



# TWO SELVES

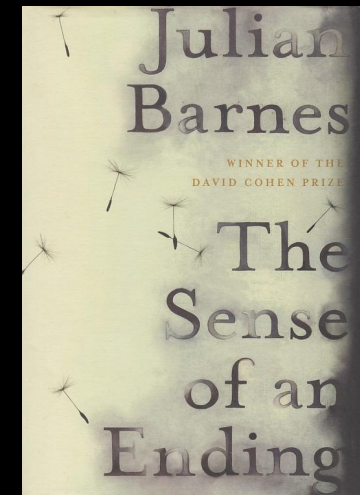
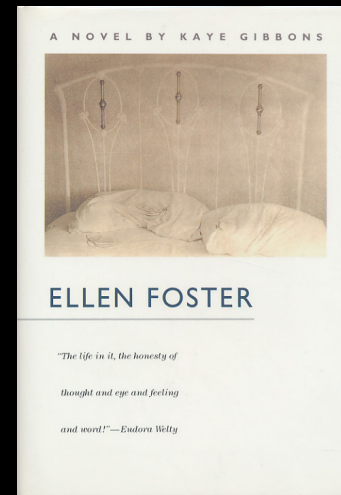
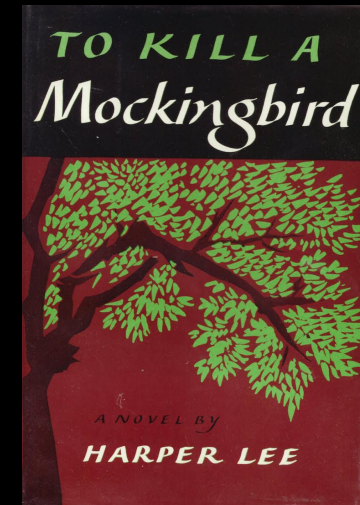
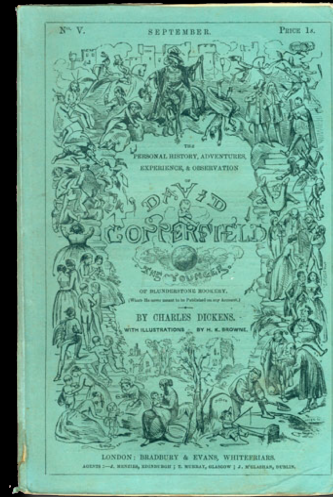
TWO SELVES

