

Jelige: Albion

“The Greater *Frisson*”: Simulated Memory and Identity in Julian Barnes’ *England, England*

“What is real? This is sometimes how I put the question to myself.
Are *you* real, for instance – you and you?” (Barnes 31)

Sir Jack Pitman, the creator of the Island Project he named “England, England,” questions not only the authenticity of artifacts, or the reality of his creation, but also the very nature of every person’s identity. Pitman’s words, a character inhabiting the world of Barnes’s novel entitled *England, England*, raise one of the greatest problems of the postindustrial society, resulting in an overwhelming anxiety. However, Pitman’s tone seems highly ironical, which makes his relation to the simulacrum ambivalent for the reader. Throughout the novel, he is one of the few characters who attempt to define the simulacrum through their own subjective view of it, but Barnes does not provide any clear definitions, allowing the reader to identify “the greater *frisson*” for himself/herself in the web of simulacra.

The phrase “the greater *frisson*,” chosen as title, encompasses the pervasive feeling the simulacrum creates in the inhabitants of the novel, the excitement of creating the perfect simulacrum, and of being integral part of it. It seems that the simulation is more interesting than “reality,” a concept employed here in contrast to the simulacrum, basically representing a stage in human understanding prior to the emergence of the theory of the simulacrum. Consequently, the present paper will attempt to locate this “*frisson*” characterizing our relation to the simulacrum, in the novel itself, focusing on three basic themes, namely the creation of England, England, the miniature England, and the individual’s relation to this world, presented through simulated memory and identity.

This paper intends to re-interpret the simulacrum through Barnes’s novel, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by also considering the different theories behind it. Since Jean Baudrillard, as one of the most important theoreticians of the simulacrum, plays a prominent role in the novel, his theories will gain central importance in this paper, as he is

both employed and contested by the fictional characters.¹ The consideration of *England, England* from the viewpoint of the theory of the simulacrum functions on two fronts: on the one hand, the knowledge of how the simulacrum works may provide a new aspect for the reading of fiction and the understanding of the contemporary culture, on the other, the novel's adoption of theories concerning the simulacrum, its criticism of the respective theories and its often ironic approach widen the theoretical field and add to our understanding of the simulacrum. Whereas every interpretation of the novel points out the allusions to Baudrillard, this paper will go further by bringing together and analyzing both the fictional world of simulacrum and the novel's central themes, and the relevant concepts adopted from Baudrillard. This method will result, on the one hand, in a re-interpretation of Baudrillard's theory from the perspective of fiction and, on the other, in revealing the complexity of Barnes's novel and its relevance for the contemporary reader, contesting such claims as it being a mere "parody," "farce," or "satire."²

The approach outlines a progress from theory to practice and back, analyzing both philosophy and literature: Barnes's understanding and definition of the simulacrum stands at the centre, employing Baudrillard's theory. However, since Baudrillard himself relies on earlier theoreticians, most significantly on Plato himself, the consideration of Plato's theory is also important. Baudrillard builds his philosophy upon a definition of simulacra stemming from Plato, formulated by Brian Massumi as "a copy of a copy whose relation to the model has been so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy" (91). The present paper will trace the process through which the copy ceases to be a copy and becomes the simulacrum, for which Barnes's novel will provide the reader with stances revealing the gradually growing effect of simulacra.

Plato was the first philosopher to be preoccupied by the dualism model-copy. In "The Allegory of the Cave", Book VII of *The Republic*, Plato, through a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, gives a metaphorical description of the whole mankind. One of his philosophical assumptions is that the world perceived by our senses is not the real but only a poor copy of it. He further implies that the real world can be apprehended only intellectually. Here he presents people as inhabiting an underground cave, being chained so that their moves are limited, they can

¹ It is rather customary to analyze *England, England* by focusing mainly on Baudrillard's theory of the simulacrum. For instance, Nick Bentley, in his *British Fiction of the 1990s*, remarks that "the French philosopher in the novel presents us with an argument that is an adaptation of Baudrillard's theories on simulacra" (184); or Sebastian Groes and Peter Childs note that Barnes's novel features "a French postsituationist Baudrillardian intellectual" (6).

² See Bradford 182; Korte 285; Henke 90; Mergenthal 101; Guignery 3; Holmes 91.

only see the shadows of the “real” things and people surrounding them. He (or Socrates) states: “what people in this situation would take for truth would be nothing more than the shadows of the manufactured objects” (Plato 221). His view implies that the majority of mankind inhabits a world of shadows which represent the reality they can experience. The possibility of leaving the cave in which shadows are perceived as the real things, and stepping into a world governed by light would result in pain and irritation. For them, illusion proves to be “more real than the real” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 1), shadows are truer than the objects themselves, and they prefer this state to the painful ascent into knowledge. The symbolic undertone of Plato’s words implies that the society lives in such dark caves where illusions preside and only a select few reach lightness or intellectual liberation.³

Baudrillard, relying on Plato’s doctrines, gives an outline of the historical theory of sign structures. Starting from the preindustrial societies characterized by “symbolic” structures in which signs consisted of words with referents, he reaches the Renaissance period, in which the abstract code presided, meaning that language began to lose its reciprocity, and finally arrives at the late 20th century, in which signs are completely separated from their referents. Thus Baudrillard gives the definition of a new world which is dominated by simulacra without referents, without any reality except their own. This world of simulacra he terms “hyperreality”: a world of self-referential signs. He speaks about a society, about the contemporary world, as governed by simulacra “masking the absence of a basic reality” and “bearing no relation to reality”: “We are in a world where the essential function of the sign is to make reality disappear and at the same time to mask that disappearance” (*Screened Out* 115). So, there can be seen a development which leads from the copy to the simulacrum itself. Simulacra can no longer be interpreted through dichotomies, they eliminate every possibility for understanding the world through the dualistic system we are accustomed to. As images become interchangeable, we find our world governed by utter indetermination.

