul's as well as Anna's perception of a self is narratively stated by means of a strong awareness of their socially established identity. On the other hand, the (inter)textual development of both novels gradually renders both characters with an emotional necessity for individualized perception of a self which leads them both away from the ability to share otherness constructively. Paul's characterization, as depicted in *The Only Story,* establishes metonymic intertextuality with Anna's narrative construction endeavoured in *Anna Karenina*, but it also attests to the metaphorical disconnection between key plot lines pursued by those novels as a whole. This thematic disruption can mostly be perceived when accessing Lachmann's model of the metaphoric intertextuality established between the texts. The chronological linearity in recovering "forgotten memories" which initially conditions the narrative development of *The Only Story* becomes thematically (re)shaped by the controversial evocation of the theme of a lack of shared memories, whereas in both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending* the principle of collaboration between their characters' memories seems to constitute the significant narrative device. As mentioned in one of the articles, the narrative composition of *The Only Story* builds itself on the emotionally unresolvable inner conflict between the memory of a self, depicted in the 1960s and recollected in 2016, with the reading of the other's memories, coming from a distinct historical time and context, embedded in the traumatic recollections of the Second World War. The reading process of a novel reveals, gradually, that the failure of communication between the characters is conditioned by their mutual loss of an emotional compatibility in sharing memories of the past; and, the physically shared past becomes a rather "foreign country" for both sides. Susan is

convinced that she is a member of a played-out generation, looking for emotional support and dialogue. Having lost her fiancé in the Second World War, she gradually leads herself to a complete disappearance. Paul records the process of forgetting those traumatic experiences, portrayed by the image of the losing of a face that maps Susan as inaccessible. This is a story – the only story – currently available to Paul's memory. Besides this, the novel manages to show how the nonlinear process of sharing memories, steadily comes to undermine, rather than to compose, a productive dialogue among the characters:

> Casey Paul,' she begins, in an affectionate, puzzled tone, 'I've decided that there's something seriously wrong.'
>
> 'I think you may be right,' you answer quietly.
>
> 'Oh, you're always going on about that,' she replies, as if this were some tedious and pedantic obsession of yours, nothing really to do with her. '...Maybe I occasionally take a drop or two more than is good for me.' She goes on, 'I'm talking about something much bigger than *that*. I think there's something seriously wrong.'
>
> 'You mean, something that causes your drinking? Something I don't know about?' Your mind heads towards some terrible, defining event in her childhood...
>
> 'Oh, you really can be a Great Bore at times,' she says mockingly. 'No, much more important than that. What's behind it all.'
>
> You are already losing a little patience. 'And what do you think might be behind it all?'
>
> 'Maybe it's the Russkis.
>
> 'The *Russkis*?' You – well, yes – you yelp.
>
> 'Oh Paul, do try and keep up. I don't mean the actual Russkis. They're just a figure of speech.'
>
> Like, say, the Klu Klux Klan or the KGB or the CIA... You suspect that this one brief chance is slipping away, and you don't know if it is your fault, her fault, or nobody's fault.
>
> 'It's no good if you can't follow. There's something behind it all, just out of sight. Something which holds it all together. Something that, if we put it back together, would mend it all, would mend us all, don't you see?' (*OS:* 123-124)

The reference to *Russkis* communicates several intertextual meanings on multiple narrative levels. Metaphorically linked with Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1862), it deals with the challenging discrepancy in perceiving the past through

generations. The lack of communication between memories of its main characters, embodied in the gradually developing renderings of the individual memories in a structurally scattered way and characterized by the predominance of forward and backward flashes which nevertheless stay disconnected, *The Only Story* focuses on exploring the contemporary lack of shared selfhood as a self-reflexive process of remembering the past.

Exploiting further the theme related to the lack of shared memories invites *The Only Story*'s readers to grasp deeper into its narrative structure. Susan's observation about the constitutional importance of pre-history in the chain of human relationships plays an important constructive function on both external and internal narrative levels. Intertextually, it becomes metonymically linked with her affirmation that 'there's something behind it all, just out of sight" which, by its turn, metaphorically reconnects itself with Gogol's character, a judge, who pronounces in *The Government Inspector*:

Yes, it's an extraordinary situation, quite extraordinary. There's something behind it all" (*GI*: 250).

According to Maguire's line of thought, by trying to (re)cover lost and forgotten meanings, embodied in the discursive practices of Russian language, and to render them with new significance, Gogol probes further into the intricacies of human relationships. The writer uses language as a primary tool in constructing connections and disruptions between 'me' and the 'other', juxtaposed in almost all of his works. This dialogically established narrative setting is metaphorically recovered by Barnes in *The Only Story*, both portraying the unshared relationship between Paul and Susan and depicting the philosophical problematics of rendering individual memories as one of the principal

thematic cores of the novel. In very similar lines, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* recollects a lack of shared memories, associated to the issue of the construction of individualized identity and discursively portrays the relationship between Anna and Vronsky. As it happens with Susan, Anna's personal (hi)story is narratively constructed by means of a dialogically set combination of fragments from her present state of mind with the enigmatic lack of memory of the pre-history. Similarly to Susan in *The Only Story*, Anna is trying to grasp the sense of her identity through fabulation. Anna's process of progressive self-disconnection from the aristocratic society operates on both private and social levels, and is embodied in the suggestive image of a self, split into two and gradually leading her towards suicide, while Susan's self-destructiveness is metaphorically associated to her "disappearing act" represented by means of uncompromising self-isolation. Susan's body and mind become disconnected in her disappearance act, thus reiterating the suggested intertextual allusion to Anna's personality split into two, metaphorically supplied by what Lachmann calls *participation*.

The narrative description of Anna's psychological and physical death becomes, as formerly evoked, metonymically connected with the damaged figure of a dead man literally split into two at the very beginning of the novel, whereas metaphorically it (re)connects with the sense of destruction of Susan's heart and memory narrated in *The Only Story.* The question of how "You believe that being 'not herself' is her new self" intertextually recollects Anna's unconsciously nurtured desire for a self-deception, suggested at the beginning of her narrative characterization and fully described in the process of her relationship with Vronsky. It establishes intertextual allusion to Susan's disappearing act and finally accomplishes to show how those characters communicate through centuries. As an example, we may consider the following passage:

> And what is now coming to the surface is unfocused anger, and fear, and frustration, and harshness, and selfishness and mistrust. When she tells you solemnly that in her considered opinion your behaviour towards her has been not just beastly but actively criminal, she really thinks it is true. And all the sweetness of her nature, the laughingness and trustingness central to the woman you fell in love with can no longer be seen. (*OS:*143-144)

The textual allusion to Susan's conceptual disintegration of an identity into irreconcilable self-beings establishes a strong intertextual connection, on both metonymical and metaphorical levels, with the complex process of Anna's moral fall followed by her physical disappearance, perceived by Vronsky as a painful expression of her double self. Coincidently, Vronsky's description of Anna's split of personality dialogically (re)writes Paul's memories of Susan:

> How often had he told himself that her love was happiness; and now she loved him as a woman for whom love has outweighed all the good things in life and he was much further from happiness than when he had followed her from Moscow. Back then he had thought he was unhappy, but happiness was in prospect; now he felt that his greatest happiness was already behind him. She was completely different to how she had been when he had first set eyes on her. She had changed for the worse, both morally and physically. She had filled out all over, and there was a bitterness in her expression when she spoke about the actress which distorted her features. (*AK:* 362)

Similarly to Paul, whose self-perception is conceptually inseparable from Susan's failure to express her identity, Vronsky reveals the existence of a non-shared memory to Anna's past. Nonetheless, both *Anna Karenina* and *The Only Story* pursue metaphorical (re)connection of memories by evoking a bond which cannot be detached from the constructive contingency of self-memories demonstrated so far:

> He looked at her as a man looks at a faded flower he has picked, in which he can scarcely recognize the beauty for which he picked and destroyed it. And in spite of that, he felt that if he had really wanted, he could have torn his love from his heart when his love had been stronger, but that now, when it seemed to him he felt no love for her, as at this moment, he knew that the bond with her could not be broken. (*AK:* 362)

In order to conclude, it would be interesting to notice that whereas in *The Sense of an Ending* "something which holds it all together" becomes a narrative element of the symbolic reconnection of one's individual memory with the shared past of memories, guiding Tony to recognize his portion of responsibility in (re)constructing the accuracy of both his own and the collective memories, in *The Only Story* the memory of an inner self is symbolically represented as one of the most (un)reliable 'cliches' of dealing with the collective level of memory.

The foundational importance of the emotional attachment to memories in Julian Barnes's work has been mentioned several times throughout this dissertation. In more ways than one, the writer describes his relationship with Russian literature and culture as emotional, rendering memories of his readings of the Russian Classics.

Similarly to the Russian Classics, the disruption and continuous replacement of meaning offered by the reading process of a past text, once regarded as fixed and closed, can be considered as an emotional and imaginative trigger in the regularly stated Barnes's claims that his fiction resists strict conclusions. Such statements about the necessity of polysemic dispersal of meaning in a literary work, providing fertile aesthetic domain for figuration and alternation of models gives voice to the author's claims about the 'polyfunctionality of a primary communicative situation' (Lachmann 1997: 125) described in a text. Barnes regularly suggests that

> having decided to and then having deliberately made the ending as open-ended as I could with as many questions left to the reader as possible. And indeed having the characters asking the reader what they would do, I feel I should probably go back to this narrative. Though not immediately because the characters have to live enough life to be interesting. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 89)

The perpetual attempt to make his characters live as much life as possible outside the fictional borders of the author's work reflects Barnes's double-minded perspective employed in the self-conscious diversification of the conventionally conceived cultural and semiotic context which governs the interpretation of a literary text: on the one hand, Barnes's references to Russian classical texts may be considered as reliably constructed bearers of memory which metonymically address their primary historical and communicative contexts and a particular creative moment. On the other hand, the sense of originality of the source communicative contexts which give rise to those literary texts is constantly challenged and subtly played off by means of the creatively conceived narrative strategies of boundary transgression articulated in the relation to the possibility of imposing a singular interpretation of meaning. In other words, the fiction from Barnes's *repertoire* examined in this dissertation clearly shows how the perpetual reconstruction of meaning narratively constructed in the texts originated by the distant historical past invites his readers to submerge in the productive process of reading founded on the transculturally conceived interpretation of those aesthetic practices of semantic amalgamation comprising the intertextual dimension of the author's works. Thus, the processes of mixing of textual codes, generic conventions and (un)conventional stylistic techniques created in Barnes's texts simultaneously on different textual dimensions, frequently by means of evoking thought-provoking intertextual echoes from Russian literary predecessors, contribute to disrupt an attempt to provide any unified narrative argument and determines to a great extent the reader's predisposition to transgress homogeneous models of interpretation restricted to a particular epoch, single historical place or time. In such an interactively conceived transcultural approach to both reading and writing, Barnesian double-minded perspective, discussed above, seeks to articulate

the uneasily coexisting relationship between the ambivalent absence of a coherent sense of narration employed on a manifest textual level and a motivating encouragement to look anew at the human need for coherent inner structure, grounded in the attempt to believe in the foundational myths and 'true' moments of being governing our existence, mostly addressed on a latent narrative level. This double perspective is very well illustrated in Martha's Cochrane's narrative construction, employed in *England, England,* whose quest to "celebrate the original image: getting back there, seeing it, feeling it" (238) just as much as "later the moment had been appropriated, reinvented, copied, coarsened" (238) mostly translates Barnes's meticulous process of (re)working on the subject of the transcultural construction of memory, perceived in the significance of the dialogical principle governing the deferred intertextual motion of any single meaning. This propensity to intertextual movements can be described as what Lachmann denominates as

> the oscillation between textual myth and textual parody, a movement closely related to the propensity for summation and accumulation, on the one hand, and for negation, on the other, has far-reaching consequences for the ways in which meaning is constituted or, more precisely, for an interpretation of intertextual activities that is geared toward meaning. (Lachmann 1997: 69-70)

The aesthetic predisposition towards summation and accumulation, on the one hand, and towards negation of any fixed meaning, on the other, constitutes one of the essential narrative tools in Barnes's critical approach to the history of England portrayed in his novel *England, England*. As has already been stated, Barnes's constructive approach to foreign semantic horizons triggered in the writer's imagination by previous texts is developed in two ways, both of which contribute to resist conclusive responses to

text's meaning. This idea of splitting and narratively decomposing the culturally inscribed stability of meaning is offered by Barnes's *England, England*.

It would be interesting to consider how Barnes, perhaps unconsciously, employs two intertextual strategies in the parodic portrayal of English history. The textual myth is both recorded and transformed by means of the highly parodical textual treatment of its existential foundations. Similarly to the narrative circularity of the *topos* of death, demonstrated above, Barnes indirectly questions the significance of circularity between personal and collective story lines simultaneously explored in *England, England*.

In a similar stance, the examined Barnes's novels focus on the multiple narrative ways in which the concept of cultural memory is constructed and embedded in the emotional renderings of communicative memory acutely observed in the process of transcultural reception of these texts. Both memories – cultural and communicative – seem to coexist and to mirror one another on metonymical and metaphorical intertextual levels in the analysed texts from Barnes's *repertoire*. The perpetual deferral of meaning conceptualized by Barnes's symbiosis between reading and writing contributes to consider both manifest and latent narrative levels in the multiple textualized "arts" ofthe narrative construction of Russian Cultural Memory. Recording the memory of places, Aleida Assmann expresses her academic interest in perceiving it as "both convenient and evocative. It is convenient because it leaves open the question of whether this is a *genetivus objectivus*, meaning that we remember places, or a *genetivus subjectivus*, meaning that places retain memories. It is evocative because it suggests the possibility that places themselves may become the agents and bearers of memory, endowed with a mnemonic power that far exceeds that of humans" (2013: 281).

The fascinating power of memory that resides in places is metaphorically restored in Barnes's consideration of the process of reading, registered in The Introduction, when the writer claims to become acquainted with different places and cultures by means of a contact with a book. A question whether an aesthetic core of such a performative reading orientation lies in the *genetivus objectivus* or *genetivus subjectivus* renewal of past memories in Barnes's work remains open for further debates. Actually, it could be both, metaphorically evoking Barnes's illusive attempt to render his reader's consciousness with the fabulation of false past memories which certainly guide us to probe into "the shimmering truths" of the present.

Conclusion

"I Need to Return Briefly to Some Approximate Memories which Time Has Deformed into Certainty"

Reflecting on the process of writing *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes relates its composition to the attempt to probe into a sort of "an upside down novel", or, as he suitably defines it as "a novel in which there was an infrastructure of fiction and very strong elements of nonfiction, sometimes whole chapters which were nothing but arranged facts" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 105).

From the intertextual point of view, Barnes's aesthetic inclination to experiment alternative literary techniques in which nonfiction creatively permeates fictional territory recovers Leo Tolstoy's endeavour of mixing the official records of the 1812 Napoleonic invasion of Russia with the multi-layered narrational accounts of war experience provided by the fictional realm of the constructed family themes in *War and Piece* (1869). Although the seminal work of the Russian author provides a fertile aesthetic background for further literary experiments in incorporating facts into fiction, Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* goes much further than his literary predecessor in the attempt to dissolve completely the border between fact and fiction, or between what is considered to be an official biographical memory of Flaubert and the creative imagination of a writer who remembers his literary predecessor by considering unofficial insights into Flaubert's life.

Julian Barnes's concern with memory either in life or in literature remains open to further interrogations. Barnes's emotional involvement with Flaubert's biography in *Flaubert's Parrot* may sustain the author's inspiration to involve his reader both critically and emotionally in the narrated story, because he sees it as "the new historical novel

[which] goes into the past with deliberate awareness of what has happened since, and tries to make a more obvious connection to the reader of today" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 73).

