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Thema: (Re-) Creating the Past: National Identity and Authenticity in Julian Barnes' *England, England* and Brian Moore's *The Great Victorian Collection*.

1. Gutachterin: Prof. Dr. Susanne Scholz

2. Gutachterin: Dr. Gisela Engel

vorgelegt von: Ulrike Christina Mättner

aus: Darmstadt

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1. Introduction

The end of the twentieth century was marked by political developments that challenged traditional national identities.

In Europe, the break-up of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries reinforced a move towards regionalism with an emphasis on local culture. At the same time, the growing importance of globalised markets and the necessary mobility of the population demanded the redefinition of national identities along inclusive multicultural lines.

Contemporary writing reflects and expounds the problems of these changes. An important concern in postmodernist British novels is thus the discussion of national identity, questioning historical truths with an interest in the crossing of boundaries between history and myth, and between the authentic and the imitation. National identities are perceived as no longer stable, collective identities, but instead as flexible and fragmented. Thus, contemporary writing that discusses national identity is often characterised by a sense of loss and uncertainty.

Julian Barnes discusses notions of Englishness in his novel *England, England* (1998). He describes two possible consequences to the prevailing nostalgic idea that true Englishness only existed in an idealised imperial past, and that it cannot be lived within a European framework. As one example, Barnes explores the renunciation of the technological development that significantly changed the world in the twentieth century. He delineates the attempt of taking a step back in time, embracing cultural regression. As another possible consequence to the belief that true Englishness only existed in the past, Barnes explores the construction of a theme park which preserves and represents everything distinctively English. This theme park capitalises the nostalgic longing for an idealised past, where the distinction between authenticated history and myth or fiction is unimportant.

In *The Great Victorian Collection* (1975), Brian Moore discusses the relation between the real and the replica, and the possibility of an indistinguishability between original and copy. Brian Moore, too, describes the construction of a theme park which makes profit from a nostalgia for the past.

This essay will explore the fundamental conditions for the reluctance and resistance to contemporary changes, which result in a glorification of the past.

The first chapter will explain the 'postmodern condition', as Jean-François Lyotard termed it. Although notions of 'postmodernism' are highly debated, it will be used here in the sense that it describes the contemporary focus on fragmentation, the decentring of the subject and the scrutiny of grand narratives. The essay will show that the emphasis on fragmentation and epistemological doubt causes a collective longing for an idealised past. The second chapter explores the feeling of nostalgia for a 'home in the past', when individuals allegedly felt 'whole' and led satisfied lives in stable communities.

Notions of 'Englishness' rely heavily on this kind of shared imagination of an idealised past. This essay will explore English national identity in terms of its constructedness on the basis of a shared nostalgic image of the past. In this context, notions of authenticity will be discussed in relation to the phenomenon of hyper real theme parks.

1.1 Introduction to *The Great Victorian Collection*

In his novel *The Great Victorian Collection* (1975) the author Brian Moore tells the story of Anthony Maloney, a twenty-nine year old assistant professor of history at McGill University in Montreal, whose dream comes to life.

Maloney, after attending a seminar at Berkeley, intends to spend the weekend exploring the Big Sur region, and checks into the Sea Winds Motel in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.That night in the motel, he dreams that outside his window, on a previously empty parking-lot, an open-air market has appeared, containing a unique collection of priceless Victoriana.

This is not an extraordinary dream for Maloney, he had once, in his graduate student days, thought of creating a collection such as this in Canada, but had been advised that such a project would be futile and impractical.

The next morning when he wakes up, he finds his dream come true. Laid out before him he sees a vast array of exquisite furniture, paintings, jewellery, tapestries and musical instruments. The Collection includes artefacts which exist in British museums, but also exhibits objects which are nowadays only known from descriptions and illustrations in books.

The Great Victorian Collection is a fantastic, surreal novel, that plays with postmodern questions of reality and authenticity. Anthony Maloney's dream of the Collection miraculously comes to life in those duplicates of original Victoriana. He is confident to have created an important collection, a second set of unique originals, but he fears that they might disappear before he has time to prove to the world that they actually materialized. All his life he had wanted to do something out of the ordinary, and now he wants to gain recognition for his creation.
He phones Professor Henning from Berkeley, who points out that the Collection needs publicity, and who gets *The New York Times* involved. They send Fred Vaterman, a journalist with German ancestors, who pursues his own dream of becoming a great newspaperman in the American tradition. Vaterman sees his chance for achievement in covering the story of the Collection, but worries that it might be a hoax. He introduces the discussion about the authenticity of the objects, the relationship between original and imitation or fake, which is central to Brian Moore's novel.
The authenticity of the Collection is to be verified by established experts on Victoriana.
Several experts discuss the question of authenticity, yet their opinions seem biased. *The New York Times* sends Professor Clews of Yale, the London *Sunday Times* commissions Sir Alfred Mannings, Director General of British Imperial Collections. Clews instantly distrusts Maloney, he doubts his qualifications – a doctorate from a Canadian university – and finds Maloney untrustworthy, therefore in his opinion the objects must be fakes.
Sir Alfred Mannings insists that he is the best qualified expert to judge the authenticity of the artefacts, and states that he believes the objects to be neither original nor fake, but that instead they might be something which has not been categorized before. Mannings opens the discussion about authenticity to the possibility of indistinguishableness between original and copy.
Management Incorporated, a company whose president, Mr Hickman, had previously secured the rights to represent the Collection, send their own experts, to dispel doubts about the authenticity of the Collection. Management Inc. chooses two experts who collaborated on a two-volume work on Victoriana which had once been reviewed unfavourably by Professor Clews. These experts willingly authenticate the Collection.