Crafting Effective First-Person Retrospective Narrators



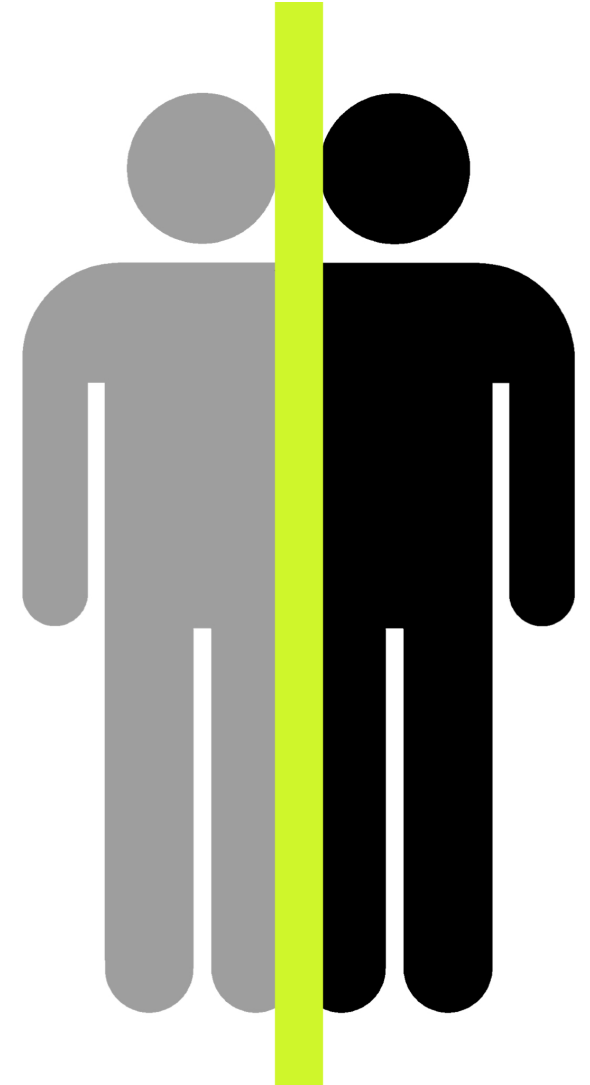
# A PREVIEW

- ❖ Definitions of terms & ideas
- ❖ Methods for creating duality in four coming-of-age novels:
  - ❖ Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*
  - ❖ Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*
  - ❖ Kaye Gibbons' *Ellen Foster*
  - ❖ Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*



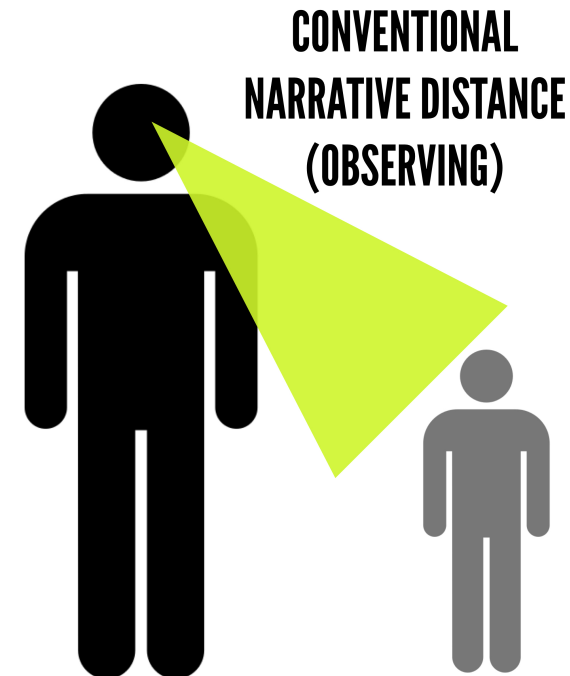
# FIRST-PERSON RETROSPECTIVE NARRATOR

- *A first-person narrator who tells a story about his or her own past experiences.*
- The first-person retrospective narrator is “split into two different manifestations of the same self, one who narrates and one who experiences” (Nicol 195).



# NARRATORIAL DUALITY

- *The psychological and temporal separation between a narrator's present (narrating) self and his past (experiencing) self.*
- First-person retrospective narrators “may recount their childhood experiences from a number of different vantage points” and “may ‘enter into’ his or her lived experience as a child to a greater or lesser degree, from a **‘reliving’**...to a **conventional narrative distance**” (Galbraith 123).



# NARRATORIAL DUALITY CONTINUED

- There can be “an interplay between these two perspectives, which can be juxtaposed, superimposed, or contrasted to varying effects” (Morini 601).

# DEICTIC SHIFT THEORY

## ■ DEIXIS

- Greek: to point, to show, to refer
- Linguistics: words that indicate who, where, and when.
- Narratology: any reference to the two planes of existence in a retrospective narrative (the *here-and-now* and the *there-and-then*).



# DEICTIC SHIFT THEORY CONTINUED

- *How a narrator indicates that she has shifted or will shift between the plane of the here-and-now (present) and that of the there-and-then (past/memory).*

# EVEN MORE DEICTIC SHIFT THEORY

- **PUSH:** A shift from the *here-and-now* to the *there-and-then*
- **POP:** A shift in the opposite direction
- **BLENDING:** Presence of *both* deictic planes at once





# BILDUNGSROMAN

- *A first-person retrospective novel that narrates the coming-of-age process.*
- This genre “narrates the process of *becoming*” (Karafilis 64).
- Plural: *Bildungsromane*