Barnes's "fantasy emotional relationship" to the Russian Classics metaphorically alludes to his self-conscious celebration of the significance of memory in culture or, to be more precise, to the imaginative process by which intertextual memory creates culture, clearly registered in his thought-provoking statement about what literally constitutes the concept of authenticity in both memory and culture employed in his novel *England, England* and may characterize his aesthetic involvement with Russian culture and literature:

> We create something from fragments and bits of memory, national memory, and we stick it together with a very rough glue and then once it's been there for a certain time, like a year, we think this is real, this is authentic, and then we celebrate it. It's fabulation all over again – convincing ourselves of a coherence between things that are largely true and things that are wholly imagined. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 63)

As has been demonstrated in the articles presented in this dissertation, Barnes creatively (re)constructs fragments and pieces of Russian cultural memory by means of sticking them with a *not* very rough glue in his own textualized constructions of contemporary reality, in order to set different semantic and cultural contexts in motion, acting simultaneously against the manipulativeness of the currently available sources of information which disseminate knowledge:

> There is also a discomfort because they seem to be, they are so well presented as reality and yet you know they are deeply manipulative. [...] It's a much sharpened sense of the manipulativeness of TV. A heightened manipulativeness, I think that's what we respond to with unease. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 89)

The motivated reader will surely be interested to inquire deeper into the polysemic significance of the writer's rather ambiguous interpretation of the specific character of cultural memory in the text. The writer's life-long involvement with the past and the officially available store of cultural knowledge do not necessarily contribute to the preservation of the ideologically regulated processes of storage or erasure supported by the authoritative mechanisms that selectively conceptualize an idea of a stable cultural identity. Mostly in opposition to the authoritatively designed ideologies of memory, Barnes's fiction celebrates the authenticity of a life embedded in memory by displaying the aesthetic practices of the ambiguous intertwining of remembering and forgetting revealed in Lachmann's idea that "there is no erasure in cultural memory [for] what is forgotten can be culturally reactivated and can take on its own (or different) semiotic value" (Lachmann 1997: 23). The examined texts from Barnes's *corpus* of fictional works clearly demonstrate his acclaimed preference to embrace the flipside lines of the available story, which he symbolically designates as "some insights that you don't get by using the official entrance" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 105). His aesthetic inclination naturally hints towards creative (inter)textual readings and interpretations of the historically available ellipses which spawn not only "a book that describes the world in a way that has not been done before" but also envisage "new truths [about life which have not] been previously available, certainly not from official records or government documents, or from journalism or television" (Barnes in Guignery & Roberts 2009: 65).

The attempt to reconcile memory and forgetting in Barnes's fiction certainly stimulates this writer's creative memory to perceive the past not so much as the mere documentary structures of the relevant cultural codes, but rather as a possibility to probe further into the "negative storage of the forgotten, the repressed, [...] which has lost its

semiotic quality" (Lachmann 1997: 23). By repeatedly recovering past meanings from the officially available sources of the Russian literary canon Barnes aims simultaneously at (re)considering the formally accessible cultural practices which dictate the rules of storage and erasure of knowledge as potentially active sources for revisiting yet unfamiliar realities, and for creating and writing anew the familiar ones, as he later affirms, "[...] this was the start of a project, in which I could play off the real against the fictional and the contemporary against the nineteenth century in a productive way – and I went on to write it" (Guignery & Roberts 2009:104).

Though Barnes's celebratory stance toward great literature of the past nurtures his practices of remembering, it clearly demonstrates the writer's allegiance to examine the inspirational aesthetic power of forgetting, which raises his artistic imagination and fulfils creative memory. The author observes that "there's bound to be a certain burden of the past, a certain oppressiveness of great writing. So, if you don't remember too well, then it's not sitting on your shoulder quite so heavily" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 38).

On the one hand, Barnes enters the secret realm of fiction with a well suggested etymological certainty that "novels come out of life, not out of theories" (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 31). On the other hand, he continuously uses memory to look back on the history of life, discerning at least two distinct phases of its symbiosis with literature, registered in the following description of the aesthetic power of literature:

> Guppy: [...] What is literature for you?
>
> Barnes: There are many answers to that question. The shortest is that it's the best way of telling the truth; it's a process of producing grand, beautiful, well-ordered lies that tell more truth than any assemblage of facts. Beyond that, literature is many things, such as delight in, and play with, language; also, a curiously intimate way of communicating with people whom you will never meet. And being a writer gives you a sense of historical community, which I feel rather weakly as a normal social being living in early twenty-first century Britain. For example, I don't feel any particular ties with the world of Queen Victoria, or the participants of the Civil War or the Wars

> of the Roses, but I do feel a very particular tie to various writers and artists who are contemporaneous with those periods and events. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 64)

Reconsidered from such an interdisciplinary perspective, the narrative construction of cultural memory demonstrates the process by which Barnes's novels, revisited in this dissertation, come to provide an alternative analytical framework for further exploitation of the link between memory and culture, since they articulate complementary insights into the practical and theoretical contributions currently available in the transcultural approach to literary historiography. On the one hand, the discussed novels look critically at the dynamics of memory in the process of construction of both personal and collective identities, exploring to the fullest extent the academic thesis that the connection between communicative memory and cultural memory, as defined by Jan and Aleida Assmann, remains notoriously unstable, malleable, and subject to the political and ideological circumstances in which the narration takes place. On the other hand, Barnes's texts also dialectically challenge Aleida Assmann's thesis that "memory is among the most unreliable of all human faculties" (2013: 55). For it is also through the complex process of constructing and (re)constructing the characters' multi-layered renderings of memory that Barnes invites the reader to (re)shape not only his or her literary and life experience, but also provides interesting contribution to the reflexive art of fiction. Expressing his sense of disillusionment with the way literature has been approached by both writers and literary theorists, Barnes remains critically attentive to memory spaces in literature where meaning becomes uncontrollably complex, even if intertextual relations between different texts are established by such common devices as the use of quotations, allusions, or the creative rewriting of (un)familiar references into a seemingly harmonious narrative development of a text. The artistic sensibility and

genuine attentiveness to both silent and forgotten layers of meaning revealed by Barnes's texts unclose the multiplicity of the contradictory interpretations nested and found in an unfamiliar text. The aesthetically varying emphases placed by Barnes on the narrative dimension of (re)creative *participation* in Russian literary heritage of the 19th century turns into transcultural and transtemporal dialogue on cultural memory which resists conclusion. It constitutes a trigger for pursuing a continuous reading process, capable to disclose a realm of cultural experience encoded in those texts, thus making their contradictions vivid and skidding out of control. Such a dialogue becomes possible, mostly, by means of a living and a productive contact with "the great novelists of the past":

> I suppose I'm slightly impatient with the lack of ambition in the next generation coming along. [...] What I do resent is that they mostly turn out something entirely conventional, like the story of a bunch of twenty-somethings living in a flat together, the ups and downs of their emotional lives, all narrated in a way that will easily and immediately transfer into film. It is not very interesting. Show me more ambition! Show me some interest in form! Show me why this stuff is best dealt with in novel form. Oh yes, and please show me some awe at the work of the great novelists of the past. (Guignery & Roberts 2009: 77)

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Articles I-V

"In Russia the Truth Almost Always Has an Entirely Fantastical Character"

Article I

"Intertextuality and Dialectics of the Self

in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* and in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*".

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Intertextuality and Dialectics of the Self in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* and in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*

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Abstract The article examines the literary relationship between *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina.* Following Kristeva's definition of intertextuality, resting upon the complex dialogic way in which words become intertwined in a literary work of art, it pursues the analysis of permeability of a literary act. The comparative reading process of *The Sense of an Ending* and of *Anna Karenina* brings to light the importance of the dialogical principle present in these texts, both in structural and thematic terms. The sense of strangeness or unfathomability involved in the encounter with otherness arises questions about the epistemological nature of the cultural web that constitutes uniqueness. The evocation of the self and of alterity announced in the element of unfamiliarity and resistance in its confrontation with the other helps us to penetrate deeper into the realm of subjectivity. The relationship of *The Sense of an Ending* to *Anna Karenina,* revisited in this article, rests upon comparative analysis of discursive practices employed in both texts. The analysis describes a host of symbolic ways in which *The Sense of an Ending* exploits consciousness and ideas from *Anna Karenina*, setting up reader's perception that the creation of literary texts arises mostly from the permanent contact of these texts with prior texts. Emphasizing Bakhtin's [1] idea that this contact is "a dialogic contact between several literary works of art" (p.162), the article reflects on different communicative practices, including both the identification of literary sources and the anticipation of future meditations on reading a sense of literary memory as observed in these texts. Specifically, revisiting philosophical reflections on the sense of a self, proposed in *Anna Karenina*, *The Sense of an Ending* achieves a connection between personal and collective levels in a process by which literary memory exploits the issue of identity.

Keywords Intertextuality, Barnes, Tolstoy, Literary Memory, Identity

1. Introduction

The article claims that the concept of intertextuality, described by Genette [9] as "the textual transcendence of the text" (p.1), may be very inspiring for a literary analysis of Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending*. The Russian point of view revisited in this work invites the reader to look not only at a dialogic way of building relationships among texts but also at the reflexive dimension of a discursive practice responsible for the non-linear, ambivalent, process involved in the construction of a literary memory. Bakhtin's definition of dialogism, primarily concerned with the relation of every utterance to other utterances, is expanded by Kristeva's emphasis on the existence of a rather disturbing multiplicity of meanings evoked in the discursive construction of a self. According to her, the relations between the exchanges of a dialogue in a literary work of art are closely connected with the relations established between the discourse of the other and the discourse of the I.

"The literary word is an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings", writes Julia Kristeva [11] in *Desire in Language* (p.65). Defining intertextuality, she first considers the complex dialogic way in which words become intertwined in a literary text. She specifically acknowledges the existence of an intrinsic communicative capacity inherent to literature, so far as a literary text creates meanings due to the constructive and deconstructive practices which it constantly carries. Following Tolstoy's reflections on the communicative side of a literary work of art[1], Kristeva's analysis provides an

[1] In *What is Art?,* Tolstoy describes art as a supreme form of communication between human beings: "Art is a human activity, consisting in this: that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them. […]. Evidently such people were wrong in repudiating all art, for they denied that which cannot be denied, one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist" (40-41).

idea of a dynamic interplay established among several writings. In *Semeiotike*, for instance, she emphasizes the concept of "translinguistic transfer', disclosing the idea of permeability of a literary text. This idea rests upon the existence of a productive dialogue a literary work of art establishes with other literary texts and contexts. Kristeva recognizes the neutralizing ability of a literary text, derived from an aesthetic principle of dialogic junction of words, both constructive and deconstructive. According to Kristeva [12], a literary act is built upon a constant (auto) reflexive dimension, in which the neutralization of meaning emerges from its communication not only with other literary texts, but also with the distinct historical, cultural and literary contexts. Consequently, she states:

To make language an operator at work in the materiality of that which, for society, is a means of contact and understanding, does this not make of it immediately an outsider to language? The so-called literary act, by dint of its not admitting to an ideal distance in relation to that which it signifies, introduces radical otherness in relation to what language is claimed to be: a bearer of meanings. Strangely close and intimately foreign to the substance of our discourse and dreams, literature today appears to be the very act which grasps how language works and signals what it has the power tomorrow to transform (p.9).

Kristeva's meditations on intertextuality suggest a sense of continuity over time, for each single text may always be replicated and reinvented in more ways than one. It is also true, however, that the acknowledgement of a variety of discursive practices, involved in the narrative construction of a self and perceived as fractured, multiple and episodic, rather than continuous, reminds us of other methods for conceptualizing the process of literary memory. The capacity of a work of art to raise new responses situates a process of literary memory on a cross-road between repetition of what is considered as already existing and a stimulus for a constant change and renovation, embodied in a new cultural and historical context.

2. Materials and Methods

The literary analysis presented in this article is based on the ongoing academic research in the field of intertextuality in Julian Barnes. Talking about the idiosyncrasies of literary art and a writer's ability to connect life and art, Barnes [7] acknowledges his fascination with the great names of world literature, such as Shakespeare, Flaubert, Turgenev and Tolstoy. Further, he relates his own experience of reading Tolstoy, as follows: "I'm more weary of art in the service of an idea than I am of art that tends to go off to the ultra-bouts spectrum of things. You can see things going wrong with Tolstoy, you can see how the need to propagandize seeps into him as the years go by, and I think that is a warning" (p.145). The interest to further explore Barnes's insightful meditations on Russian literature and culture of the XIX century stays as a main stimulus for the current research project. This article aims to demonstrate one among many other perceptible dimensions of Russian intertextuality in Barnes's works. Reflecting on the thematic and compositional framework upon which *The Sense of an Ending* rests, the article proposes to revisit a series of complex, ambivalent intertextual processes responsible for "the orientation of the now-said to the already-said and the to-be-said…comprehending all of the ways that utterances can resonate with other utterances and [constitute] consciousness, society and culture" (Bauman, p.5). The theoretical support for this investigation first emerges from the already mentioned Kristeva's concept of neutralization and permeability of a literary act. Further, it focuses on Bauman's [5] understanding of literary performance as "a mode of communicative display" (p.9). He regards intertextuality not simply in terms of "relational nexus between texts, but in how it is accomplished in communicative practice, including both production and reception, and to what ends" (p.5). In terms of discursive practice, the communicative impetus, resulting from the context of a creative dialogue established among different texts, potentiates, according to Bauman [5], not only entextualization (the organization of discourse into a text) but also the iterability of texts, an aesthetic quality inherent to literature. Thus, for instance, Bauman [5] states:

A text, then, from this vantage point, is discourse rendered decontextualizable: entextualization potentiates decontextualization. But decontextualization from one context must involve recontextualization in another, which is to recognize the potential for texts to circulate, to be spoken again in another context (4).

Finally, Orr's [13] reflections on influence and imitation, which she designates as conceptual shadowlands to intertextuality, are employed to shed light on how a communicative act, performed in *The Sense of an Ending,* transcends the first-layer textual narrative structure and directs itself towards a deeper narrative level, resting upon what Bakhtin [1] calls "a contact of personalities and not of things" (p.162).

3. Discussion

The idea of otherness, mentioned in the Introduction, provides a fertile theoretical background for one of the possible readings of Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending.* According to Bauman [5], the recounting of the event as a story may "emerge from multiply embedded acts of contextualization in which talk is oriented to other talk" (p.28). From the structural point of view, the novel builds upon Tony's retrospective reminiscences of his youth, materialized through evoking the relationship with his three schoolmates and the girlfriend Veronica. In aesthetical terms, this relationship is recorded mostly

through the constructive dialogue among Tony's intimate, emotionally conceived, reflections on life and the meditations on serious philosophical questions embodied in the school context and in his conversations with Veronica. Following the idea of permeability of a literary act provided by Kristeva, the reader may acknowledge the importance of a dialogical principle in *The Sense of an Ending*, both in structural and thematic terms. Thus, for instance, at the very beginning Tony reflects upon the non-linear relationship established between life and fiction, which ironically becomes, some steps further, a foundational stone for his own memory process:

This was hopeless. In a novel, Adrian wouldn't just have accepted things as they are put to him. What was the point of having a situation worthy of fiction if the protagonist didn't behave as he would have done in a book? Adrian should have gone snooping, or saved up his pocket money and employed a private detective; perhaps all four of us should have gone off on a Quest to Discover the Truth. Or would that have been less like literature and too much like a kid's story? (p.16).

Furthermore, he questions the reliability of the process of memory by which his life events have been recorded: "Again, I must stress that this is my reading now of what happened then. Or rather, my memory now of my reading then of what was happening at the time" (p.41).

Second, though the narrator's voice – which isassumed, from the very beginning, to be Tony's voice – seems to guide the reader through the whole memory process represented in the novel, it is nevertheless progressively balanced by the restructuring of his memories through the systematic dialogue with the other. The ready-made discourse used by Tony to recount his life story carries both decontextualizing and recontextualizing processes. As Bauman [5] mentions, the "extracting ready-made discourse from one context and fitting it to another are…essential mechanisms of social and cultural continuity" (p.8). Tony acknowledges the conceptual importance of corroboration in the process of reconstruction of memory of one's individual life:

What you fail to do is look ahead, and then imagine yourself looking back from that future point. Learning the new emotions that time brings. Discovering, for example, that as the witnesses to your life diminish, there is less corroboration, and therefore, less certainty, as to what you are or have been. Even if you have assiduously kept records – in words, sound, pictures – you may find that you have attended to the wrong kind of record-keeping (p.59).

Thus, a first-person account provided by Tony rests upon a dialogically split into two structure of how things may really happen and how they are remembered - then and now. Consequently, these dichotomic memory dimensions – the objective recording of what happened, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, what and how we emotionally remember what has happened – are perceived, in the text's structure, not as incompatible, but rather as complementary qualities. It seems relevant to mention, also, that the whole memory process is built upon their mutual permeability:

The time-deniers say: forty's nothing, at fifty you're in your prime, sixty's the new forty, and so on. I know this much: that there is objective time, but also subjective time, the kind you wear on the inside of your wrist, next to where the pulse lies. And this personal time, which is the true time, is measured in your relationship to memory. So when this strange thing happened – when these new memories suddenly came upon me – it was as if, for that moment, time had been placed in reverse. As if, for that moment, the river ran upstream (p.122).

