

## **Deconstruction of the Complex Human Relationships in Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending***

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### **Abstract**

Adrian Finn gives the readers a story of his relationships through two mathematical equations in the second part of Julian Barnes' Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Sense of an Ending* (2011). In these equations, all the main characters – Sarah Ford, Veronica Ford, Tony (Anthony) Webster, Adrian Jr., and Adrian himself, are mentioned. The equations convey the cause of all the events in this sleek but full of insight and intelligent novel. The novel, divided into two parts, is a tale of past events recalled by Tony Webster. Since beginning, he does not have much confidence on his memory. He recalls past events after receiving a letter written forty years ago by someone who was very close to him. He colours events and relationships to his needs in the garb of his fading memory during his old age. This paper highlights the relationships of Tony Webster, the protagonist, with other major characters of the novel deconstructing the two equations which reveal the actual relationships in the novel. Since the main themes are memory, death, and sex; these will be taken as references to discuss the main issue of human relationships in the paper.

**Keywords:** Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending*, human history, memory, relationship, sex, suicide

The British creator Julian Barnes composed his eleventh novel, *The Sense of an Ending* in 2011 under his very own name. He has composed his crime fiction under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh. Tony Webster is the storyteller and hero of the novel. He is an elderly person who is resigned as a Librarian. The tale got the Man Booker Prize in October 2011. In the novel, Tony, when he gets a letter and an envelope in the first place, goes into the glimmer back where he reviews how he and his gathering met the keenest among every one of the companions, Adrian Finn at school and pledged to remain companions forever. At the point when the story goes in the flashback, the primary area portrays the scenes of the developing connection among Tony and Adrian Finn. Be that as it may, the fellowship has riddles.

History, as storyteller Tony Webster reminds us, comprises of the lies of the victors, yet in addition of the self-fancies of the defeated. Tony is one of the vanquished, and the novel is a record of his self-fancies. It is an individual history, and like all narratives, it is a sureness created at the point where the defects of memory meet the deficiencies of documentation. Tony portrays the story recalling the past occasions yet that can't be trusted at all as Tony's rendition of occasions are anticipated by his very own solace of portrayal with dispersed recollections. For a book that tips the scales at 150 pages, simply, much overwhelming climate is made of such fake philosophizing; the contemplations are not actually unique. It is these customary courses that mislead us into imagining that the book will be one of those anecdotal reflections on schedule, for example, Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, that shakes the kaleidoscope of reality into a novel form. How English it shows up, this change from the lifted to the mundane, disguised as clever. All the basic components for a secret account are available in this novel, for example, a storyteller/hero with an untrustworthy memory, a journal, missing letters, a demise as suicide, and a character constantly asserts about Tony that, "You just don't, You never did" (SE 304), a club-footed method for showing to perusers that they don't get it either and that a Revelation is going to go along soon that flips around this dreamland for the perusers.

Adrian, as another participant at school, could be a piece of the hover of three companions. After a couple of gatherings, the companions see that Adrian is a long way ahead in insight and has a special nature of being not kidding about genuine things, however this genuine new companion is by all accounts mysterious and inaccessible. Some portion of this region Barnes has crossed previously, with clever astringency, in his first novel, *Metroland* (1980). On fruition of the school, Tony joins a college in Bristol and Adrian in Cambridge. At Bristol, Tony has a brief and terrible relationship – even though non-relationship would be a progressively precise term – with Veronica, who, not long after their threatening separation, begins going out with Adrian. In any case, the refined Adrian looks for consent recorded as a hard copy from Tony to date Veronica. As Tony is the main individual separated from the two who knows this mystery. Tony thinks of him a paltry card with the impact of 'Go right ahead' and, later, an even more very much considered harsh letter. From that point forward, he left for a year, making a trip to the USA. At the point when he returns, he finds the Adrian's suicide.

At the point when Veronica and Tony were in relationship in college, Tony had a visit on an end of the week to her family where he met Sarah Ford, Veronica's mom, just once. An enrichment of £500 and a few 'records' from the as of late perished Sarah recovers the past and Tony's advantage. The 'record', which Tony comes to know from the legitimate agent that is Adrian's journal however was in the ownership of Veronica till that time and with the blessing Veronica sends just one page from that journal to him. He perseveringly attempts to seek after Veronica, whom he has not seen since they separated, into giving the journal to him. "Why does Veronica give him only one page of Arian's diary?" (Mukherjee) The page contains some quite dodgy cod-philosophizing, masterminded like the recommendations of a tract on rationale to trick perusers into believing that they're getting Wittgenstein revival. A later light of the

codes utilized in the page causes just to feature, accidentally, the disappointment associated with applying insightful way of thinking to the activities of a cryptic life.

