

Research Article

Julian Barnes' *England, England*: Beyond Postmodernism and Dystopia

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Abstract

Julian Barnes' *England, England* lends itself to many types of critical readings as it garners many concepts and themes as diverse as identity, memory, history, nationality, rise and fall of a nation, and individual crises. All these are incorporated satirically, if not farcically, into the life of a Martha Cochrane whose life milestones run in tandem with the three parts of the novel, which nostalgically cite how a nation's glory ebbs away gradually. The present paper sets out to explore *England, England* in particular dimensions in order to come to better terms with its embedded themes, especially Englishness and English identity. With an esoteric literary aura and a resolute voice in portraying Englishness, its memory and the aesthetics thereof, the novel seeks to illuminate many hidden codes and messages in the guise of humor and satire. To unravel such encryptions, one needs to decipher them initially through an investigation of postmodernist elements and staples, such as paradoxes, simulacrum and parody, which constitute the most compelling plank of the thematic contents of the novel. Along this path, prominent names such as Linda Hutcheon and Baudrillard will emerge whose theoretical implications will be high on the critical agenda of the paper. On a different note, *England, England*, as a distinctly dystopian work, happens to equally send strongly nostalgic messages regarding the concepts of Englishness, past, present, and their memory through the portrayal of a dystopian wasteland. The ending portion of the paper will endeavour to shed light on how Barnes deploys such dystopian air and poetics to embellish his work further concerning Englishness. Ultimately, the papers will infer that the fall of grand narratives such as Englishness, identity, and memory is what it takes for a nation to rebuild and re-invent its identity.

Keywords

Postmodernism, Paradox, Simulacrum, Parody, Dystopia, Identity, Memory

1. Introduction

Rarely does a writer rise to voice, with the utmost clarity, the literary conventions by which his or her own canon were undermined. Julian Barnes is one such writer. Not only has his canon bespoken the very alarming worries of literature today, but they have also happened to be in direct dialectics with the same movements or approaches that have caused the so-called hazy and ambivalent judgments regarding his own

works. In simple terms, Barnes breathes life into the very same literary notions that betray his oeuvre by bringing his aura down to mere labels. This is not the only odd thing about Barnes. He addresses specialized literary concepts such as postmodernism and its salient features so vividly that one might think of it as a literary criticism textbook. The very close dialogue between the tangible literary conventions

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and his fiction is what makes rare, if not unparalleled, masterpieces out of his aura. These and many other issues would make any critic lack the courage to classify some of his works. *England, England* (1998), for instance, has fallen to many categories from postmodern to dystopian to satire to farce. In fact, one might feel at no ease classifying Barnes's *England, England*. The novel is so densely layered and coded that the more a critic unravels and deciphers it, the more perplexed she or he might get in perceiving its true thematics. This is perhaps why many people have compared Barnes to writers of sovereign order. In his conclusion chapter of *Understanding Julian Barnes*, Moseley duly borrows a quotation from Richard Lock saying "Barnes's literary energy and daring are nearly unparalleled among contemporary English novelists. With such a passion for history, art, and formal innovation, with such fulgent wit and bright discursive skill, he will most likely push on along the high Parnassian path he's beaten beside Nabokov, Calvino, and Kundera" [23] (p. 170).

The canonical spectrum of Barnes has, in more ways than one, lent itself to critical acclaim. To name but a few, one could mention the triple shortlist record for Booker Prize for *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), *England, England* (1998), and *Arthur and George* (2005). Barnes ultimately received the Booker Prize for *The Sense of an Ending* in 2011. Among his works, some, I suggest, deserve more critical analysis than others owing to the profound labyrinth of the themes they bear with themselves. *England, England* (1998) is one instance of such underappreciated works. One simple short look at this novel reveals such an unprecedented collection of many diverging and converging entities that one might be amazed at how all those were collected in one book. Postmodernism, dystopia, satire, farce, history, politics, mystery, myth and many other genres and entities are at play in *England, England* (1998). All these myriad themes have, in one way or another, to do with the concept of Englishness and what in fact constitutes the English identity. The essay in hand is targeted at revealing the postmodern and dystopian elements of *England, England* (1998). In so doing, I will commence my words with a quick light, albeit hardly sufficient, on the plot and themes of *England, England*. Once this prelude is over, I will lead my arguments towards the postmodern elements of the novel, so that a thorough understanding of postmodernism in *England, England* could be feasible. Last but not least, I will illuminate the dystopian elements of the novel to eventually approach the hybrid genre of a postmodern dystopia. Needless to say, the proposed line of arguments will be directly in tandem with the concept of Englishness and identity, which will enable us to discern the true purpose of Barnes in interpreting Englishness in this novel.

Julian Barnes's *England, England* falls into three parts whose temporal essentials vary from one another with noteworthiness. The first section, which is called England, revolves around the life of Martha Cochrane in her teenage years. The staple of the events occurring in this section

would be the metaphorical or symbolic jigsaw puzzle she so fervently lavished her attention on, which in fact never came to a completed state. As the essence of the jigsaw puzzle had to do with the counties of England, one could be led to infer that this could be an allusion to the never completed identity of England. Moreover, this section encompassed the sudden leaving of Martha's father, which traumatized her psyche as a result. The second section of the novel, to which Barnes devotes much of his aura, includes the efforts of Sir Jack Pitman, a media mogul, in attempting to turn the isle of Wight into a theme park whose figures and sites include all the well-known myths and legends of England, so that the visitors would not have to resort to any other venue in realizing what England was like. Named *England, England*, this section marks the inception of a simulated England or a replica which gradually takes precedence over the real one. This section additionally entails the affair of Martha with Paul Harrison and the embarrassing disclosure of Sir Pitman's fetish sexual tendencies. The project prospers so unimaginably as to help the island become an independent state, whereas the old England fades into clouds of oblivion and regression. Thus, thematically, Barnes is aiming at the issue of replica and simulacra in this major section, which will come to light later. The last part is set decades later when Martha has already matured into a wise woman residing in old England. Titled Anglia, the last section is rife and replete with nostalgia, melancholia and regression. The more the Old England retreats to its traditional and obsolete roots, the more England, England roots for further booming life. In terms of themes, Barnes's words here are meant to reflect a dystopian air which will be illustrated later as well. Barnes dedicates over two hundred pages to the second section, while the other two sections barely sum up to 50 pages.