The presence of otherness becomes an essential narrative element through which the novel's communicative process, disclosing the elusive nature of self-knowledge, takes place. Reflecting upon the process of self-discovery reworked through memory, Tony Webster questions not only the sense of evasiveness attached to our perception of truth, but also recognizes the importance of corroboration by the other in evaluating the sense of authenticity attached to his personal life story. As a consequence, the dialogic principle, here perceived as an exchange of memories between I and the other, turns into one of the most valuable structuring elements in a personal account of events embodied in this narrative. Contemplating a complex memory process by which he records the past, Tony recognizes the importance of witnesses, as a key element in reconstructing memory. Regretting the fact that "the witnesses to our lives decrease, and with them our essential corroboration" (p.97), the main character nevertheless progressively seeks support for his memories in other people's accounts and testimonies to his own life. Thus, the apparently bifurcated structure of *The Sense of an Ending,* oscillating between the factual certainties of what happened in the past and the emotionally structured present narration of the past colored by revisionism, turns into a circular experiencing of life events. These are being constantly registered and modified, constructed and reconstructed by the sense of a renewed birth taking place inside Tony's mind. Following Kristeva's idea of a neutralizing ability of a literary act, the birth / ending, as well as life / death dichotomy appears to be recreated into complementary narrative devices in a process of life recollection: "To die when *something* new is born – even if that *something* new is our very own self?" (p.105) [my italics]. This question stays, deliberately, unanswered in *The Sense of an Ending.* Nonetheless, it provides the reader with the essential tools to further explore the semantic intricacies of intertextual processes on which the novel rests. Following Kristeva's principle of permeability of a literary text, and also her above mentioned affirmation of how "literature today appears to be the very act which grasps how language works and signals what it has the power tomorrow to transform", let's turn for a moment to a wider intertextual context which this novel embraces. Ensuing the already mentioned

corroborative process responsible for the structural development of both novels, and the relations between the exchanges of ideas between them, it would be necessary to consider the following reflection on the sense of an ending / birth proposed by Levin in *Anna Karenina*:

He knew and felt only that what was taking place was similar to what had taken place the previous year at the deathbed of his brother Nikolay in the hotel of the provincial town. But that had been grief, whereas this was joy. But that grief and this joy both lay equally outside all of life's usual conditions, and were like apertures in this ordinary life through which *something* higher could be glimpsed. What was taking place was proceeding equally painfully and agonizingly and, as it perceived this higher *something*, his soul was ascending equally incomprehensibly to a height it had never understood before and with which his intellect could no longer keep pace (p.715) [my italics].

In order to further pursue one of the available intertextual lines of thought in *The Sense of an Ending* and in *Anna Karenina*, we will start by evaluating the significance of a repetitive occurrence of the word "something" in the above quoted passages. Following Kristeva's definition of the concept of intertextuality, proposed in "Word, Dialogue and Novel" [11] and stating that "the literary word is an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (p.65), the presence of the strategically employed word 'something' becomes a textual key device establishing a productively permeable communicative process between these two accounts of personal experience. *Oxford English Dictionary* [14] defines "something" as "a thing that is unspecified or unknown" or as "used in various expressions indicating that a description or amount being stated is not exact".

This definition of the word 'something' provides a fertile background for analyzing the elusive sense of a self, experienced by Tony in *The Sense of an Ending* and by Levin in *Anna Karenina.* Analyzed separately, the construction of the sense of a self, occurring in both novels, rests upon the idea of corroboration between the main character's mind and the uncanny sense of otherness, coming from other characters with whom Tony and Levin communicate. Though the above cited quotations, built on free indirect speech, provide rich psychological accounts of selfhood, the full appreciation of its narrative intensity and of its stylistic complexity only becomes possible when those are balanced against the access to the other character's minds. Again, the sense of corroboration pursues an apparently dichotomic structural principle, oscillating between life and death. Even when it is processed by one's individual mind, it is also fore- and backgrounded by the uncanny, neutralizing, power provided by otherness. As Helena de Paiva Correia [8] points out,

The accepted English translation of Freud's German expression *unheimlich* is uncanny (217). Yet, according to Sigmund Freud's essay, the word *heimlich* (familiar, in English) covers two different concepts: something familiar, agreeable, but also that which is concealed and kept out of sight. Further on, the author reminds us that Schelling points out that the antonymous word, *unheimlich* conveys the meaning of what should have remained secret and hidden but has come to light (p.362).

Thus, the presumably "fixed meaning" of the word 'something' as "a thing that is unspecified or unknown" acquires the dynamic coloring produced by a dialogical relationship with the uncanny the word "something" establishes within and outside each novel's textual surface. Considering the subtle yet profound way in which creative writing communes with life, Barnes pays homage to Flaubert, praising his aesthetic capacity to "wade into life as into the sea but only up to the belly button"[2]. Stating that it is to fiction that we regularly and gradually turn for the truest picture of life, Barnes himself looks forward to exploring the intimate recesses of a feeling arising within the subject as from outside it. It becomes evident that in both *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina*, the occurrence of a word 'something' aims at encouraging the reader to access the intricacies of the existential quest for self-knowledge, even if still undefinable, pursued by its characters; furthermore, when evaluated on a broader intertextual level, 'something' in *The Sense of an Ending* enters into complex collaborative relationship with 'something' depicted in *Anna Karenina.* This corroboration rests upon the conceptual similarity encoded in the word "something" and represented in both texts. Revisiting the territory of what presumably should have remained concealed and kept out of sight, as unspecified or unknown reality, 'something' comes to life as a strong, pure and authentic feeling of a self. Its nature remains inaccessible by reasonable thinking, as both texts show. This feeling of a self does not refer, however, only to subjective self-perception. It seems to encompass an infinitely broader scope of the self. A diversity of cultural meanings which can make for its imprecision and inconsistency relates to the way in which an individual's perception of the world is permanently negotiated by the constantly changing array of overlapping, and often contradictory, experiences embodied in the course of his or her living. As Sebastian Groes and Peter Childs [10] mention, "to portray Barnes primarily as a relativist would do insufficient justice to the seriousness and intellectual intensity of the writer's engagement with the world beyond the subjective self" (p.3). It seems relevant to mention, therefore, that both Barnes and Tolstoy try to construct their characters in terms of otherness and singularity, located somewhere between intimacy and strangeness involved in the perception of their own selves. Thus, for

[2] See Conversations with Julian Barnes, 2009, (p.80).

instance, Tony observes that "life isn't just addition and subtraction. There's also the accumulation, the multiplication, of loss, of failure. Adrian's fragment also refers to the question of responsibility: whether there's a chain of it, or whether we draw the concept more narrowly" (p.104). In *Anna Karenina*, for instance, the still unfamiliar nature of the self is perceived by Levin in a form of a conflict between its conscious and unconscious dimensions:

What was happening to him now was not like what had gone on with his previous states of contrived serenity, when it was necessary to retrace his entire train of thought in order to locate the feeling. On the contrary, the feeling of joy and serenity was now more vivid than before, and his thoughts could not keep up with his feelings (p.818).

The impossibility to verbalize the overwhelming feeling proves to be of a great importance in Tolstoy's poetics. Not only does it reveal the existence, according to Tolstoy's thoughts, of the ungraspable state of communion in which all human beings may remain through the law of goodness, it also recognizes the undefinable territory in which his own being is permanently united with other people's beings, for "understanding of goodness...always has been and always will be the same for everyone" (p.821). Levin reflects upon the invisible sense of union he experiences with other human beings as a revelation, "which I feel within myself, and through recognition of which I do not so much unite, but am united with, other people" (p.820).

The invisible side of a being, united with other people's beings, remains objectively inexplicable, throughout the texts, but its uncanny dimension comes to light and becomes perceived only by a character's inner self.

Thus, "the dialogue among several writings", as defined by Kristeva, is established on a productively permeable intertextual level: both textual surfaces, in which 'something' is repeated, refer to the complementary sense of selfhood depicted in conceptually dichotomic concepts, such as beginning and ending, life and death, singularity and otherness. According to Tolstoy's poetics in general, life only becomes fully perceptible through its eminent contact with death. Moreover, Tolstoy [17] acknowledges that "life is a constant process of dying. And by saying 'I'm constantly dying', one might just as well say I live" (51:15). Barnes's reflections on death appear frequently been shaped up by a rather ironical approach to life:

Fear of death replaces fear of God. But fear of God – an entirely sane early principle, given the hazard of life and our vulnerability to thunderbolts of unknown origin – at least allowed for negotiation. We talked God down from being the Vengeful One and rebranded Him the Infinitely Merciful; we changed Him from Old to New...We can't do the same with death. Death can't be talked down, or parlayed into anything; it simply declines to come to the negotiating table... 'Death is not an artist': no, and would never claim to be one. Artists are unreliable; whereas death never lets you down, remains on call seven days a week, and is happy to work three consecutive eight-hour shifts (*Nothing to be Frightened of,* p.69-70).

Thus we see that both in *The Sense of an Ending* and in *Anna Karenina* "something", though still undefinable and intellectually ungraspable, becomes an important structuring element in the detailed depiction of an interior emotional process of memory directed towards self-discovery. Within the domain of intertextuality, which in Kristeva's terms stresses the importance of permeability and neutralization of a literary act, there are, again, many types and degrees to creative reworking. In both quotations, 'something' occurs precisely when life and death are epistemologically confronted. The symbolic encounter between these two dimensions of the human condition brings several other philosophical questions which can be revisited on a wider intertextual level. This point of view turns into an important theoretical device when approaching a correlation between life and death in the complex narrative structure of both texts. To begin with, it goes almost without saying that both *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina* enrich their structural and thematic dimensions through approaching, dialogically, the question of suicide. It may even be argued that the idiosyncrasy of the narrative exteriorization of suicide turns, on a first-layer narrative structure, into the central thematic and compositional device in both texts. Moreover, in *The Sense of an Ending* the theme of suicide appears strategically stated at the very beginning, when Adrian curiously evokes Camus's opinion that suicide is the only true philosophical question (p.13). Though provoking immediate counter response from his fellow friend, who declares the equal importance of "ethics and politics and aesthetics and the nature of reality and all the other stuff" (p.13-14), Adrian's answer stays firm: "The only *true* one. The fundamental one on which all others depend" (p.14). Taking a deeper step into intricate textual web, this approach to suicide seems to foreground Adrian's naturally conceived response to his own life's complexity. Adrian's suicide is discursively constructed as a well-thought action, involved in the narrative context of his deep philosophical reflections on a sense of human existence. The tragicomic meditation on the nature of human life, foreshadowed by the character's attachment to intellectual freedom and liberal thinking, encourage him to feel free to renounce it. Staying at the very beginning of the narrative development, Adrian's consideration of suicide as the only *true* philosophical question allows Tony Webster later on to recognize the existential complexity of such an affirmation and to reflect, in a different light, on the significance of his friend's death:

So I doubt anyone paid much attention to Adrian's argument, with its references to philosophers ancient and modern, about the superiority of the intervening act over the unworthy passivity of merely letting life happen to you...He also asked to be cremated, and for his ashes to be scattered, since the swift destruction of the body was also a

philosopher's active choice, and preferable to the supine waiting for natural decomposition in the ground (49-50).

Let us turn now towards Levin's reflections on the philosophical complexities the existential dimension of human life seems to bear. The identity issue displays an intense cross-referential reflection on the unresolved mystery of life and death in Levin's mind. It establishes a quite perceptible proximity to the core question towards life meaning unveiled in Adrian's suicide:

From the moment when the sight of his beloved dying brother had caused Levin to look for the first time at the issues of life and death through the prism of those new convictions, as he called them, which between the ages of twenty and thirty-four had imperceptibly replaced the beliefs he had held in his childhood and youth, he had been horrified not so much by death as by life, lacking the slightest knowledge about where it came from, what it was for, why it existed, and what it was. The human organism, its destruction, the intractability of matter, the law of the conservation of energy, and evolution were the terms which had replaced his former beliefs. These words and the concepts associated with them were very good for intellectual purposes, but as a guide to life they offered nothing... (p.790).

This passage represents, in the novel, the already well depicted symbolic tension between intellectual reasoning and the full perception of the significance of human existence which reason is unable to explain. The reason which "made knowledge of what he needed to know impossible" foregrounds, in Levin's case, the permanent struggle between the materialistic explanation of the self and the quest for spiritual self-discovery. The way these questions are approached, in *The Sense of an Ending* as in *Anna Karenina,* plays a crucial role in understanding the cross-referential function of suicide as represented in these novels. In Adrian´s case, the commitment of suicide rests upon the idea of reasonable power over one's individual life, culminating in the sense of control and irreducible liberty over one's own existence. When dialogically confronted with Levin's restrain from committing suicide, the reasonable thinking goes to the second plan, being substituted by "something" ungraspable which permits him to live:

Reasoning had led him into doubt, and prevented him from seeing what should and should not be done. When he did not think, however, but lived, he was constantly aware in his soul of the presence of an infallible judge determining which of two possible courses of action was better and which was worse; and as soon as he did not act as he should have done, he was immediately aware of it.

Thus he lived, neither knowing nor seeing any possibility of knowing what he was and what the point of his life on earth was, and while he was tormented by this lack of knowledge to such a degree that he was afraid of committing suicide, he was at the same time resolutely carving his own particular decisive path in life (p.795-796).

Approximating Adrian's and Levin's reflections on the issue of identity, it becomes evident that the core question for preserving or renouncing life is strictly bounded, in these texts, with a topic of reason and intellectual thinking. Reason assumes the role of a strong intertextual linking device between two texts, playing a role of a common contextual background, which allows *The Sense of an Ending* to communicate with *Anna Karenina.* Accessing the polemical fragment of Adrian's diary exposing his last thoughts on life and the individual sense of responsibility, Tony acknowledges his friend's intellectual capacity for rational thinking, as the main impetus for committing suicide:

And how admirable he remained. I have at times tried to imagine the despair which leads to suicide, attempted to conjure up the slew and slope of darkness in which only death appears as a pinprick of light: in other words, the exact opposite of the normal condition of life. But in this document – which I took, on the basis of this page, to consist of Adrian's rational arguing towards his own suicide – the writer was using light in an attempt to reach greater light. Does that make sense? (P.86-87).

Moreover, Tony continues to pursue an attempt to understand, reasonably, Adrian's motifs for committing suicide, taking almost for granted the fact that his friend's uncommon intelligence provides him with the necessary intellectual tools for taking control over his own existence. Whereas Levin's lack of reasonable explanation for what he was living for gives him the possibility to continue living and applying to every life's mystery an instinctively "*given* knowledge of what is good and what is bad", Adrian's "applied [to life's meaning] intelligence" and reasonable thinking drives him towards death, perceived by his mind as a form of liberation from the "unsought gift" offered by life:

I did, eventually, find myself thinking straight. That's to say, understanding Adrian's reasons, respecting them, and admiring him. He had a better mind and more rigorous temperament than me; he thought logically, and then acted on the conclusion of logical thought. Whereas most of us, I suspect, do the opposite: we make an instinctive decision, then build up an infrastructure of reasoning to justify it (p.53)...Not just pure, but also applied intelligence. I found myself comparing my life against Adrian's. The ability to see and examine himself; the ability to make moral decisions and act on them; the mental and physical courage of his suicide Adrian took charge of his own life, he took command of it, he took it in his hands – and then out of them. How few of us – we that remain – can say that we have done the same? We muddle along, we let life happen to us, and we gradually build up a store of memories (p.88).

Levin's quest for self-discovery, precisely when oscillating between reasonable thinking and the attachment to the ungraspable perception of his self in time, which reason cannot explain, rests upon the balancing nature of "the answer given to [him] by life itself"; presuming that

"what reason discovered was the struggle for existence and the law demanding that I strangle all those who obstruct the satisfaction of my desires", and that it "could never discover loving one's neighbor, because that is something unreasonable", Levin, by paying attention to his soul, comes towards restraining even more the sense of his disengagement with life. Following Tolstoy's own conclusions on life's meaning [3], Levin manages to counter-balance his interior contradictions by the laws of almost instinctive perception of goodness:

After grasping clearly for the first time back then that there was nothing ahead but suffering, death, and eternal oblivion for every person, including himself, he had made his mind that he could not live like that, and that he must either explain his life in such a way that it did not appear to be the evil mockery of some kind of devil, or shoot himself. But he had done neither, and had instead gone on living, thinking, and feeling, and had even gone and got married during that very time and experienced many joys, and was happy when he was not thinking about the meaning of his life (p.801).

