

England as a Simulacrum: Julian Barnes's Novel *England, England*

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vyobrazením Anglie jako objektu simulace v románu *England, England* od Juliana Barnse. Analýza románu vychází z teorie Jeana Baudrillarda o simulakrech a cílem práce je prozkoumat, jak Julian Barnes využívá tento koncept k zobrazení procesu tvorby repliky Anglie. Práce dále také poskytuje vhled do Barnesova života a jeho děl, vysvětluje základní pilíře Baudrillardovy teorie a předkládá analýzu na konkrétních příkladech toho, jak se simulace v románu projevuje.

Klíčová slova: Anglie, Simulakra, Simulace, Hyperrealita, Realita, Historie, Julian Barnes

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on the depiction of England as an object of simulation in Julian Barnes's novel *England, England*. The analysis draws on the theory of simulacra by Jean Baudrillard, and the aim of the thesis is to examine how Julian Barnes employs this concept to portray the construction of England's replica. Furthermore, it provides an insight into Barnes's life and work, as well as explains the main pillars of Baudrillard's theory. The thesis presents the analysis through specific examples of how the simulation manifests throughout the novel.

Keywords: England, Simulacra, Simulation, Hyperreality, Reality, History, Julian Barnes

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to analyse how England, its history, and other aspects connected to Englishness are represented and altered in the form of simulacra in the novel *England, England* by Julian Barnes. It explores how the philosophy of simulacra, based on the theories of the French philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, is reflected in the artificially created portrayal of England in Barnes's novel. The plot of the novel centres around a project launched with the aim of creating a close replica of England in the form of a worldwide renowned amusement park, aptly titled England, England. This copy of England, constructed on the Isle of Wight, essentially consists of carefully hand-picked and modified elements – pieces of the nation's identity, but with transformed or omitted details to fit a desired model and an easily comprehensible narrative. As the project develops and gains international acclaim, it begins to overtake England's position, until it eventually becomes a world-recognised nation itself, while the 'old' England and its identity progressively fall into oblivion. This way, the newly created replica of England becomes the new version of reality – in other words, a perfect simulacrum of England that successfully replaces the original.

The philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*, written in 1981 by Jean Baudrillard, explores the relationship between reality, the symbols depicting it and how society receives it. Simulacra are perceived by Jean Baudrillard as copies, being it objects or concepts, that with time progressively override the referential element, until the original form ceases to exist and only the replica in its altered embodiment remains.¹ This process of simulation is manifested in four stages, where with each stage the intensity of simulation increases. In the fourth stage, when the simulacrum replaces the original referent and becomes the new reality, a state of hyperreality is created, where the distinction between reality and simulation is non-existent. Moreover, through simulation, the gravity of truth, meaning and substance is gradually lost.

In the first step, this thesis provides a clearer understanding of Julian Barnes's background and position in the literary world while providing context for the conceptualisation of the novel *England, England*. Being well educated in French, Barnes was well acquainted with classic French literature and authors such as Rimbaud, Baudelaire,

¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, *The Body, in Theory* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

Voltaire, and Verlaine since early childhood² and later also with Jean Baudrillard, the author of *Simulacra and Simulation*. The style of Barnes's novelist attitudes differs vastly in the overall range of his publications, from his first novel, *Metroland*, to presumably the most renowned novel, *Flaubert's Parrot*, or his later novels like *Arthur & George* or *The Sense of an Ending*. However, his fiction can be substantially characterised by a combination of social satire, Swiftian irony, and experimentation, mixed with elements of melancholy, tragicomedy and fabulation.³ At the same time, he gradually turns to themes of memory, history, and scepticism to truth in his later works,⁴ such as in the case of the novel *England, England*. Julian Barnes is commonly categorised as a humanist writer, while some consider him a post-modernist, although he does not always consistently follow the conventions of post-modernism.⁵

In the second step, this thesis clarifies the terms simulacra and simulation in relation to the philosophical concept introduced by the French sociologist and philosopher, Jean Baudrillard. The second chapter thus explains the defining concepts of simulacra and simulation by summarising the main theory behind it, outlining the three initial stages of simulation and the final fourth stage of hyperreality, as well as providing clarifying examples, implications and theory that surrounds it. This includes illuminating the relationship between signs and meaning, the notion of attempting to resurrect the past, and the rise of simulation in the contemporary Western world.

Finally, in the third step, this paper examines how the concept of simulacra and simulation is portrayed in Julian Barnes's novel *England, England*. This is achieved by a close analysis of the novel and by presenting specific examples of how Julian Barnes used the theory of simulacra and simulation to depict England and English identity in his novel. There are examples from the novel for each stage of simulation, which are followed by an examination of how the situation of constructing England's simulacrum develops. The original model that the simulacrum is based on is the real and contemporary country of the United Kingdom and its known history.

² Peter Childs, *Julian Barnes*, Contemporary British Novelists (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011), 2.

³ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 5.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ Ibid., 14–15.

1 JULIAN BARNES

Julian Barnes is an English contemporary writer and the author of the 1998 novel *England, England*, which this thesis analyses. He was born in 1946 in Leicester, located in the East Midlands region of England, before relocating with his family to London, where he has been settled ever since. His parents, Albert Leonard and Kaye Scoltock Barnes, were both teachers of French,⁶ meaning that he was brought up in close vicinity to both English and French languages and culture, as well as to other European literary influences.⁷ His career path has been as diverse as his later literary works. Barnes briefly studied philosophy⁸ before graduating in 1968 with a degree in Modern Languages at Magdalen College at Oxford.⁹ His three-year-long position as a lexicographer for the Oxford English Dictionary further reinforced the newly acquired linguistic knowledge.¹⁰ This academic background has laid a strong foundation for his future career and has helped him develop skills to make a better use of language in his writing. Despite Barnes's brief interest in becoming a lawyer, after passing his bar exams in 1974, his focus turned towards freelance journalism, and he was soon oscillating between different positions in the journalist sector from 1979 to 1986.¹¹ Barnes has thus, for several years, occupied a combination of columnist, critic, reviewer, as well as chief editorial positions for magazines such as *The New Review*, *The New Statement*, and newspapers as *The Sunday Times*, or *The Observer*.¹² He often concealed his journalist contributions behind pseudonyms as Edward Pygge and Basil Seal, before taking the first confident steps towards becoming a literary novelist under his own name. From its initial release in 1980, his debut novel, *Metroland*, received widespread critical acclaim.¹³ The novel, in comparison to his later pieces, is the only one with the strongest autobiographical elements.¹⁴ In the period between the publication of his two other now widely recognized novels; *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989), he had gained the option to turn to writing fiction full time and has earned himself a stable reputation among other novelists and literary critics.¹⁵

⁶ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 2.

⁷ Frederick Michael Holmes, *Julian Barnes*, New British Fiction (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2008), 12.

⁸ Vanessa Guignery and Nicolas Tredell, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*, Readers' Guides to Essential Criticism (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 2.

⁹ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 2.

¹⁰ Guignery and Tredell, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*, 2.

¹¹ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 3.

¹² Guignery and Tredell, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*, 2.

¹³ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

Although there is no broader autobiographical work written by Julian Barnes to the present day, there are several memoirs published under his name. These, however, appear only in his later works, as Barnes seems to lean towards the themes of retrospection and memory more prominently only in his later works. In 1995, his first extensive socially and politically oriented essay collection about his motherland, *Letters from London*, was published. It is said to have sparked in Barnes an idea for the 1998 novel *England, England*.¹⁶ Together with the ensuing works *Cross Channel* (1996) and *Arthur & George* (2005), all three are substantially focused on the mechanisms of memory acquisition, retention and recollection.¹⁷ It is also during this time of mid-1990's that Barnes widened his already diversified literary production even further as several series of non-fiction in the form of personal memoirs, namely *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* (2008) and *Levels of Life* (2013), or essays and short stories collection such as *The Lemon Table* (2004) and *Through the Window* (2012) appear in print. Overall, in the span of his still ongoing career, Barnes has expanded his oeuvre by additional crime novels, screenplay drafts, prefaces and introductions to other literary works and translations from German and French.¹⁸

Julian Barnes's literary works have been nominated and have at the same time received prestigious literary awards numerous times, namely the Somerset Maugham Award (1981), Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize (1985), Shakespeare Prize (1993), and the 2004 Austrian State Prize for European Literature.¹⁹ Despite the shortlisting of three Barnes's novels for the Man Booker Prize, including the novel *England, England* in 1998, so far, it has been only *The Sense of an Ending* that has won the title in 2011.²⁰ His prominent acclaim is further highlighted by being classified among other highly successful contemporary writers such as Graham Swift, Ian McEwan, and Martin Amis.²¹

Naturally, Barnes's works well reflect his upbringing, educational and vocational background²² and interests, namely in the sectors of public, cultural and literary world, which he often displays a comfortable familiarity with.²³ This is manifested in his work as scores

¹⁶ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ Guignery and Tredell, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*, 3–4.