Linda Hutcheon's notions of postmodernism will mark this essay's first step towards the analysis of *England, England*, namely her notions of postmodern paradox and parody. Secondly, simulacrum, as another postmodern trope belonging chiefly to Baudrillard, will be employed to explore a notable portion of the aesthetics of this work. Last but not least, *England, England*, will be investigated through a dystopian lens. Many dystopian critical staples will come to light, among which the concept of dystopian alienation might be the most paramount one. Through all this critical and analytical spectrum, the essay will first provide the literary and theoretical background upon which the consequent and relevant discussions will be built.

2. Peculiar Paradoxes

England, England has been read from many various literary or philosophical angles. Yet, what most readings have lost sight of, I argue, is the site of paradoxes. Many postmodern elements such as simulation, irony and parody have been resonantly expounded in *England, England*, but very little has been said apropos the intriguing postmodern con-

cept of paradox. However, this is not to detract from the value of the very fundamental concepts of simulation, irony, parody and many other elements in negotiating the workings of *England, England*, as this study will veer towards the same later. There is a very fine line between the aforementioned and the concept of postmodern paradox. Thus, I intend to commence my work with the concept of paradox, and then consequently shift my analytical trajectory towards simulation and parody.

Should one be asked to come up with an indispensable component of postmodernism today, the word would most likely be contradiction. This is an area about which Linda Hutcheon, as a renowned postmodern thinker, writes a great deal. In point of fact, contradictions and paradoxes are pivotal to her arguments. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) one can argue that the word contradiction recurs in most of her arguments, as if it is a keyword. Paradox and contradiction, at the risk of sounding daring on this essay's end, act like the very meta-narratives whose denial and rejection is what she has striven for in all her oeuvre: "I would like to begin by arguing that, for me, postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges—be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film,... or historiography" [16] (p. 3).

In line with the above-cited concept yet elsewhere, she contends that "what I want to call postmodernism is fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political. Its contradictions may well be those of late capitalist society, but whatever the cause, these contradictions are certainly manifest in the important postmodern concept of the presence of the past" [16] (p. 4). However, to Hutcheon, "the presence of the past" is not nostalgic but critical; "This is not a nostalgic return; it is a critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society, a recalling of a critically shared vocabulary..." [16] (p. 4). Then, postmodernism delves into the past and converses with it, yet it does not sympathize with it nostalgically the way previous liberal humanists did. And herein falls the irony of the postmodern.

Hutcheon's Paradoxes in England, England

In establishing a dialogue between Hutcheon's paradoxes and *England, England*, many courses are open to our advance. In fact, everything is paradoxical in *England, England*, including the characters, plot and themes. Englishness, which will be recurrently discussed in this essay and which is central to the thematics of *England, England*, is subject to a deep conflicting voice. The leading character is but a paradoxical personality. The following paragraph portrays the very paradoxical nature of her personality:

BRIEF HISTORY of sexuality in the case of Martha Cochrane:...

4. Paradox of the Impulse. In the words of the old song: Never had the one that she wanted, Never wanted the one that she had. Intense and unadmitted desire for Nick Dearden, whose forearm she never even brushed. Com-

plaisant submission to Gareth Dyce, who f..ked her three times in a row on an un-Hoovered carpet, while she smiled and encouraged him, wondering if this was as good as it got and half-embarrassed by the oddness of male weight-distribution: how he could be light and floaty down there, while pressing the air out of her lungs with his heavy boniness up here. And she hadn't even liked the name Gareth when she'd spoken it before and during. [2] (p. 47)

The paradoxical impulse seems to overshadow most of the other dimensions of her life. Her impulsiveness in her decisions later in life, for instance her blackmailing Sir Pitman and many other decisions, could resemble her sexual impulsiveness. The paradoxical nature of postmodernism applies not only to the leading character of *England, England*, but also to the very important thematics of the novel, particularly Englishness, with which Barnes seems to have close affinities. Without it, one could not envision the alternative Barnes could have turned to. In fact, Englishness, to Barnes, is as paradoxical as the postmodernism itself. To many critics, Englishness is nothing but merely a falsity. To Barnes, particularly in *England, England*, Englishness is a paradox; something that can be neither ignored nor put on pedestal. Imagining Barnes siding with those who offer the concept of "empty illusion" is not far-fetched, for that is easily inferred at times:

Despite this, *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. Barnes's achievement is thus considerable. What his peers have said by implication and omission, he has relentlessly foregrounded: Englishness is an empty illusion. [27] (P. 93)

Barnes further substantiates the weight of this illusion by shoehorning all the architectural monuments such as Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, and Tower of London as well as mythical figures such as King Arthur and Robin Hood into a satirical theme park. This does fortify the weight of an illusion. This camp of illusion believers could be somewhat frowned at by the other camp whose members believe in the term "emotional mythology" used by Bradford, which is quite a novel word, I suggest, in addressing Barnes:

Julian Barnes's *England, England* (1998) invokes a non-existent tradition of fiction that represents the emotional mythology of Englishness while Barnes is known for his Francophile affiliations. The novel presents us with a fictional Theme Park that distils national images and myths, run by an entrepreneur who treats England and Englishness as products for tourists. Englishness is represented as an empty illusion, but the chapter argues against approaches to *England, England* as a work of satire. [2] (p. 92)

Thus, Barnes spares no ink in creating a deeply controversial site for Englishness through the conflation of a hollow

false thought (empty illusion) and a sentimental value (emotional value) in being English. However, one can never know which side outweighs the other and which side Barnes personally belongs to, which brings up another postmodern term titled uncertainty or “undecidability, [which] involves the impossibility of deciding between two or more competing interpretations [5] (p. 249)”. In fact, reality, in the sense that stands opposed to fiction, or illusion in Bradford’s terms, is hazy. This haziness, however, does not preclude Barnes from drawing the line between the two:

‘That’s because you’re English, said Martha. You think being touched is invasive.’

‘No, it’s about keeping reality and illusion separate.’

‘That’s very English too.’

‘I f..king *am* English’ said Mark.