Analyzing Anna's psychological struggle between life and death depicted in a moment of suicide, it becomes almost self-evident that the narrative process, disclosing her contradictory meditations on the meaning of life, can only be fully grasped by seeing the reverse side, personified by Levin. In her Introduction to *Anna Karenina*, Rosamund Bartlett mentions the paradox of Tolstoy writing with such sympathy about Anna while at the same time writing a novel which clearly condemns adultery4. Evidently, Anna's gradual self-destruction followed by suicide stays as a symbolic shadowland to Levin's instinctively perceived family happiness. Curiously, the moment in which Anna commits suicide follows the rationally conceived desire of vengeance she is giving to herself as a fact of justifying her action:

And suddenly, remembering the man who had been crushed on the day she had first met Vronsky, she realized what she had to do...'There!' she said to herself, looking down into the wagon's shadow at the mixture of sand and coal sprinkled on the sleepers; 'there, right at the midpoint, and I'll punish him and be rid of everybody and myself' (p.770).

4nClusion s

It becomes clear how *The Sense of an Ending* and *Anna Karenina* pursue similar narrative developments which in turn propose a permeable, complementary, account of one's life experience. Both texts are built upon the intricate depiction of its main character's quest for the sense of identity. Both Tony's and Levin's search for identity are fore- and backgrounded by the uncanny sense of otherness, perceptible through the careful representation of other character's inner selves.

Tony's acknowledgement of a fragment from Adrian's diary partly explaining his friend's reasons for committing suicide allows him to go further in evaluating the reliability of his own memories questioning the accuracy of chronological time when confronted with emotionally perceived sequences of events. Both texts are built upon dialogically conceived reflections on time, memory and identity, doing justice to Kristeva's definition of intertextuality. In *Intertextuality, Debates and Contexts*, Mary Orr pursues multidimensional theoretical line of the analysis of intertextuality. Instead of considering it as a key-concept in a rich textual web the post-modernist narrative frequently claims to be, Orr's study looks forward to situating a concept of intertextuality into the broader cultural, historical and literary contexts. According to Orr, such traditionally conceived concepts as creative influence and productive imitation stay permanently as shadowlands to intertextuality. Following Orr's [13] line of thought, these key-concepts still have a capacity to maintain a constructive dialogue between canonical past and the contemporary impetus for innovation[5]:

Postmodern intertextuality pertains to be all-inclusive of text, including the Bible. Yet its anti-religious spirit of interpretation, that all texts are text, in fact delivers tokenism and taboo packaged together. Influence studies, especially comparative, allow greater space for traditions across historical periods. Cultural tunnel vision or political correctness often airbrush anti-humanitarian parts of culture out of the picture or clothe them more comfortably (177).

Similarly, Julian Barnes considers literary traditions of the past, reflecting on their constructive contribution to modern art in general. In *Keeping an Eye Open,* Barnes [2] invites his reader to evaluate the dimension of the aesthetical variety coming from the cultural heritage of the past. He claims that modern art continues to stay in a permanent dialogue with the past: "I didn't realize – couldn't yet see – how in all the arts there are usually two things going on at the same time: the desire to make it new, and a continuing conversation with the past" (p.9). Moreover, he goes even further in considering the aesthetical contribution of the previous literary movements, highlighting the creative dimension of Realism: "It took me a lot of looking before I understood that Realism, far from being just the base camp for high-altitude adventure by others, could be just as truthful, and even just as strange –

[3] In the unsent letter to Strakhov, Tolstoy mentions the importance of the other in perceiving oneself: "The other is more visible than oneself. And I see you clearly...And it is impossible for you to write your life story. You don't know what is good and what is bad in it. And one needs to know" (November 19-22, 1879; quoted in Paperno, 53)

4 For more details, see Bartlett's Introduction to *Anna Karenina.*

[5] See the first three chapters of Mary Orr's *Intertextuality, Debates and Contexts* (2008).

that it too involved choice, organization and imagination, so in its own way might be equally transformative" (p.7).

Barnes's valorization of the aesthetic background provided by Realism together with Orr's theoretical approach to the creative dimension of conceptual shadowlands coming from the past, invites the attentive reader to put the aesthetical representation of memory as depicted in *The Sense of an Ending* in a constructive conversation with a literary portrayal of otherness and of a sense of alterity disclosed in *Anna Karenina,* underlining Kristeva's definition of a way in which literary texts constitute the relations between the exchanges of a dialogue. To sum up, let us turn towards Orr's [13] enriching ambivalence when defining the role of intertextuality in perceiving of literary text:

However, if 'nothing only comes of nothing', goes endlessly round and round or empties out, how can intertextuality's parameters be ascertained? Rather than defining intertextuality by what it is not, for example, against nonsense (the *via* negative), or, indeed, by a double negative (a deconstruction of deconstruction), this study, like Lear, will press it further for what it is. Lear's personal tragedy in so doing, however, also constitutes a warning. From the outset, his error was to take at face value the wordy reformulations of 'love' of his elder daughters Goneril and Regan, whereas it was his youngest daughter Cordelia's more profound silence that spoke the more. His failure to discern between her 'nothing' as no response, and nothing as something infinitely more than was expressible, is the ultimate tragedy of the play and a timely reminder to debates grounded in linguistics. Terms such as 'love' or 'intertextuality' can be nothing without the qualifiers and contexts in which they can speak again (p.4-5).

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Article II

"Life Comes as Spring Comes From All Sides":

Constructing and Reconstructing Silence in *The Noise of Time*".

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"Life Comes as Spring Comes, From All Sides"[1]: Constructing and Reconstructing Silence in *The Noise of Time*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on a non-linear relationship between the course of one individual's life and its creative reshaping in the literary work of art as experienced in Julian Barnes's novel *The Noise of Time*. Contemplating a creative process of writing, the author seems to insist on a symbiosis between art and life. Writing about Shostakovich, he goes on challenging art's ability to deliver a clear message about life: how to put what one has experienced into words? A creative dialogue thus established between a non-speaking, extra-linguistic, and unique self and its verbal representation in literature is built upon a relational nature of the said and the not-said. Eloquent silence is employed to transpose one's life experience into the realm of verbal represenation. Focusing on the limits of verbal representation, Barnes' character in *The Noise of Time* similarly strives to grasp a meaning of the relationship among language, "silence", and liberation from the self. Refiguring silence as one of the most valuable narrative devices, the text challenges the illusory nature of historical time, of historical places, and of selfhood.

Keywords

J. Barnes, L. Tolstoy, silence, language, self

In *A Life With Books*, Barnes reveals the subtle yet profound way in which fiction communes with life:

> I have lived in books, for books, by and with books; in recent years, I have been fortunate enough to be able to live from books. And it was through books that I first realized there were other worlds beyond my own; first imagined what it might be like to be another person. First encountered that deeply intimate bond made when a writer's voice gets inside a reader's head. (Barnes 2012)

Revisiting "other worlds beyond [his] own", the author focuses, in *The Noise of Time*, on a non-linear relationship between the course of one individual's life and its creative reshaping in the literary work of art. He goes on challenging art's ability to deliver a clear message about life: how to put what one has experienced into words?

This paper aims at examining a creative dialogue between a non-speaking, extra-linguistic, and unique self and its verbal representation in literature, as experienced in *The Noise of Time*. Contemplating a creative process of writing, Barnes insists on a symbiosis between art and life, stating: "You took life and turned it, by some charismatic, secret process, into something else: related to life, but stronger, more intense and, preferably, wider" (Barnes 2015: 7).

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The question of how effective a transposing of one's life experience into the linguistic domain of words could be has been receiving expanding attention not only in literature and in linguistics (Bilmes 1994; Berger 2004), but also in such fields of inquiry as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. In *Making Meaning of Narratives*, Josselson and Lieblich offer a dialogically conceived, interdisciplinary approach to the narrative study of lives. The search for the "reliable" method by which we can put what one has thought or experienced into words invites us to "think of narrative […] as a hermeneutic mode of inquiry, where the process of inquiry flows from the question—which is a question about a person's inner, subjective reality and, in particular, how a person makes meaning of some aspect of his or her experience" (Josselson and Lieblich 1999).

In *The Death of the Heart*, for instance, Bowen's narrator examines a conceptual interconnectedness between silence and word encoding a sensorial reality of the self. Her character Portia oscillates between eloquent communication with the social world and the emotional silence binding her to her deceased mother. Both define her as an identity:

> The heart may think it knows better: the senses know that absence blots people out […] Portia was learning to live without Irene, not because she denied or had forgotten that once unfailing closeness between mother and child, but because she no longer felt her mother's cheek on her own […]. (Bowen 1989: 148)

Reflecting on a close semiotic relationship between the heart, revealed in emotions, and the senses, revealed in character's rational connection to reality, Bowen examines the extent to which (still) unspoken words matter; how can they interfere, constructively, into verbal communication, which stays for the world of encoded ideology. The perception of emotional absence in Portia's perhaps yet unconscious articulation of the self acquires strong narrative voice of its own, capable to disrupt the established order and social conventions; it invites Portia to perceive reality in a different light, creating a new kind of existential authenticity.

Though many twentieth-century literary critics and linguists (Barthes, Derrida, Heidegger, among others) tend to conceptualize language as an indispensable verbal instrument through which the question of being can be unfolded[2], it is also true that the rhetoric of silence, theoretically disclosed in an admission of word's inherent inability to fully communicate a clear message about the process of self-construction revealed in time, has been duly acknowledged since Cicero, who considered silence as one of the great arts of conversation. It becomes also self-evident that silence symbolically plays the very central role in many literary works, such as Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Turgenev's *Mumu*, Joyce's *Dubliners*, to refer but a few.

Regarding literary art as "one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist" (Tolstoy 1897: 65), Tolstoy nevertheless reveals his generally present distrust of the linguistic process by which meaning becomes converted into language utterances. In his essays and several fictional works, the writer constantly reflects on the inexpressible side of language, dichotomically stated in the complex conceptual connection between an act (a moment) of living and its subsequent expression in words, defined by Tolstoy as "the instrument of reason". He establishes a clear separation between life and a literary work of art constructed through words:

> But if I were to try to say in words everything that I intended to express in my novel, I would have to write the same novel I wrote from the beginning… In everything, or nearly everything I have written, I have been guided by the need to gather together ideas which for the purpose of self-expression were interconnected; but every idea expressed separately in words loses its meaning and is terribly impoverished when taken by itself out of the connection in which it occurs. The connection itself is made

> up, I think, not by the idea, but by something else, and it is impossible to express the basis of this connection directly in words. It can only be expressed indirectly—by words describing characters, actions and situations. (Tolstoy 1: 266)[3]

Trying to figure out an appropriate aesthetic method by which he could keep alive, a careful linking between the truth which is lived and its verbal representation, Tolstoy seems to hesitate between two contradictory impulses: on the one hand, he struggles to find the effective way to describe human experience and, on the other, aims for the desire to stay silent:

"If this were not a contradiction, to write about the necessity to be silent, I would have written: I can be silent. I cannot be silent" (Tolstoy 57: 6).

According to Tolstoy's philosophical reflections on language, an attempt to narrate a sense of the self in words converts into linguistic inability to connect form and content, portraying verbal expression of experience as meaningless, "meaningless simply by virtue of the fact that they are expressed by the word… As expression, as form, they are meaningless" (Tolstoy 1: 399).

Focusing on the limits of verbal representation, Barnes' character in *The Noise of Time* similarly strives to grasp a meaning of the relationship among language, "silence", and liberation from the self:

"And yes, music must be immortal, but composers alas are not. They are easily silenced, and even more easily killed" (Barnes 2016: 109).

Regarding fiction as a form of communication between writer and reader, Barnes in his novel, consciously working on a literary task, seems also to be concerned with an attempt to read one's subjective self:

> He could not live with himself. […]. Or what it was like to have your spirit, your nerve, broken. Once that nerve was gone, you couldn't replace it like a violin string. Something deep in your soul was missing, and all you had left was—what?—a certain tactical cunning, an ability to play the unwordly artist, and a determination to protect your music and your family at any price. (Barnes 2016: 155)

The continuous, though non-linear sequel, thus established between life and writing, could actually become a productive dialogic chronotope (Bakhtin 1982), suggestively entranced in the novel's plot. The artist's life and the performance of his work go hand in hand:

"But you can still write music? Yes, he could still write unperformed and unperformable music. But music is intended to be heard in the period when it is written. Music is not like Chinese eggs: it does not improve by being kept underground for years and years" (Barnes 2016: 109).

The Noise of Time reveals, through its wavering narrative structure and intricate literary discourse of almost oral storytelling, Barnes' concern with how a particular literary form should best suit the idea. Echoing Flaubert, Barnes seems to be aware that there is no idea without a form, and no form without an idea.

During one interview given on the publication of *The Noise of Time*, Barnes suggests a connection between a life context, an idea for the novel and its subsequent expression in words:

"I think that the novel is a very generous and flexible form, and I allow the story wherever it leads me, often across the old-fashioned borders; so I am happy to mix fiction with history, art history, biography, autobiography—whatever tells the story in the best way"[4].

From the point of view of literary criticism, *The Noise of Time*, such as a majority of Barnes' novels, resists clear genre classification. Being called by some critics a nonfiction or even nonfictional fiction[5], this work of art represents an attempt to recreate, through words, an individual life course submitted metaphorically to the noise of time. It displays a dialectical relationship between two intrinsically connected states of the human condition—the outer, socially constructed sense of identity and the inner,

subconsciously designed personal self. Recalling Tolstoy's philosophical reflections on a metaphysical interconnection between a mortal, ephemeral human physical body and an immortal, eternal human soul, in which the author etymologically separates bodily death destroying spatial and temporal consciousness without necessarily destroying that which makes the foundation of life, *The Noise of Time* challenges the verbal capacity of a narrative to portray a human condition. Taking to heart a full awareness of a castrating relationship between art and power, the main character undertakes a stoic precept to continue living in disturbing desolation, experiencing a destructive feeling of a man sentenced, psychologically, to death:

"He thought of suicide, of course, when he signed the paper out in front of him; but since he was already committing moral suicide, what would be the point of physical suicide?" (Barnes 2016: 156).

Expanding in ample intertextual way, Tolstoy's image of life and death, Barnes creates in his novel a sense of their interconnectability into a metaphor of the artist's human condition in Soviet Russia. A creative life, when lived in full awareness of one's finitude, becomes a metaphor for a wasted self and a desolated artistic self. *The Noise of Time* reveals the silence of its music:

"Life is not a walk across a field: it was also a last line of Pasternak's poem about Hamlet. And the previous line: I'm alone; all round me drowns in falsehood" (Barnes 2016: 111).

The non-linear though extremely hermeneutic confluence of life and art is personified in the creatively conceived well-known historical figure—the Russian composer Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich, living and working under fierce political pressure from the Soviet Party, headed by Stalin. Far from conceptually constructed theory and academically stated knowledge system, art in its purest form lies, according to Shostakovich's perception, in "irreducible purity to itself, […], which could not be played cynically":

> This was a nonsense: it was not true—it couldn't be true—because you cannot lie in music. […].
>
> Music—good music, great music—had a hard, irreducible purity to it. It might bitter and despairing and pessimistic, but it could never be cynical. If music is tragic, those with asses' ears accuse it of being cynical. But when a composer is bitter, or in despair, or pessimistic, that still means he believes in something. (Barnes 2016: 125)

Even if the novel's first layer, a narrative structure pursues a chronological line through Shostakovich professional career, culminating at his forced membership of the Soviet Party, the text's main thematic concern seems to reside at the authentically depicted psychological violence displaying unbearable human suffering and artist's desolation. Such stylistic effect is mostly achieved through a suggestive connection of words, utterances, and speech acts functionally employed in order to recreate the disturbing inner monologues and tormentous free indirect speech fluxes of a human mind working under a totalitarian ideology. The obligation to join the Party becomes a culminating point in incompatible relation between pure art and counter-art, embodied in life's scepticism. The bodily expression becomes conceptually inseparable from the inner expression of pain, even when such disruption is discursively perceived:

> He felt, suddenly, as if all the breath had been taken out of his body. How, why had he not seen this coming? All through the years of terror, he had been able to say that at least he had never tried to make things easier for himself by becoming a Party member. And now, finally, after the great fear was over, they had come for his soul. (Barnes 2016: 152)

The dialogical plot setting, located in between "History, [that] does not relate" and its controversial perception by an individual consciousness which does not "want get fooled again" functions as one of the main indicators of the yet-inexpressible in words

territory. Its representational depiction lies somewhere in the sense of uncertainty and clouded judgment about Shostakovich's sense of a self split into two:

> "He could not live with himself". It was just a phrase, but na exact one. Under the the pressure of Power, the self cracks and splits. The public coward lives with the private hero. Or vice versa. Or, more usually, the public coward lives with the private coward. But that was too simple: the idea of a man split into two by a dividing axe. Better: a man crushed into a hundred pieces of rubble, vainly trying to remember how they—he—had once fitted together. (Barnes 2016: 155)

Shostakovich's personality split into two becomes representative of the philosophical reflections on the limits of language conceived by Tolstoy in one of his letters to Strakhov, in which he contemplates the simultaneous efficacy and fall ability of verbal representation:

> It's very hard for me to judge my life, not just the most recent events, but also the most distant ones. Sometimes my life appears vulgar to me, sometimes heroic, sometimes moving, sometimes repulsive, sometimes unhappy to the point of despair, other times joyful… These oscillations cause me great distress: I can't get any truth from myself! And it doesn't happen just in my reminiscences, but every day in all my affairs. I don't feel anything purely or directly, everything in me splits into two. (Tolstoy 2: 541)

Describing the form of self that frequently lies beyond narrative, Barnes succeeds in creating reflections on the limitations of the word in expressing answers to the fundamental problems of life faced by the character. Frequently, his character thinks about the growing desire to remain silent, and the ever growing desire to stop remembering. The symbolic sequence of silence and memory intertwined with a constructive perceptiveness of history, in order to recreate a tormenting interior monologue on finitude of art when faced with power:

> One to hear, one to remember, and one to drink—as the saying went. He doubted he could stop drinking, whatever the doctors advised; he could not stop hearing; and worst of all, he could not stop remembering. He so wished that the memory could be disengaged at will, like putting a car into neutral… But he could never do that with his memory. His brain was stubborat giving house-room to his failings, his humiliations, his self-disgust, his bad decisions. (Barnes 2016: 168)

Silence becomes, then, throughout the novel's narrative dynamics, a cross-referential leitmotif dominating the territory of the unsayable in the text's structure. It may be argued that, even contradictorily, the necessity to be silent turns into the most expressive discursive device of the novel. Instead of speaking where one cannot, Shostakovich expresses himself through silence.