The great leap from Plato to Baudrillard can be explained by the fact that theories of the simulacrum gained vast territories starting from the second half of the twentieth century, and

³ In *The Sophist*, Plato enumerates two kinds of image making: “the art of making likenesses, and phantastic or the art of making appearances,” which Baudrillard further develops into four phases, namely: 1 It is the reflection of a basic reality. 2 It masks and perverts a basic reality. 3 It masks the absence of a basic reality. 4 It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (*Simulacra* 4)

today they are usually included under the blanket term “postmodernism.”⁴ Postmodernism itself entails quite a few characteristics which we identify in relation to simulations, for instance, as Norman Denzin summarizes,

Postmodernism is defined by the following terms: *a nostalgic, conservative longing for the past, coupled with an erasure of the boundaries between the past and the present; an intense preoccupation with the real and its representations; a pornography of the visible; the commodification of sexuality and desire; a consumer culture which objectifies a set of masculine cultural ideals; intense emotional experiences shaped by anxiety, alienation, resentment, and a detachment from others.* (Denzin vii, italics in original)

Consequently, it seems that the simulacrum is a postmodern phenomenon. However, it has been always present, theoreticians have always been preoccupied with its forms under different names, such as Friedrich Nietzsche in his 1888 “Reason in Philosophy,” claiming that the senses deceive, they present lies, and exclaiming: “get rid of the *body*, this miserable *idée fixe* of the senses! full of all the errors of logic, refuted, impossible even, although it is impudent enough to act as if it were real!” (167). Thus, his views are similar to Plato’s, but he lays emphasis on the senses which, according to him, blind the individual and confine the truth, the reality.

While not much can be found under the term “simulacrum” before the second half of the twentieth century, these years present growing interest in this phenomenon. For instance, Umberto Eco, similarly to Baudrillard (who wrote extensively about the United States, Disneyland, etc.), in *Travels in Hyperreality* (the same term as used by Baudrillard for the “reality” of simulacra), brings examples of simulacra (ghost towns in America), differentiating between two types, namely: “reasonably authentic” ones (40) and those “born from nothing, out of pure imitative determination” which he calls “the real thing” (40). The similarities between his and Baudrillard’s theory, furthermore, between his definition of the second group and the Island Project Jack Pitman creates, are uncanny.

The simulacrum is widely accepted as a postmodernist term, referring most importantly to the postmodern self. In the following work, it will be analyzed from the perspective of such a

⁴ Norman Denzin, in his *Images of Postmodern Society*, focuses on the terms “postmodernism” and “postmodern self,” basing his theory on the Baudrillardian understanding of the simulacrum; similarly, David B. Clarke, in *Consumer Society and the Postmodern*, defines the postmodern through the simulacrum, claiming that “the postmodern can be characterized as ‘the immense process of the destruction of meaning, equal to the earlier destruction of appearances’” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 161; Clarke 77); Scott Durham, in his exhaustive *Phantom Communities*, sets out to re-examine the theory of the simulacrum and its relation to postmodernism from the theoretical legacy of the simulacrum as “the privileged form through which something like a ‘postmodern experience’ might be imagined” (3).

“postmodern self,” defined by Denzin as “[t]he self who embodies the multiple contradictions of postmodernism, while experiencing itself through the everyday performances of gender, class, and racially-linked social identities” (vii), the fictional postmodern selves (from Barnes’s novel) will primarily present different feelings and reactions to the simulacrum, through their simulated memories and their simulated identities. Nevertheless, the novel, similarly to Baudrillard’s theory, follows a progress from representation to simulation, with its characters gradually shifting from the sphere of representation to that of simulation, through the creation of the Island Project, which turns not only the Isle of Wight (housing England, England) into a simulacrum, but Old England itself, and the inhabitants of both worlds as well.

From Representation to Simulation

Andreas Huyssen states in his *Present Pasts*: “[o]riginal remakes’ are in, and not only as merchandise: as cultural theorists and critics we are obsessed with re-presentation, repetition, replication, and the culture of the copy, with or without original” (20–21). The postmodern world gradually stops chasing a lost original, an “original” which nevertheless always proves to be a replica of an earlier “original”. Today’s individuals live in a world which functions as a system of simulacra, a system that comprises a new kind of reality.

Jean Baudrillard set out to present this system of simulacra Huyssen talks about, with a rather apocalyptic vision, filled with a sense of loss, not only of real referentials, but of the individual self as well. He argues: “Like the illusionist in the story, we are suddenly aware of the rapid, unintended disappearance of something very precious (a disappearance for which we must in some way be responsible). But of what? And how are we to bring it back?” (*Screened Out* 116). His theory discloses the entangled web of simulacra, pertaining to different orders or levels, as he terms them. In his view, simulations, and since representations gradually become incorporated into simulations, they as well, cover more complex and more overarching simulacra that comprise the fabric of our lives. Baudrillard identifies this state as a stage from which there is no return, characterized by a strong sense of loss:

For we know that with us and all our undertakings, the world will never be real or original again, and that everything is doomed, henceforth, to the curse of the screen, the curse of the simulacrum. We are in a world where the essential function of the sign is to make reality disappear and at the same time to mask that disappearance. Behind each image something

has disappeared (it is not so much what it represents as this conjuring trick inherent in the image which gives it its force as sign). (*Screened Out* 115)

Baudrillard depicts the simulacrum as an all-pervasive phenomenon whose main aim is to cover losses, disappearances. He understands the contemporary state of the world as “doomed” and “cursed”. However, while “reality” might disappear behind the screen, behind the simulacrum, a new reality is born: “hyperreality” which exceeds the boundaries of the real.

Simulacra go beyond simple copies which cling to lost referentials: they become new realities, they form a world in which the simulacrum as a distinct phenomenon is the real itself, thus becoming the hyperreal, as Baudrillard names it. The prefix “hyper” denotes something excessive and exaggerated; in this manner, the hyperreal becomes “more real than the real”. Baudrillard defines it as “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality” (*Simulacra* 1), which is “sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences” (1). The hyperreal becomes a condition in which real and imaginary are blended and it is impossible to distinguish them from one another.

Prior to Baudrillard, Guy Debord celebrates the new society, the “society of the spectacle”, and this conforms to the understanding of life which, in Baudrillard’s view, pertains to the past, today is gradually disappearing. Debord analyzes the society from the perspective of representations, without reaching the point at which these representations cease to exist, mold into the more complex design of the simulation. He speaks about a “spectacular domination” that “eradicate[s] historical knowledge” (*Comments* np) by the spectacle which “organizes ignorance of what is about to happen and, immediately afterwards, the forgetting of whatever has nonetheless been understood. The more important something is, the more it is hidden” (np). Debord attributes the media, which surrounds us, the power to turn everything – past, present and future – into an eternity, into an amalgam of events that lose their importance: “When social significance is attributed only to what is immediate, and to what will be immediate immediately afterwards, always replacing another, identical, immediacy, it can be seen that the uses of the media guarantee a kind of eternity of noisy insignificance” (np).