‘Our Visitors won’t be.’ [2] (p. 95)

Presence of the past, as another dimension of Hutcheon’s paradox, is vividly witnessed in *England, England*. The structure of the novel is suggestive of a deeply organized trace of the past, including all types of past figures, values, myths, and monuments which define Englishness: “Fifty Quintessences of Englishness” [2] (p. 75). Among these fifty quintessential elements mentioned by Barnes, most cases such as “Imperialism, Robin Hood, King Arthur, Shakespeare, Winston Churchill and Magna Carta” [2] (p. 75) are not but history and past. This way, Barnes takes upon himself to allude to the past, or rewrite it in better terms, with no or very little concern for nostalgia. He constantly speaks of such mythical and past figures or values, yet he does not establish a nostalgic tone. This is indeed nostalgia escapism of which Peter Childs speaks:

... referring to writers such as Barnes, ‘even the radical wing of postmodernism betrays a deep, if parodic, obsession with the past. In heritage consumer capitalism, where critique is fragmentary, and in an accelerated culture where the contemporary can be redundant in the time it takes to write and publish a novel, the present seems often to be neglected for the escapism of nostalgia. [10] (p. 117)

Avoiding the sense of nostalgia in a consumer, or capitalist society in Hutcheon’s terms, Barnes attempts not only to highlight the presence of the past but also to critique it, and even dare to manipulate it by his satirical characters. As many postmodernists firmly hold that the postmodern is resolutely historical, Barnes emphasizes historical events such as Battle of Britain and Magna Carta, turning to a sort of “skeptical nostalgia in portraits of a fallen human condition” [2] (p. 11). The more the nostalgic air, Barnes and Hutcheon should concur, is eluded, the better resoluteness in sensing and conversing to the past and its historical labyrinths. This way, Barnes tackles the cliché-ridden concepts of identity which only deal with past nostalgically and blindfoldedly. Thus, by means of such paradoxical and conflicting accounts, Barnes is not but bound to breathe new life into the concept of English identity oozing a sense of hope to start all anew.

3. Simulacrum

Perhaps, the most commonly taken position in reading *England, England*, is the postmodern concept of simulation or simulacrum. Barnes places a great emphasis on the issue of simulacra, devoting the majority of his writing to the second section which is but the portrayal of a simulated theme park. Here more than elsewhere, Barnes, in what could be called an idiosyncratic style, directly underlines the concept of identity as well, in that he attempts to exhibit the rift between the authentic and the simulated identities. Barnes’s character, the French intellectual, candidly engages Baudrillard’s name in one of his lectures:

But with a few suave gestures he drew doves from his sleeve and a line of flags from his mouth. Pascal led to Saussure via Laurence Sterne; Rousseau to Baudrillard via Edgar Allan Poe, the Marquis de Sade, Jerry Lewis, Dexter Gordon, Bernard Hinault and the early work of Anne Sylvestre; L’évi-Strauss led to L’évi-Strauss. [2] (pp. 49-50)

Later, the same character sheds light on how people do not care about the originality and opt for any version of copy or simulacra they get their hands on. “We prefer the reproduction of the work of art to the work of art itself, the perfect sound and solitude of the compact disc to the symphony concert in the company of a thousand victims of throat complaints, the book on tape to the book on the lap” [2] (p. 51). Indeed, the pages pertinent to this concept could, at the risk of making a bold claim, lend themselves to a literary theory book whose main concern is adducing examples for simulation. This, with all certainty, has to do with the way Barnes attempts to illuminate not only the postmodern notion of simulation as his own idiosyncrasy but also the critique of the copy/real challenges and its consequent effect on identity inflicting the majority of humanity today.

The term simulacrum, of course in a literary sense, was coined by the French philosopher Baudrillard. In his seminal book titled *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), Baudrillard singles out three orders for simulacra:

simulacra that are natural, naturalist, founded on the image, on imitation and counterfeit, that are harmonious, optimistic, and that aim for the restitution or the ideal institution of nature made in God’s image;

simulacra that are productive, productivist, founded on energy, force, its materialization by the machine and in the whole system of production - a Promethean aim of a continuous globalization and expansion, of an indefinite liberation of energy (desire belongs to the Utopias related to this order of simulacra);

simulacra of simulation, founded on information, the model, the cybernetic game - total operationality, hyperreality, aim of total control. [3] (p. 108)

In an effort to interpret these categories, Miracky calls them first-order simulation as ‘a representation of the real’, a second-order simulation as ‘a blurring of the boundaries between reality and representation’, and a third-order simula-

tion— which he calls ‘hyperreality’ – as the situation where the replica is given precedence over the real [4] (p. 163). Put simply, Baudrillard places a great stress on the fact that the real or the original fades away in a chain of events or transformations, ending up in a hyperreality whose value seems to take precedence over the real. This is the stage where Baudrillard states “simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance” [3] (p. 166). In other words, the simulated product, many times beyond its expected qualities, surpasses its very origin and becomes “the map that precedes the territory” [3] (p. 166).

Baudrillard in England, England

Before setting a relational analysis between Baudrillard and Barnes in *England, England*, my preference is to turn to Bennet and Royle’s words in addressing the very same concept but in a very intriguingly perceivable way which encompasses an example of hamburger and Coca Cola. In *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Bennet and Royle devote one whole chapter to postmodernism which includes simulation as one of its salient features. Starting with forerunning philosophers such as Plato, they do place a great emphasis on how western philosophy was strictly concerned with the original, as Plato argued that the image of a bed is a second degree copy of the essential bed, twice estranged from reality [5] (p. 252). However, postmodernism, as Bennet and Royle are quick to point out, functions somewhat differently by means of shattering all such binaries and welcoming challenging of the hierarchies and mingling the real and the copy, hence the creation of simulacra. The example of hamburger and Cola is the last to come in their line of arguments:

That hamburger that looks so tempting is far more delicious than any you could ever taste. But, paradoxically, when you taste *your* hamburger, you are at the same time tasting what is created by advertising images of hamburgers. If Coke really is it, then, it is because our experience of drinking Coca Cola cannot be disengaged from the seductive lifestyle images of its advertising, from those insidious effects of the brand name, whereby the desirability of a given product is in a sense *branded* into our consciousness and unconscious. [6] (p. 253)

In short, the hyperreality or the virtual third order technology-oriented simulacra gives rise to a seductive hamburger whose delicious taste outweighs the real/original hamburger. This way the simulacra become, more often than not, more significant than what they are supposed to mirror, namely the real.