¹⁹ Vanessa Guignery, "Foreword" in *Conversations with Julian Barnes*, ed. Ryan Roberts (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), XI.

²⁰ "Full list of Booker Prize winners shortlisted and longlisted authors and their books", The Booker Prizes, accessed March 4, 2025, <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/features/full-list-of-booker-prize-winners-shortlisted-and-longlisted-authors>.

²¹ Guignery and Tredell, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*, 3.

²² Holmes, *Julian Barnes*, 12.

²³ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 13.

of specific intertextual allusions to novels, poems, artworks, musical compositions – such as the recurring references to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in *England, England*, and other cultural artefacts that he happens to be acquainted with.²⁴ At the same time, his works are interspersed with a playful, wry, and witty sense of humour²⁵ presented in the manner of social satire and Swiftian tragicomic irony,²⁶ although Barnes's aim is not always to entertain, but rather to invoke a thought-provoking prompt for the reader to experience. The essence of Barnes's writing is best described by Frederick Holmes: "They are richly textured, aesthetically accomplished, highly entertaining productions, fuelled by clear-sighted intelligence, crackling wit, emotional depth, and a broad imaginative sympathy."²⁷

Moreover, it is possible to identify a set of thematic concerns that usually run through Barnes's work: memory, history, representation, belief, truth, art, identity, death, and a combination of lingering melancholy with a consistent celebration of the ordinary.²⁸ As Bruce Sesto highlights in his work, throughout his career, Julian Barnes has consistently expressed a strong interest in exploring the relationship between history and fiction²⁹ – particularly in a form where history itself is reinterpreted rather than accurately interpreted.

As identified by Peter Childs, the way Barnes engages with the concept of memory and representation in his novels accurately defines his typical stance to fiction and his distinctive experimental modes of writing in the form of generic fabulation.³⁰ This term was first defined by Robert Choles in 1967 and describes a narrative technique, often associated with postmodernism, of combining traditional genres with fabulated narratives that often unconventionally disrupt the expected form and rules of the genre.³¹

In writing, Julian Barnes prefers to target each literary piece with a different perspective and innovative form, to broaden the scope in which ideas can be communicated rather than being confined to the tendencies of one generic category.³² His experimental engagement with genres, narratives and literary features – each expressed in his works with varying degrees of intensity, combined with the frequent intertextual references and reflexive irony

²⁴ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 11.

²⁵ Guignery, "Foreword" in *Conversations with Julian Barnes*, X.

²⁶ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 5.

²⁷ Holmes, *Julian Barnes*, 27.

²⁸ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 13, 15.

²⁹ Bruce Sesto, *Language, History, and Metanarrative in the Fiction of Julian Barnes*, Studies in Twentieth-Century British Literature (Oxford, NY: Peter Lang, 2001).

³⁰ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³² Holmes, *Julian Barnes*, 14.

typically causes him to be classified as a postmodernist writer. Peter Childs points out “The form and eclectic approaches of Barnes’s fiction thus illustrate the stance of a fabulist who mixes genres and ideas, but his writing is rooted in a set of literary precedents that couch his experimentations in a tradition of formal and self-reflexive invention that looks to the authors he himself references in his work, rather than postmodernist contemporaries.”³³ Even though the eclectic personal style of his writing is often hard to define, it only further highlights Barnes’s remarkable ability to adjust his style to the desired context at hand³⁴ while at the same time accurately presenting his thoughts with “the mix of pragmatism, stoicism, scepticism, aestheticism and existentialism that underpin much of his worldview.”³⁵

1.1 Conceptualisation of the novel *England, England*

As mentioned earlier, Barnes’s upbringing led him to be considered a Francophile from early youth, mostly as a consequence of his parents’ influence. Since a very young age, he was well read in French literary works from classical authors such as Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Montaigne, Voltaire, Verlaine, while mostly gravitating towards the work of Gustave Flaubert, who Barnes also used as a main centre piece for his well-acknowledged novel *Flaubert’s Parrot*.³⁶

Later in his life, sometime around the beginnings of his new career as a novelist, he was introduced to the ideas of the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard and his philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981). The ideas presented in Baudrillard’s work combined with Barnes’s increasing focus on British culture, history, and identity. During the years 1990 to 1995, Barnes’s satirical essays *Letters from London* – later published and compiled in a collection – focused on the complexities of England’s historical and current events, together with its cultural traditions and identity in the increasingly globalised and commercialised world. The satirical critique of British society and history, both in how it is presented to and perceived by the world, connected well with Baudrillard’s opinions on symbols of representation – simulacra, that are essentially malleable in what information they convey. Barnes thus combined both subjects and further explored these ideas in the 1995 novel *England, England*, focused on a distorted national identity. Therefore, this novel is categorised in the genre of historiographic metafiction and aligns with Barnes’s

³³ Childs, *Julian Barnes*, 15.

³⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³⁶ Ibid., 1–2.

aforementioned postmodernist tendencies – “whereas traditional historical novel sustained the pretence of supplying direct access to the past in all of its fullness and particularity, historiographic metafiction periodically undermined the authority of its own representations by exposing their fictive status.”³⁷

³⁷ Holmes, *Julian Barnes*, 15.

2 THE CONCEPT OF SIMULACRA AND SIMULATION

The relationship between a simulation and the truth has been contemplated since the ancient times of Roman and Greek philosophy. The concept of imitations, likeliness-making and copies has been discussed and written about in several of Plato's works, such as the *Republic* or *Sophist*,³⁸ and it has remained a topic of philosophical fascination up until the notions of contemporary philosophy of the 20th century. This concept has also appeared in the existentialist works of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche,³⁹ and later it was more widely explored by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze⁴⁰ and Jean Baudrillard, who published a treatise, *Simulacra and Simulation*, in 1981. Although he was not the one to coin the Latin term "simulacrum", it was his work that is usually designated as having revived and popularised this expression in postmodern theory. Whilst every depiction of simulacra varies intrinsically, depending on the philosopher's approach, every grasp of this concept centres on the relationship of some sort of a copy and the original – an object or idea that is targeted by this process of simulation. For this bachelor's thesis and the concurrent analysis of Julian Barnes's novel *England, England*, only the theory and perception of simulacra by Jean Baudrillard will be used.

In his work *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard explores the connection between reality, symbols, and society. For instance, he does this by demonstrating in detail his perception of simulacra by exploring the different categories of what is being simulated, the escalating stages of simulation, the role of meaning and value in the process of simulation, and the correlation between the concept of simulacra and the contemporary society of the Western world. He goes even further by discussing the paradoxes and metaphysical ideas connected to the concept of simulacra, which, however, are not important for this thesis.

³⁸ Jowett Benjamin, *The Dialogues of Plato. Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by B. Jowett* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1892), E-text by The Gutenberg Project, accessed through <https://archive.org/details/TheDialoguesOfPlatoV0.1/page/n111/mode/2up>.

³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols Or, How to Philosophise with the Hammer*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1911), accessed through <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52263/52263-h/52263-h.htm>.

⁴⁰ Giles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), accessed through <https://archive.org/details/logicofsense0000dele/page/n5/mode/2up>.