At that point, there is Veronica, effectively a seriously disturbing animal, who doesn't support her motivation, nor Tony's, by more than once expressing that he doesn't get things that he never did. To authenticate this, when they were going out one day, she hands over him a venomous letter that he kept in touch with Adrian when in college to demonstrate his difference to the relationship of Adrian and Veronica. In any case, as a storyteller, Tony reviews and describes just those occasions that suits him, so he doesn't recollect that he composed a letter all things considered to both. In this way, that was a blow all over that stirs his recollections. It is absurdly remorseless and insignificant, and Tony, imagining this is the thing that drove Adrian over the edge, is burdened by extreme atonement. Another round of decided examination of the surprisingly unflinching Veronica pursues, this opportunity to apologize and attempt to offer reparation. The last curve in the book is the weakest and flawed as talked about in the accompanying lines. An incensed however abrupt Veronica who would not propose any explanations ever, acquaints him with a gathering of individuals that he accepts that are care in the network individuals. One out of them, a multiyear elderly person however rationally a youngster, appears to be amazingly upbeat seeing Veronica and calls her Mary. This emerges interest in Tony that why she has taken him here, who these individuals are, and particularly that man who is satisfied to see her and calling her Mary. At the point when they all met with steely quietness and, at last, discharge from the vehicle.

Tony, resolved to discover reality, pursues the gathering on their next campaign to the bar and converses with their vocation. After some understanding, Tony reasons that the man who called Veronica Mary is Adrian and Veronica's child. This causes him much anguish as something he had written in that savage letter was,

Part of me hopes you have child, because I'm great believer in time's revenge, but revenge must be on the right people, i.e. it would be unjust to inflict on some innocent foetus the prospect of discovering that it was the fruit of your loins, if you'll excuse the poeticism. (SE 289)

Be cautious about what you wish for, they state; seeing his curse exemplified like this sour something in Tony. It appears that to substantiate himself guiltless and the letter as a demonstration of youthful it, he composes an expression of remorse letter to Veronica to tell that regardless he doesn't get it. In any case, the last curve is yet to be uncovered. In a possibility experience at a similar bar a few months after the fact, Tony has another discussion with a vocation who is disapproving of a similar gathering. Further, it surfaces that the distinctively abled man isn't Veronica's child however Adrian and Sarah's child. Like pieces in a goliath bewilder, everything starts to become all-good for Tony: the silly man's condition; the enigmatic comments of Veronica and her self-preoccupation; Adrian's suicide; that page from

his journal; Sarah Ford's endowment to Tony, which Veronica had called "blood money". (SE 245)

What doesn't make sense is the dissonance between the content or exact nature of the illumination and the feelings, indeed the existential crisis, it generates in Tony and, by extension. A man gets his girlfriend's mother up the duff; the son born to them, at a dangerously late age, is physically and mentally damaged; the man in question kills himself. (Mukherjee)

This may hasten, in the event that you are the amazingly overly sensitive sort, as Adrian obviously may be, some grave pickle in the at fault man's life – it's scarcely the stuff used to be called *la condition empathetic* – yet what are the odds that it instigates in this current man's school companion an existential possibility of equivalent extent? "For of such proportions it is; no page goes by, particularly in Part Two when we are not treated to somber assessments of the Big Things: guilt versus remorse" (Mukherjee); memory as fiction; the huge human limit with respect to hallucination as a self-defensive measure; childishness that information goes to self-flogging; the nature of history and time; regardless of whether life is an arrangement they are shrewd, snazzy, honest, if unsurprising, and develop naturally from plot and character, yet you wouldn't anticipate anything less from an author of Barnes' bore.