Simulacra, the study in hand claims, come at the very heart of *England, England*. To illustrate the depth of this claim, nothing can be more convincing than the fact that Barnes devotes over two hundred and ten pages of his novel, or in better terms the second part of his novel and the part on which most of his ink is spent, to the concept of establishing a theme park which is but a simulation or simulacrum of England. In truth, Barnes, through a farcical fashion, at-

tempts to incorporate all England, its legends, heroes and honors into a fun fair whose main purpose is to sell its products to the tourists lest the tourists might feel inconvenient in having to go on different quests in order to inquire into what England and Englishness is. This way, the theme park offers its themes in a very efficient way, albeit farcical deep inside, to its visitors without further ado. Instances of such simulated themes in this theme park, I persist in thinking, had better be adduced in detail as the current paper has such simulacra high on agenda here. The simulated staples of this section, which belong to different categories such as historical monuments, values, myths, legends and figures, could include the “royal family, myth of Robin hood, Manchester United football club, imperialism, BBC, Shakespeare, Oxford/Cambridge, London Taxis, Gardening, homosexuality, Battle of Britain, beer/warm beer, emotional frigidity, and Magna Carta” [2] (pp. 75-76).

Barnes subjects most of the above-mentioned simulated themes to serious parody, satire and mockery, thereby inviting the minds to question the true concept of Englishness and the English identity. Moreover, these values are the values which seem to be marketed, rated and measured for sale by Sir Pitman inasmuch as he arrogantly believes “We are already what others may hope to become” [2] (p. 40). That values and honors are sold cannot but be another indication of the sacrificed merit in the simulacra, as the original or the real can never be measured for sale, hence its priceless condition. The marketable and presentable mode of this England as a product for sale is best displayed here: “You – we – England – my client – is – are – a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated wisdom. Social and cultural history – stacks of it, reams of it – eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate. Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, Industrial Revolution, gardening, that sort of thing” [2] (p. 40).

Once we embark upon section three or Anglia, simulacra set their voice consonant to a hyperreal mode. And here more than elsewhere, the resonance and the strength of the simulacra which exceed the real could be felt. Indeed, the technologically advanced England, England prospers to its best decades later, while the real old England has regressed to an agrarian wasteland. This is precisely where the simulacra or the theme park take precedence over the real or the old England. This was previously mentioned and even predicted by the French intellectual as he even directly mentioned the name of Baudrillard. “The novel, therefore, is a lament not for lost Englishness, but for the fact that the ‘real’ past can never be recouped, as it is always artificial” [6] (p. 87). This lament is vividly felt in the following lines:

What had surprised her, watching from afar, was how quickly the whole thing had unravelled. No, that was unfair, that was how The Times of London – still published from Ryde – would have put it. The official Island line, loyally purveyed by Gary Desmond and his successors, was gloatingly simple. Old England had progressively

shed power, territory, wealth, influence, and population. Old England was to be compared disadvantageously to some backward province of Portugal or Turkey. Old England had cut its own throat and was lying in the gutter beneath a spectral gas-light, its only function as a dissuasive example to others. [2] (p. 210)

Another way to approach simulation is through its close tie to the concept of identity, which is key to Barnes's thematics in *England, England*. The bond between the simulacra and the identity, with which Barnes seems to be stoutly concerned, is key to the purpose of the novel. A close look at the theme park reveals the fact that the identity that most of the fake characters have is a given one. In other words, the identity they own is as simulated as the simulacra themselves, hence their defamiliarized state. Not being who and what they should be and only obsessed with a phony past, they suffer from many delusions. "Any attempt at finding the essence of Englishness in the past is bound to fail for yet another reason, for it proceeds from the mistaken premise that an individual's or a nation's identity is located at some specific point in the remote past" [24] (p. 24). The hollow yet proud theme artists have to, as Hobson's choice, resort only to the vague memories of the nonexistent and simulated knowledge of the past in order to keep their fake delusions and illusions going. "Any attempt at forging a national identity therefore has to reckon with elusive memories, lack of knowledge, and highly distorted patriotic views of history" [24] (p. 15). The simulacra in the theme park, be they in the shape of a myth or a value, develop and impose, I argue, a fake identity on the characters, thereby Barnes's censuring of it.

Barnes, in a critical spirit then, aims at parodying the whole simulated identity and perhaps strives to invite new dynamics into this arena: "I am interested in what you might call the invention of tradition. Getting its history wrong is part of becoming a nation." [24] (qtd on p. 1). Perhaps, Barnes is targeted at criticizing the past in order to reconstruct not only the past but also reinvent and open new horizons of identity before the eyes of those who, in a fashion of similitude, still long to simulate identity, live in delusions and indulge in phony-non-existing past. This must be the same line of dialectics at which Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Granger are aiming in their seminal work called *The invention of Tradition* [15] (pp. 1-10). In short, they illustrate how illuminating it can be to employ the past traditions to create, rewrite and explore new horizons of tradition or, as I add, identity for future. Albeit hard to read, Barnes should mean this one thread of thought unequivocally in *England, England*. Perhaps, the ending part of his descriptions of the little children at the end of the third section, via addressing their innocence as a component of identity, could reflect this sense of invention or reinvention:

Could you reinvent innocence? Or was it always constructed, grafted onto the old disbelief? Were the children's faces proof of this renewable innocence – or was

that just sentimentality? PC Brown, drunk on scrumpy, was circling the village green again, thumb tinkling his bell, saluting all he passed with his truncheon. PC Brown, whose two months' training had been done long ago with a private security firm, who was attached to no police station and hadn't caught a single criminal since his arrival in the village; but he had the uniform, the bicycle, the truncheon, and the now-loosening moustache. This seemed to be enough. [2] (p. 223)

4. Parody in England, England

Another premise in postmodernism, which could operate in *England, England*, is parody. As the framework of the present paper has, to this moment, managed to turn to Hutcheon as one of its significant references, the same is wished, henceforth, to be pursued in this portion of the essay as well. However, in order to have a multi-faceted grasp over the concept of parody, one needs to look back at the very conventional and non-postmodern definition of parody. This retrospective strategy procures a deeper and more tactful comprehension of parody. As most general definitions of literary terms—the term parody in this study, however, is not used as a literary term but a postmodern component—are addressed with simplicity in Abrams's glossary, then, it is preferred to initially heed his words in this regard. In the words of Abrams, "A parody imitates the serious manner and characteristic features of a particular literary work, or the distinctive style of a particular author, or the typical stylistic and other features of a serious literary genre, and deflates the original by applying the imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject" [1] (p. 36). Then, at the heart of the parody, to conventional parodists, lies the heavily comic mode of retelling a serious and perhaps a tragic or dramatic genre of literature and art.