2.1 The Theory of Simulacra by Jean Baudrillard

Baudrillard categorises simulacra into three orders depending on the nature of what is being simulated. In every category, simulacra always contain elements that are the same as those of the referential, but the dissociation from the real is, in any case, apparent every time. The first are simulacra, which are, by the process of simulation, leaning towards the principles of what is known as utopia. It is a projection of a reference in a harmonious, naturalistic, transcending, and optimistic way as opposed to the referential,⁴¹ as are, for example, romantic dreams or the depictions of heaven. This depiction is limitless because harmonious balance does not have a universal embodiment; it is not based on finality, but rather on constant shifting. Simulacra of the second order focus on the topics of production, power, energy, mechanics, and the simulated image aims to reflect an increase or continuous expansion of these productivist attributes.⁴² This category is most widely represented in science fiction, but the idea behind it is represented in any mass production and development of industrial and technical machinery. In addition, it potentially has no state in which it can be fully saturated, either, as it aims to convey an image of constant improvement, infinite manufacturing, and fulfilment of material needs. The third order of simulacra is concerned with information. In this case, the purpose is to acquire total control of the final form of the simulation by manipulating the referential at every level of realisation.⁴³ It is best illustrated by the performance of media output and the digital environment, where information can be tampered with without any boundaries. The referential information, however, can itself be already fabricated, thus the cycle is often perpetual and fully fictitious. Later in this chapter, this will be explained in more detail on the concept of hyperreality.

Jean Baudrillard describes the manifestation of simulacra in four stages, through which the increasing intensity of simulation can be perceived. It is not necessary for every simulacrum to go successively through every stage during the process of simulation, instead, these stages are to be seen as indicators of how intensely the simulacrum has deviated from or has ultimately completely replaced the original referent.

The first stage of simulacra “is the reflection of a profound reality.”⁴⁴ These simulacra are mostly focused on the representation of appearance. This representation is, however, not

⁴¹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 121.

⁴² Ibid., 122.

⁴³ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 6.

entirely exact; there is still some sort of abstraction or deviation present, which gives space for secrecy and imagination. Its form is nevertheless considered trustworthy, and it reflects reality in a substantially faithful manner.⁴⁵ Moreover, it is important to mention that this representation of reality with blunted edges is not created with maleficent intent. This stage is best demonstrated for example by the portraits of classical art, photographs used for identification, scaled down maps of physical geography or “visible metaphors” in the case of language and poetry; “The poet is like a painter who, as we have already observed, will make a likeness of a cobbler though he understands nothing of cobbling; and his picture is good enough for those who know no more than he does, and judge only by colours and figures.”⁴⁶

The second stage of simulacra “masks and denatures a profound reality.”⁴⁷ The simulation does not reflect the original or reality accurately anymore, and although it is still based on reality, it instead purposefully contains a distortion. It is a manipulated form of a simulacrum where the truthfulness of the original is twisted to denote a different desired meaning.⁴⁸ This is, for example, perceptible in the figures of power. The person of power embodies the objectives that they stand for in the political sphere. In the eyes of the voters, this figure does not denote the traits of his identity, as it is, for example, with one’s friends and family, but instead serves as a vessel of opinions for the purpose of fulfilling a political objective.⁴⁹ The character of this persona can be and usually is manipulated by said figure. Although it is usually natural for the voters to know that this “doubling” is happening, the lines between reality and the simulacrum begin to blur anyway. Such an example can also extend into a wider example at the level of state or ideological propaganda, or product advertising in general. It is the notion of posters displaying prosperity, while the real disposition of the state is not that prosperous at all, or claiming a product will guarantee the customer a much better result than it will in reality.

To continue, as Jean Baudrillard states in his work, “the transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing marks a decisive turning point.”⁵⁰ This shift occurs halfway through the described stages of simulation. In this

⁴⁵ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6.

⁴⁶ Benjamin, *The Dialogues of Plato. Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by B. Jowett*, 1455.

⁴⁷ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

instance, the third stage of simulacra “masks the absence of a profound reality.”⁵¹ Such a form is achieved by pretending to represent something real when, in truth, there is nothing real behind it.⁵² The third stage is most easily comprehensible through the example of reality television. Reality television poses as a truthful depiction of real situations, however, the situations are mostly fundamentally scripted, acted out and falsified. Nevertheless, this manipulation is obscured from the viewers, and in this, the falsification of a truthful depiction is hidden. That is to say, this simulation is not that of the first order, since it doesn’t try to reflect reality, and at the same time it is not that of the second order either, since it doesn’t distort any reality, because inherently – there is none, and ultimately, it is actively attempting to mask it.

The sequence of the third stage into the fourth is not defined by specific boundaries; rather, it can occur through a gradual shift. One of the important markers for both stages, in terms of ultimately successfully masking the absence of a profound reality, is that “Forgetting extermination is part of extermination, because it is also the extermination of memory, of history, of the social, etc.”⁵³ In other words, forgetting that it is not reality is part of it becoming a reality. To illustrate this, Jean Baudrillard uses a short story by Jorge Luis Borges, *On Exactitude in Science*, to depict the sequencing from the third stage simulacra to that of the fourth – the hyperreality. The fable narrates a story about cartographers who, with their skill, create a detailed 1:1 scale map of an empire. This map is an exact copy that ends up covering the whole territory. With time, the map starts to wear off, but for the people living on the land, it becomes indistinguishable from the land under it.⁵⁴ Eventually, when the last inhabitant forgets about the event of the creation of the map, it becomes a pure simulacrum. A hyperreality that is self-referential, it no longer needs anything to measure itself with and compare itself to.

The fourth stage of simulacrum thus “has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum.”⁵⁵ It effectively replaces the original in its entirety, becoming as real as the “real” or even more real than it, by completely replacing it.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6.

⁵² Ibid., 49.

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 81.

Specific examples of hyperreality are illustrated, for example, by the existence of AI-generated Instagram models or video games. Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality was mostly influenced by his view on the emerging cyberspace and digital world. Although this sphere has not been as prominent during his life, it has evolved in a manner that now aligns directly with his theory of hyperreality. An AI-generated Instagram model is not based on a real person, but rather on the perception and simulation of what qualities such Instagram models display. The same principle applies to the functions of video games – the contents are not based on faithfully representing reality, but rather on the conditions of it. There is a character of being that the player embodies, there are items of value for collecting, challenges to overcome, objectives to achieve, objects to interact with, essentially anything that mirrors the characteristics of a real experience. In conclusion, none of these are aiming for being a truthful representation, instead, their aim is that of the simulation itself. Examples of hyperreality, however, are not limited to the virtual world. The process of restoring landmarks follows the same pattern. Although the process is called restoration, it is by no means possible to bring the original back to the same form of existence, “the tourist can only have false access to the past.”⁵⁷ It is possible only to simulate what has worn down, faded, or is missing based on the model of what the landmark has looked like at some previous point in time. Nevertheless, by effectuating this simulation, the whole landmark itself becomes a simulacrum, not a restored original image.

What is also typical for hyperreality is that this is where the cycle of simulation can begin anew. A new simulacrum can simulate the previous simulacrum, which is now the original. However, the “previous” original cannot ever be restored again, it is a linear and never-ending system of death based on resurrection in a new form.⁵⁸ Baudrillard further argues that death is part of the process of existence, and one should not go against this process,⁵⁹ but rather embrace it. He uses a quote by Friedrich Nietzsche to illustrate his point: “One must push what is collapsing...”⁶⁰

To further develop on the idea that the process of pure simulacra and simulation cannot be reversed, it is best illustrated by a reversion of the aforementioned examples of hyperreality. A person cannot come into being based on an AI-generated character, equally

⁵⁷ Helen Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017), Kindle edition, 37.

⁵⁸ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

as a new reality cannot be created based on a video game. A landmark cannot truly be worn down by time once it has been restored or returned back to its “original” place after it has been removed, since “their reimportation to the original site is even more artificial: it is a total simulacrum that links up with "reality" through a complete circumvolution. The cloister should have stayed in New York in its simulated environment, which at least fooled no one. Repatriating it is nothing but a supplementary subterfuge, acting as if nothing had happened and indulging in retrospective hallucination.”⁶¹ Therefore, the form of these simulacra is now that of a different and new reality. They are made real in their new form,⁶² while the previous realm of reality of the referential is lost.

2.2 The Parallel Between Signs, Meaning, and Truth

To further develop on Baudrillard’s theories, it is important to outline the defining features of the correlation between simulacra and signs, their inherent meaning, the theories of truth, and society’s tendencies to assign value.

Signs and meaning are mutually dependent. If one side is simulated, it directly becomes the reality of the other. When a sign is fabricated, it still transfers the same meaning, and when one is attempting to fabricate meaning, it is done so by the same signs as well. To better demonstrate this, if one were to forge a diploma – a sign, and hang it on a wall, the passersby would assume that the person possesses the knowledge connected with the degree. Reciprocally, if one were to stage a robbery of a shop – the meaning of stealing something, it would be done by using the same signs as are connected with it – having a gun, a mask, shouting, etc. Despite now knowing that these are only simulations, in both cases, however, for the outside environment, the simulation holds the same truth value as the “real” reference. For the passersby, the diploma is real in the same way as is the robbery for the shop clerk. As Baudrillard points out, “the network of artificial signs will become inextricably mixed up with real elements.”⁶³ Thus, it can be reversed into: the network of artificial meanings will become inextricably mixed up with real elements of signs. Simulation is thus beyond the polar connotation of true and false, the simulacra always hold the same truth value as that of the referent.