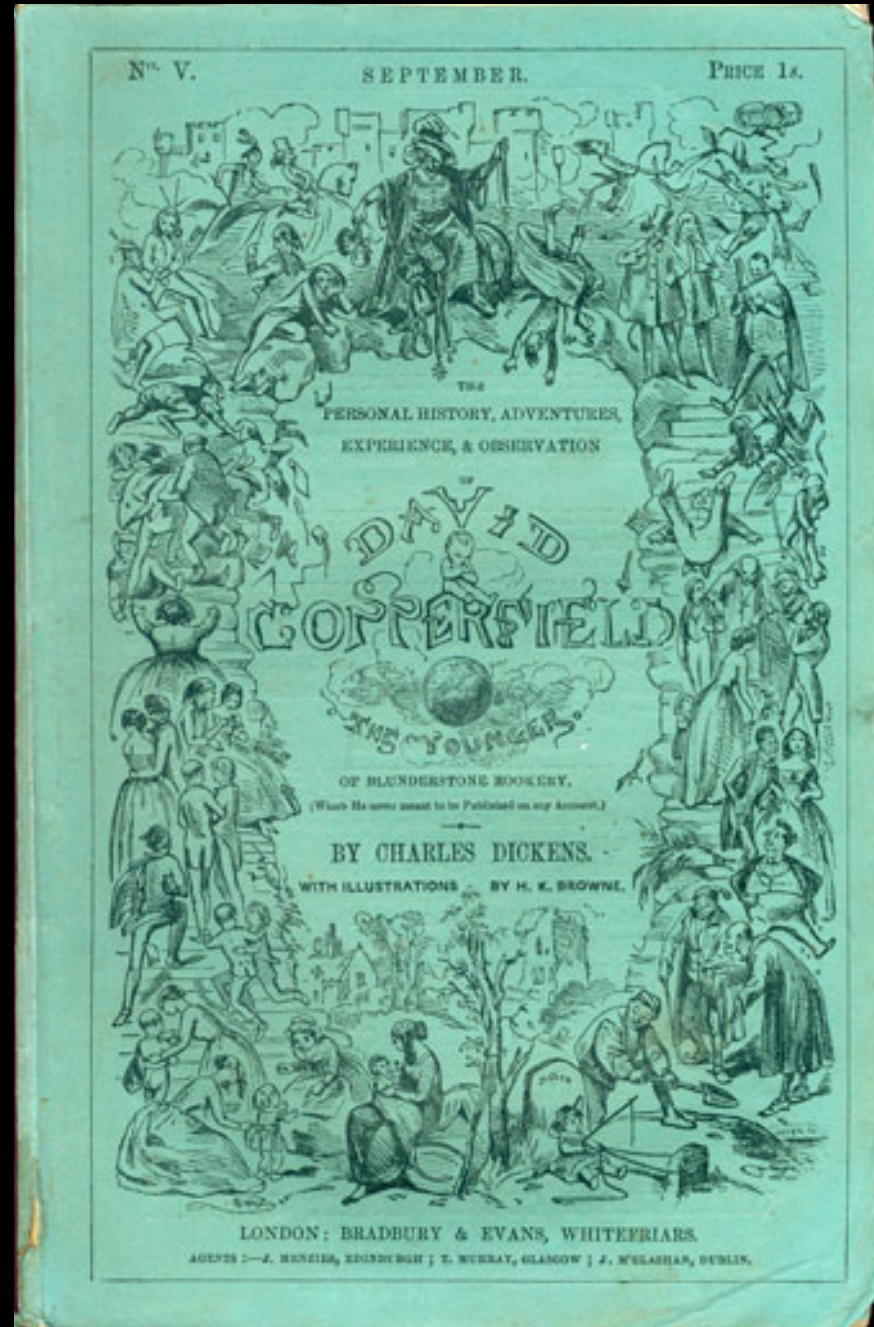
***DAVID COPPERFIELD***

**CHARLES DICKENS**



# HOW CHARLES DICKENS CRAFTS DUALITY

- Deictic POPs
- Deictic PUSHes
- Narratorial self-reference



“Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born...” (Dickens 13).

“I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy” (Dickens 24).

David “makes a determined effort to re-enter faithfully his earlier self as child and to relive his early life” (Galbraith 123).

—

“Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggoty’s kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don’t know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly-burning light, letting a mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee all at one whiff” (Dickens 25).