Parody, on a postmodern scale, develops distinct differences, though. Hutcheon addresses parody in both her books titled *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) and *The politics of Postmodernism* (1989). It is difficult, for all a critic can differentiate, to tease out one precise definition of parody or one certain trend of its orientation among the many dicta she eloquently clarifies. Yet, one thing that one could, with all certainty, assert is that Hutcheon diverges straightforwardly and ensemble from the very conventions that formed the previous thoughts on parody:

What I mean by "parody" here—as elsewhere in this study—is *not* the ridiculing imitation of the standard theories and definitions that are rooted in eighteenth-century theories of wit. The collective weight of parodic *practice* suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity. In historiographic metafiction, in film, in painting, in music, and in architecture, this parody paradoxically enacts both change and cultural continuity.... [16] (p. 26)

Then, at the very heart of this parody lies a direct opposition to the classic and conventional parody thoughts whose defenders presumed that a ridiculing essence was the epicenter of the parody. Instead, the postmodern position highlights the role of the irony and the enacting of the change and cultural issues. Elsewhere, Hutcheon emphatically asserts that postmodern parody aims at social discourse: "Postmodernist parody, be it in architecture, literature, painting, film, or music, uses its historical memory, its aesthetic introversion, to signal that this kind of self-reflexive discourse is always inextricably bound to social discourse" [16] (p. 35). Hutcheon, to recapitulate, believes parody is and should be a strategy that should not only distance from the regular ridiculing or mocking stance, but also needs to include as many diverse facets as culture, society and politics. This way, parody moves beyond its satirical stance and finds a more didactic and obvious performance. "its [postmodernism's] paradoxical incorporation of the past into its very structures often points to these ideological contexts somewhat more obviously, more didactically, than other forms" [16] (p. 35). This, however, is not to say that classic parody was not didactic or had no function in this specific area, whatsoever.

In her *Politics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon does not fall astray from her previous parody perspective and yet she further emphasizes the role of parody in being critical of what it parodies. This way she opposes Jameson in aiming for pastiche or empty parody [18] (pp. 15-20), stating that parody's voice is fervently resonant and critical. She finds no room for nostalgia, be it within parody or anywhere near postmodern politics. "But this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical" [17] (p. 89).

England, England has fallen into many categories and realms close to parody, including "satirical comedy" [25] (p. 228), "corrosive critique of what may be thought to be England" [26] (p. 78), and "a cartoonish romp whose real concern is seriousness" [20] (p. 15). Barnes himself calls it "far-cical" [12] (qtd on p. 15) or "semi-farce" [20] (p. 15), as he eventually prefers the latter. Needless to say, it takes a lot of courage and knowledge to classify *England, England* into a certain genre in the light of its densely layered and multifaceted nature. The present study is in no state to detail the taxonomical or generic analysis directed towards the novel, nor do the priorities in hand allow us to sidetrack at this juncture. In fact, *England, England* is prone to fall into a myriad of genres, yet what this study sets out to accomplish includes the dimensions of the novel which strike a chord with the postmodern parody.

England, England teems with parody. However, whether this parody is the conventional parody or the post-modern parody is a matter in need of in-depth analysis. Returning to the conventional parody thoughts one should take the liberty in setting a sort of similitude between the conventional parody and farce, as both aim at a ridiculing sense and simply creating a sense of laughter. If this is true, which is what Barnes personally argues, the text should be all about "broad,

physical visual comedy" [28] (p. 9), or "some absurd situation, hinging generally on extra-marital relations" [28] (p. 9), hence coming down to a state of mockery and stagnant ridicule. Perhaps, this is why Barnes personally refrained from calling a full farce, and instead opted for a "semi-farce". Probing the text and its workings more meticulously, one can readily and notably witness a profound body of parody criticizing the long-enduring social traditions of England. By means of creating a theme park filled with honorable symbols and values, Barnes is not only aiming at liberating the people from the past social and historical traditions but also aims at rigorously criticizing the people who keep clinging to those archaic traditions and clichés, thereby obstructing the path along which novel traditions could be explored. Thus, Hutcheon's circle of components are vividly witnessed: social and cultural discourse, criticism and little room for nostalgia. As I previously pointed out, one can claim many things in addressing *England, England*, but nostalgia is the least of those claims to be validated. Then, Hutcheon's parody, with its components hold true here. To quote Barnes from *Conversations with Julian Barnes*, "the search for truth, the invention of tradition" [14] (p. 49) is high on agenda in *England, England*. By foregrounding the quest for truth and authenticity, Barnes is parodying historically distorted characters who are long gone, and is aspiring to instill in England new hopes and capabilities of reinventing novel traditions in lieu of the culturally and historically misunderstood and misplaced myths and figures. This must be in tandem with Hutcheon's parody stressing the role of socio-political and historical critique.

Barnes's parody in *England, England* can even move beyond our ken and the postmodern parody. Apart from Hutcheon's postmodern socio-political and historical parody, there is another layer embedded in *England, England*, a notch deeper than the parody Hutcheon spoke of. Before I set about clarifying this rather odd style of parody, I feel an urge to return to Baudrillard and simulation again. As displayed earlier, simulation comes at the very heart of the thematics of *England, England*. By emphasizing the concept of simulation in the words of one of his intellectual characters and having him voice the name of Baudrillard, Barnes is not only criticizing or parodying the very French intellectuality, but also he is astutely underscoring and parodying the concept of simulacra theorized by Baudrillard. Oddly enough, the French character is parodying not only the hyperreality/simulacra but also the critical theory which gave rise to it. Principally, what Barnes generates here is a parody/pastiche of parody: "Barnes satirizes both the world of hyperreality and that of critical theory, in effect creating a parody of a parody" [22] (p. 165). However, the significance of pastiche in this particular case seems, I propose, to outstrip parody, as Jameson believes pastiche is blank parody [18] (p. 166-7). And here more than elsewhere, one could feel the way there is just simply an urge to mention the name of Baudrillard and his simulation and leave the rest to the reader's judgment; an

allusion to a name or a neutral citation of a postmodern technique rather than ridiculing it, which is what pastiche is all about. In the words of Pateman, “a reasonable pastiche of a sort of postmodern theory” [4] (p. 79) is what this particular facet of *England, England* indicates. Pastiche or parody, this literary incident is scarce, if not unprecedented, in contemporary fiction today.