⁶¹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 11.

⁶² Ibid., 11.

⁶³ Ibid., 20.

Furthermore, through simulation, the loss of meaning happens.⁶⁴ There is always simplification present in simulation. This simplification reaches its peak in hyperreality, where all the information and meaning of the “previous” reality is overridden and lost. Meaning is both malleable and mortal, like other things of existence.⁶⁵ A notable aspect is that Jean Baudrillard argues that there is one exact thing that is also lost during the process of simulation due to it being beyond the reach of simulation.⁶⁶ He referred to this as “the remainder”.

The remainder embodies the idea of essence that cannot be described or captured by any signs, symbols, or references. It is the imaginary, the aura, the essence of existence and the universe, none of which can be simulated by the tangible limitations of simulation.⁶⁷ It is the substance of the in between and the substance inaccessible to the disposition of simulation. This is best illustrated by the concept of cloning living beings. “All the individuals produced through cloning individual X, are they anything other than a cancerous metastasis – the proliferation of the same cell, such as occurs with cancer?”⁶⁸ It is the end of the body because it loses its essence – the piece of truthfulness that eludes and transcends simulation, and thus it cannot be a part of this newly created form. In that instant, the body becomes a stockpile of information and nothing but a message that can be infinitely serially reproduced, altered, and processed.⁶⁹ Baudrillard draws another example of this from the ideology of Iconoclasts, who feared that the symbols and icons used to portray God – in religion, inherently the very essence itself, will instead fully overtake the position of the true image entirely.⁷⁰ He writes, “But what if God himself can be simulated, that is to say, can be reduced to the signs that constitute faith? Then the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer itself anything but a gigantic simulacrum – not unreal, but a simulacrum, that is to say, never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference.”⁷¹

⁶⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 80.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 164.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 100.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁷¹ Ibid., 6.

2.3 Simulacra and History as a Lost Referent

For humankind, time has always been used to connote value. Time is drawn out as a linear representation of the order of things of existence, because “We require a visible past, visible continuum, a visible myth of origin, which reassures us about our end.”⁷² Thus, what has existed for a long time has, in the eyes of humankind, essentially accumulated more value.⁷³ In his work, Baudrillard discusses the effect that this notion has on the tendencies of the Western world; “our entire linear and accumulative culture collapses if we cannot stockpile the past in plain view,”⁷⁴ suggesting that the world and its science are obsessed with resurrection to attempt to fight time, abolish death and to accumulate meaning all the more.

However, this obsession with recreating, remembering, and preserving to protect value is nothing but imitating what has already been lost. It is a hyperreal performance of a memory, considering that to embody this memory, the history is translated into endless signs and meanings that are constantly reinterpreted, rewritten, recreated, and readapted to new stories, movies and scenarios.⁷⁵ Thus, with time, this accumulation of history paradoxically only strays away from the real referential – the boundaries between memory, fabrication, and simulation thin. In this, history becomes a simulation and “its reinjection has no value as conscious awareness but only as nostalgia for a lost referential.”⁷⁶

Further in his work, Baudrillard clarifies that this nostalgia naturally manifests in the form of melancholia, which is inherently connected with our recognition of meaning being lost in the progress of time. He writes, “melancholia is the inherent quality of the mode of the disappearance of meaning, of the mode of the volatilisation of meaning in operational systems. And we are all melancholic.”⁷⁷ Consequently, by attempting to immobilise history in a particular fixed form and frame narrative, it serves as an effort to ease the weight or suppress the feeling of melancholy – of having lost something.

Nevertheless, as was previously illustrated, this lost referential of history cannot be truly resurrected, only simulated. Baudrillard explains it as such: “The great event of this period, the great trauma, is this decline of strong referentials, these death pangs of the real

⁷² Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 10.

⁷³ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 162.

and of the rational that open onto an age of simulation.”⁷⁸ In conclusion, the past, being only a simulated framework of signs and meanings, is mistaken for the true referential and any attempts to resurrect it only create a world of simulation based on simulation, thus, a world of hyperreality.

2.4 The Contemporary World of Hyperreality

One of the central themes of Baudrillard’s work is his argumentation of how the contemporary Western world has turned to a hyperreality. As the modern world progresses, the cycle of simulations fastens and intensifies: “It is now the era of murder by simulation, of the generalized aesthetic of simulation, of the murder-alibi – the allegorical resurrection of death...”⁷⁹

In the treatise, Baudrillard asserts that the transition from the dominance of the real to the dominance of simulation took place with the emergence of capitalism; “throughout its history it was capital that first fed on the deconstruction of every referential, of every human objective, that shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power. Capital was the first to play at deterrence, abstraction, disconnection, deterritorialization, etc.”⁸⁰ Capitalism, based on supply and demand, creates an ideal environment for the rise of simulation. It does function on the principle of satisfaction of true needs, nevertheless, it advances faster by the principle of imposing a simulated need on its consumers. All the more, in the case of supplying, it can often only simulate the satisfaction of that imposed need, meaning that the demand for the product or service will be sought after repeatedly and sooner. This is best illustrated on the concept of hypermarkets; “The hypermarket is already, beyond the factory and traditional institutions of capital, the model of all future forms of controlled socialization: retotalization in a homogeneous space-time of all the dispersed functions of the body, and of social life (work, leisure, food, hygiene, transportation, media, culture); retranscription of the contradictory fluxes in terms of integrated circuits; space-time of a whole operational simulation of social life, of a whole structure of living and traffic.”⁸¹

After capitalism, when globalisation became dominant, the world has witnessed a rise in the activity of mass media – be it the print media, online media, or the film industry. For

⁷⁸ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 43.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 24.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁸¹ Ibid., 76.

example, Baudrillard references the current reality of cinema production: “Cinema plagiarizes itself, recopies itself, remakes its classics, retroactivates its original myths, remakes the silent film more perfectly than the original.”⁸² However, the amount of information with real meaning that can be communicated is limited; thus, with modernisation and easier means of widely producing and accessing the products of the media industry, the communicated information has started to be fabricated to keep up with the demand. By this, “rather than creating communication, it exhausts itself in the act of staging communication. Rather than producing meaning, it exhausts itself in the staging of meaning.”⁸³ It is a repeated cycle of recycling of information, whose meaning devaluates with the amount of simulation it is met with, that ultimately creates a hyperreal space of communication and meaning.⁸⁴ Its aim is no longer to communicate anything specific; its aim is the act of communication itself, which comes at the cost of fabricating its contents. Baudrillard’s statement: “thus the media are producers not of socialization, but of exactly the opposite, of the implosion of the social in the masses,”⁸⁵ emphasizes the point that the aim of current mass media is not to support genuine human connection anymore. Instead, it hurls the consumers into a passive consumption, which dissolves the social sphere into that of a mass audience not interested in a meaningful interaction.

Moreover, in the same way as the media abolishes the social sphere, the social sphere abolishes its culture. For the social, culture still carries value because of anteriority and the obsession with preventing it from dying out; nevertheless, the meaning behind it has shifted. Before, the cultural practices were connected to the higher sphere – the essence. Nowadays, with the era of globalisation and the rule of capital, it is instead consumed like a product. Baudrillard states that “from today, the only real cultural practice, that of the masses, ours (there is no longer a difference), is a manipulative, aleatory practice, a labyrinthine practice of signs, and one that no longer has any meaning.”⁸⁶ Culture became a hyperreality – a product of recycled aesthetics and simulations of meaning that have been nevertheless prompted by the social sphere itself; “thus, always a sort of parody, a hyper simulation in

⁸² Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 47.