In "Truth and Power", Foucault connects conceptually power and knowledge. Moreover, he relates etymologically power and silence, stating that power turns to be more effective when acting in silence. He does not conceive power as exclusively oppressive, for in ideological contexts, it might become very productive, because it constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies and (inter)subjectivities:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault 1980: 119)

If power is bound both with silence and with knowledge, could we go expanding a constructive relationship among knowledge, power, and silence? In line with Foucault's above stated conclusions, Ephratt's (2008) theoretical path towards discoursive analysis of silence proposed in "The Functions of Silence" overtly challenges the meaning of silence associated with "negativity, passiveness, impotence, absense and death" edged into linguistics in 1970. Instead, she defines silence as an important discursive turn-taking point. Instead of turning down the

functioning of silence as focusing on the morphological and the syntactical meaning of absence, Ephratt concentrates on exploring the communicative power of eloquent silence[6] both in conversation and writing, treating it as an "active constituent" in each communicative pattern:

> The sequence of premises is laid down: the need for a word; the need for silence. The route of these premises to the reasoning, to the conclusions, is blocked in the verbal sphere, but they stand out and become even more salient specifically through the choice of silence, the unsaid. (Ephratt 2008: 1916)

One of the central roles assigned by Ephratt to silence as a syntactic marker attests to the idiomatic nature of "no words to express". Reflecting about the language code, the use of silence in this kind of a context expresses the failure of words to carry out an act of communication. Echoing Tolstoy's theoretical framework which underlines the apparent dichotomy between a word as expression and a content as an act, Ephratt illustrates how silence acts as a discourse marker also on the metalinguistic level:

> There are no words (strong enough) act then as a discourse marker on the metalinguistic level. A marker pointing to the code: commenting on the structure of language to indicate: How comes silence—not because I have nothing to say but due to the inadequacy of the code to express. The idiomatic character of "there are no words to exress" also attests to its being a marker. (Ephratt 2008: 1928)

Reflecting metalinguistically on the limits of language in expressing the self, Tolstoy nevertheless points out the intrinsic human necessity to establish channels of communication through language embodied in a literary work of art. Distinguishing between art and counterfeit art (Tolstoy 1897: 117-128), the writer attributes to art its naturally assimilated capacity to communicate, to establish an interpersonal contact between the voice which speaks (draws, plays, or remains in silence) and the interlocutor (reader, listener, or receiver of a message). If art fails to communicate, it becomes counterfeit.

Following this line of thought, Kurzon recognizes, in his article "Analysis of Silence in Interaction", the importance of a dialogically established contextual interaction in interpreting silence, underlining that "both in conversation and in written texts… language is at the core of the interaction" (Kurzon 2013: 1). According to the author, both in conversations (dyadic interaction or multiparty interaction) and in written texts where the communication occurs between writer and reader, "meaning is created not only by the person who is speaking or writing, but also by those who interact with him or her" (Kurzon 2013: 2).

As a conclusion, Kurzon attributes contextual importance and intensive communicative function to "metaphorical silence", since it becomes a strong discursive marker in each of three types of silence mentioned in the article: conversational silence, textual silence, and situational silence. All of these types of silence are contextually bounded and therefore subjected to semantic and syntactic variations, implying that silence as a discursive device could be developed beyond language.

How should silence be interpreted in the overtly biographical account of one individual's life course? Barnes' mastery lies in exploring, through silence, the deep philosophical question regarding not only the human condition, but also the artist's condition living and working metaphorically under the noise of time. Recalling a conceptual dilemma between the complete articulation of the self or the complete silence, the text creatively employs narrative devices that help underline great psychological repression articulated through a depiction of a non-speaking artist.

In her article "An Interpretive Poetics of Languages of the Unsayable", Rogers acknowledges the methodological importance of the relational nature of the said and the not-said, stating that the meaning of the unsayable could only be figured out of what is pronounced. She goes on insisting on the relational

nature of languages of the unsayable:

"We can explore the psychological significance of the contrasts that form na essential part of each response… those contrasts include among other things, the implicit presence of the not-said" (Rogers 1999: 85).

The below quoted episode, portraying an encounter between Schostakovich and Anna Akhmatova, follows a stylistic device of metaphorical counterpointing between active and passive artistic auto-reflexiveness, embodied in the thematic element of intentionally constructed silence. There, history is recalled as a highly suggestive semantic background—a kind of a metaphorical melting spot—of actively passive response towards a totalitarian exercise of power:

"He had also had a 'historic meeting' with Akhmatova. He had invited her to visit him at Repino. She came. He sat in silence; so did she; after twenty such minutes, she rose and left.

She said afterwards, 'It was wonderful'" (Barnes 2016: 134).

The psychological depth of a creative interchange between two artists is expressed through discursive abruptness underlined by suggestively employed lexical and morphological devices. Short, abrupt sentences are trying to express an unsayable. They encompass silence which talks in its own suggestive language, located between dissatisfaction and self-contempt, but also sharing of this "strength for silence":

> There was much to be said for silence, that place where words run out and music begins; also, where music runs out. He sometimes compared his situation with that of Sibelius, who wrote nothing in the last third of his life, instead merely sat there embodying the Glory of the Finnish people. This was not a bad way to exist; but he doubted he had the strength for silence. (Barnes 2016: 134)

In her article "Silences", Gittins establishes a close metaphoric relationship between power and silence. Though, according to her initially stated argument that "there are many silences" and each different way to be silent relates epistemologically to different states of mind, she nevertheless concludes that "silence and power work hand in hand":

> In documentary records what appears on the agenda or in the variables chosen for analysis often represents only the acceptable, anodyne face of that issue. More controversial aspects tend to be cloaked in silence, discussed outside official hours, outside official meetings; decisions and agreements that "matter" thus often go unrecorded. Power, as Foucault pointed out, is most effective when invisible. Silent. (Gittins 2014: 46)

Refiguring silence as one of the most valuable narrative devices, *The Noise of Time* contributes to challenge the illusory nature of historical time, of historical places, and of selfhood. Silence acquires voice, rhythm, sound, expression beyond time, and representation. It becomes the world portraying how "life comes as spring comes, from all sides". It becomes a powerful literary word capable to construct and to reconstruct artistic means of representation:

> What could be put up against the noise of time? Only that music which is inside ourselves—the music of our being—which is transformed by some into real music. Which, over the decades, if it is strong and true and pure enough to drown out the noise of time, is transformed into the whisper of history. (Barnes 2016: 125)

CONCLUSIONS

The semantic density disclosed in a language of silence builds up upon a "downward spiral from speech to silence" (Rogers 1999: 103). Both referential and metalinguistic functions of eloquent silence are symbolically articulated in the discursive construction of *The Noise of Time.* Being artist's main instrument, music is not silent, but contextually (referentially) could be silenced. Music "belongs to no time" (Barnes 2016: 91), but artist's life is contextually and temporally bounded. Still, silence

reserves the right to revise power. Silence challenges the accuracy of time, of history, and of ideology.

Notes

1. Tolstoy's Diary, November 24, 1888. Translated by Irina Paperno, in *"Who, What Am I?" Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, 2014. Back cover.
2. For further reading on this topic, see *Writing and Difference*, by J. Derrida; *Being and Time*, by M. Heidegger.
3. References to Tolstoy's work throughout the paper are to *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90 tomakh (Complete Set of Works in 90 Volumes)*, with volume and page number indicated in the text. Translated by Irina Paperno, in "*Who, What Am I? Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, 2014.
4. In *Russia Beyond*, November 29, 2016. Retrieved April 10, 2018 (https://www.rbth.com).
5. In *Russia Beyond*, November 29, 2016. Retrieved April 10, 2018 (https://www.rbth.com).
6. Eloquent silence is defined by Ephratt as: "Eloquent silence alone (not stillness, pauses, or silencing) is an active means chosen by the speaker to communicate his or her message" (Ephratt 2008: 1913).

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Article III

"The Plethora of Choice as a Double Shift Retrieval
in Julian Barnes's *The Lemon Table*".

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The Plethora of Choice as a Double Shift Retrieval in Julian Barnes's The Lemon Table

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Abstract: Reading experience of *The Lemon Table* (2004) challenges our memory either to retrieve the "dead" text or to withdraw it from any further links. A creative intertextual way which drives a contemporary impetus for the multiplicity of choice, its exclusive all-inclusiveness, becomes a metaphor for a nightmare vortex. A detailed literary analysis of the text shows how memory exercise, active and human, located between experience and imagination, is constantly counter-balanced by a possessive/passive consumption, leading towards modern obsessive knowledge. Thus, the double anxiety between past and present is revealed in the concept of the "translinguistic transfer" (Kristeva), performed by the text's construction. The artificial intelligence of a modern character is challenged by a secular philosophy of mind through an emphasis on memory as a complex process of permutation and insider-outsider grasp into the "buried" text and the "dead" author (Barthes).

Key words: the short story, memory, canon, Julian Barnes, Ivan Turgenev

1. Introduction

In *Levels of Life* (2013), Julian Barnes states:

> "You put together two people who have not been put together before. Sometimes it is like that first attempt to harness a hydrogen balloon to a fine balloon: do you prefer crash and burn, or burn and crash? But sometimes it works, and something new is made, and the world is changed. Then, at some point, sooner or later, for this reason or that, one of them is taken away. And what is taken away is greater than the sum of what was there. This may not be mathematically possible; but it is emotionally possible" (*Levels of Life*, p. 67).

Published in 2004, *The Lemon Table* is composed of 11 short stories that intentionally interweave silence and sound, memory and forgetfulness, emotion and intellect, consistency and fluidity. This parallel shifting is particularly well underlined in "The Revival", the story in which the process of memory is constructed through an ambivalent interchange of backward and forward flashes:

> "This is safe. The fantasy is manageable, his gift a false memory. A few decades later, the political leaders of his country would specialize in airbrushing the downfallen from history, in removing their photographic traces. Now here he is, bent over his album of memories, meticulously inserting the figure of a past companion. Paste it in, that photograph of the timid, appealing Verochka, while the lamplight rejuvenates your white hair into black shadow" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 98).

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2. Main Body

This interchange of backward and forward flashes is based on the "turn-and-turn about"[1] method of telling a story. As already mentioned in the introduction, this method foregrounds an important piece of evidence when assessing a dialectical relationship between the creative dimension of modernity and conventional fields of knowledge, supported by the organic consistency of a narrative structure. In "Vigilance", for instance, the dialectical interconnectedness between past and present is constructed through a dynamically shifting focalization of a narrative voice echoing voices from the past:

> "So, how was the Shostakovich? Loud enough to drown the bastards out?"
>
> "Well", I said, "that's an interesting point. You know how it starts off with those huge climaxes? It made me realize what I meant about the loud bits. Everyone was making as much noise as possible — brass, timps, big bad drum — and you know what cut through it all? The xylophone. There was this woman bashing away and coming across clear as a bell. Now, if you'd heard that on a record you'd think it was the result of some fancy bit of engineering — spot-lighting, or whatever they call it. In the hall you knew that this was just exactly what Shostakovich intended" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 110).

In "The Story of Mats Israelson", on the other hand, one of the main characters examines the complex relationship between past and present through an ambivalent relationship between dream and reality, trying to establish her own sense of identity:

> "Though she prided herself on having little imagination, and though she took no account of legends, she had allowed herself to spend half her life in a frivolous dream. And what sort of claim was that?" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 45).

Throughout this story, the character is facing life turnings with defiant rage, resulting from her interior division between logical thinking, on the one hand, and aspiration to fantasy, on the other. The inability to deal with the controversial way in which life reveals its mysteries results from the character's unawareness that intellect alone, based mostly on her logical thinking, cannot always serve as a real foundation for identity. The story's narrative construction intentionally guides a reader through a dialogic interaction between a pure reality and an imaginatively conceived fantasy. The narrative leads the reader through an intensive counter-pointing exploring the extent to which a legend communes with reality:

> "'Mrs. Lindwall…' All clarity of mind deserted him. He wanted to say that he loved her, that he had always loved her, that he thought of her most — no, all of the time. 'I think of you most — no, all of the time', was what he had prepared to say. And then, 'I have loved you from the moment I met you on the steamboat. You have sustained my life ever since.
>
> "But her irritation made him lose heart. She thought he was a seducer. So the words he had prepared would seem like those of a seducer. And he did not know her after all. He did not know how to talk to women" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 43).

The failure of communication between two characters results from their inability to connect a deceiving truth with an authentic fantasy and figure out a non-linear thematic way in which an imaginative dimension of the old legend could indeed reconstruct in a new light the perception of what really happens:

> "I'm sorry", she said, as if aware of his disappointment. "I have little imagination. I'm only interested in what

[1] For further clarification see *Translation as Collaboration* (2014), by Claire Davison, chapter 1, p. 40.

> really happens. Legends seem to me…silly… He says that people will take me for a modern woman. But it is not that either. It is that I have little imagination" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 31).

The double anxiety between "simple, hard and true" life story and the "silly legends" comes hand in hand with the character's anxiety about singularity and convergence, identity and difference. The textual mastery in retrieving the past reveals an attempt to represent the new not as an innovation at all, but as a variation of similar cultural patterns. In "Hygiene", the confluence of past patterns of thought and of the present active thinking provides a real foundation for identity:

> "Were you as young as you felt, or as old as you looked? […]. But she was still what he looked forward to when he was feeding the pullets, scraping for coal, poking at the gutter with tears leaking, tears he smeared across his cheek-bones with the back of a rubber glove. She was his link to the past, to a past in which he could really tie one on and still ring the gong three times in a row" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 75).

Moving to other characters and other stories' settings, we will find even more different, though conceptually consistent, forms of textual and symbolic levels. In these levels, conventionally conceived impetus towards traditional thinking productively collaborate with an unbounded recycling drive of contemporary art.

The reading experience of *The Lemon Table* invites our memorial function either to sustain the 'dead' text or to withdraw it from further readings:

> "But as we mock these genteel fumblers of a previous era, we should prepare ourselves for the jeers of a later century. How come we never think of that? We believe in evolution, at least in the sense of evolution culminating in us. We forget that this entails evolution beyond our solipsistic selves" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 92).

Here, the narrative voice considers the cyclical nature of cultural renovation, in which conceptual shadowlands from the past establish a demanding dialogical conversation with contemporary theoretical fields of knowledge.