The rivalry between the experts seems to make an objective judgement about the authenticity of the Collection impossible.
Eventually, a contemporary witness, Lord Rennishawe, can undoubtedly attest the authenticity and originality of the Collection. It contains a secret room that once belonged to Lord Rennishawe's grandfather, a room which Lord Rennishawe only saw once in his childhood before it burned down, and which noone ever wrote about. Even though Lord Rennishawe confirms the supernatural aspect of Maloney's creation, this factor of the Collection remains unvalued by the news media.
A group from Vanderbilt University, under the direction of Dr I.S.Spector, investigates the creation of the Collection with a series of tests and interviews. Brian Moore includes some of the documents gathered in this investigation in his novel, along with comments on further research on Maloney's case, which, for the reader, facilitates a suspension of disbelief. The general public in Maloney's world, though, doubts his version of the creation of the Collection.
Apart from I.S.Spector's group, only Maloney himself and Vaterman's girlfriend, Mary Ann, who becomes Maloney's temporary secretary, are convinced that concerning the Collection the dream aspect is the most important one.
The supernaturally created Collection follows its own rules, a fact that Maloney only gradually realizes. When he tries out his power over his creation and attempts to telepathically move an object from the Collection, the consequences for the authenticity of that object are fatal, it becomes a fake with the words 'Made in Japan' stamped on it. Furthermore, it is impossible to remove an object from the Collection. Maloney's creation soon controls his life. He cannot find sleep outside Carmel-by-the-Sea, and every night he dreams about admiring, touching and guarding the Collection. After an attempt of actively renouncing the Collection, by uttering a performative sentence, in hopes of thus returning to his normal life, his nightly dream turns into a nightmare. In this nightmare he guards the Collection by watching a black-and-white television monitor, unable to move. This dream exhausts Maloney, his hopeless situation drives him into alcoholism.
Meanwhile the Collection decays, it loses authenticity when pictures are taken, and it reproaches Maloneys attempts to get away from it by looking more and more fake. The original materials begin to seem false, and actual damage occurs. Yet it cannot be destroyed, even when Maloney, in a desperate moment, attempts to set fire to it.

Mr Hickman sees the great potential of the Collection in its attractiveness to tourists, he knows that its mysterious creation and the erotic content of the Collection make it impeccably marketable. Management Inc. creates a Great Victorian Village, a theme park near Carmel, on a convenient site by the highway, that meets the tourist's expectations. They organise erotic shows and sell cheap replicas of Victoriana in a warehouse supermarket that is misleadingly named the Great Victorian Collection. Only few tourists make the journey to see the original Collection, which is now run by the California Parks Service. After the State of California announced that the pornographic parts of the Collection would remain closed to the general public, tourists only visit the original site to see the room where the original dream had taken place, or to meet, or catch sight of, the creator of the Collection.
The predominant indifference towards the rare artefacts in the Collection, his creation, drive Maloney mad. Ultimately, he commits suicide, yet the Collection continues to exist, and the Great Victorian Village prospers.

1.2 Introduction to England, England

Julian Barnes' novel *England, England* (1998) explores notions of reality, identity and the glorification of the past against the background of England's cultural and political decline. Set in the third millennium, the novel delineates both the protagonist Martha Cochrane's struggle to find her true self, and England's attempts to find its authentic national identity.
The novel is structured into three parts. The first part of the novel, titled 'England', describes Martha's memories of her childhood in rural England. Yet on the first page, Julian Barnes introduces doubts about the reliability of memory.
Martha's memories are strongly connected with England. Her favourite pastime was a Counties of England jigsaw puzzle, and she remembers that her father used to tease her by hiding one of the pieces – before he abandoned the family and took a piece of the puzzle with him. She also remembers history lessons at school, which presented the history of England in short facts and dates, not discussing causes and disputes. Only later, at college, Martha realizes, with the example of Sir Francis Drake, that her nation's hero can be seen as a pirate from another point of view. Here, Barnes hints at the uncertainty of historical truths, a major theme of the novel.

The second part, named ‘England, England’, describes in detail the construction of media tycoon Sir Jack Pitman’s project. He sees himself as a patriot at heart, and makes an effort to revive England’s image. He decides to construct a vast heritage centre on the Isle of Wight, replicating the quintessences of England.