⁸³ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 65.

response to cultural simulation, transforms the masses, who should only be the livestock of culture, into the agents of the execution of this culture..."⁸⁷

The contemporary Western world has succumbed to the consumerist grasp of a world of capital, which has no ultimate finish line, only a never-ending cycle of supply and demand. Therefore, it is a world that has entered an endless cycle of simulation, a world of hyperreality. In the same way that the social is now the agent of cultural execution, the world of simulation has executed the world of essence. This world of essence is now a lost referential that the world will try to resurrect through the modified signs and meanings that nonetheless no longer hold the same value. Baudrillard develops on this as such; "Perhaps science fiction from the cybernetic and hyperreal era can only exhaust itself, in its artificial resurrection of "historical" worlds, can only try to reconstruct in vitro, down to the smallest details, the perimeters of a prior world, the events, the people, the ideologies of the past, emptied of meaning, of their original process, but hallucinatory with retrospective truth."⁸⁸

Nevertheless, not even hyperreality can elude death, "because the desert of cities is equal to the desert of sand – the jungle of signs is equal to that of the forests – the vertigo of simulacra is equal to that of nature – only the vertiginous seduction of a dying system remains, in which work buries work, in which value buries value – leaving a virgin, sacred space without pathways, continuous as Bataille wished it, where only the wind lifts the sand, where only the wind watches over the sand."⁸⁹ To conclude and clarify one of Jean Baudrillard's last remarks of his work, he claims that a total collapse and death of the cycle of hyperreality is predetermined as well. Thus, with its death, the essence will then overtake all anew. It will be the end of simulation and hyperreality.

⁸⁷ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 66.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 153.

3 ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK AND NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Nation and national identity, such as that of England, consist of recorded and passed down memories usually encompassed in literary texts and cultural practices. This has over time manifested itself in the form of heritage – national symbols, shared historical references, language, traditions, cuisine, preferred religion, government structures, etc.⁹⁰ It is a set of characteristics that are reinforced by signs and their meaning and it is used as a reference to “something treasured, a wealth associated with the past.”⁹¹

Both, however, as illustrated in the preceding chapters, are, with time, reshaped into new forms and meanings by the social sphere of the nation. National identity is not a fixed element; it is, on the contrary, a natural object of change with the course of time. Consequently, the national identity of modern England could thus already be characterised as a simulacrum based on Baudrillard’s theories.

Nevertheless, that is not the primary focus of this analysis. Instead, the aim is to examine the escalating process of simulation and the ultimate turning point of hyperreality, in which the contemporary nation of England – and all elements associated with it, serve as the true referential. Therefore, the process of simulation in the context of *England, England* is analysed despite the fact that the contemporary England might already be designated as constructed or fabricated within the previously explained Baudrillard’s theoretical framework.

3.1 *England, England*

3.1.1 England

The first part of the novel introduces the protagonist, Martha Cochrane, and her childhood upbringing in post-war rural England. This chapter illustrates how, in her youth, her English identity is shaped, through local agricultural fairs, history classes, religious education, family situation and friend circles – essentially by her inherent environment. Although these retrospections are presented as nostalgic, they progressively highlight her scepticism towards what the environment assigns as true or false information. Over time, her view on England as a concept is marked with increasing disillusionment, by realising that the signs

⁹⁰ Ryan Trimm, *Heritage and the Legacy of the Past in Contemporary Britain* (Milton, NY: Routledge, 2017), 1.

⁹¹ Trimm, *Heritage and the Legacy of the Past in Contemporary Britain*, 2.

and meanings, which the concept of national identity consist of, are always constructed artificially.⁹²

3.1.2 England, England

In the second part, the character of Sir Jack Pitman is introduced. Being a successful businessman, Sir Jack leans into his patriotic desire to revive England's lost glory and thus the idea of gaining worldwide recognition.⁹³ He sets out to create a project that offers tourists something unprecedented in the standards of the leisure industry⁹⁴ – a theme park of England on the Isle of Wight. Incidentally, Martha Cochrane is selected to be a part of the project committee, and the initial research stage for the project is started.

Sir Jack's aim for his family-centred and bias-free amusement park is to piece together all the – in his eyes, most important English monuments and symbols to perfectly mimic England as a whole. If some do not coincide with his aims, he modifies them so that they are up to his standard, or he simply omits them altogether. Achieving this, Sir Jack in a way fabricates a new English identity according to his liking. This element quite plainly illustrates one of the main themes of the novel – the 'construction' of Englishness.⁹⁵

By modifying and improving the signs associated with England, he wishes to reinstitute its worldwide importance, which has been, according to him, declining since the disintegration of the British Empire. Moreover, by targeting the sphere of world tourism, Sir Jack prepares England to be a "ready-made product available for consumption."⁹⁶

After all preparations have finished, the island is transformed according to predetermined plans and the theme park is opened. All activity on the island is controlled and has its predetermined course of action. Over time, the authenticity of the theme park is enhanced, and it continuously moves closer to becoming a recognised nation itself,⁹⁷ while the old England – now termed Anglia, falls into economic and existential oblivion. As this shift progresses, several elements of the theme park begin to overstep the predetermined borders of their existence and behave autonomously in the now new reality that they have embodied.

⁹² Barnes, *England, England*, 6.

⁹³ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁹⁵ Christine Berberich, 'England? Whose England? (Re)Constructing English Identities in Julian Barnes and W. G. Sebald', *National Identities* 10, no. 2 (June 2008), 172, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608940801997242>.

⁹⁶ Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces*, 30.

⁹⁷ Barnes, *England, England*, 171.

3.1.3 Anglia

As events unfold, Martha Cochrane relocates back to Anglia to settle down. The territory, overshadowed by its now fully commercialised counterpart, is rid of all modern aspects, and its occupants also forget what has once been associated with the nation of England. Through closer connection with nature and genuine interaction, the inhabitants begin to build a new, more organic society, focused only on a simple way of living and community-based knowledge without any external influence. The authenticity of a lived experience returns as Martha Cochrane reflects on the events of her past connected with her English identity, the artificial reality of the theme park, and the reestablished natural order of the cycle in Anglia.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Barnes, *England, England*, 257.

4 ENGLAND AS A SIMULACRUM

The initial impulse for the project of creating England's simulacrum was, similarly to the overall beginning of the contemporary age of simulation according to Baudrillard, of capitalist origin. When Sir Jack first discusses his plans with one of his business associates and corporate strategists, he remarks "You – we – England – my client – is – are – a nation of great age, great history – stacks of it, reams of it – eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate."⁹⁹ The idea of positioning the nation of England, its identity, and culture as a product for tourism and its cycle of supply and demand goes hand in hand with Baudrillard's concept of simulation and the contemporary world of hyperreality. Therefore, the signs and meanings – here it encompasses the whole of the English nation – are treated like products, whose authenticity is dismantled in favour of mass production. As Baudrillard puts it, mass production is "not in the sense of a massive production or for use by the masses, but the production of the masses,"¹⁰⁰ thus creating a steady influx of capital. The visitors of the island, moreover, support the idea of this simulated replica of England because it commodifies their wants and needs. The leisure is easier to access, and the concept of Englishness is easier to comprehend through the aforementioned process of simplification connected with simulation.

Moreover, in his novel, Barnes points out that the visitors themselves wish to be deceived and want to be persuaded that they are being shown the truth. So much so, that they complain when the experience is not faithful enough to the referent, as in the instance of an actor who fails to fulfil the visitor's expectation about a dining experience with a character of Dr Johnson: "I have a screenful of complaints about you. Here, for instance, is Monsieur Danial of Paris. He says that he paid his Dining Experience supplement expecting to hear examples of high-class traditional British humour from you, but that uttered barely a dozen words all evening, none of them worth repeating."¹⁰¹ Therefore, through this intentional interest in reconstructing reality and truth, the hyperreality of England's simulacrum can be enacted to its full potential.

⁹⁹ Barnes, *England, England*, 39.

¹⁰⁰ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 68.

¹⁰¹ Barnes, *England, England*, 209.

4.1 Constructing Englishness: the beginnings of a simulated nation

From the outset of the novel, Julian Barnes sets the tone for later stages of simulation by initially presenting the reader with subtler and less invasive forms of England's simulacra.

4.1.1. The Jigsaw Puzzle: A First Stage Simulacrum of England

The most apparent example of the first stage simulacrum of England is Martha Cochrane's childhood jigsaw puzzle of English Counties, "and there, spread on the matting, was her Counties of England jigsaw puzzle, and Mummy had decided to help her by doing all the outside and the sea to begin with, which left this outline of the country in front of her."¹⁰² The puzzle is based on the real appearance of England's territory and its division. It represents and simulates it on a scaled-down version through different shapes and colours, similarly like a map would, and through this, it still maintains a faithful depiction of reality, although a sense of abstraction is still present.