5. Dystopian Wasteland

The twentieth century has witnessed limitless dystopian works reflecting the most important socio-political events and life-devastating calamities, yet again the proclivity towards deeming this genre inadequate and beneath its actual merit lingers on. War, famine, political unrest, violence, social discrimination, racism, and all sorts of atrocities are among the very vivid instances to which the twentieth century mankind bore witness and by which they were all traumatized. Likewise, the very same traumatizing elements bundle up and shape a genre titled dystopian fiction, yet the thinkers lose sight of its significance calling it a marginal genre with minor efficacies in the heart of society. The crux of the problem is dystopia is no longer fiction inasmuch as it mirrors the reality of the catastrophes bearing the fingerprints of human. It would be thus with light and certainty if one rose up against the already and unfoundedly shaped notions placing dystopian works beneath the other disciplines. Booker daringly states “dystopian fiction is not a marginal genre. It lies at the very heart of the literary project” [7] (p. 176). Regarding dystopian fiction as “a didactic and utilitarian category that frequently pays little attention to aesthetic form or technique” [7] (p. 173) or a genre that sacrifices the artistic merit in the favor of contents seems to be obsolete today.

No genre is thought to reflect the reality of the society as fervently as the dystopian genre does. In fact, upon reading Orwell’s *Nineteen Eight-four* one is led to infer that many socio-political dictatorships harbor the same underlying system whose essence has haunted humanity for longer than one can conceive; and *Nineteen Eight-four* is but a dystopian novel. The instances of such brilliant dystopian works know no end. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* is nowhere beneath such merit either. Dystopian literature is laden with politics and thereby invites the minds to be wary of what the future might herald. Thus, it must be rightly felt for and solidly concurred with if Booker held that “[t]he dystopian genre thus serves as a locus for valuable dialogues among literature, popular culture, and social criticism that indicates the value of considering these discourses together and potentially sheds new light on all of them” [7] (p. 174).

Where does dystopia stand amidst all the utopian tendencies? Does it once and for all oppose the utopian voice? And if so, is that why all the utopianist or utilitarian thinkers rise and stand steadfastly against the dystopian impulse? Utopianists, if any is left indeed, might look askance at all these grounds. Nevertheless, the oversight is they overlook the

healing power of the dystopian impulse in reminding the utopias of what they should distance from. Barely does dystopia stray away from utopia. Nor does its voice fade from the utopian ideals. It has always been there to reify and solidify what a utopia might neglect. “Dystopian thought does not disable utopian thought, but merely acts as a healthy opposing voice that helps prevent utopian thought from going stale” [7] (p. 176). By placing greater stress on the dystopian project, not only does one restore the dialogues among literature, society and culture, but also new life is breathed into dreamy ideals of utopias.

Is *England, England* a dystopian novel? Can we risk thinking that the second section of the novel is the utopian realm while the third section called Anglia is a dystopia? These are some bold queries with which my words will attempt to deal later. Many critics have not dared to categorize *England, England* as a dystopian novel, whereas many others have taken the liberty and dare to call it dystopian. What my study aims to conduct at this point, is to shed light on dystopian fiction and its constituents briefly first and explore its signs and features in *England, England* as the next step.

Most dystopian works are inclined to opt for future settings where and when humanity has already met its demise. This particular futurist aspect, thus, lends itself to one of the salient features of dystopian literature. To this facet comes the imaginative science fiction voice which is believed to be another paramount element of dystopian literature today. “Most postmodernist futures, in other words, are grim dystopias—as indeed most science-fiction worlds of the future have been in recent years” [21] (p. 67). This could also be seen as the failed efforts of mankind in trying to reach a utopian society. “[D]ystopian literature depends upon considerations of possible futures, specifically futures in which attempts to create utopian societies have failed [11] (p. 8). To name but a few, works such as Orwell’s *Nineteen Eight-four* (1949), Zamyatin’s *We* (1924), and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) stand as the emblems of dystopian literature and they all have the above-cited elements in common. Set in different future times, all three are targeted at exploring the very dark, corrupt, socio-politically ill challenges of humanity. Booker who has written quite abundantly on dystopia never neglects the role of social and political issues in forming a dystopian work:

[Dystopia] situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions or systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. [7] (p. 3)

Gordin, Helen, and Gyan, in another reading of dystopia, add other elements such as “urban poverty, exploitation and

violence” [13] (p. 13), depicting a Dickensian wasteland where all political schools and social policies have failed. “Even as the utopias of communism and cosmopolitan peace stand indicted, the neoliberal utopia of the market creeps up on us, now under the ideologically driven notion of a Smithian human nature” [13] (p. 13). Thus, obviously there seems to be a unanimous convergence between Grodin et al and Booker, in that they all assert that socio-political injustice or instability is imperative to the dystopian tone. Last but not least, technological advance, of course misplaced or placed in the wrong hands, is regarded as an indispensable criterion in dystopian fiction: “[I]t is the very same technologies—nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and advanced robotics—that give us the power to reduce all organic life on the planet to a puddle of gray goo that also hold the keys to a utopian world free of aging, disease, poverty, and possibly even death” [9] (p. 8).

Whether or not *England, England* is a dystopian novel is a can of worms. Many repel the dystopian stance in addressing *England, England*, whereas many others embrace it. The study in hand, by dint of certain cogent arguments, persists in opting for a dystopian orientation in addressing *England, England*. In so doing, it is crucial that one be privy to the dystopian voice of section three, as this section, I argue, is the closest context to which dystopia can extend. Anglia or old England possesses certain features that could evoke a dystopian spirit. Although the novel does not seem to be in total accordance with the ground rules of a dystopia, namely a futuristic imaginative science fiction entity, or a totalitarian regime with its brutal measures in keeping the proletarian class under control, violence, and dictatorship, it does meet certain dystopian terms in section three. Anglia heralds a very stifling and regressive trend where nobody feels like visiting it anymore. An abandoned and rurally isolated place whose appeal is long gone: “Of course, no-one from the Island had visited the mainland for years...” [2] (p. 213). Poverty, as another dystopian feature, befell the people of the old England. On the bright side, however, it was not accompanied by the dystopian terminal illness: “Poverty ensued, of course, though the word meant less in the absence of comparisons: If poverty did not entail malnutrition or ill health, then it was not so much poverty as voluntary austerity” [2] (p. 212). Apart from the dystopian isolation and poverty, signs of criminality surface in the third section as well: “Crime was said to flourish despite the best efforts of the bicycling policeman; even the reintroduction of the stocks had not deterred malefactors” [2] (p. 213).