The spectacle, similarly to the simulacrum, is defined by repetition. Its power lies in continuously going back to the start, and thus altering everything, every “reality” for its own purposes. Guy Debord’s theory concerning the spectacle stands for an understanding of the world

prior to Baudrillard's, who draws attention to the fact that Debord is concerned with representations which still cling to their originals, to something accepted as real. However, the safety provided by this view is dispersed with the emergence of the theory of the simulacrum. As Baudrillard states in *The Vital Illusion*, "for Debord there was still a chance of disalienation, a chance for the subject to recover his or her autonomy and sovereignty" (66). This stands for an approach which can no longer be accepted, since reality becomes only an illusion. He states that in a world defined by excesses, particularly by the excess of reality which "puts an end to reality" (*Vital* 66),

We move into a world where everything that exists only as idea, dream, fantasy, utopia will be eradicated, because it will immediately be realized, operationalized. Nothing will survive as an idea or a concept. You will not even have time enough to imagine. Events, real events, will not even have time to take place. (*Vital* 66)

Debord's thesis operates on the level of the scene, functioning as a mirror to the reality of everyday life. Baudrillard identifies the disappearance of the "scene" and the "mirror" (*Ecstasy* 126) in the contemporary world. He describes the previous understanding of "this whole intimate universe" (*Ecstasy* 126) as corresponding "to the imaginary depths of the mirror and 'scene': there is a domestic scene, a scene of interiority, a private space-time (correlative, moreover, to a public space)" (*Ecstasy* 126). While in this state there was a direct relationship between subject and object, in which the object worked as a mirror to the subject, today this distinction is no longer valid. The scene and the mirror disappear and the screen and network take over their place: "a nonreflecting surface, an immanent surface where operations unfold – the smooth operational surface of communication" (*Ecstasy* 127). The screen represents the new reality, the hyperreality which has no relation to the older perception of reality. It functions as a distinct entity, never allowing a peek behind or beyond it, building its own truth, its own unique world:

The era of hyperreality now begins. What I mean is this: what was projected psychologically and mentally, what used to be lived out on earth as metaphor, as mental or metaphorical scene, is henceforth projected into reality, without any metaphor at all, into an absolute space which is also that of simulation. (*Ecstasy* 128)

This drastic shift in the world which Baudrillard identifies comes with heightened losses: the loss both of the public and the private life and space. As he remarks, "the one is no longer a spectacle, the other no longer a secret" (*Ecstasy* 130). The society of the spectacle ended, with the society of

the simulacrum taking over, “when all becomes transparence and immediate visibility, when everything is exposed to the harsh and inexorable light of information and communication” (*Ecstasy* 130). This hyperreality does away with every scene, with every image and consequently puts an end to every representation. According to Baudrillard, the present state of civilization is a virtual surface which gradually integrates every reality situated outside itself, and makes them hyperreal.

England, England: The Perfect Simulacrum

Julian Barnes’s novel captures the shift through which Debord’s society of the spectacle, a world dominated by representations, gradually turns into Baudrillard’s hyperreality, into the society of the simulacrum, of the screen. In the fictional work the boundary between the real and the replica becomes blurred, and ultimately the replica becomes the thing itself – as Jack Pitman, the great entrepreneur of *England, England* names it: “der Ding an Sich” (61).⁵ *Ding an sich*, in the novel, represents the point at which the boundary between authentic and original is dispersed. Although the original ceases to exist in the world of simulacra, which in this case is “England, England”, since the characters move in the sphere of representation, they identify the simulacrum as original, and thus the perfect simulacrum gains existence. Consequently, the Island is believed to be England itself.

The novel traces the birth of the Island Project and its becoming a new kind of “thing-in-itself.” One of the most relevant stages in *England, England*, capturing the simulation, is represented by the French philosopher, who provides the reader with an elaborated thesis concerning the (fictional) contemporary world. Coming to give a lecture to the crew working on the simulacrum of the Island project (the island which becomes more than the miniature replica of “Old England”), his assumptions seem to bear quite a few similarities with Baudrillard’s,

⁵ This concept has a great history, analyzed and defined by numerous philosophers from Immanuel Kant through Friedrich Nietzsche to Martin Heidegger. Kant assumed a *Ding an sich* in order to identify the cause of our sensations: “objects in themselves are not known to us at all, and that what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after in experience” (162). G. W. F. Hegel (similarly to Edmund Husserl) in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, challenged Kant’s theory of the thing in itself as unknown, claiming that by knowing phenomena more fully we can arrive at the consciousness of the absolute and spiritual truth.

however, while Baudrillard criticizes the world of “hyperreality,” the fictional philosopher praises it. As he states:

Once there was only the world, directly lived. Now there is the representation – let me fracture that word, the re-presentation – of the world. It is not a substitute for that plain and primitive world, but an enhancement and enrichment, an ionization and summation of that world. This is where we live today. A monochrome world has become Technicolor, a single croaking speaker has become wraparound sound. Is this our loss? No, it is our conquest, our victory. (Barnes 54)

The philosopher argues that the contemporary society prefers the replica to the original, the reproduction to the work of art itself. He states that “[w]hen such discoveries were first made, there were certain old-fashioned people who expressed disappointment, even shame” (Barnes 54), considering that the fabric of the society is undermined. Allusions to Baudrillard and other theoreticians are quite overt, the fictional philosopher even cites some ideas pertaining to him. However, he confidently affirms that “in the modern world we prefer the replica to the original because it gives us the greater *frisson*” (54). This *frisson*, this excitement and thrill is what animates the entire project and what stands at the core of the simulacrum of the island: this *frisson* brings tourists from all around the world to experience a new kind of England (at first the replica of the old country, but becoming a distinct entity with no relation to its model). The simulacrum becomes more appealing, “more real than the real,” providing the longed-for *frisson* for every visitor, and even for its actors who also choose the simulacrum over the model.