4.1.1 Implicit Parallels Between Simulation and the Reality of the Referent

In the sequence from the first stage simulacra to that of the second, there are a few elements in the unfolding of events that inadvertently draw parallels between simulation and reality. Sir Jack's course of action of constructing a replica of England strikingly resembles the real unfolding of events of past British imperialistic ventures. Although it is not necessarily a conscious step in the plans of realizing the project, through these, the project unintentionally simulates the reality in an even more faithful manner, since "some histories have claimed that British culture was 'steeped' or 'saturated' in imperialism, the very concept of British nationality depended on it."¹⁰³

These ventures were usually enacted by confiscation of land, assault of indigenous cultures, and oppression of ethnic groups.¹⁰⁴ Before the confiscation, however, the Empire would send agents into the targeted places to 'map out' the situation at hand before the territory was officially taken over,¹⁰⁵

the activities of these individuals have been interpreted as 'hollowing out' places for later colonial rule, drawing attention to exploitable resources in a particular area, publicizing problems that might

¹⁰² Barnes, *England, England*, 4.

¹⁰³ Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

strike a chord with missionaries or humanitarians, or contributing to instability that called forth metropolitan attempts to sort out the mess.¹⁰⁶

This is a perfect parallel to Sir Jack Pitman sending one of his employees to make a list of what is usable for his project on the Isle of Wight – “Marco Polo as I said. On your horse. Report back in two weeks.”¹⁰⁷ Moreover, when the English officials didn’t allow him to buy the island,¹⁰⁸ he destabilizes the island’s situation by exposing that the island was illegally acquisitioned by Britain in the past and then he offers to help them get it annulled – “Isabella de Fortuibus, delivered to the International Court at The Hague a petition requesting annulment of the 1293 Island Purchase.”¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, when the Isle of Wight becomes independent from the British crown, he then completely takes it over as a governor, “after letting them run with the ball for a while – Sir Jack might be obliged to exercise his emergency powers as Governor. At which point, technically – legally, too – everything would then belong to him.”¹¹⁰ Similarly, as this was possible for the British Empire by having the power and capacity to exercise such endeavours,¹¹¹ for Sir Jack it was a similar situation, as a renowned and successful businessman with substantial disposition of money.

Therefore, the initial phase of the project follows the same pattern as the real referential of the project – England – did in the past in its own imperialistic ventures. Sir Jack Pitman invades the desired location for his project – the Isle of Wight, and essentially acquires it through lobbying, overrides everything authentic of the island’s own culture, and forcefully makes the inhabitants of the island to take part in his plans, as illustrated in this excerpt: ““But Sir Jack ... isn’t it, well, presumably, full of inhabitants?” ‘No Mark, it is not full of inhabitants. What it is full of is grateful future employees.’”¹¹² These parallels thus later further enhance the truthful form of the simulation of England and its characteristics.

4.2 Transforming England: Reshaping Identity into a Desired Model

In the next step in constructing Sir Jack’s simulacrum of England, the project coordinating committee sets out to create a list of elements that the general public connects with the nation and its identity. The list mostly consists of famous historical components – since a nation is

¹⁰⁶ Jackson, *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Barnes, *England, England*, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 107.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 171.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹¹¹ Jackson, *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, 53.

¹¹² Barnes, *England, England*, 63.

usually forged through its shared history, and the glorified past is what is aimed to be remembered,¹¹³ “so we don’t threaten people. We don’t insult their ignorance. We deal with what they already understand.”¹¹⁴ This preparation stage essentially denotes the second stage of simulacra, since it is concerned with gathering information about what the masses assume England is, so that it can be modified according to that image, and therefore, it can be much more easily accepted as truth by everyone: “The Island Experience, as the billboards have it, is everything you imagined England to be, but more convenient, cleaner, friendlier, and more efficient.”¹¹⁵ However, the exact list of what a nation’s heritage encompasses cannot be made due to its extensiveness and essentially limitlessness;¹¹⁶ the act of hand-picking elements therefore already reduces the project to a hollow replica.

To reiterate, the second stage of simulation is still based on reality, however, it purposefully embraces or installs a distortion. After the list of associated elements with England is drafted, the project teams then either modify or remove the items until the finalised list for the theme park aligns with the values of the project. For example, some sizes of landmarks – particularly those of the Big Ben and the Buckingham Palace,¹¹⁷ are purposefully halved to create a ‘sufficient enough’ replica of the referent without exhausting too many resources on it.

The same reasoning applies to the choice of the project’s location – since the concept of an island nation is closely tied to English identity, Sir Jack Pitman identifies this as another commercial opportunity and selects the Isle of Wight, despite only a vague geographical resemblance.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, some English regional dishes are excluded so that the cuisine register is more socially appropriate for the customers – the Gastronomic Sub-Committee banned “faggots and fairy cakes in case they offended the pink dollar,” and “spotted dick even when renamed spotted dog”.¹¹⁹

In the same manner, the backstory of Nelly Gwynn’s character is reimaged for the island’s sex tourism sector, “‘We could make her older,’ suggested Martha brightly, ‘lose

¹¹³ Berberich, *‘England? Whose England? (Re)Constructing English Identities in Julian Barnes and W. G. Sebald*, 168.

¹¹⁴ Barnes, *England, England*, 71.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹¹⁶ Trimm, *Heritage and the Legacy of the Past in Contemporary Britain*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Barnes, *England, England*, 142, 166.

¹¹⁸ Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Barnes, *England, England*, 91.

the children, lose the mistresses, and lose the social and religious background. Then she could be a nice middle-class girl who ends up marrying the King.”¹²⁰ By purposeful distortion, the scandalous angle of her character is now much better hidden by the obscurity of the situation.

Lastly, another major example of second-stage simulacra is the modernisation of the myth of Robin Hood and his Merrie Men. In this case, the myth's depiction is questioned by the Project Development Committee and new modern approaches of re-tellings are explored for the project, such as the name of Robin being sexually ambiguous, “so one might, if one wished to be provocative ..., venture a repositioning of the Hood myth within the true corpus of the female outlawry.”¹²¹ The manipulation of this myth reaches even further towards the modern notions of equal representation,

Mark ... seconded the proposal that there should be active recruitment among gays and ethnic minorities. He also agreed that further investigation was required into how conditions of outlawry might equip the differently-abled to make a fuller contribution than that permitted in today's marginalizing society.¹²²

To summarise, these intentional alterations of referents create second-stage simulacra of several English elements that still originate from reality, but ultimately lay the groundwork for higher and deeper levels of simulation.

4.3 Inventing Itself: England, England as Its Own Detached Referent

As discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, the sequence from the second stage simulacra to that of the third marks a decisive point from distorting reality to masking the absence of reality. The third order undermines the principle of truth by posing fabricated simulacra as reality.

To begin with, one of the pillars that the simulacrum of England is founded on is the act of replicating landmarks. The theme park is interspersed with replicas of places from England's history and famous contemporary attractions as; the White Cliffs of Dover, the Big Ben, the Wembley Stadium, the Uffington White Horse figure, the grave of Shakespeare and Princess Diana, the Sherwood Forest, the National Gallery, Jane Austen's house, Stonehenge, the Buckingham palace, William Wordsworth's daffodil field, and Anne

¹²⁰ Barnes, *England, England*, 94.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 148–149.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 152.

Hathaway's Cottage among many others.¹²³ Apart from the aforementioned second stage simulation of a purposefully planted distortion in their depiction, such as the scaling down of Big Ben and the Buckingham Palace, essentially, all these replicas of landmarks align at a common waypoint of simulation, and that is their artificial installation onto the island. The landmarks are not real; their existence on the island has been artificially curated. Nevertheless, the project successfully masks this absence of truthfulness of their existence by the immediate environment in which they are located.

The English identity is commonly connected with the idea of idyllic countryside life, serene natural scenery, and traditional farming. To simulate these conditions, the project committee has decided that "agriculture would be represented by true-life dioramas clearly visible to passing traffic."¹²⁴ This meant that employees – essentially the inhabitants of the island – would become actors portraying field workers ploughing and tossing hay, shepherds with their sheep dogs flocking livestock, and even poachers stealing from farmhouses and the gamekeepers that arrested them.¹²⁵ In cities, on the contrary, to invoke the urban bustle of English metropolises, the employees personify the roles of typical English policemen, the guards of the Tower of London, or taxi drivers.¹²⁶ Simultaneously, in providing the visitors with an authentic experience of English history at first hand, many actors were tasked with embodying the characters of famous English public figures, for instance, that of Shakespeare, Francis Drake, Dr Johnson, Nell Gwynn, Boadicea, and Lady Godiva.¹²⁷ The actors, by taking over the personas and the predetermined qualities of those characters, nevertheless, only replicate a version of reality mediated by performance. This performance, however, contributes to the overall image of reality that the project aims to convey.