Barnes evinces a middle ground in the dystopian mode of Anglia as well, just as the same way he held his middle position in regard to the farce by calling his work a semi-farce. If one decides to take into account his authorial voice, as should often not be the case, in the sentence “The village was neither idyllic nor dystopic” [2] (p. 215), this middle ground is vividly felt. However, what one reads is what one must interpret. In other words, text takes precedence over the au-

thor. Therefore, this must be precisely why Nünning argues contrarily that the setting “is a curious amalgam of dystopian fiction and a regression to an idyllic, rural England” [24] (p. 9). Antiquarian and obsolete air is so dominant in Anglia that the author eloquently and wittingly writes “From now on, only those with an active love of discomfort or necrophiliac taste for the antique need venture there [Anglia]” [2] (p. 156). This discomfort and necrophilia should herald a dystopian society which Barnes is anticipating.

Dark politics and weak socio-economic states, which are imperative to dystopia, rose in Anglia consequently. “The natural political response to this crisis was the election of a Government of Renewal, which pledged itself to economic recovery, parliamentary sovereignty, and territorial reacquisition” [2] (p. 211). Many other adversities in Anglia brought about a change in its trajectory towards a dystopia, among which mass depopulation and symbolic punishments could be cited. “Symbolic punishments were also introduced: the Greenwich Meridian was replaced by Paris Mean Time; on maps the English Channel became the French Sleeve. Mass depopulation now took place. Those of Caribbean and sub-continental origin began returning to the more prosperous lands...” [2] (p. 211). Anglia failed its people drastically when it reached a state Barnes wrote: “[w]hat remained incontestable was that the long-agreed goals of the nation – economic growth, political influence, military capacity, and moral superiority – were now abandoned” [2] (p. 211). In addition, tourism was banned and communication technologies were discarded. Put briefly, the country “simply gave up” [2] (p. 211).

The dystopian decline of Anglia was no less regressive than the gradual failures of Martha. Barnes, in a very intellectual fashion, interweaves the death of the two entities to each other:

Pages fell from the booklet’s rusted staples; then a dried leaf. She laid it, stiff and grey, against her palm; only its scalloped edge told her it was from an oak. She must have picked it up, all those years ago, and kept it for a specific purpose: to remind herself, on just such a day as this, of just such a day as that. Except, what was the day? The prompt did not work: no memory of joy, success, or simple contentment returned, no flash of sunlight through trees, no house-martin flicking under eaves, no smell of lilac. She had failed her younger self by losing the priorities of youth. [2] (p. 206)

Section three and its tangible dystopian features aside, *England, England* hosts a rather symbolic and figurative type of dystopianism in section two, which entails a certain abstract style of postmodern dehumanization. The characters of the theme park portrayed in section two are massively alien to the real and crave replicas in lieu of the original. They have all lost sight of their factual lives, living in delusions and illusions. They wish to identify with what is already history and non-existent. They are self-deceived, self-alienated and delusional. Then, section two or the chronicles of the theme park do not totally fall short of a dystopia either, as

Booker states “[i]ndeed, dystopian films like *Westworld* and *Futureworld* derive directly from this dark side of Disney, dealing with the fear of domination of humanity by its machines by depicting fictional theme parks in which technology runs amok” [8] (p. 2).

Section two of *England, England* could be the most fitting and relevant example for Baudrillard’s dual argument of dystopian/utopian theme parks. “Jean Baudrillard argues that such [theme] parks represent a negative escapism that is specifically designed to divert attention from social problems in the “real” world. Proclaiming the “hyperreality” of modern American society, Baudrillard sees a carefully gauged attempt to set Disneyland off as a fantasyland separate from the surrounding reality” [3] (p. 2). Section two of *England, England*, acts precisely as a fantasy hyperreality whose role is to divert attention from the real England and pretend to look utopian while it is dystopian deep inside: “the double nature of the Disneyland both as the idealization of the American dream and the carceral society” [2] (p. 3). This diversion from the reality in the second section, to Baudrillard, culminates in undermined and eclipsed critique by the phony hyperreality of the theme park. Plainly put, the theme park (section two) is a cover under which the reality (old England) resides. And this is not but a dual condition of the theme park and Baudrillard’s Disneyland in his dystopian thinking. This makes section two dystopian enough: A dystopia under the guise of a utopia, or I would use the most of my liberty in calling it a dystopian utopia. This duality splits their identity as well, not knowing precisely who they are. The characters are at times led to believe they are truly the legends that are too good to be true, hence a defamiliarized identity.

Dystopian Alienation in England, England

Alienation, as an integral ingredient of dystopian fiction, has been subject to increasing attention in recent years. As a mode, most dystopian works shock their readership through the very strange spatial settings as well as eccentric timelines they develop within their world. This literary technique or device has been approached and appreciated under different titles such as defamiliarization by Russian formalists, alienation effect by Brecht and eventually “cognitive estrangement” by Darko Suvin [7] (pp. 6-15). All three terms serve the same purpose, as Booker depicts:

The principal technique of dystopian fiction is defamiliarization: by focusing their critiques of society on spatially or temporally distant settings, dystopian fictions provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable. This exploration of alternative perspectives obviously recalls the technique of defamiliarization that the Russian Formalists saw as the literary technique ... it even more directly recalls the alienation effect of Bertolt Brecht...One recalls, for example, Dark Suvin's useful emphasis on "cognitive estrangement" as the central strategy of science fiction. [7] (p. 19)

Thus, dystopian fiction, via odd temporality and unprecedented spatiality, alienates the reading minds. Similarly, Bennet and Royle contend that “Literature, for the Russian formalists, has to do with *defamiliarization* (*ostranenie*): it makes the familiar strange, it challenges our beliefs and assumptions about the world and about the nature of reality” [5] (p. 35). In short, dystopian literature opens the readers’ eyes to such unprecedented and newly witnessed atmospheres as to give rise to an indescribable and peculiar sentiment called alienation, which questions the sense of reality and the state the person is in. This has served as an end in most dystopian works in contemporary fiction. This way, the readers’ identity, I suggest, is exposed to a serious body of transformations and dynamics.