“My school-days! The silent gliding of my life—from childhood up to youth! Let me think, as I look back upon that flowing water, now a dry channel overgrown with leaves, whether there are any marks along its course, by which I can remember how it ran.

“A moment, and I occupy my place in the Cathedral, where we all went together, every Sunday morning” (Dickens 274).

“And now my written story ends. I look back, once more—for the last time—before I close these leaves.

“I see myself, with Agnes by my side, journeying along the road of life” (Dickens 878).

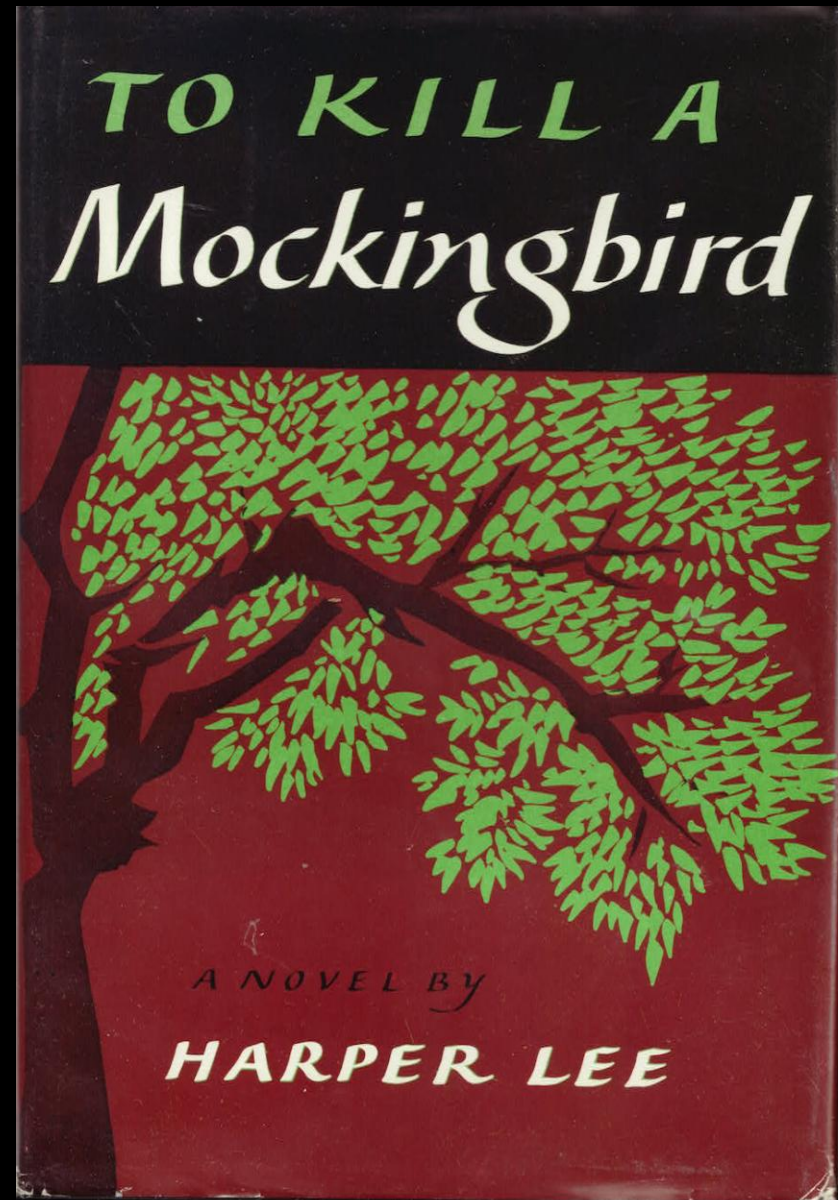


***TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD***

**HARPER LEE**

# HOW HARPER LEE CRAFTS DUALITY

- *Deictic blending*
  - Where there is no clear POP or PUSH, but Scout's narrating and experiencing selves often seem to exist simultaneously, which allows Lee to build and manipulate the sense of Scout's duality.



How Lee indicates (when they aren't blended) the two manifestations of Scout:

- *Narrator-Scout*: heightened diction, narratorial judgement and interpretation, and a dry, knowing sense of humor.
- *Character-Scout*: simpler diction, lack of judgement/interpretation, “relives” experiences.