What happens then when conventionally stored textual reference dwells on the contemporary short story's dispersive structure? Addressing the plethora of choice to which the modern mind is subjected, *The Lemon Table* examines as well a writing process in which all-inclusiveness becomes in some way aesthetically counter-productive when not balanced against the conceptual patterns of thought echoing from the historical past. The text suggestively takes into the contemporary idiom many literary predecessors and archetypal settings in order to establish 'the exact, complicated, subtle communion between absent author and entranced, present reader" (Barnes, "A Life with Books", p. XVIII).

In order to figure out a possible answer to this question, I will suggest put forward a brief analysis of the short story "The Revival", the fifth story in *The Lemon Table*.

There, an actively conceived recollection, coming from the past, is artfully embodied in the narrative voice of a contemporary author performing an imaginative response to Turgenev's train journey in Russia in 1880:

> "But all love needs a journey. All love symbolically is a journey, and that journey needs bodying forth. Their journey took place on the 28th of May 1880. […]. There is an ironic side to this precision. At one time, affectedly, he carried a dozen watches on his person; even so, he would be hours late for a rendezvous. But on May the 6th, trembling like a youth, he met the 9.55 express at the little station of Mstensk. Night had fallen. He boarded the train. It was thirty miles from Mstensk to Oryol" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 90).

Here, the biographically stated fact of Turgenev's journey is suggestively interwoven with full or half-echoed

quotes from the writer's love letters, composed in the XIX century and accessed by a narrator in the XXI century. The narrator creatively rereads the writer's letters:

> "On the other hand, when everything is safe and stylized, he writes this: 'You say, at the end of your letter, "I kiss you warmly"'. How? Do you mean, as you did then, on that June night, in the railway compartment? If I live a hundred years I will never forget those kisses.' May has become June, the timid suitor has become the recipient of myriad kisses, the bolt has been slid back a little. Is this the truth, or is that the truth? We, now, would like it to be nest then, but it is rarely neat; whether the heart drags in sex, or sex drags in the heart." (*The Lemon Table*, p. 94).

The reflecting narrator not merely reads Turgenev's letters; he also invites a reader to give shape to his or her triggered imaginative response to the letters' content. Thus, the ample room left by the real letters is functionally explored through highly performative narrative dynamics, which productively occupies the silenced, emotionally conceived, spaces of the text. Those emotional spaces hide a half-present, trans-subjective encounter between the contemporary "we" and the XIX century "they":

> "Here is the argument for the world of renunciation. If we know more about consummation, they knew more about desire. If we know more about numbers, they knew more about despair. If we know more about boasting, they knew more about memory" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 92).

An interest in shifting boundaries, including those of "controlled disruption that results in an exchange of energy between two conceptual systems" (Dalgarno, 2012, p. 131), might help explain how a shift occurring in contemporary fiction away from traditional clichés becomes a retrieval to the past, hiding the repressed voices which are sometimes located between a "visible that is modeled on the perspective of the desiring subject on the subject of philosophical reflection, and a quite different visible in which the subject is witness to an event created by light, that exceeds the parameters of retinal vision" (Dalgarno, 2001, p. 6).

By mobilising conventionally stated counter-discourse towards "imprudent moveable" [2] contemporary discourse, not by transposing the original text to make its silent spaces overtly resonant but by renaming its concealed dreams within the new linguistic and conceptual framework, the author renews both the original biographical account on Turgenev's life and his own text creation. The deconstructive practices of the modern discourse are constantly challenged by showing how traditional euphemisms can either perform or cancel out the rich dialogical debates between two epochs. A detailed analysis of the text shows how an active exercise in memory, located between reality and imagination, is constantly counter-balanced by a possessive/passive consumption, leading towards postmodern obsessive knowledge. And the narrator goes on:

> "'My life is behind me', he wrote, 'and that hour spent in the railway compartment, when I almost felt like a twenty-year-old youth, was the last burst of flame!' Does he mean he almost got an erection? Our knowing age rebukes its predecessor for its platitudes and evasions, its sparks, its flames, its fires, its imprecise scorchings. Love isn't a bonfire, for God's sake, it's a hard cock and a wet cunt, we growl at these swooning, renouncing people. Get on with it! Why on earth didn't you? Cock-scared, cunt-bolted tribe of people! *Hand*-kissing! It's perfectly obvious what you really wanted to kiss. So why not? And on a train too. You'd just have to hold your tongue in place and let the movement of the train do the work for you. Clackety-clack, clackety-clack!" (*The Lemon Table*, p. 91).

[2] In chapter 3 of *Translation as Collaboration* (2014), Claire Davison underlines the significance of "an imprudent moveable" in translation: "I see such marginal echoes, where 'strangeness' is allowed to kindle, as a fine illustration of translation's power as an 'imprudent moveable' — giving a Mansfieldian edge to 'mutable mobile' theories that contemporary translation critics use to illustrate translation's power to question and deflect textual agency". (Davison, 2014, pp. 83–84).

A directly stated allusion to possessive and passive consumption, disclosed in the transgressive potentiality of the text's syntactic and lexical devices, displaces a touch of subjectivity and agency which are not mere communicative structures; they perform a complex translinguistic dialogue between two cultural situations.

The conceptual gap between "prudent fixtures" and "imprudent movables" (Davison, 2014, p. 84) is spread through heavy counterpointing. The textual dialogic destabilizing lexical arrangement renders the idea that the contemporary processes of revision and negotiation with the past give full access to this state of wavering which forms *The Lemon Table*:

> "Did his imagination stop respectfully? Ours doesn't. It seems pretty plain to us in our subsequent century. A crumbling gentleman in a crumbling city on a surrogate honey-moon with a young actress. The gondoliers are splish-sploshing them back to their hotel after an intimate supper, the sound-track is operetta, and we need to be told what happens next? We are not talking about reality, so the feebleness of elderly, alcohol-weakened flesh is not an issue; we are very safely in the conditional tense, with the travelling rug tucked round us. So… if only… if only… then you would have fucked her, wouldn't you? No denying it." (*The Lemon Table*, p. 96)

Thus, the double shift retrieval seems to be embodied in the intentionally performed dialogical text construction, particularly well revealed in the concept of "translinguistic transfer". According to Kristeva, "the text is therefore productivity, meaning that […] it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a text, many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralise one another". (Kristeva, 1969, p. 52).[3]

The consumptive input of a contemporary narrator focused in the present is challenged by a secular philosophy of mind through an emphasis on memory as a complex process of permutation and insider-outsider grasp into the "buried" text and the "dead" author. This exhaustive cross-referencing offers a setting for cultural renewal, mapping qualitative understanding of complexity and confluence of traditions.

If Barthes's concept of *dérive* focuses on counter-currents to the past, whether its models or conventions, it is nonetheless true that cultural recycling is among the key dynamics of Modernity. The contemporary form of intertextual recycling, as performed in *The Lemon Table*, highlights the dialogically designed narrative process, not only the final product in a form of a text, thus underlining both the fixed historically in time and the permutatively regenerative status of canon.

Thus, the question of mediation, disclosed in such interactive, permutational text production, creates a space of textual indeterminacy, asking the reader to speculate on the significance of its gap. Therefore, dialogue and ambivalence, as intersecting and mutually neutralising processes, both contribute to maintain indecisiveness about the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of morally offensive choices explored in *The Lemon Table*.

The "imprudent moveables" both distance from and approximate to the narrator's unconventional discourse, cross-referencing also the psychological depth of Turgenev's conventional stereotyping.

3. Conclusion

"The Revival" thus lingers around the boundaries of more conventionally defined lexical practices and the unrestrained imprudent vortex. The expressive potential of lexical and stylistic devices simultaneously discomfits and legitimizes norms and conventions of the past. The collaboration between "old" and "new" becomes very well summarized by Wilson:

[3] Translated and quoted by Mary Orr, in *Intertextuality* (2003), p. 27.

> "The tension between our troubled encounters with those spaces and our desire to fit smugly into them is at once mundane and unspeakable. The emphasis is in a new place, not a place we can name, except provisionally, contingently, but a place that is simply 'elsewhere' than where we expected to go". (Wilson 2011, p. 88)

A double shift retrieval is located, according to the story, in the text-to-text or/and reader-to-reader relationship. The rehearsal of the past becomes the necessary interlocutor to the present. This cross-voicing (Harvey, 1995) in the history of ideas is very well stated in *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008):

> "The art, of course, is only a beginning, only a metaphor, as it always is. Larkin, visiting an empty church, wonders what will happen when 'churches fall completely out of use'. Shall we 'keep a few cathedrals chronically on show (that 'chronically' always produces a burn of envy in this writer), or 'Shall we avoid them as unlucky places?' Larkin concludes that we shall still — always — be drawn towards such abandoned sites, because 'someone will forever be surprising/A hunger in himself to be more serious.'" (*Nothing to be Frightened of*, p. 57).

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Article IV

"A Voice Speaking from the Heart": An Absence of Memory of a Memory in Julian Barnes's *The Only Story*".

"A Voice Speaking from the Heart": An Absence of Memory of a Memory in Julian Barnes's *The Only Story*

"One should write only those
books from whose absence one suffers. In
short: the ones you want on your own desk"[1]

To construct identity by bringing together the (re)collected memories of the past turns into a dominant theme in a great number of Julian Barnes's literary works. For instance, the narrative composition of *The Sense of an Ending* (2011)[2], winner of the Man Booker Prize 2011, achieves the connection between memory and identity, doing justice to a literary mnemotechnique that encourages "literary fictions to disseminate influential models of both individual and cultural memories as well as of the nature and functions of memory" (Neumann, "The Literary Representation of Memory", 333). Specifically, in "The Literary Representation of Memory"[3], Birgit Neumann argues that, by drawing attention to the extra-textual reality, "literature creates its own memory worlds with specifically literary techniques" (Neumann, 334). Focusing on the multi-dimensional narrative processes concerned with the constitution of identity, *The Sense of an Ending* underlines the selective capacity of memory, suggesting a connection between the character's present state of mind and the controversies of his past[4]. For example, it could be argued that the chain of responsibilities upon which the narrative composition of *The Sense of an Ending* draws is haunted by the literary discourses on memory (see, for instance, the chain of responsibilities narrated in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*). The literary techniques of remembering upon which *The Sense of an Ending* rests are concerned with what Neumann denominates as "mnemonic presence of the past in the present, ... being this particularly true for cultural memories because they

[1] Marina Tsvetaeva, *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries*, 1917-1922. Edited and translated by Jamey Gambell. New York Review Books Classics, 2017.
[2] Barnes, Julian. *The Sense of an Ending*. London: Vintage, 2011.
[3] Neumann, Birgit. "The Literary Representation of Memory", in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, pp.333-345, edited Erll, Astrid, Nunning, Ansgar, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010.
[4] Bollinger, Elena. *Intertextuality and Dialectics of the Self in Barnes's The Sense of an Ending and in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina.* Sociology and Anthropology Vol. 6(11), pp. 813 - 820
DOI: 10.13189/sa.2018.061101. Accessed November 24th, 2019.

involve intentional fashioning to a greater extent than do individual memories" (Neumann, 333).

This essay will examine how the processes of remembering, depicted in *The Only Story* (2018)[5] are mostly constructed by the "writing of those books from whose absence one suffers" (Tsvetaeva, Marina, *Moscow Diaries*). Working subtly on the unpredictable intricacies of the human heart, Barnes the novelist recognizes the presence of a tenuous connection between the narrative construction of the process of individual memory pictured in *The Only Story* and an accurately sketched, but not sufficiently developed, issue of the collective memory represented in his earlier novel *The Sense of an Ending*, stating that "the new novel is "about a relationship between a young man and a middle-aged woman, which was central to the other book but absolutely not described. The reader had to intuit what happened. It must be related to that, that I thought I would write about it more overtly this time"[6].

Yet, "writing about it more overtly this time" provides *The Only Story* with an even sharper perception that an emotional site of a process embedded in the individual construction of memory could hardly be reliable. Contrary to the narrative development of the process of memory observed in *The Sense of an Ending*, *The Only Story* builds itself on an absence of a constructive dialogue among memories. Featuring, on the one hand, a fascination with a process of memory, the novel represents the renderings of memory in a slightly different perspective, suggesting that the narrative construction of memory through its absence becomes an ultimate medium for the artistic representation of "a [modern] world that has rid itself of its memory" (Assmann, 344)[7].

In the essay "Memories between silence and oblivion"[8], Luisa Passerini draws attention to the multiple layers of representation embodied in the processes of remembering and forgetting, stating that "both memory and forgetting are multiple processes in time and perception" (239). The multiplicity of perceptions, incorporated in the memory of a self, she explains, is connected to the emotional necessity of a

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[5] Barnes, Julian. *The Only Story.* London: Vintage, 2018.

[6] in *The New York Times,* https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/27/books/review/julian-barnes-on-the-only story.html Accessed November 24th, 2019).

[7] Assmann, Aleida. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization. Arts of Memory.* Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[8] Passerini, Luisa. "Memories between silence and oblivion". In *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory.* Edited katherine Hodgkin, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 238-254.

subject to keep (re)creating a chain of associations he constantly receives from historical and cultural dimensions edging his life through time. Stating that "the subject cannot receive representations without creating new ones" (239), Passerini accurately observes how the process of self-reflection, understood through a process of remembering that simultaneously mirrors a process of forgetting, constitutes a vital communicative apparatus among human beings. Focusing on the multiplicity of cultures and languages which compose the modern diaspora, the author concentrates on exploring the multiple non-linear connections between voicing and silencing of memories as a complex interdisciplinary process comprising both the individual dimension of a self and the cultural dimension of a nation. Quoting the French ethnographer Marc Augé, Passerini positions memory and forgetting as an intertwined doubling process, in as much as "all our memories are screens, but not in the traditional sense, as traces of something they reveal and hide at the same time". The author goes beyond the argument and (re)configures this idea by suggesting that the retrieval of memory is intrinsically connected to the absence of memory, on both individual and collective levels. Thus, she reviews memory of a memory through its absence:

"What is registered on the screen is not directly the sign of a piece of memory, but a sign of absence, and what is repressed is neither the event nor the memory nor even single traces, but the very connection between memories and traces.[...] Put another way, when trying to understand connections between silence and speech, oblivion and memory, we must look for relationships between traces, or between traces and their absences; and we must attempt interpretations which make possible the creation of new associations" (Passerini, 240).

Taking into consideration Passerini's above-stated argument, one might argue that *The Only Story* focuses on examining the multiplicity of the emotional absences of memory in the latent processes of remembering, mostly constructed by what Neumann calls a "reintegrative interdiscourse" (335), a literary process of constructing memories on the basis of affiliating a literary discourse with other systems of knowledge such as history, psychology, and sociology. Conflicting, in conceptual terms, with several of Barnes's previously written novels, which mostly rest upon the importance of sharing

memories, or, as happens in *The Porcupine* (1992)[9] and *The Noise of Time* (2016)[10], on the sense of an objective justice emphatically accessible on the collective level, *The Only Story* seems granted with a greater extent of an enclosing self-referentiality, embodied in the repressed, non-communicated framing of the process of memory. Contrary, for instance, to *The Sense of an Ending* in which the sharing of memories helps Tony become aware of an indispensable responsibility of the other in the reconstruction of one's individual memory, in *The Only Story* Paul's attempt to seize Susan's memories gives him a rather destructive feeling of strong emotional desolation, summing up, from the very beginning, his reflection on time, self and identity:

"Most of us have only one story to tell. [...]. This is mine. But here's the first problem. If this is your only story, then it's the one you have most often told and retold, even if – as is the case here – mainly to yourself. The question then is: do all these retellings bring you closer to the truth of what happened, or move you further away? I'm not sure" (3).

Curiously, the title of the work – *The Only Story* – subtly reminds its reader of the effacing nature of memory, emphasizing Paul's present state of mind which stresses the isolation of his own story, derived from the impossibility to reconnect himself with the other through memory:

"I don't mean that only one thing happens to us in our lives: there are countless events, which we turn into countless stories. But there's only one that matters, only one finally worth telling" (3).

Indeed, the narrative composition of the novel builds itself on the almost microscopic sketch of the emotionally devastating inner memory of a self, reflected through the lens of the 1960s Sexual Revolution and recollected in the beginning of the 21st century, trying to come to terms with the reading of the other's memories, embedded in the traumatic recollections of the Second World War, the extensively contentious Cold War and the 1990s socio-political controversies following the 1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall. Doing justice to Erll's observation that "all forms of human remembering (from neuronal processes to media representations) take place within

[9] Barnes, Julian. *The Porcupine.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1992.
[10] Barnes, Julian. *The Noise of Time.* London: Jonathan Cape, 2016.

sociocultural contexts" (Erll, 6)[11], *The Only Story* conveys an overall impression of being granted with a greater extent of sociocultural referentiality concerning the variety of 20th century historical events than probably most of Barnes's other works. Working on this novel, Barnes critically reflects, in one of the interviews, on the 1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall, stating that:

"I travelled to Russia in 1965 when the Eastern bloc was formed. I remember when the wall came down, I became disappointed with the Western politicians. Because I thought that they would say "ah, now we can painlessly and without any fear look at what left wing systems had and maybe take some of the best they had and put some of the best we had. Instead, they were saying look, we are the best. Our system is good. There is no alternative. You can only have capitalism. And this turned into a catastrophe for both sides"[12].