The Island of *England, England* functions on the basis of repetition: the actors performing various roles of historical figures enact and re-enact each event day by day, forming an infinite circle, which ultimately leads to the birth of a new reality.⁶ The actors identify so completely with their roles that they believe to have become the original. The special issue of *Ding an sich*

⁶ Baudrillard employs and redefines the structuralist and poststructuralist concepts in order to explain the generation of simulacra. Thus, in order to understand the Baudrillardian definition of the simulacrum, presented and analyzed by Barnes’s novel, one has to go back to Ferdinand de Saussure, according to whom the essential principle of language is that it consists of signs with signifiers and signifieds (Saussure 70). Roland Barthes, a poststructuralist philosopher employs the concept of the “signifying chain,” stating that a “signifier word/ signified concept chain can continue *ad infinitum* by using the initial concept produced as a signifier for a further concept” (Barthes 111). With this, signs cease to be comprised by the duality of signifier-signified, since these implode, creating the simulacrum in which signifiers point towards new signifiers: Jacques Lacan suggests that the meaning is attributed to the sign (as a unity) in relation to other signs from the signifying chain, like “rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings” (Lacan 116). The idea of implosion Baudrillard develops in numerous instances, as being the inevitable consequence of the “explosive” processes (which constantly accelerate and acquire a fatal speed and ultimately lead to the system’s implosion).

surfaces once again: the actors believe the illusion, and they become the new models for others. Thus, the old model, the “original” is destroyed, and this new model takes its place. The whole role-playing becomes authentic, since the copy takes over the place of the model allowing for new copies to appear. The initial phase of the novel reveals an approach which conforms to Debord’s handling of the duality of original-copy. At the beginning, the fictional characters lure the reader into the illusion that everything presented in the novel has visible connections to an original (certainly, in the boundaries of the fictional world they inhabit). What becomes of great concern is the issue of authenticity, surfacing when we understand the world through the dichotomy of original and representation. Walter Benjamin, in his “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” approaches this issue from the perspective of the “aura” (Benjamin *passim*.), stating that the original possesses an aura which is lost through reproductions. As Benjamin remarks,

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership. The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original. (215)

The element reproductions lack, according to Benjamin, is the aura itself. Since he considers that the “presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” (215), with the loss of the aura that characterizes the original, every possibility for creating something authentic is lost. The numerous reproductions which, through time, became possible and widely used, substitute “a plurality of copies for a unique existence” (216), thus creating a crisis in which no original object can be found. With the advent of the age of simulacra, the concept of authenticity itself became altered: while at first originality was the prerequisite of authenticity, today the original has disappeared, but the authentic conformed to the new system. In the case of *England, England*, the central characters invest themselves into the very creation of a reproduction that would faithfully mirror an original, the country itself, at first attempting to preserve (the illusion of) that original. However, Sir Jack’s reaction to the French philosopher’s lecture becomes the point at which he detaches himself and his project from the plane of reproductions, deciding to create the perfect simulacrum.

Repetition generates anxiety which can be identified in the wish to be original, and the realization that nothing can be traced back to an original. The novel problematizes the complex issue of reality. Ultimately, it reveals that this reality is not fixed but comprised of simulacra which provide a new version to the lost original, taking the place of that original. Everything belonging to this fictional world reaches its extremes, so that not even death can be accepted any more. Jack Pitman, though dead, must immediately be replaced by a new face, which makes the grieving of his death impossible: one cannot visit the tombstone of a man and then cheer on his appearance as the leader of the Island:

The funeral was an affair of orotundity and black-plumed horses; some of the grief was real. But Time, or, more exactly, the dynamics of Sir Jack's own Project, had its revenge. In the first months, Premier Visitors came to pay their homage at the mausoleum, to read Sir Jack's wall-wisdom, and depart thoughtfully. Yet they also continued to tour the Pitman mansion at the end of the Mall, if anything in larger numbers. Such loyal enthusiasm pointed up the emptiness and melancholy of the building after its proprietor's death, and it seemed to both Jeff and Mark that there was a difference between making your Visitors reflective and making them depressed. Then the logic of marketing flamed like a message on Belshazzar's wall: Sir Jack must live again. (217)

Richard Bradford argues that "*England, England* (1998) addresses itself almost exclusively to its subject. Everything and every individual in the novel is a falsification, often a caricature, of questionable memories and nostalgic contrivances" (93). However, what shows itself as a mere caricature turns into a more serious matter: actors become one with their characters, Old England almost entirely ceases to exist, closing its gates to all countries, reverting into a primordial state, the Island taking away its position, even Sir Jack, the entrepreneur, who should be a "real" figure in this imaginary world, proves to play a role which must always be fulfilled by someone. So the question Pitman asks becomes central to the whole understanding of this fictional world: "What is real? This is sometimes how I put the question to myself. Are *you* real, for instance – you and you?" (Barnes 31). The events show that nothing is real, not even those certainties to which we cling in our fear.

The novel gradually abandons every link to a supposed original: what it presents ceases to be mere representation, it becomes the thing itself, the simulacrum. As Gilles Deleuze remarks, "[t]hings are simulacra themselves, simulacra are the superior forms, and the difficulty facing everything is to become its own simulacrum, to attain the status of a sign in the coherence of eternal return" (*Logic* 67); a difficulty which in the novel is turned into a goal: the island with its

every inhabitant becomes its own simulacrum in the eternal repetition of roles and performances. When the island achieves this state, it becomes the perfect simulacrum its creator dreamed of, and thus ceases to be a representation of the “Old England.” As Baudrillard claims, “representations stem from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real” (*Simulacra* 25), whereas simulation “stems from the Utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversions and death sentence of every reference” (25). Simulation incorporates the representation, thus producing a simulacrum, distancing it from all referents, ultimately comprising an entirely new system.

The system of dichotomies in which signifier and signified are both present as distinct entities, is dispersed when an implosion takes place in which the boundaries are eliminated, and only the unity of the simulacrum remains. However, since every era’s world view is based on dualities (e.g. Cartesian dualism), on the cherished dichotomy of model-copy, original-reproduction, image-likeness, this implosion causes chaos or the “crisis of signification”, a sense of insecurity and anxiety pervading the scene and the audience – society at large. Baudrillard characterizes the new world as governed by “models”, or “self-referential simulacra”. The emergent hyperreality is a world with self-referential signs, in which simulation stands for the “generation by models of a real without origin or reality” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 1). In this manner, as Baudrillard remarks, “[t]he territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory” (1), we live in a world defined by the “precession of simulacra” (1).