Some performances and characters, which are posed as truthful reality, are even in their very core based on myth and fabrication. That is the case of Robin Hood, his Merrie Men, and their life as outlaws in the Sherwood Forest,

the ovoid rock-finished tumulus looked properly medieval; the repatriated Saudi oaks were flourishing; the man in the bear-suit entirely plausible. On either side of the Cave there were peaceful queues for the viewing windows. Through them Visitors could scrutinize the Band's domestic

¹²³ Barnes, *England, England*, 142, 166, 178, 179.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109, 110.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 164–165.

lifestyle: Much the Miller's Son baking ten-grain bread; Will Scarlet rubbing camomile lotion into his enflamed skin; Little John and others of his size making merrie in their miniaturized quarters.¹²⁸

Therefore, not only is the myth of Robin Hood changed in its contents as mentioned in the previous chapter by the principles of second-stage simulacra, but it is also essentially posed as reality by inherently never-ending performance.

This is also the case with historical events from English history that are re-enacted at various spots around the theme park. These acts presented by actors include, for example, The Battle of Britain, the trial of Oscar Wilde, the execution of Charles I, the setting sail of the Mayflower,¹²⁹ or the Iranian Embassy Siege of 1980.¹³⁰ The rehearsed encounters are posed as spontaneous, as if the history were happening at that exact moment. It is a cycle of history repeating itself, nevertheless, it is a version of history that never happened. The way these re-enactments are acted out, from dialogues, costumes, narrative progression, to all involved individuals, the project only pretends that there is a connection to reality, when in fact this connection is entirely hollow. The "real" course of English historical events is not important anymore; only the "re-enactments" – the project's idea of those events, posed as truthful re-enactments, exist in the public consciousness of the visitors.

This hollow reality and the maxims of third-rate simulacra moreover encompass the principle of English law and government that is instituted on the island. The project successfully manages to construct these elements of national existence through the simulation of political and governmental bodies.

After an extensive persuasion, the royal family ultimately signs a contract to become a part of the project, "the crowds and the cameras are for real; so are the clouds. But the guardsmen are actors, Buckingham Palace is a half-size replica, and the gun salute electronically produced. Gossip has it that the King and Queen themselves are not real, and that the contract they signed two years ago with Sir Jack Pitman's Pitco Group excused them from this daily ritual."¹³¹ Exactly as is assumed by the visitors, through the contract, the Royal Family is promised lesser duties as part of their function and less strict regulations related to their position, "No taxes. No tabloid press. Occasional exhibiting of the royal person, though very good replicas will shoulder most of the burden. No dreary heads of state

¹²⁸ Barnes, *England, England*, 222.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 185.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 228.

¹³¹ Ibid., 178.

coming to call.”¹³² However, through the contract, the Royal Family essentially loses most legal obligations towards the supervision of the state. Instead, their presence on the island becomes symbolic. The sole reason the project desires for them to be included is because of their connection with England and English identity.

The government is on the other hand simulated entirely:

the Project was still auditioning for its House of Commons Experience. Front-bench jobs had been allocated, but they were looking for non-speaking backbenchers able to master some simple choreography – rising to their feet at a signal from the Speaker, waving their order papers in mock urgency, and then flopping back on the green leather benches. They would also be required to utter various non-verbal but interpretable noises...¹³³

Here, the presence of the government is achieved by the actors portraying the representatives and mimicking the process of fulfilling their duties of operating the state.

Power and law are based only on the palpable and determined dimensions,¹³⁴ however, in the case of the theme park, these dimensions are only simulated, thus the authority of the governmental power is non-existent, except for the power of the project executives themselves. In the process of simulation, “power itself ends by being dismantled in this space and becoming a simulation of power.”¹³⁵ Therefore, the project essentially reaches a simulation of where the Royal family and the English government have hollow authority; as illustrated by the following excerpt “‘I’m the fucking King *anyway*,’ he shouted. ‘Anywhere, every-where, always.’ Only as long as you behave, thought Martha. You are king by contract and by permission. If you disobey an executive order and we put you on a boat to Dieppe in the morning I doubt there will be an armed insurrection.”¹³⁶ Through this simulated position of governmental figures, the project integrates the power of the English political dimension into its simulated reality, and due to it being a simulation, the dimension has no lawful claim to govern.

To conclude, through this extensive control over the environment and all the events happening on the island, the project engulfs the visitors in its desired model of a new reality. This reality is thought and executed through to such an extensive detail that it successfully hides all traces of manipulation and emptiness of meaning. In this stage, the theme park does

¹³² Barnes, *England, England*, 166.

¹³³ Ibid., 173.

¹³⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 21.

¹³⁵ Barnes, *England, England*, 21.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 189.

not embody a replica of England; instead, it embodies a collage of fabricated English elements that are essentially hollow in their gravity of truthfulness – be it the case of landmarks, the people, the setting, or the political system.

4.4 A Hyperreal Nation

As the story progresses, the state of old England progressively degenerates and collapses, while the project of England, England steadily adopts its position as a worldwide recognised state. The world's perception of the idea of the nation of 'England' gradually shifts towards the simulated depiction of it by England, England, while on the island itself, the simulation manifests itself and becomes a new reality – a hyperreality.

Right from the successful launch of the project, the state of old England lags behind England, England in both popularity and capital growth: “while the London Stock Exchange endured such a Black Tuesday that dealing was suspended at lunchtime for the foreseeable future, Pitco shares soared worldwide.”¹³⁷ Due to the annulment of the 1293 Island Purchase and thus the inherent declaration of independence, the island is viewed by the world as a new developing country; “along with the first Visitors (as they call tourists hereabout) came the World Bank and the IMF”¹³⁸ – a country, that is now entirely run by the project: “there were no lawyers except Pitco lawyers. There were no economists except for Pitco economists. There was no history except for Pitco history.”¹³⁹ The world, thus, after old England's unsuccessful attempts to recover from its grave situation, voluntarily decided to forget and erase it from records and memory, “the Greenwich Meridian was replaced by Paris Mean Time” and “on the maps the English Channel became the French Sleeve.”¹⁴⁰

Moreover, with time, the initially fabricated elements of the theme park start to take on a new form. The actors, made and paid to portray various English characters, are permitted to be addressed only as the characters they are portraying.¹⁴¹ Combined with the repeating performance of 'authentic' scenarios, within a few months, this leads to cases of “separation – or adhesion – of personality”¹⁴² across the entire island, “they were happy to be who they had become, and didn't want to be other.”¹⁴³ The inhabitants prefer their cottages over

¹³⁷ Barnes, *England, England*, 172.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 179.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 202.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 252.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁴² Ibid., 197.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 198.

employee accommodation, demand to be paid in the theme park's currency, and take on characteristic traits of the characters they are portraying. For example, such is the case of Dr Johnson's replica, when his sense of self ultimately succumbs to "Johnsonesque melancholy."¹⁴⁴ Thus when the visitors, expecting to have a positive leisure experience, are met with this reality, they complain to the project executives – "He was badly dressed and had a rank smell to him; that he ate his dinner like a wild beast... that he was either bullishly dominant or else sunk in silence... that he was depressing company."¹⁴⁵

A similar event also occurs in the case of actors playing the roles of smugglers and the band of Robin Hood. The nature of their actions ultimately shifts to be the same as that of the characters they are made to portray, by this, the "performativity ends and a composite reality begins."¹⁴⁶ The smugglers are now engaged in "the clipping of Island coins and the minting of counterfeit; the secret distillation of a colourless, high-proof spirit from local apples; the pirating of Island guidebooks and forging of official Island souvenirs; the importation of pornography in various forms; and the renting-out of village girls."¹⁴⁷ Likewise, the band of Robin Hood and his Merrie men are eventually – to the project executives dismay, hunting their own food and stealing vegetables from the farmyards, heritage parks, and gardens, while they demand more competent warriors, and real combats to take place, "he says the staged fights are hopeless and wouldn't it be more realistic if the Sheriff's men were given extra financial inducement to capture the Band, and if they, the Band, were allowed to ambush the Sheriff's men anywhere."¹⁴⁸

Fundamentally, over time, the previously staged situations manifested themselves into a truthful condition of reality and the reality of the previous elements is lost. The inhabitants are not the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight anymore, but the citizens of England, England and the band of Robin Hood is not a re-enactment of a myth but a real band of outlaws living on the island. The project now "may not offer access to real history, but it does offer access to real, lived, cultural experience."¹⁴⁹

It is also important to note, that the higher executives of the projects are directly responsible for the upkeep of this new reality of England, England. Otherwise, with no

¹⁴⁴ Christine Berberich, *'England? Whose England? (Re)Constructing English Identities in Julian Barnes and W. G. Sebald*, 173.