In this quotation, the image of the collective catastrophe Barnes is referring to can act as a tenacious metaphorical device, aiming at (re)evaluating, on an inner, individually perceived level, the full-scale temporal context of what Hobsbawm defines as the "short twentieth century"[13]. The European collective memory of a catastrophe, represented through the trope of historical incommunicability and the absence of a constructive sociocultural dialogue between Eastern and Western Europe in the years that follow the World War II, translates itself into the personally perceived absence of memory of a memory represented as a catastrophe of a self. Again, the theme of retelling historical memory and the oblivion of that memory functions here as an invitation to reconsider the sociocultural consequences of postwar Europe, looking, as Passerini suggests, for the "relationships between traces, or between traces and their absences" (240). The self-reflecting quest for truth progressively grows into Paul's sincere intention to retrieve the past, on both collective and individual dimensions. Recollecting, step by step, his relationship with Susan, Paul construes episodically perceived screens of memories as traces of the past, in which the sign of absence comes to direct the overall

[11] Astrid Erll, "Transcultural memory", *Témoigner. Entre histoire et mémoire* [Online], 119 | 2014, Online since 01 June 2015, connection on 10 December 2019. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/temoigner/1500 ; DOI : 10.4000/temoigner.1500
[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBAgKTtZMMQ&feature=youtu.be
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[13] Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991.* London: Michael Joseph, 1994.

picture. Indeed, the reading process of this novel seems to reveal, gradually, that the failure of communication between Paul and Susan on a personal level arises from their mutual loss of the emotional compatibility in sharing memories of the past; even the process of sharing the common living context become a rather "foreign country" for both sides. Susan is convinced that she is a member of a played-out generation, looking for emotional support and understanding. Having lost her fiancé during the Second World War, she gradually leads herself to disappearance. Paul, in turn, records the process of forgetting those traumatic experiences, revealed by the image of the losing of a face that portrays Susan as inaccessible. This is a story of absence – the only story, currently available to Paul's memory. The novel manages to show how the attempt to share memories steadily comes to undermine, rather than to compose, a constructive intergenerational dialogue among the characters. Moreover, conveying the latent presence of the culture-specific discourses directed to the renderings of individual and collective levels of memory, the narrative composition of *The Only Story* formally aims at establishing a constructive dialogue between Paul and Susan, trying to establish a dialogue among the readings of each others memories. Although formally the text follows the commonly used pattern for the literary representation of memory, thematically it does not seem necessarily to accomplish a task of the accurate recovering of the past. It does not either provides a coherent narrative perceived as a connection between its characters' memories.

In "Memories Between Silence and Oblivion", Passerini acknowledges that "the twentieth century has been for the most part a time of cancellation of memory, and that it has prolonged the tendency to remove the past – a process Walter Benjamin analysed as deriving from the crisis of memory and experience typical of modernity" (Passerini, 241). Her argument stands in a similar stance depicted in *The Only Story*, which dialogically juxtaposes the individually conceived dimension of the memory of a self and the collectively transmitted intergenerational memories, carefully acknowledging that the relationships between both individual and collective traces of memory and their absences go hand in hand. Passerini also subtly suggests that the cancellation of memory, or an absence of memory of a memory, though mostly associated with totalitarian regimes, "can easily happen in democratic or transitional political regimes..." (241).

In this sense, one might argue that *The Only Story* returns to the question of interconnection between silence and speech, oblivion and memory stated at the beginning of the essay. Focusing on exploring how the attempt to share memories steadily comes to undermine, rather than to compose, a constructive intergenerational dialogue among the characters, the novel seems to engage seriously with the question of how what we call the chronologically arranged past events themselves are a product of a modern self-projection, located on a threshold of a "piece of memory and a sign of [its] absence" (Passerini, 240). Constructed between the strategically oriented towards the future collective memory and the imposed silencing of the personal, mostly traumatic, memories, Susan tries to communicate to Paul a need to retrieve the absent traces from the memories of the past in order to (re)connect herself with the present:

'Casey Paul,' she begins, in an affectionate, puzzled tone, 'I've decided that there's something seriously wrong.'

'I think you may be right', you answer quietly.

'Oh, you're always going on about that', she replies, as if this were some tedious and pedantic obsession of yours, nothing really to do with her. '...Maybe I occasionally take a drop or two more than is good for me.' She goes on, 'I'm talking about something much bigger than that. I think there's something seriously wrong.'

'You mean, something that causes you drinking? Something I do not know about?' Your mind heads towards some terrible, defining event in her childhood...

'Oh, you really can be a Great Bore at times', she says mockingly. 'No, much more important than that. What's behind it all.'

'You are already losing a little patience. 'And what do you think might be behind it all?'

'Maybe it's the Russkis.'

'The Russkis?' You – well, yes – you yelp.

'Oh Paul, do try and keep up. I don't mean the actual Russkis. They are just a figure of speech.'

'Like, say, the Klu Klux Klan or the KGB or the CIA...You suspect that this one brief chance is slipping away, and you don't know if it is your fault, her fault, or nobody's fault.

'It's no good if you can't follow. There's something behind it all, just out of sight. Something which holds it all together. Something that, if we put it back together, would mend it all, would mend us all, don't you see?' (*The Only Story*, 123-124)

The above-quoted dialogue between Paul and Susan clearly illustrates the double dimension of a process of memory, composed between evocation of the emotional connection to the past and its simultaneous concealing. Besides the metonymical employment of a puzzle motif at the beginning of the dialogue ("she begins in an affectionate, puzzled tone") already used in *England, England* (1998)[14] as a metaphorical device staying for the desintagrated collective memory of England, its last paragraph informs and consolidates, in more ways than one, a theme of absence of the dialogue between memories, on both collective and individual levels, represented in the novel. The undefinable and therefore not graspable, 'something which holds it all together" is irretrievably missing, postponing yet again the emotional communion between two characters. Rendering Susan's individual reflection on the memory of the past in a structurally scattered way, with the predominance of forward and backward intertextual flashes which nevertheless stay disconnected from Paul's consciousness, *The Only Story* attempts to interpret the lack of shared selfhood embodied in the theme of an absence of memory of a memory as a self-reflecting process of (re)cording the past. Consequently, the characters' inner self represented through an abcense of shared memories becomes one of the most (un)reliable 'cliches' of dealing with a collective level of memory, as Barnes critically states: "Memory is not linear, after all. But, excluding diaries and documents, it's our only guide to the emotional past."[15]

In "Memories, a bridge towards intergenerational learning", Adriana Osoian argues that "generational conflict and disconnection are concerned not only with economic and social parameters but also with matters of culture and attitude. Older and younger generations are becoming increasingly disconnected due to: the changing family patterns, the breakdown of traditional community structures, age segregating activities

[14] Barnes, Julian. *England, England.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1998.
[15] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/29/julian-barnes-interview-the-only-story. Accessed December 10th, 2019.

and living arrangements, and policy interventions or services that target only specific groups" (Osoian, 500)[16].

If Susan's naturally conceived predisposition to establish a psychological connection with Paul dictates, to a greater extent, her narrative characterization, Paul's cultural and historical background marked by loneliness, boredom and a rather distanced spirit towards traditional community, portrays him as an individualist and presents the impossibility to conceive memory process as a vehicle to the representation of the past with shared values and traditions. The narrative construction of *The Only Story* explicitly states that the emotional disconnection between Paul and Susan arises from their lack of shared reflections on the memory of the past. It might be important to recall that Paul's attitude towards his relationship with Susan is conditioned, from the very beginning, by the illusion of originality and disassociation from the dominant social practices and traditional family structures. Isolating himself from shared collective memories which nonetheless hold his community together, he becomes a lonely interpreter of his feelings. Thus, at the beginning he admits that

"I wasn't so much constructing my own idea of love as first doing the necessary rubble-clearance. Most of what I'd read, or been taught, about love, didn't seem to apply, from playground rumour to high-minded literary speculation. 'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart / 'Tis woman's whole existence.' How wrong – how gender-biased, as we might now say – was that? And then, at the other end of the spectrum, came the earthly sex-wisdom exchanged between profoundly ignorant if yearningly lustful schoolboys" (51).

In the middle of life, however, coming to terms with his own identity proves to be the emotionally devastating task not only for Paul, but also for the majority of Barnes's characters. One might even argue that the somehow abstract assumptions about love Paul had convinced himself as a young man are philosophically questioned through the retrieval of the well structured memory of his parents, whose existential dogmas acquire significance for Paul at the end of the narrative:

[16] *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* Volume 142, 14 August 2014, pp. 499-505. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.655. Accessed November 24th, 2019.

"And he, in turn, now felt retrospective gratitude for the very safety and dullness he had been railing against when he first met Susan. His experience of life had left him with the belief that getting through the first sixteen years or so was fundamentally a question of damage limitation. And they had helped him do that. So there was a kind of posthumous reconciliation, even if one based on a certain rewriting of his parents; more understanding, and with it, belated grief" (211)

The argument towards the failure of intergenerational sharing of memories of the past renders this text with a set of confessional traces situated on a threshold of scattered pieces of memory and an absence of memory of a memory. The novel's thematic arrangement draws attention to the disintegrated, disconnected and desolate nature of a contemporary self in almost Chekhovian poetic terms, repeating somehow Augustine's interrogation:

"And I turned toward myself, and said to myself: 'Who are you?' I replied: 'A man'.[17]

[17] Quoted in Paperno, Irina. *Who, What am I? Tolstoy struggles to narrate the self.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014, p.61.

Article V

"Reading Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending*

in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*".

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Reading Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*

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This paper addresses the narrative construction of the moment of death as depicted in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and in Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending.* Following Orr's definition of positive influence, described as a "site for cultural renewal", it pursues the analysis of complexity and confluence of literary traditions in these texts. Though both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending* seem to insist on portraying a chronicle of struggle between a moment and a process of dying, it is nevertheless a physical moment of life ending which becomes an intensely condensed, and almost photographic, representation of the intimate, psychologically depicted, dying process. It is argued that the moment of death reveals, for instance, Anna's unresolved internal conflict between psychological and physiological phenomena shaping human behaviour. Similarly, Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* builds upon a subtle dialogic tension between a process of psychological dying and a moment of physically conceived death. Specifically, this paper brings to light the repetitive occurence of the intense epiphanic moments which shape the thematic and the structural development of both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending.*

Keywords: comparative criticism, moment, death, life, J. Barnes, L. Tolstoy

The purpose of this article is to compare the narrative construction of a dialogically conceived relationship between the process of dying and the moment of life ending in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and in Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending.* This article claims that the concept of positive influence, described by Mary Orr as "a site for cultural renewal", may in fact be one of the possible ways of opening up and disrupting closed orders, "of calling for the past to be added to the future, and to map qualitative understanding of complexity and confluence of literary traditions" (Orr, 2003, p. 87). Orr's critical approach to intertextuality envisages the conceptual importance of comparative criticism as critical genre, thus signalling the potential communicative power of multiple and foreign differences in what appears to be a single channel of expression:

> Comparative criticism as critical genre, therefore, goes far beyond reiterating the battle between the Ancients and Moderns on the side of the Ancients. Its insistence on tradition as combinatory, and on influence as open critical method, provides ways of recognizing what was programmatic in grille-based theorization of culture in its various twentieth-century economies. Beyond excellent critical purviews of one national heritage, comparative criticism's most valuable recognition is that bi- or trilingual understanding produces rather different angles of vision to monolingual approaches. (Orr, 2003, p. 90)

Acknowledging Tolstoy as one of the great names of world literature and talking about the idiosyncrasies of literary art and a writer's ability to connect life and art, Barnes confesses that "the making of the bond between

writer and reader on the page is of maximum concern to me" (*Russia Beyond*, 2016). Commenting further on sometimes unconventional alignment of thematically disordering principles and formally traditional narrative techniques present in his novels, Barnes focuses his attention on the readers' emotional involvement with the text, as he states in the following passage: "I may take readers to unexpected places, but I want them to follow the path without the necessary trouble" (*Russia Beyond*, 2016). Moreover, in "A Life With Books", he states that "...nothing can replace the exact, complicated, subtle communion between absent author and entranced, present reader" (Barnes, 2012a, p. xviii). While Barnes's concern for the idea of a fluid but also profound form of communication between writer and reader has mostly developed into positive critical response (Childs, 2011), Tolstoy's persevering reflections on the reader's emotional communion with the text, achieving a strong culminating point, perceived as "infection", has evinced a rather unsympathetical praise[1]. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that Tolstoy's thoughts on the reader's role in construing a reading process dialogically alive find an echo in Barnes's view of an emotionally involved and deeply participating reader:

> Thus, the simplest case: a boy who once experienced fear, let us say, on encountering a wolf, tells about this encounter, the surroundings, describes himself, his state of mind before the encounter, the surroundings, the forest, his carelessness, and then the look of the wolf, its movements, the distance between the wolf and himself, and so on. All this—if as he tells the story the boy relives the feeling he experienced, infects his listeners, makes them relive all that the narrator lived through—is art. (Tolstoy, 1898, p. 39)

It is interesting to note how both Tolstoy and Barnes come to reflect upon the presence of a somehow unlinear and labyrinthine principle guiding the thematic intricacies of their works. Writing about *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy seems to project his own still unresolved and probably unresolvable dilemmas concerning human principles of ethics and moral conduct, stating:

> I am at work at the moment on that dreary, vulgar Anna Karenina and all I ask God is that he give me the strength to be rid of it as soon as possible, to free some space—I do need free time, and not for pedagogical, but for other, more pressing matters. (Paperno, 2014, p. 37)[2]

Similarly, Barnes relates his own experience of evaluating the complex thematic spectrum of *The Sense of an Ending*, as follows:

> I'm sorry you don't understand what it's about. I think it's about responsibility and remorse. What exactly is our responsibility for our actions, and how precisely can we measure it? ... And when—sometimes, many years later, we discover that our responsibility is not what we thought it was, we may suffer guit, or, worse, remorse. (*Russia Beyond*, 2016)

Taking as a starting point, a mosaically organized discursive practice, featuring a human quest for self-understanding inside a particular time and space, upon which thematic contourns and compositional framework of both Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* rest, this article revisits a complex dimension of intertextual processes responsible for what Julia Kristeva designates as "the so-called literary act which, by dint of its not admitting to an ideal distance in relation to the that which it signifies,

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[1] See, for instance, Barnes's opinion about Tolstoy's later works, as follows: "I'm more weary of art in the service of an idea than I am of art that tends to go off to the ultra-bouts spectrum of things. You can see things going wrong with Tolstoy, you can see how the need to propagandize seeps into him as the years go by, and I think that is warning" (Guignery, 2009, p. 145).