This simulacrum brings all times into the present: the past becomes “instantaneous and instantaneously forgotten” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 87), incorporated in the simulacrum, which gains life through an implosion. As Baudrillard asserts, “simulation is characterized by a precession of the model” (*Simulacra* 16), meaning that the models always come first, they create the events. As a result, there is a confusion of the fact with the model, the implosion of antagonistic poles:

In fact, this whole process can only be understood in its negative form: nothing separates one pole from another anymore, the beginning from the end; there is a kind of contraction of one over the other, a fantastic telescoping, a collapse of the two traditional poles into each other: implosion - an absorption of the radiating mode of causality, of the differential mode of determination, with its positive and negative charge - an implosion of meaning. That is where simulation begins. (*Simulacra* 31)

Baudrillard's conclusion that "the map precedes the territory" stems from Jorge Luis Borges's fable and extends towards a general description of the contemporary world. In his "On Exactitude in Science", Borges presents an empire in which the mapping of a particular territory became so detailed and perfect that the map itself occupied that territory entirely. The wish for perfection drew the cartographers into mapping the entire empire, resulting in a map the exact size of its subject. This is what Baudrillard calls the hyperreal: an entity which exceeds the real, surpasses it, and results in the degeneration of the real, in its total disappearance. "The map precedes the territory" becomes not only an axiom, but a realization that simulacra precede reality and only hyperreality remains. The theme park of *England, England* functions as Borges's map that precedes Old England itself and endangers its existence. The island is hyperreal: "more real than the real", and England's "shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map" (1). While Baudrillard speaks about maps that entail the existence of an original and a connection between the two, Deleuze dissolves this connection and considers the simulacrum as a distinct entity from its appearance.⁷

The greatest difference between Baudrillard's and Deleuze's approach to the theory of the simulacrum would be that while Baudrillard seems to ground his theory on the Platonic understanding of the simulacrum, Deleuze inverts the Platonic hierarchies. Baudrillard, in "The Precession of Simulacra", returns to the Platonic dichotomy, only to reverse it: "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself... Illusion is no longer possible because the real is no longer possible" (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 19). Baudrillard's "nightmarish vision of art offers no constructive alternatives to our image culture" (Camille 43). Contrary to this approach, Deleuze seeks to provide an alternative to Platonism, analyzing the novelty and the possibilities the simulacrum opens up in visual arts, emphasizing the role art plays in every individual's life ("We have forsaken moral existence in order to enter into aesthetic existence", 1990, 257). Deleuze

⁷ Deleuze takes the understanding of the simulacrum to a new level, contrary to Baudrillard. He states that "the copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance" (*Logic* 257). Thus, in his understanding, the simulacrum undermines the very distinction between copy and model, and bears only an external resemblance to a model: "a thing, in order to become apparent, is forced to simulate structural states and to slip into states of forces that serve it as masks... underneath the mask and by means of it, it already invests the terminal forms and the specific higher states whose integrity it will subsequently establish" (Deleuze, and Guattari 91). Contrary to Baudrillard's four phases outlined in *Simulacra and Simulation*, Deleuze does not agree with the view that simulacra replace reality, but he claims that simulation "appropriates reality in the operation of despotic overcoding, it produces reality on the new full body that replaces the earth. It expresses the appropriation and production of the real by a quasi-cause" (Deleuze, and Guattari 228).

considers the simulacrum to harbour “a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*” (Deleuze 262, italics in original). This simulacrum is not subversive but receptive, all-encompassing, in which “there is no longer any privileged point of view except that of the object common to all points of view” (262). The point of view central to Plato’s construction of simulacra is displaced. The differences among the approaches to the simulacrum surface in the novel as well, in which the central characters occupy firm positions in the debate. However, these positions seem to provide an overview of the philosophers’ theories.

The main point at which theories clash in the novel is realized through the French philosopher who, while bearing visible similarities with Baudrillard, criticizes his views on the simulacrum and, ironically, he is also criticized and rejected by Sir Jack Pitman, the great entrepreneur of England, England. Sir Jack finds the French philosopher disappointing, since he speaks of reproductions, while they

are not talking Disneyland, World’s Fair, Festival of Britain, Legoland, or Pare Asterix. Colonial Williamsburg? [...]We are not seeking two-penny tourists. It is world-boggling time. We shall offer far more than words such as Entertainment can possibly imply; even the phrase Quality Leisure, proud though I am of it, perhaps, in the long run, falls short. We are offering the thing itself. Der Ding an sich. (87)

Sir Jack is conscious of the simulacrum as both Deleuze and Baudrillard explain it: the simulacrum as being the new reality, with no connections to any original whatsoever, creating a new world, being itself the new world. Sir Jack’s explanation of the simulacrum through the example of the nature we perceive as the “real” nature, untouched by man represents the moment at which every representation disappears, at which the hyperreal is born: The Island. As he states,

You, as a person passing through, would no doubt have assumed that Dame Nature was going about her eternal business. I knew better, Mark. The hill was an Iron Age burial mound, the undulating field a vestige of Saxon agriculture, the copse was a copse only because a thousand other trees had been cut down, the river was a canal, and the pheasant had been hand-reared by a gamekeeper. [...] It becomes the thing itself. (89)

The Island, similarly to nature, becomes the new authentic, acquires a reality distinct from everything preceding it, just as nature, accepted as the authentic, is something entirely constructed, deconstructed by man and then reconstructed for new purposes, as a new world. At this state all dichotomies collapse, there is no way of telling original from copy, since there is no

such thing any longer: only simulacra, the world which struggles to hide its existence as simulacrum.

Memory and Nostalgia. The Past as the Lost Referential

Jean Baudrillard's theory of the simulacrum comprehensively analyzes the different aspects of the individual in general which suffer changes due to the emergence of simulacra. At the centre of his interest, just as at the centre of Barnes's novel, stands the "self," and every change, every impact of the simulacrum is filtered through this. The emergence of hyperreality entails both challenges (and anxieties) and thrill ("frisson") for the individual. One of the sites at which these great changes become overt, and which both Baudrillard's theory and Barnes's novel share, is memory and its unreliability, resulting in nostalgia. Baudrillard draws attention upon the appearance of a heightened sense of nostalgia, which results from losing the real (understood as the opposite of the hyperreal) and our sense of the past:

When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality - a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. Escalation of the true, of lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. Panic-stricken production of the real and of the referential, parallel to and greater than the panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us - a strategy of the real, of the neoreal and the hyperreal that everywhere is the double of a strategy of deterrence. (*Simulacra* 6)

These issues are of primary importance because simulacra comprise in a perfect manner the relationship between past and nostalgia, our relationship to history. The sense of nostalgia is heightened in the course of a life lived surrounded by simulacra, by an altered history. Nostalgia becomes the predominant feeling through which people struggle to reconnect with their past, with their roots, which is constantly altered and organized according to the logic of simulation.