“When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that” (Lee 3).

“He had asked me earlier in the summer to marry him, then he promptly forgot about it. He staked me out, marked as his property, said I was the only girl he would ever love, then he neglected me. I beat him up twice but it did no good” (Lee 46).

“I mumbled that I was sorry and retired meditating upon my crime. I never deliberately learned to read, but somehow I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily papers” (Lee 19).

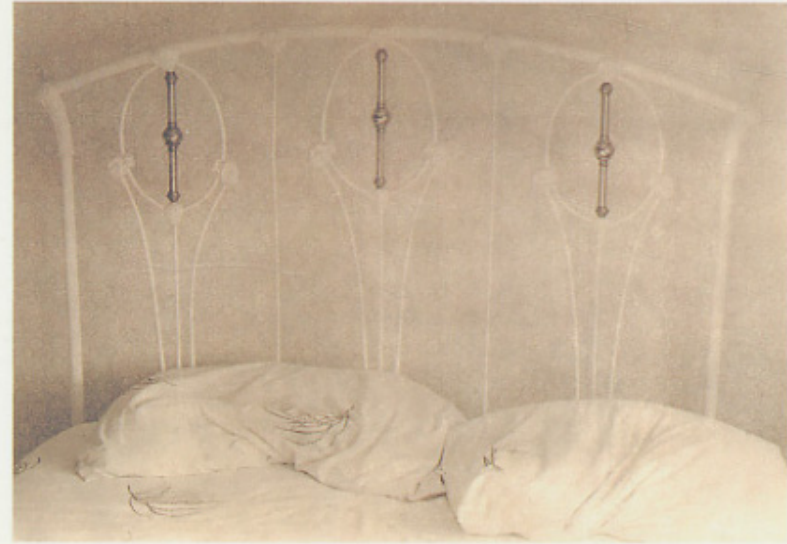
***ELLEN FOSTER***

**KAYE GIBBONS**

# HOW KAYE GIBBONS CRAFTS DUALITY

- Structural duality
- Deictic POPs
- Deictic PUSHes
- Narrative immediacy

A NOVEL BY KAYE GIBBONS



ELLEN FOSTER

*"The life in it, the honesty of*

*thought and eye and feeling*

*and word!"—Eudora Welty*



# NARRATIVE IMMEDIACY

- Occurs in “situations in which little gap exists (or is communicated to the reader) between the protagonist and the narrator” (Sandefur 1).
- By using narrative immediacy in a coming-of-age novel, writers can “present the protagonist’s interpretations as they occur and change,” which helps to “re-create...the *process* of identity development” (Sandefur 7).

**A** When I was little I would think of ways to kill my daddy. I would figure out this or that way and run it down through my head until it got easy.

The way I liked best was letting go a poisonous spider in his bed. It would bite him and he'd be dead and swollen up and I would shudder to find him so. Of course I would call the rescue squad and tell them to come quick something's the matter with my daddy. When they come in the house I'm all in a state of shock and just don't know how to act what with two colored boys heaving my dead daddy onto a roller cot. I just stand in the door and look like I'm shaking all over.

But I did not kill my daddy. He drank his own self to death the year after the County moved me out. I heard how they found him shut up in the house dead and everything. Next thing I know he's in the ground and the house is rented out to a family of four.

All I did was wish him dead real hard every now and then. And I can say for a fact that I am better off now than when he was alive.

I live in a clean brick house and mostly I am left to myself. When I start to carry an odor I take a bath and folks tell me how sweet I look.

There is a plenty to eat here and if we run out of something we just go to the store and get some more. I had me a egg sandwich for breakfast, mayonnaise on both sides. And I may fix me another one for lunch.

**B**

**C** Two years ago I did not have much of anything. Not that I live in the lap of luxury now but I am proud for the schoolbus to pick me up here every morning. My stylish well-groomed self standing in the front yard with the grass green and the hedge bushes square.

I figure I made out pretty good considering the rest of my family is either dead or crazy.

Every Tuesday a man comes and gets me out of social studies and we go to a room and talk about it all.