It is the point at which one sands back and ask oneself what had offered ascend to such considerations, its uneven idea can just prompt frustration; after the entirety of Tony's wrongdoing, if such it tends to be called, is of lack of care and unintentional harshness, excusable issues in the stupendous structure of things. It tends to be said that Tony is certifiably not a dependable storyteller however even here Barnes is by all accounts lingering behind the fundamentally genuine renaissances of this other age-old gadget in fiction that other contemporary British writers have achieved. All things considered, a great deal of Tony's numbness is brought about by Veronica's adamant conduct (however at that point if she came clean from the earliest starting point there would be no novel).

On the other hand is this matter of disproportionality, which has the sad impact of making the book not exactly the aggregate of its parts, some way or another Tony's late disguise of a sort of scholarly and social insubordination first sounded by Adrian in quite a while first year at college when he bewilders his companions and punctures a basic part of their Englishness by proclaiming, I despise the manner in which the English have of not being not kidding about being not kidding. "I *really* hate it." (SE 238) But to be not kidding about genuine things as well as exaggerate the genuine hand to the degree that it achieves a contrariness between the truth and feelings: would that be a liberation from Englishness as well?

At the book's closure, Tony arrives at the stunning resolution that Adrian, the impaired man that he meets at the bar, is the child of Adrian, Tony's self-destructive companion of forty, however as Veronica recaps the perusers a few interims, in connection to Adrian, Tony doesn't see it appropriately and he won't ever. Because of this and Tony's dishonesty as a storyteller,

the peruser should dispose of Tony's induction. Or maybe, it should likewise be presumed that Tony, himself, is Adrian Junior's genuine father.

Sarah and Tony had visit erotic experiences that Tony, with the section of resulting decades, had smothered this gathering in his recollections. The principal meeting happened when Tony desired an end of the week visit at Veronica's place in Chislehurst. It is depicted that on the primary morning of his visit just Sarah is in the house when he awakens. As Tony recollects that it was Veronica who told the remainder of the family that he wanted to have a long rest, brought about leaving Tony back at home and took a stroll without him. Obviously, since Tony was evidently sleeping at the time, he couldn't have known whether the family walk genuinely was Veronica's thought or really Sarah's.

Sarah's secretive "horizontal gesture at waist level" (SE 95) because of Tony's farewell wave toward the finish of the visit shows to the peruser that something surprising has occurred between them. In any case, Tony has not memory of their experience. Tony reveals to us that Veronica is reluctant to have "full sex" (SE 70) with him, but instead limits their physical closeness to what he alludes to as "infra – sex" (SE 71). Even after the separation of Tony and Veronica, he recalls that he is skipping into Veronica at a bar, coming back to her room, and engaging in sexual relations with her. He is stunned to think about the Veronica's abilities at rolling a condom onto him while he is of the assessment that Veronica is a virgin. Tony obviously reviews this as an experience with Veronica since he can't force himself to acknowledge that it was really an experience with Veronica's mom. The habits of his accomplice don't coordinate with that of Veronica, giving an insight to the peruser that his accomplice was really an unquestionably increasingly polished lady and not in any manner Veronica.

After forty years, as it is found out in Part two, new recollections start to develop in Tony's psyche of different scenes with Veronica that he has overlooked for quite a long time. In one of the recollections, he reviews that he is hitting the dance floor with Veronica, who quite moved, to 45s played on his turn table. Another occurrence he recalls is that when he was with his companions, he watched the inversion of the Thames in a night. He abruptly reviews that Veronica was there too, and that when the remainder of the gathering escaped with lights (flashlights) to watch the inversion, he remained behind and finally, he reviews his form of recollections of his end of the week visit to the Ford family. He recalls that Veronica strolled him to his room on the second night of his visit, inclined him against the entryway, kissed him on the mouth, and murmured into his ear, "Sleep, the sleep of the wicked." (SE 342)

Every one of these memories remains somewhat stifled, the realities obscured and uncertain. It's clear to the peruser that Tony reviews every one of these episodes as including Veronica since he can't stand to accept the colossal truth that he had a progressing yet an illicit relationship among Tony and Sarah is the main conceivable clarification for Sarah's leaving 500 pounds and two archives (one of them is Adrian's journal) to Tony in her will. There

emerges an inquiry that with no close connection with Tony, why Sarah leaves him cash and reports in her will, as he was her girl's ex forty years back and that too for an extremely brief timeframe. Also, as per Tony's memory he met Sarah just once when he visited on an end of the week to their family. Scarcely an affiliation that would be thought back in one's will and declaration.