Recent years presented the emergence of memory as a key cultural concern, which implies, contrary to earlier tendencies, a turning towards the past, a clinging to past events, a return to something which almost imperceptibly slides into oblivion. Andreas Huyssen reflects on the change in understanding the memory: he notes that memory for the Romantics was a force which "bound us in some deep sense to times past" (Huyssen 3), while today memory becomes

something very present, since the act of remembering itself always happens in the present, and focus shifts onto the act. As he states,

Historical memory today is not what it used to be. It used to mark the relation of a community or a nation to its past, but the boundary between past and present used to be stronger and more stable than it appears to be today. Untold recent and not so recent pasts impinge upon the present through modern media of reproduction like photography, film, recorded music, and the Internet, as well as through the explosion of historical scholarship and an ever more voracious museal culture. The past has become part of the present in ways simply unimaginable in earlier centuries. As a result, temporal boundaries have weakened just as the experiential dimension of space has shrunk as a result of modern means of transportation and communication. (Huyssen 1)

Thus, he understands memory as “a mode of re-presentation and as a belonging ever more to the present” (Huyssen 4). What is of paramount importance in his understanding of the memory is that, as he states, “[i]nvariably, every act of memory carries with it a dimension of betrayal, forgetting, and absence” (Huyssen 4). Huyssen sheds light on the fact that memory is closely allied with forgetting, which is one of the most characteristic phenomena of today’s world.

Progress means shedding the past, destroying the past ways of living, of being in the world. Destruction takes active part in a progressive society: destruction of the past means forgetting, forgetting leads to amnesia: an amnesia that characterizes the whole world and threatens every individual. What defines today’s world is the disappearance of a sense of history, as Fredric Jameson states:

the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social information have had, in one way or another, to preserve. (Jameson 20)

This, in its own course, results in trauma as experienced by each member of the society. Huyssen defines trauma as being “located on the threshold between remembering and forgetting, seeing and not seeing, transparency and occlusion, experience and its absence in repetition” (Huyssen 8). Memory and trauma both exist due to an absence, they are “marked by instability, transitoriness, and structures of repetition” (Huyssen 8). Consequently, there is an implied sense of loss, but not necessarily an overwhelming one. The contemporary world requires forgetting of the kind which manifests itself through the memory.

Barnes constantly plays with the concept of memory throughout his novel. As he writes in *England, England*, “Memories of childhood were the dreams that stayed with you after you woke” (6). Memory plays a key role, being the phenomenon which opens the novel and which guides the reader through it. Memory and the jigsaw puzzle run in parallel as two concepts representing the development of personality. The memory is a model which is constantly rewritten, altered by nostalgia, thus gradually losing all connection to the original.

Past events fall into an abyss, impossible to recollect. As Jonathan Culler notes, “one cannot track down and make present the event or cause because it exists nowhere” (163). Consequently, memory becomes a trauma, impossible to reconcile. Martha’s memories symbolized by her childhood jigsaw puzzle are the representatives of her constant search for her father and for her identity: “She did not know whether she was meant to remember or to forget the past. At this rate she would never build her character” (87). She feels that her life is unfulfilled, and the only way to retain some control and balance is through her memories of playing with her “Counties of England” puzzle.

Memory fails to recall the past faithfully and, what is more, it is able to distort past events for its own purposes. Martha notes that what is represented by memory is not “a solid, seizable thing” (Barnes 3) in the past, but rather “a memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when” (3). This leads to an infinite chain – the signifying chain – in which each memory points to an earlier one, never reaching truth *per se*, but only figments of the consciousness which compose a story about the past of the individual. Memory is no more than “a sign that only ever points back to another sign” (Henstra 97). As Sarah Henstra remarks, “Martha compares personal memory with national history to explain how the means supercede the ends when reconstructing the past”:

If a memory wasn't a thing but a memory of a memory of a memory, mirrors set in parallel, then what the brain told you now about what it claimed had happened then would be coloured by what had happened in between. It was like a country remembering its history: the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself. The same went for individuals, though the process obviously wasn't straightforward. (Barnes 6 qtd. in Henstra 97)

She understands memory as built and molded by the technique of *mise en abyme*, through which her memory becomes “a story within the story of what is its own statement” (de Man 86) through “mirrors set in parallel” (Barnes 6), in which memories are embedded into other memories,

always pointing towards the next memory, never reaching an end. The result is an infinite reproduction of one's memories, and through them, of oneself: of one's own image. The process of remembering works as the chain of signifiers, constantly referring to new ones, ultimately achieving a state in which each memory is rendered unstable. Memory is always coloured and altered by new mirrors, reflecting on the present, impossible to distance from the present.

According to *The Times of London*, the newspaper published on the Isle of Wight, "Old England had lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself" (Barnes 77). In an interview, Barnes remarked that *England, England* was "about the creation of false truths about a country, and these coarse icons that are made to stand in for real things" (Guignery, and Roberts 59). The (re)creation of England and its consecutive decay stand at the centre of the novel. The process through which this is achieved relies heavily on memory: on tourists' memory of England, on their perceptions, on myths surrounding the country. As it is revealed in the course of the novel, memory is replaced by nostalgia. The text alludes to the fact that those who retain their memories of history remain outside the effect of simulacra. However, this proves to be almost impossible in a world which is conceived of simulacra and of forgetting through the media. Baudrillard, in his "Ecstasy of Communication", submits the concept of the "obscene" to surpass the medium of pornography and to pervade the entire society. He claims that "obscenity begins precisely when there is no more spectacle, no more scene, when all becomes transparence and immediate visibility, when everything is exposed to the harsh and irrevocable light of information and communication" (*Ecstasy* 130). Thus the obscene appears when everything is visible, when there are no secrets left and, consequently everything is overly close to us. All boundaries between private and public spheres disappear, so as the boundaries between past and present. The distance from which we previously contemplated our past, a nation's history has disappeared: everything is present and obscene, as Huyssen's "detemporalizing processes" show. The "history" lived on the Pitco Island becomes obscene because of its proximity to the present: the insight into the true nature of its past and of England's history is impossible. It seems that all that remains for the individuals to cling to is nostalgia.

Two distinct kinds of nostalgia are presented in the novel. The general one is represented by the tourists who seek entertainment by visiting a world of simulacra, an island re-presenting something lost, the past of a country, guided by the laws of the consumer society, of the "society of the spectacle". They, like Martha Cochrane herself, are in search of a world lost, but their

attitude is one of passive gazing, of devouring the spectacular shows they are entertained with. Martha's nostalgia differs from the one represented by the tourists: she clings to her own past – tightly connected to that of a whole country –, and does not let her memories slip away from her consciousness. Her nostalgia might be “excused”, as implied by Barnes, since it is “knowingly constructed and aware of its idealizing take on the past”, as Sarah Henstra remarks (103). Her version of nostalgia is an active agent which serves to find a valid identity for the heroine, which acknowledges that the object of its affection is not and can never be real, but a simulacrum.