¹⁴⁵ Barnes, *England, England*, 208.

¹⁴⁶ Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces*, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Barnes, *England, England*, 200.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁴⁹ Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces*, 38.

interference, the desired model of simulacrum could collapse. This situation is alluded to right after the revolt of Robin Hood's band: "The Band in revolt? It was unthinkable. It was central. It played in so many other directions. What if they all took it into their heads to behave like that? What if the King decided he really wanted to reign; or, for that matter, if Queen Boadicea decided he was an upstart from some johnny-come-later continental dynasty? What if the Germans decided they should have won the Battle of Britain? The consequences were unimaginable."¹⁵⁰ The project executives thus stand on the outside of the simulation – they are the instigators of that simulation, and when elements stray away from their desired model of simulacra, they must interfere. If they do not interfere, the situation would still be in the realm of simulation, but it would evolve along its own axis and not in the desired form that the project wants it to be in – a family friendly uplifting and rejuvenating leisure experience with all the best that 'England' has to offer. Therefore, Sir Jack has "dealt swiftly with the subversive tendency of certain employees to over-identify with the characters they were engaged to represent. The new Robin Hood and his new Merrie Men had brought respectability back to outlawry. The King had been given a firm reminder about family values," and "Dr Johnson had been transferred to Dieppe Hospital ..."¹⁵¹

All the same, by then, England, England is turned into an 'entity' of hyperreality. The original referent – old England, "had been in a state of free-fall, had become an economic and moral waste-pit. Perversely rejecting the established truths of the third millennium, its diminishing population knew only inefficiency, poverty and sin; depression and envy were apparently their primary emotions,"¹⁵² until it is completely overshadowed by the project's presence.

To add to this, as Kapstein points out, "the old national form breaks up in favour of an Island that is a corporate, not a national, holding,"¹⁵³ suggesting that the project's superficiality is deepened by its inherent lack of national values. The world continues to refer to England, England as a nation, despite it essentially functioning as a corporation. Through this complete simulation – amplified by the passage of time, the project is manifested into a new realm of reality and overrides all traces of the previous meaning of what the 'original' nation of England was – England, England is thus a pure simulacrum.

¹⁵⁰ Barnes, *England, England*, 225.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 248.

¹⁵² Ibid., 202.

¹⁵³ Kapstein, *Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces*, 36.

However, the form of this new reality is based on the principle that each element has been modified and still can be modified or omitted if such interference is needed or desired by the project executives. Eventually, there will be new forms of simulation, now based on simulation itself, that will become reality and therefore, this cycle of hyperreality will be repeating itself until the system collapses under its own weight.

The reason for why the project was destined to become a simulation from the very beginning, lies in the nature of what national heritage in reality is. As Ryan Trimm points out, “heritage, surviving from the past, despite the deaths of those connected to it, takes on a spectral dimension.”¹⁵⁴ This denotes, that national identity ultimately cannot be reduced to signs, symbols, nor references alone, which suggests a connection to the realm of the remainder – as defined in Chapter 2.2 of this thesis. Heritage cannot be made nor purchased,¹⁵⁵ essentially, it can only be superseded by the overriding power of simulation.

4.5 Anglia: The Reality of the Remainder

After the ‘old’ England’s initial defiance of its fate, by pleading to countries and unions for help and weighing wars for lost territories, the last acts of resistance ultimately die out when the last attempts of the Government of Renewal are abandoned.¹⁵⁶ Because of this, “some asserted that at this point the country simply gave up; others that it found new strength in adversity,”¹⁵⁷ and a decision is made that to further distance itself from the world, the land is to be re-named Anglia.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, by being left to decay, the reality of Anglia is focused onto a new and separate realm – “the world began to forget that ‘England’ had ever meant anything except England, England, a false memory which the Island worked to reinforce; while those who remained in Anglia began to forget about the world beyond.”¹⁵⁹

Despite the economic downfall, what crucially happens is that when England, England with its hyperreality overrules the existence of Anglia, then “old England has lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself.”¹⁶⁰ By this total absence of substance of identity – a crucial pillar of any nation, it intrinsically ceases to be a nation, and instead it dissolves into a cluster of elements that can reassemble into a new form of

¹⁵⁴ Trimm, *Heritage and the Legacy of the Past in Contemporary Britain*, 18.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Barnes, *England, England*, 252.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

community. Thus, with no ties to previous collective national identity, the inhabitants of Anglia are free to embrace a new culture of their own. There are new emerging dialects, new folk stories are shared, and new cultural traditions are started.¹⁶¹

Moreover, by this destructuralization, the taint of all previous simulations also disappears. This space can thus be reclaimed by the 'remainder'. The presence of the remainder – marginalised yet unreachable by simulation and hyperreality – then signals that a more natural and imaginary form of reality can emerge. This essence is re-established in Anglia, for example, by the presence of stronger natural forces – "The seasons, being untrustworthy, were more respected and their beginnings marked by pious ceremonies. Weather, long since diminished to a mere determinant of personal mood, became central again: something external, operating its system of rewards and punishments, mainly the latter. It had no rivalry or interference from industrial weather, and was self-indulgent in its dominance: secretive, immanent, capricious, ever threatening the miraculous."¹⁶²

Accordingly, this return of the reminder is mirrored in the form of the inhabitants' lifestyles. By abandoning most modern commodities and technology, the land is divided into smaller village-sized communities, the common lands are reintroduced, fields and farms are smaller in size, food and resources are not overly wasted, and family evenings and letter writing are cherished as meaningful rituals.¹⁶³

The questions of whether Anglia's situation is attributed to economic downfall, spiritual rejuvenation, or natural course of life hold little importance to its inhabitants, "a sign perhaps that the country's fretful, psoriatic self-consciousness had finally come to an end."¹⁶⁴ The inhabitants, therefore, liberated by the overriding force of England, England's simulacrum, embrace the new quieter and natural way of living with acceptance and respect for the newly resurfaced and powerful essence of natural life. Essentially, as a community, they are now able to create a new reality without the detrimental influence of the world of simulation and hyperreality.

¹⁶¹ Barnes, *England, Englan*, 254, 244, 247.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 253–256.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 257.

CONCLUSION

The novel *England, England* by Julian Barnes illustrates a scenario where the nation of England is replicated into a theme park located on the Isle of Wight. This project, termed *England, England*, targets the nation's identity, history, culture, and other elements connected to Englishness, which are, nonetheless, intentionally modified to coincide with a desired model of simulation. The degree of simulation of the original elements of reference intensifies and develops in the same simulation patterns as Jean Baudrillard describes in his treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*. The representation of an appearance in the form of a jigsaw puzzle of England falls under the first stage of simulation. The distortion of the appearance of landmarks and altering information about historical events fall under the second stage of simulation of purposefully changing reality. The simulation of authentic English life on the island and presenting the operation of governing bodies through performance fall under the third stage of simulation of masking the absence of reality. The ultimate disintegration of England and the emergence of *England, England* as a nation in its place indicates the final fourth stage of simulation of hyperreality, where the replica overrides the original reference and becomes the new reality. In this stage, the distinction between reality and its replica is indecipherable. Thus, the project of *England, England*, becomes a pure simulacrum and a nation of hyperreal existence, while England is abandoned and forgotten about. Under the new name - Anglia, the territory turns from the modern way of life to that of natural flow and order.

Therefore, through simulation, the project of *England, England* represents a monument of total disconnection from reality, values, and meaning since it deconstructs the nation of England, reassembles it into synthesised components, and displays it for the world as a commodity for consumption.

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