Last week he spread out pictures of flat bats for me to comment on. I mostly saw flat bats. Then I saw big holes a body could fall right into. Big black deep holes through the table and the floor. And then he took off his glasses and screwed his face up to mine and tells me I'm scared.

**D** I used to be but I am not now is what I told him. I might get a little nervous but I am never scared.

**E** Oh but I do remember when I was scared. Everything was so wrong like somebody had knocked something loose and my family was shaking itself to death. Some wild ride broke and the one in charge strolled off and let us spin and shake and fly off the rail. And they both died tired of the wild crazy spinning and wore out and sick. Now you tell me if that is not a fine style to die in. She sick and he drunk with the moving. They finally gave in to the motion and let the wind take them from here to there.

**F** Even my mama's skin looked tired of holding in her weak self. She would prop herself up by the refrigerator and watch my daddy go round the table swearing at all who did him wrong. She looked all sad in her face like it was all

her fault.

She could not help getting sick but nobody made her marry him. You see when she was my size she had romantic fever I think it is called and since then she has not had a good heart.

G

She comes home from the hospital sometimes. If I was her I would stay there. All laid up in the air conditioning with folks patting your head and bringing you fruit baskets.

Oh no. She comes in and he lets into her right away. Carrying on. Set up in his E-Z lounge like he is King for a Day. You bring me this or that he might say.

She comes in the door and he asks about supper right off. What does she have planned? he wants to know. Wouldn't he like to know what I myself have planned? She would look at him square in the face but not at his eyes or mouth but at his whole face and the ugliness getting out through the front. On he goes about supper and how come weeds are growed up in the yard. More like a big mean baby than a grown man.

I got her suitcase in my hand and I carry it to the bedroom. But while I walk I listen to him and to her not saying a word back to him. She stands between his mean highness and the television set looking at him make words at her.

Big wind-up toy of a man. He is just too sorry to talk back to even if he is my daddy. And she is too limp and too sore to get up the breath to push the words out to stop it all. She just stands there and lets him work out his evil on her.

Get in the kitchen and fix me something to eat. I had to cook the whole time you was gone, he tells her.

And that was some lie he made up. Cook for his own self. Ha. If I did not feed

us both we had to go into town and get take-out chicken. I myself was looking forward to something fit to eat but I was not about to say anything.

If anybody had asked me what to do I would have told us both to feed on hoop cheese and crackers. Somebody operated on needs to stay in the bed without some husband on their back all the time. But she does not go on to the bedroom but turns right back around and goes to the kitchen. What can I do but go and reach the tall things for her? I set that dinner table and like to take a notion to spit on his fork.

H

Nobody yells after anybody to do this or that here.

My new mama lays out the food and we all take a turn to dish it out. Then we eat and have a good time. Toast or biscuits with anything you please. Eggs any style. Corn cut off the cob the same day we eat it. I keep my elbows off the table and wipe my mouth like a lady. Nobody barks, farts, or feeds the dogs under the table here. When everybody is done eating my new mama puts the dishes in a thing, shuts the door, cuts it on, and Wa-La they are clean.

My mama does not say a word about being tired or sore. She did ask who kept everything so clean and he took the credit. I do not know who he thinks he fooled. I knew he lied and my mama did too. She just asked to be saying something.

Mama puts the food out on the table and he wants to know what am I staring at. At you humped over your plate like one of us is about to snatch it from you. You old hog. But I do not say it.

Why don't you eat? he wants to know.

“Dora asks her mama if she plans to put some old tacky paper frame on their wall and her mama says she should be nice to me because this is all so cute.

“But it is not cute and it is not a game I want to say. I wanted to scoop the cats and the colored frames up and burn them and forget I had tried to appeal to somebody and look at them now making fun of me.