[De]Constructed Identity

Identity and its definition have become of central concern in the contemporary world: in politics, in sociological studies, at every level of enquiry, with fiction occupying an important position in exploring its politics. As is the case with Barnes's *England, England*, personal identity today seems to be interconnected with national identity. The individual and the country remember their pasts through the same process, Martha identifies her first memory to consist of her assembling the counties of England jigsaw puzzle: “this, she thought, might be a true, unprocessed memory: she had progressed from the floor to the kitchen table, and her fingers were swifter with the counties now, neater and more honest – not trying to force Somerset to be Kent – and she would usually work her way round the coastline...” (Barnes 5), and thus her very first notion of her identity is directly related to her getting to know her own country. “English identity... attract[s] increasing attention..., fuelled by nostalgic reconstructions of the myths of Englishness”, Bentley remarks (11). The heightened sense of national identity provides a basis for searching the personal and for creating the illusion of community, of a shared system of values which seem to guide each individual's life in the society.

Anxieties surrounding the deconstruction and pluralization of the self have resulted in an interest in models of hybridity and inbetweenness, of identities that reside on the borders between, and in between, traditional categories of identity. This has led the novel to investigate questions of ontology often expressed as an uncertainty about the relationship between the real and the unreal, between simulacra and simulations, about authenticity and fakery, as well as nostalgia for lost or displaced selves and organic communities. (Bentley 10)

Nick Bentley reveals the relationship between identity formation and the novel which today focuses on the person caught up in a web of simulacra, unable to find “truth”, to rely on any reality. Memory plays a central role in constructing identity by distorting past events, by forming them according to its own purpose. It leads to the illusion of acquiring a clear identity and, through this identity, a sense of certainty, of safety in a world full of signifiers which lead to other signifiers, but never to signifieds: to a graspable reality.

Martha Cochrane, the central character of *England, England*, provides the occasion for the text’s enquiry into “the links between individual and collective identity, between personal loss and national decline” (Henstra 96). There is a clear-cut process of formation detected in her case, showing how, in the project which builds entirely on simulacra, from “Appointed Cynic” (Barnes 44) she becomes CEO and, in contrast to this, her sense that she loses her own identity is more and more heightened. From the very beginning, through the metaphor of her jigsaw puzzle, Martha’s “individual identity is linked to that of her country” (Henstra 96): she is overwhelmed by “a sense of desolation, failure, and disappointment in the imperfection of the world” (Barnes 5) when she discovers a piece missing, and she feels complete only when the puzzle is completed: “Staffordshire had been found, and her jigsaw, her England, and her heart had been made whole again” (Barnes 6).

Henstra notes that “[e]arly losses compounded by the inevitable failure of recall set the stage for Martha’s struggle to reconcile national and personal selfhood, while the suggestion here of indeterminate betrayal and uneasiness directs the reader’s attention to a narrative substratum of anxiety and grief” (Henstra 97). The entire process of her search for an identity is embedded in her country, which becomes even more powerful with her involvement in the Project. What haunts her throughout is the question of natural as against artificial identity, which leads to her anxiety, fearing that her nature “was no more natural” (Barnes 259) than the constructed reality of the theme park. Mark states: “As for being c–onstructed [sic]... well, so are you, Miss Cochrane, and so am I, constructed. I, if I may say so, a little more artfully than you” (Barnes 136). This proves that every individual, Martha included, is artificially constructed; our identities are formed by the illusion of being part of a community, and possibly “for all a lifetime’s internal struggling, you were finally no more than what others saw you as. That was your nature, whether you liked it or not” (Barnes 259).

Not only Martha's perception of herself changes in the course of the development of the project, but the island itself begins to take on a life of its own, starting to look like "the thing itself". This is nothing else but the victorious permeation of simulacra into the world, turning into a version of the real. The actors gradually identify with the roles they are playing, turning a world of copies into an autonomous miniature "hyperreality", as Baudrillard would name it, in which there is no more space for the reality of the past. As Henstra states about the exemplary case of Dr. Johnson, his "is an identity rehearsed and reiterated into a coherent 'self' – a self whose foibles prove irreconcilably inconvenient to the profit-minded project. Watching this melancholy genius sway and twitch in her office, Martha suddenly finds herself believing in him" (Henstra 101). The complete identification with a character leads to the birth of a new personality, of a coherent identity which becomes true, ceases to be a poor copy:

The sudden truth she had felt as he leaned over her, wheezing and muttering, was that his pain was authentic. And his pain was authentic because it came from authentic contact with the world . . . By whatever means this vision had been put in front of her, she saw a creature alone with itself, wincing at naked contact with the world. When had she last seen – or felt – anything like that? (Barnes 217-18)

The case of Dr. Johnson proves that identity has nothing to do with real or fake, original or copy – identity gains birth in contact with others, in the "imagined community" Benedict Anderson speaks about. Martha realizes something important in the course of the actions namely, that "happiness, truth, and genuine contact with the world lie elsewhere than in the ever-elusive realization of one's 'true' identity" (Henstra 101). What she witnesses in the actor's becoming a "Dr Johnson" traces the birth of the simulacrum through an implosion: the two personalities merge and form an entirely new one from which there is no turning back. This individual himself becomes the epitome of the obscene:

Martha Cochrane scanned the file onscreen which summarized the complaints against Johnson. That he was badly dressed and had a rank smell to him; that he ate his dinner like a wild beast, and so quickly that Visitors, feeling obliged to keep pace, gave themselves indigestion; that he was either bullishly dominant or sunk in silence; that several times, in mid-sentence, he had stooped down and twitched off a woman's shoe; that he was depressing company; that he made racist remarks about many of the Visitors' countries of origin; that he was irritable when closely questioned; that however brilliant his conversation might be, clients were distracted by the asthmatic gasping that accompanied it, and the needless rolling-around in his chair. (Barnes 265)

Dr Johnson, the historical figure becomes so close both to the actor and to the visitors, that none of them can objectively identify whether it is part of the show or something completely different. This too much proximity results in the visitors' witnessing details they should normally not see: like his foot fetishism, his drunkenness, rudeness, shouts. He is obscene in his every action, and consequently becomes one of the best personifications of the issue of the simulacrum in the entire novel.

As it was stated earlier, personal and national identity seem to meet in the course of the novel. The actors' changes presented above transpire in parallel with the great changes both the Island and the "original" England undergo. England, now under the name Albion (or Anglia), falls into a primordial state, but this very state is consciously organized and created in a simulacrum. It constructs new identities, every inhabitant takes up a new personality, fooling outsiders, even themselves. Jez Harris, formerly Oshinsky, an attorney working for an American firm, is an outstanding example of this phenomenon:

'Tell me,' the earnest hiker with the give-away new boots might begin, 'does that clump of trees over there have a special name?'