Adrian also was allured by Sarah. Adrian came to think about their relationship however was not sure whether he or Tony was the dad of Sarah's unborn kid. The two mathematical equations in paragraph 5.6, " $b=s - v x/+ a1$  or  $a2 + v +a1 x s = b$ ?" (SE 258) of Adrian's journal speak to Adrian's hypotheses with regards to the youngster's paternity. In the two conditions, he encodes himself (a1) as the dad of that kid and in the other, he specifies Tony (a2) as his dad. The consummation of the fractional sentence from Adrian's journal, "So for example, if Tony..." (SE 260) is 'the dad of Sarah's youngster.' The likelihood that was really Adrian himself who fathered Sarah's kid, and his disgrace with respect to their relationship, prompted his suicide.

Tony, in contrast to Adrian, adapted to the disgrace and torment of his undertaking through the instruments of curbed memory and transference, supplanting Sarah in his halfway subdued recollections with Veronica. Or then again maybe this whole hypothesis is bunk. Tony reviews that Veronica ha told the remainder of the family that Tony needed to have a "lie-in", (SE 139) so they went out for a stroll without him. Obviously, since Tony was clearly snoozing at the time, he couldn't have known whether the family the family walk genuinely was Veronica's thought or really Sarah's. Be that as it may, Tony has no recognition of their gatherings.

As Tony explains,

You get towards the end of life – no, not life itself, but of something else: the end of any likelihood of change in that life. You are allowed a long moment of pause, time enough to ask the question: what else have I done wrong? [...] There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And bryond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest. (SE 456)

He should compose his biography thinking about lament for support. As Gerben J. Westerhof calls attention to while dissecting the recuperating job of life accounts in mature age, it isn't important for the storyteller and hero of the novel to continue revising his life account yet in addition an indication of constitution since when one's life story is remade, and balanced new encounters can be fitted into it. (Westerhof)

By showing a scene of the existence account of a resigned character, Julian Barnes permits the peruser into the developing character's attention to the way that when going into



mature age, one isn't constantly unbound from similar sentiments and feelings that have vanquished one in one's past phases of life. Unexpectedly, the reality of having more relaxation minutes to one's recollections together with the conniving nature of memory may propel those in mature age to deal with negative recollections and to retain regret and blame as emotions which should be incorporated to continue keeping in touch with one's life account. To be sure, Tony himself admits that it was genuinely simpler for him to oversee recognitions when he was in his prime phase of life. As he clarifies,

When you are in your twenties, regardless of whether you're confounded and questionable about your points and purposes, you have a solid feeling of what life itself is, and of what you in life are, and may turn into. Later...later there is more uncertainty, more overlapping, more backtracking, more false memories. Back then, you can remember your short life in its entirety. Later, the memory becomes a thing of shreds and patches. (SE 318)

Tony didn't envision himself, at the age of sixty-five, in this situation as he supported himself with the idea that mature age was a phase of mental harmony and quietness in which one needed to sit tight for the end without making a lot of complain about it. In one of the primary examinations on abstract gerontology, *Safe at last in the Middle Years: The Invention of the Midlife Progress Novel* (2016), Margaret Morganroth Gullette the rise of another sort of novel she names "the progress narrative of the middle years." (1988 xi) She knows about numerous ongoing Anglo-American journalists who, rather than depicting middle age and the going into mature age as a period of unending misfortune and decrease which will prompt social obscurity, they present maturing courageous women snared in "new plots of recovery and development in those years." (1988 xii) In that sense, as time can't be characterized in a straight line, the going into mature age isn't a continuum through which one can go unobtrusively; rather, emergency and dealing with them are additionally part of the game, as they are in the other life stages. As Tony calls attention to, "[we] live such easy assumptions, don't we? For instance, that memory equals events plus time. Who was it said that memory is 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." (SE 190)

Scholarly gerontology comprehends the way toward maturing in an increasingly complete manner as in it enables the peruser to go into mental forms which are very hard to express and characterize in logical terms. By getting into the existence account of Tony Webster who tends to the perusers as though one was tuning in to him, one sides with him in the way that memory is a twofold edged weapon. It is the entryway towards one's past and the development of a legitimate life account yet it is additionally the update that all that one did before and will do later on is prepared by sentiments and feelings which offer subjectivity to our recollections and which require steady revaluation and reworking of what our identity is, whatever the age.

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