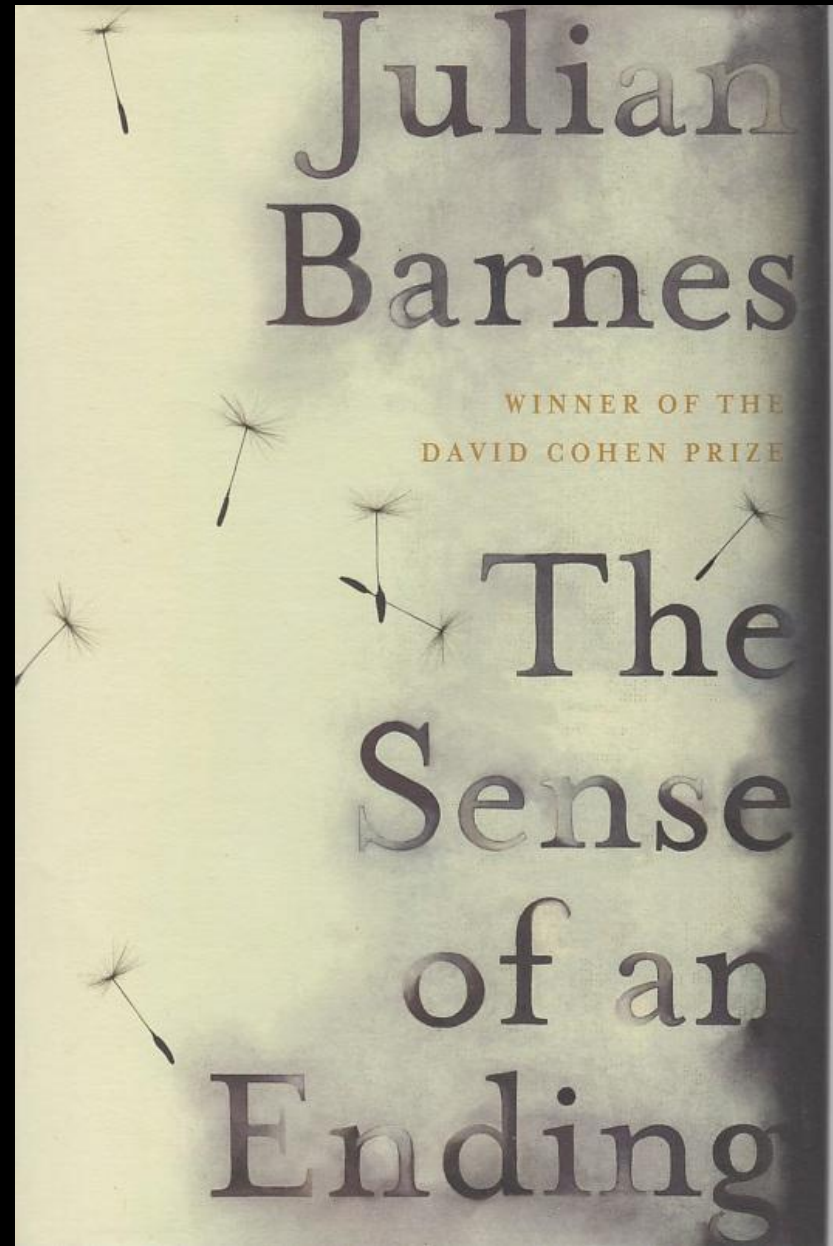
“But I left it all there on the floor and walked away” (Gibbons 109).

***THE SENSE OF AN ENDING***

**JULIAN BARNES**

# HOW JULIAN BARNES CRAFTS DUALITY

- References to narrative act and act of remembering
- Frequent narratorial judgement/interpretation
- Deictic POPs
- Structural duality





“I’m not very interested in my schooldays, and don’t feel any kind of nostalgia for them. But school is where it all began, so I need to return briefly to a few incidents that have grown into anecdotes, to some approximate memories which time has deformed into certainty. If I can’t be sure of the actual events any more, I can at least be true to the impressions those facts left. That’s the best I can manage” (Barnes 3).

“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” (Barnes 45).

“...we were book-hungry, sex-hungry, meritocratic, anarchistic. All political and social systems appeared to us corrupt, yet we declined to consider an alternative other than hedonistic chaos” (Barnes 10).

“You can probably guess that I’m putting off telling you the next bit” (Barnes 44).

“Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange” (Barnes 20).

“...when you are young, you think you can predict the likely pains and bleaknesses that age might bring. ...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” (Barnes 65).

**THE END**