'Name?' Harris would shout back from his forge, wrinkling his brow and banging a vermilion horseshoe like a manic xylophonist. 'Name?' he would repeat, glaring at the investigator through matted hair. 'That be Halley's copse, half-drowned dog know that.' He would toss the shoe contemptuously into a pail of water, the fizzle and fume dramatizing his rebuke.

'Halley's copse ... You mean ... like Halley's comet?' Already the disguised sipper and browser of retarded humanity would be regretting that he couldn't take out notebook or recorder.

'Comet? What comet's that? No comet's round here betimes. Ain't never heard of Edna Halley then? No, reckon it's not what folk hereabouts like to tell of. Rum business, if you ask me, rum business.' (332)

This phenomenon, encountered in the Old England, is similar in many respects to that one experienced by tourists visiting the Island. The difference is, however, that while visitors to the Island have clearly delineated expectations, encounter characters from England's historical past, the primordial England is entirely constructed by its inhabitants, and the visitors are deprived of the security of knowing beforehand what they might encounter. This simulacrum might be even more complex than Sir Jack's, since "reality" is more changeable than ever. Jez Harris enters a game with the tourists in which he is the one who sets up the rules: if he invents a new name for some trees, the tourists are compelled to accept it unconditionally. This section enhances the

irony of the novel: in the second part, when designing the Island Project, the group provides the reader with a critique of the tourists, building the entire site on the stereotypical information foreigners have about England, and thus conforming to their “touristy” expectations. In Albion, those who have the opportunity of visiting it (since very few are permitted to), come with the same stereotypical expectations, with thirst for sensation, which, in this case, Jez Harris fulfills by inventing a name for a “clump of trees.” This is again a different kind of simulacrum: something nonexistent gaining existence through giving it a name and inventing a catching story for it.

The entire nation has reverted to its roots: roots that are impossible to retrace, and so they invent new ones for themselves. The nation living in Albion closes its gates to the outside world, becomes secluded, creates an entirely different world for itself: an agrarian world with no media, no international relations, only village people living from one day to another. For this simulacrum to function every citizen has to conform to its new rules. Consequently, many choose exile with the prospects of a successful life not obliterated by the Island Project or, to the contrary: on the Island, as actors. Those who remain, consciously choose the simulation of living, a simulation even more difficult to achieve and retain than that of the Island, since the roles of the inhabitants are not delineated beforehand by famous personalities of the past, but they have to construct these identities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the characters of *England, England*, together with its readers, achieve “the greater *frisson*” in a world of simulacra, in the fictional sites that have become “more real than the real.” The novel quite overtly follows Jean Baudrillard’s doctrines, building its world on the gradual shift from representation to simulation, ultimately comprising hyperreality. This hyperreality becomes a new kind of “Ding an sich,” dispersing the boundary between original and authentic, ultimately erasing the original. While Benjamin argued that only the original can possess an aura, and thus with reproductions the aura disappears, the novel proves that through infinite repetition a new reality is born, hyperreality which retains authenticity and, consequently, possesses an aura. In this manner, representation is substituted by simulation, like the French philosopher in the novel is replaced by Sir Jack Pitman, the entrepreneur, who creates the perfect

simulacrum (or Guy Debord's "spectacle" by Baudrillard's simulacrum and, at the last stage, Baudrillard's theory by Gilles Deleuze's).

Barnes plays an often humorous, but at other times more serious and thought-provoking game both with distinct theoretical doctrines and with human self and perception in general. Thus, he carefully combines the different sites into a novel about persons and selves, about personal and national history brought into an eternal present causing nostalgia and anxiety resulting from a sense of loss, and about a continuous search for identity in a world of simulacra, becoming a simulacrum.

The three distinct parts of *England, England* focus on different aspects, present different issues brought together by the main character: Martha Cochrane. In her persona is comprised the problematic issue of memory which, analyzed through the lenses of simulacra becomes unreliable, and consequently alters the personality's whole perception of herself. Furthermore, she represents the search for identity aggravated by the unreliability of the memories, facing the simulacrum which gradually encompasses everything previously considered "real," the mixed feelings of acceptance and rejection ultimately resulting in the abandonment of one simulacrum for the other in Albion. Barnes, through Martha, brings the simulacrum closer to the individual, explains and criticizes it, never losing the subtle ironies throughout the novel.

Jean Baudrillard, the controversial philosopher, both in the novel and in this paper might become more easily digestible and acceptable, especially when his doctrines are attenuated by others', and thus a more detailed and accurate picture is attained. This represented one of the main focuses of the paper, namely: bringing together the complex theories of the simulacrum and the fictional world of a novel, proving their successful coexistence, and how one is tightly related to the other, enriching the reader's understanding of the simulacrum and of Barnes's novel. Thus, Barnes both employs and contests Baudrillard's theories, presenting both the anxiety and the "frisson" simulacra may provoke in the fictional characters of his novel. These characters are the epitome of the "postmodern self," who struggle with the anxieties of a world of simulacra. The difference between Martha and the tourists visiting the Island relies in their distinct relations to both memory and nostalgia. While the tourists experience the unreliability of their memories, the proximity of their past as "frisson," for Martha Cochrane, the protagonist, this becomes a trauma, and nostalgia a struggle to connect with her past, but impossible. Through the continuously shifting memory, always altered by simulacra, identity in general is always shifting, molded by

the changes in the past (in the memories) and in the present, brought in such proximity that they become obscene: the past becoming a continuous present, too close to the individual, impossible to view from distance and thus understand it.

The last ironic (or serious) twist in the novel, namely Old England itself undergoing substantial changes, brings the reader back to Sir Jack's words, chosen as motto for this paper: "Are you real ...?" (Barnes 31). The conclusion of the novel leaves the question open for debate, however, it may prove that everything and everyone in this work of fiction has become simulacrum. However, this simulacrum is different from Baudrillard's nostalgic and apocalyptic understanding of it, truly becoming "the thing itself," provoking frisson and not anxiety. Since Martha Cochrane, the only character conscious of the simulacrum and anxious about her futile search for a "true" identity, ultimately finds her place and self in Old England, another simulacrum, this ending presents another critique of Baudrillard and provides a comprehensive picture about the overarching power of simulacra making everything hyperreal. In conclusion, with the realization that ultimately both memory and identity are simulated, may come the greater frisson, the excitement the simulacrum provides one with.

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