In this essay’s endeavor at tracing and interpreting dystopian alienation in *England, England*, the temporal and spatial rift between the England, England and the old England proves to be pertinently significant. By virtue of having these two sections belong to two absolutely differential settings, spatially and temporally —of course not in a science fiction time travel fashion but in a more logic sense of time divergence— Barnes is targeted at magnifying such huge rifts, be they social and political, between the two worlds as to alienate his readers’ minds, thereby inviting them to reinvent second thoughts on the concept of identity. Such rifts and differences, I suggest, instill in the reader the very challenging concepts of authentic identity, not to mention the already existing challenges between the reality and the copy in the second section. Once more, Barnes, through the technique of alienation, attempts to awaken his readers from the oblivion and illusions webbed around the concept of identity. Just as the same way a country can begin again, the identity can reshape as well. Thus, alienation is at the disposal of identity reinvention. Apart from the thematic alienation surrounding the concept of identity, alienation is vividly seen in the characters of the theme park as well, for they are but agents of mere delusions, illusions and falsities. They have lost the sense of reality and solely live in a bubble which could blast any minute by the foregrounding of the truth.

6. A Hybrid Entity: A Postmodern Dystopia

If one is to do justice to *England, England*, the most fitting term in addressing it should be a postmodern dystopia. As the last piece of my analytical spectrum, I will tersely try to shed light on this hybrid genre and its interwoven affiliation with *England, England*. Booker in a chapter titled “Postmodernist Dystopia” devises a quick way to discern such works: “Indeed, a typical characteristic of Western postmodernist “utopian” and “dystopian” works is that the classification of such works tends to be extremely uncertain” [8] (p. 142). So far, I have incessantly and on many fronts endeavored to highlight the very same dimension, namely the hard-to-

categorize nature of *England, England*; the same determining criterion Booker overtly delineates. Apart from this distinguishing factor, which utterly holds true here, other elements of this hybrid genre, as Booker is quick in laying forward, are effective skepticism, mocks and a sense of nihilism. [8] (pp. 141-42). Espousing Woody Allen's *Sleeper* (1973) as a full-scale instance of a postmodernist dystopia, Booker characterizes the genre by a specific trace of comedy merging "both silliness and seriousness" and "disbelief that traditional realms of hope like science, religion, and politics can never solve the problems of modern society" [8] (p. 141).

That a deep sense of nihilism, absurdity and skepticism informs the heart of *England, England* is an indubitable fact. Barnes recurrently stresses his skepticism towards the grand concepts of history, memory and identity all throughout the novel. Perhaps no collection of his words could reflect the sense of absurdity and nihilism better than the following: "A sense of falling, falling, falling, which we have every day of our lives, and then an awareness that the fall was being made gentler, was being arrested, by an unseen current whose existence no-one suspected. A short, eternal moment that was absurd, improbable, unbelievable, true" [2] (p. 199). Barnes perceptively plants the very nihilistic notion of questioning the grand concept of memory right at the very outset of his novel " 'WHAT'S YOUR FIRST MEMORY?' " someone would ask. And she would reply, 'I don't remember' " [2] (p. 10). This playful and absurd allusion is perfected later when he states: "Old England had lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself" [2] (p. 210). Memory, identity and history have all ceased to exist. Thus, this air of nihilism coupled with the previously illustrated parody, mocks, farce, and the serious idiocy of the characters leaves no room for doubt in calling *England, England* an overriding instance of a postmodernist dystopia.

7. Concluding Words: Fall of Grand Narratives and a Quest for a Reinventing Identity

Initially through Hutcheon's concept of postmodern paradox, the paper tried to shed light on how Barnes juxtaposes England's past with its disappointing present, hence the paradox and the waned Englishness. Later, via Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum, the paper intended to represent how the copy of an England surpassed most of the qualities found in the genuine one. Next, through Hutcheon's dialectics of parody, it was shown how the novel resonates the role of socio-political and historical critique of the past, which was the major plank of Hutcheon's arguments shaping the postmodern parody. Last but not least, this paper aimed at revealing the dystopian nature of the novel through instantiating the elements of a dystopia, namely the dark politics, corruptly failed economy, and the banning of tourism and communications. All these consequently caused a huge rift, spatially

and temporally, between the two Englands which culminated in an eventual dystopian alienation, discussed as the ending portion of this essay's arguments.

I have evaded detailing the significant postmodern concept of fall of grand narratives, which obviously fares well in *England, England* throughout my essay, in order to allow it to grace the conclusion of my essay. So far and by way of a recap, the present paper has majorly deployed a myriad of postmodern elements such as paradox, simulacra and parody in order to unravel the densely codified thematics of *England, England*, not to mention the minor allusions to other postmodern elements such as uncertainty and pastiche. Englishness and the English identity create a locus in which all the mentioned postmodern elements operate solidly, as each section of my essay highlighted. As a result, Barnes likes his words to parody, conflict and simulate grand narratives such as history, identity, memory and Englishness to denote their eventual fall, as Lyotard transparently wrote: "The grand narrative has lost its credibility" [19] (p. 37). Then, the cost of a lost grand narrative i.e. its identity and memory is what England, Barnes unequivocally suggests, shall pay to reinvent a new one. The ending portion of my essay veered towards the dystopian features of *England, England*, from which the merging of the two genres i.e. postmodern and dystopian as the very last part of my essay derived. To name but a few, dystopian elements such as isolation, crime, socio-economical blights and hybrid components such as nihilism, absurdity, and farcical idiocy of the characters were the staples of this section.

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Majid Sadeghzadegan is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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Biography



Majid Sadeghzadegan is a senior lecturer of literature at Tabriz Azad University where he teaches courses as diverse as poetry, drama, contemporary American literature, short story, introduction to literature, essay writing and applied linguistics. He acquired his PhD in English and American Studies from University of Lisbon in 2021, defending his thesis titled "Reading *No Country for Old Men* and *The Road*: Trauma in Contemporary Literature and Cinema" with distinction and honors. His MA at Tabriz Azad University focused on traumas of the novel and the film *Shutter Island*, making multi-disciplinary studies the major plank of his academic success. He currently teaches internship project with a focus on academic writing at Tabriz Azads University.