[2] Much has been written about the links between Tolstoy's philosophical inquiries and compositional idiosyncrasies of Anna Karenina in Irina Paperno's *Who, What Am I? Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, 2014.

introduces radical otherness in relation to what language is claimed to be: a bearer of meanings" (Kristeva, 1969, p. 9). The methodological support for this investigation emerges partly from Kristeva's concepts of neutralisation and permeability of a literary act. To specify the manifold connection between two strategic axes present in a literary text, designated by Bakhtin as dialogue and ambivalence (1982), Kristeva focuses, respectively, on analysing a productive intersection of utterances in the space of a text and furthermore on a redistributive—perceived as destructive-constructive—function of a text, locating it in logically organized, rather than purely linguistic, categories. In "The closed text" (1966-1967), for instance, she states:

> The text is therefore productivity, meaning that (1) its relation to the language in which it is sited is redistributive (destructive-constructive) and consequently it can be approached by means of logical categories other than purely linguistic ones; (2) it is a permutation of texts, anintertextuality: in the space of a text, many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralize one another. (Kristeva, 1969, p. 52)

Further, Kristeva's understanding of a literary act through its neutralising, productive, and permutational aesthetic function allows her to position a literary word as a "minimal textual unit [which] turns to occupy the status of mediator" (Orr, 2003, p. 26). Although Kristeva does not consider the position of the reader at the heart of the interpretability of a text, the question of mediation evoked in her writings opens a possible theoretical perspective of regarding the reader's role in the corollary of both constructive and deconstructive dimensions offered by a literary text, resulting in its contingent polyphonic capacity to provoke in readers both identification with and alienation from its characters. Kristeva notices how

> the word as a minimal textual unit thus turns out to occupy the status of mediator, linking structural models of cultural (historical) environment, as well as that of regulator, controlling mutations from diachrony to synchrony, i.e., to literary structure. The word is spatialized: through the very notion of status, it functions in three dimensions (subject-addressee-context) as a set of dialogical, semic elements or as a set of ambivalent elements. Consequently the task of literary semiotics is to discover other formalisms corresponding to different modalities of word-joining (sequences) within the dialogical space of texts. (Kristeva, 1969, p. 85)

Though it is to the word in itself that Kristeva attributes the greatest importance in the creative dynamics of the text, it could be suggested how significant a reader's active participation is in accomplishing the never-ending expansion of meanings and gradual thematic reworkings in his or her communion with the text. This idea of collaboration between text and reader is very well underlined by Worton and Still (1990) and reinforced by Mary Orr in her complex approach to intertextuality:

> a text is available only through some process of reading; what is produced at the moment of reading is due to the cross-fertilization of the packaged material [ ] by all the texts which the reader brings to it. A delicate allusion to a work unknown to the reader, which therefore goes unnoticed, will have a dormant existence in that reading. On the other hand, the reader's experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation. (Orr, 2003, p. 39)

Taking into account the main theoretical principles depicted sofar, this article focuses on exploring the literary relationship between Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending*, while arguing simultaneously how aesthetically multivoiced and inconclusive the sense of an ending in *Anna Karenina* could become when compared to the expressive significance of the moment in Barnes's original text.

Though both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending* seem to insist on portraying a chronicle of struggle between a moment and a process of dying, it is nevertheless a physical moment of life ending which becomes an intensely condensed, and almost photographic, representation of the intimate, psychologically depicted, dying process. It is argued that the moment of death reveals, for instance, Anna's still unresolved internal conflict between psychological and physiological phenomena shaping human behaviour. The narrative arrangement of Anna's character seems to follow the conceptual contours of Schopenhauer's idea of a self carried out in *The World as Will and Representation* (1818). He acknowledges the existence of a juxtaposition between the concept of the world perceived as a representation of objects by our own mind and the other aspect of the world, the will, described as the inner self, which is not objectively perceivable, and exists outside the chronological time order. Claiming that human will is one of the most important vehicles of experience leading to self-knowledge, Schopenhauer mentions its inherent capacity to probe into the world which lies beyond palpable representation. Interpreting will as an ultimate form of desire, striving and urging, he argues that a single person traces, deliberately, his or her own path towards pain and suffering due to the insatiable will to fulfill life's desires and passions. Rosamund Bartlett, a distinguished Tolstoy's scholar, translator, and biographer, recognizes the existence of a strong metaphoric connection between Schopenhauer's concept of the will and Tolstoy's deliberately arranged repetition of the word "involuntary" as the main discursive device in the psychological depiction of his characters:

> Tolstoy depicts everyday life in an unidealized, objective way, indeed his dissection of the shifting states of emotional experience is often executed with a surgical precision...but a key element of his realism is also to depict his characters...doing or saying things they had not intended. This technique certainly illustrates Tolstoy's acute powers of psychological analysis. (Tolstoy, 1877, p. xii)

This article claims that such a dialogic relationship between the human body and the human will revealed in the text's insistence on the discursive juxtaposition between will, disclosing Anna's desire and urging for romantic, idealized love and her involuntary manifestation of an inner self, demanding a proposition and a much more prosaic concern with what ultimately constitutes family happiness (Tolstoy, 1877, p. xv), ultimately discloses the novel's disturbing and unresolvable existential conflict. In narrative terms, the perceptiveness of this theoretically described conflict lies in a carefully conceived, emblematic depiction of a moment carrying out a profound revelation. Frequently, a narrative disclosure of a deep, long-lasting epiphany is embedded in a depiction of an ordinary moment that, in line with Virginia Woolf's revelatory sketching of space outside time, seems of no importance:

> Yet what composed the present moment? If you are young, the future lies upon the present, like a piece of glass, making it waver, distorting it. All the same, everybody believes that the present is something, seeks out the different elements in this situation in order to compose the truth of it, the whole of it. (Woolf, 1966, p. 293)

In Tolstoy's text, the philosophical quest for the essence of the present moment is suggested, primarily, by the multilayered psychological depiction of a character, disclosed in a modern sense of a contingency of being. As a literary work of art, *Anna Karenina* can be seen as the summation of Tolstoy's literary journey, initiated with *Childhood*, his first work of fiction published in 1852. At the same time, *Anna Karenina* is also considered as a stepping stone for what he would write over the next three decades of his life (Tolstoy, 1877, p. xi), for it

examines a creative way in which Tolstoy addresses questions of family, moral decisions, and the process of self-knowledge, without, deliberately, establishing a necessary way of solving them. It goes almost without saying that the writer's mastery in portraying Anna's character lies in his ability to fit together an ineffable, oblique, almost inexpressible side of her inner self and the more explicit, overt, expressible portrait of her outer self, mostly perceived through the observable eyes of the encountered other depicted in an apparently ordinary life situation. The strong symbiosis between will and involuntary manifestations of a self observed in *Anna Karenina* encourages its reader to perceive the multiplicity of intertwined versions of the other embedded in the narrative construction of Anna'scharacter. In *The Singularity of Literature*, Derek Attridge, describing a writer's main task, attributes great importance to his capacity of accommodating the other in the narrative construction of each singular character. Moreover, it is precisely this capacity that makes each single character truly singular. According to him, the narrative "encounter with the other, even if it happens repeatedly and to everybody, is always a singular encounter, and an encounter with singularity" (Attridge, 2004, p. 29). Thus, this discursively conceived montage technique, acclaimed by Bartlett to be one of the most expressive narrative techniques in Tolstoy's *oeuvre* (Tolstoy, 1877, p. xviii), provides the reader with the necessary interpretive tools in disclosing the strong conceptual interconnectedness between the process of Anna's life and the moment of her death: "Lord, forgive me for everything! she murmured, feeling the impossibility of struggling" (Tolstoy, 1877, p. 771); she pronounces, falling under the train's wagon. This narrative effect embodied in an intense moment of revelation is mostly achieved through a discursive combination of "murmured" and "struggling", both ambiguously connected in the construction of a sense of her identity as a woman, wife, mother, an intelligent high ranking society woman and a mistress. It seems irrevocable that the impressive, almost photographic, representation of the moment of psychological and physical dying rests upon the employment of the narrative technique of montage. It is worth remembering how, at the very beginning of Anna's first journey, the tragic death of a watchman in the train station acts as an insightful foreshadowing of Anna's both physical and psychological death. Recalling Woolf's characterization of the moment, quoted previously, the choice of lexical devices employed to represent the watchman's crush strikes us both for the ordinary simplicity of its everyday speech and the profundity of its framing significance acting on a deeper narrative level: "'What a terrible way to die!' said a gentleman walking past. 'He was sliced in two', they say" (Tolstoy, 1877, p. 67). It can be therefore concluded that the symbolic characterization of a man sliced in two encourages the attentive reader to recollect an image of the divided body at the moment of Anna's own death: The perceptiveness of her inner self becomes metaphorically sliced into two. Disclosing a complex narrative construction of Anna's personality sliced into multiple pieces during her lifetime, it symbolically foregrounds the sense of ambiguity and inconclusiveness related to whether the conceptualization of a modern woman or as a self lying beyond the confines of time, space, and biological life. The image of a man physically sliced in two, strategically placed at the beginning of Anna's train journey, sheds light on anentire book depicting her life's journey and a process of identity. According to Bartlett, Tolstoy's fictional works function as "'verbal icons'... which is why his realism is inherently filled with 'emblematic' repetitions, proliferation of important symbols embedded in its [narrative] structure" (Tolstoy, 1877, p. xvii). One of these verbal icons employed in the description of a moment of her death consists of the "familiar sign of the cross summoned up in her soul" and joyful childhood memories of the past joys, leading simultaneously towards light and darkness, "huge and inexorable". The image of a little peasant working over the iron which equally kept

appearing in Anna's dreams during her lifetime is materialized, in the narrative terms, as an epiphanic revelation of the meaning of Anna's existence at the moment of her death. Her life, leading deliberately to death, is perceived as a book:

> And the candle by which she had been reading that book full of anxiety, deceptions, grief, and evil flared up more brightly than at any other time, illuminated for her everything that had previously been in darkness, spluttered, grew dim, and went out for ever. (Tolstoy, 1877, p. 771)

It is relevant to mention Tolstoy's reflections on literature, registered in his letters and diary, in as much as he regarded the role of each single book as a figurative and valuable contribution in the (re)building of one's sense of identity. Hence he reflects upon memory, writing and a reader-oriented receptiveness of the written work of art. In one of his diary entrances dating back 1888, he aims to move towards many-volumed conceptualization of the cross-cultural dynamics implied in the process of reading. This may be applied, when interpreting *Anna Karenina*, to both Anna's personal life story, written as a book, and the novel itself, being only one volume of a many-volumed edition:

> I thought: life, not my life, but the life of the whole world, which, with the renewal of Christianity, comes as spring comes, from all sides, in trees, in grass, and in waters, becomes incredibly interesting. It is as if you kept reading a book, which became more and more interesting, and suddenly, at the most interesting moment, the book comes to an end, and it turns out that this is only the first volume of a many-volumed edition, and that one cannot get hold of the sequel. One could only read it abroad, in a foreign language. But one would certainly read it. (Paperno, 2014, Back Cover)

It seems interesting to consider, from the point of view of art's natural predisposition for the sequential sense of continuity, here acknowledged by Tolstoy, the close symbolic similarity between the above registered metaphoric statement about a many-volumed edition and the following meditation of Julian Barnes regarding his novel *The Sense of an Ending*:

> The novel is also about time and memory, yes. And it's also, as you say, a kind of psychological thriller. I am pleased when some readers tell me that after finishing it, they went straight back to the beginning and read it again, to see what really happened, and the work out the clues they'd missed. (*Russia Beyond*, 2016)

Reflecting on the symbiotic confluence of different narrative devices featuring the creative process of writing, Julian Barnes considers the importance of the constructive dialogue between past and present. In his essay entitled "George Orwell and the Fucking Elephant", Barnes acknowledges the existence of a link between the process ofconstruction of literary memory and the fabrication of the collective identity:

> When it comes to the dead, it is hard to retain, or posthumously acquire, treasuredom. Being a Great Writer in itself has little to do with the matter. The important factors are: 1) An ambassadorial quality, an ability to present the nation to itself, and represent it abroad, in a way it wishes to be presented and represented. 2) An element of malleability and interpretability. The malleability allows the writer to be given a more appealing, if not entirely untruthful, image; the interpretability means that we can all find in him or her more or less whatever we require. 3) The writer, even if critical of his or her country, must have a patriotic core, or what appears to be one. Thus Dickens, as Orwell observed, is "one of those writers who are worth stealing". (Barnes, 2012b, pp. 30-31)

This article argues that, by tracing a symbolic continuity with the complex issue of a literary representation of death developed in *Anna Karenina*, Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* builds upon a subtle dialogic tension between its main characters' past and present, or between a process of psychological dying and a moment of a

physically conceived death. It becomes also perceptible that it is precisely a moment, and not a whole process of a symbolic dying, which assumes the quintessential role in both the structural and thematic development of the novel. The metaphoric relevance of a moment from the point of view of a novel's narrative structure is faintly revealed in Tony's apologetic letter to Veronica, in which he tries to come to terms with his past judged injurious attitude coming out of a moment's reaction to her love affair with Adrian:

> I realise that I am probably the last person you want to hear from, but I hope you will read this message through to the end. I don't expect you to reply to it. But I have spent some time re-evaluating things, and would like to apologize to you That letter of mine was unforgivable. All I can say is that my vile words were the expression of a moment. They were a genuine shock for me to read again after all these years. (Barnes, 2012c, p. 143)

Nevertheless, it is exactly the apparently ordinary, momentaneously conceived and lacking in seriousness statement that shapes the main thematic contours of not only Veronica's and Adrian's love story, but also of a whole narrative development of an individual self, depicted in the novel. It becomes the emphatically epiphanic moment in Tony's ambiguous perception of his own life story and the contradictory process of memory embedded in it. The reminiscences of the moment in which his vile words become registered in a written form provide Tony with the necessary tools to evaluate an epistemological significance of an alternative vision of the self. The stagnant continuity of self-consciousness so far serving as a firm, stable, foundation for his sense of self becomes destabilized by his momentary contact with a letter. The process of a chronologically stated development of his self is symbolically interrupted by an epiphanic revelation embodied in a seemingly insignificant moment of expression. The going around in circles and leading to nowhere quest for life's meaning personified by Anna's effaced candle becomes summoned up in Tony's strong sense of a self-deception regarding his apparently common, unharmful, existence:

> 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 realised? 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 just words once read in novels? 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 precisely for that reason. (Barnes, 2012c, p. 142)

Consequently, it becomes relevant to show how the revelation process of a self underlined in the above stated moment of epiphany is symbolically bounded up with Tony's prophetically vile words which at first glance were no more than a mere expression of a moment. The repeated occurence of the faintly perceived metaphoric moments carrying in itself the profound thematic revelations about human condition and determining the structural development of the novel can be considered as an integral part of a narrative idiosyncrasy in *The Sense of an Ending.* Very similarly to *Anna Karenina's* depiction of Anna's death, Adrian's suicide is discursively constructed as a moment's action, involved in a narrative context of his deep reflections on a sense of a human existence. The character's meditations on a meaning of life appear most of the times foreshadowed by his almost unconditional attachment to intellectual freedom and liberal thinking, that he properly defines as "a philosopher's active choice", encouraging him to examine the nature of human existence and leading towards life's deliberate renunciation. The moment of life ending seems, nevertheless, to balance somehow this kind ofintellectual, strict, empirically based, approach to the sense of a human ending. Extending beyond Adrian's ambiguous scope of a

free will displayed in his voluntary giving up of his own existence, the notion of memory of his action extends beyond the semantic borders of Tony's revelatory letter and even beyond the contours of human life itself. Evoking Anna's suicide as a rationally conceived desire of vengeance, Adrian's reminiscences of his friend Tony registered in a last line of a fragment of his abrupt letter call upon the use of past conditional—"So, for instance, if Tony…" as an open-ended life story. Should it be interpreted as a realization of Tony's responsibility for his vile words? Or is it rather an invitation to reflect upon his future actions? Its deliberately conceived narrative open-ending contradicts the presumably finite sense of an ending which is also the novel's title. In one of his diary entries Tolstoy curiously states that death provides us, in figurative terms, with a possibility of a new birth: "What happiness that reminiscences disappear with death…As things stand, with the annihilation of memory we enter into life with a clean white page upon which one can again write both good and evil" (1903, quoted in Paperno, 2014, p. 89). Ironically, Adrian's acknowledgement of Tony's role in rewriting both an individual and a collective, group, memory process assumes a crucial narrative function in this novel. It invites the reader to reflect upon the strict sense of interconnectedness established between memory and writing. Quoting Irina Paperno's recognition of Tolstoy's mastery in showing how writing literature shapes and reshapes a whole memory process[3], it also seems fair to acknowledge Barnes's intrinsic ability to keep reflecting upon a way of how each single work of art carries in itself an everlasting potential for a constant creative renewal, due to its dialogic relationship with a lived life. Thus, for instance, Paperno notices that

> Tolstoy did not seem to grasp a contradiction: While rejoicing that individuality and memory disappear with death, he nevertheless imagined that, after death, life-writing might continue, albeit on a blank page. (In other words, death wipes the slate clean but does not bring the end of writing.) (Paperno, 2014, p. 89)

The repetitive occurrence of the intense epiphanic moments shape the thematic and the structural development of both *Anna Karenina* and *The Sense of an Ending*, highlighting their ability of playing seriously with the issue of a literary memory and of life meaning. By establishing a close link between life and literature, Barnes reflects on the importance of keeping a reading process alive, as stated in *The Lemon Table:*

> The point, Mr Novelist Barnes, is that Knowing French is different from Grammar, and that this applies to all aspects of life... I am not saying there is life after death, but I am certain of one thing, that when you are thirty or forty you may be very good at Grammar, but by the time you get to be deaf or mad you also need to know French. (Do you grasp what I mean?) (Barnes, 2014, p. 152)

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[3] For further readings on this topic, see Assmann's *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 2010.

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