First of all, Pitman engages a French intellectual to address the Project’s Co-ordinating Committee. This intellectual situates the idea of the project in the postmodern pattern of thought. He introduces the discussion about the reality of the original and the replica, which is one of the central themes of Julian Barnes’ novel. The project grounds in the French intellectual’s hyperreal notions, Sir Jack wants to create not a theme park, but ‘the thing itself’.

There is some confusion as to whether the project should be conceived as reality or fantasy. The project is planned with the help of Dr Max, the Official Historian, yet his function is not to reflect the history of England accurately, but to advise on how much people already know about history. The aim of the project is declaredly not to teach visitors about England’s history, but to make them feel less ignorant.

The project is constructed on the basis of an international survey amongst potential future visitors to the theme park. Participants were asked to list six characteristics, virtues or quintessences which the word England suggested to them. Sir Jack disapproves of some of the quintessences on the list, which he then reworks to suit his own desires and the project’s marketability.

The team, including Martha in her position as an ‘Appointed Cynic’, faces innumerable problems of coming up with anything authentic that meets the demands of the targeted family audience. In order to please their visitors, historic figures and myths are repositioned and changed beyond recognition. The blurring of boundaries between the authentic, and imitations and inventions is one of the major thematic leitmotifs of Barnes' novel.

Pitman’s project on the whole is not concerned too much with authenticity; instead it is governed by the rules of marketing. Yet, unintentionally, the project becomes more authentic when the employee-actors start to behave as if they were the characters they represent. The smugglers smuggle goods, and Dr Johnson is moody and a nuisance to the visitors who paid to enjoy his company. This unpredictable behaviour on the part of the actors causes many problems for the management of the Island, but the crisis hits its peak when the members of Robin Hood’s gang begin to turn into real outlaws.

At the same time, the inauthenticity of some of the main characters in the novel is disclosed. Sir Jack Pitman is not really a patriot, since he accepts England's decline, which is to a great extent caused by his project.
Bit by bit, it entices all the tourists away from the mainland. His project fulfils the tourist's needs completely, offering everything one might want to see in England, but in more convenient distances between the sights. The project manages to lure the Royal Family away from England, and offers replicas of all the major tourist sights. Barnes includes a report from the *Wall Street Journal*, which confirms that, when offered a well-made, convenient replica, tourists no longer feel the need to see the original.
The project reflects in no way the allegedly typically English love of freedom. The newly invented independent state 'England, England' is run by Sir Jack Pitman in egomaniacal autocracy; a pure market state with no government, only economic policiy.
For a short while, Martha is in charge of the Island. After she and her Partner Paul Harrison, who is also a Pitco employee in the function of Sir Jack's 'Ideas Catcher', found out about Sir Jack's embarrassing sexual preferences, they use this information to blackmail him when Sir Jack decides to fire them, in order to keep their jobs.
Yet Paul, who never stopped believing in Sir Jack's grandeur, eventually betrays Martha and destroys the evidence. Paul and Sir Jack use the problems with the Hood-gang as an excuse to remove Martha and to ban her from the Island.
The novel lays bare that most of the characters are playing roles; some even invented multiple identities for themselves.
Martha is always searching for truth and authenticity. She tries to find truth and simplicity in her relationship to Paul and she tries to find her true inner self. But Martha realises that in the relationship she is not true to herself, whereas she also feels that it seems impossible to identify her true self.

The final short section, titled 'Albion', describes England's return to a preindustrial world, where Martha spends her old age in a small village. In this part, Barnes explores the possibility of an alternative, purer reality. The economically and culturally regressed 'Old England' or 'Anglia' renders possible a renewal of England's traditions. The inhabitants of Anglia once again live in rural communities.

They drive carriages, and their choice of foods is dependant on the weather and the season.
Yet, Barnes does not describe a return to a nostalgic paradise, he highlights the unreality of the village's return to its roots. The blacksmith of the village, Jack Oshinsky, is a former legal expert of an American electronics firm, who decided to change his name to Jez Harris, and who finds pleasure in playing a yokel tour guide and telling invented folklore to the rare tourists or disguised anthropologists.
The villagers decide to revive the Village Fête, and to ask Martha for advice, only to be unconvinced by the information she gives, that is drawn from her childhood experience and the official booklet of such a festival. They decide to start from scratch.
The novel ends with a description of the Village Fête, which is based on information taken from an encyclopaedia, and influenced by practical factors. The Village Fête is an invented tradition, suggesting that all traditions are to some extent invented.

2. The Postmodern Condition

Both Brian Moore's *The Great Victorian Collection* and Julian Barnes' *England, England* play with postmodern questions of reality and authenticity. Moore focuses on the discussion of a possible indistinguishableness between the original and the replica, whereas Julian Barnes, writing about twenty-five years later than Brian Moore, only broaches this discussion shortly, and highlights the idea that there is no such thing as an 'original'. Barnes highlights the elusive nature of reality and knowledge and thus demonstrates the constructedness of identities and nations.
The development of theme parks described in *England, England* and *The Great Victorian Collection* focuses on the capitalisation of a prevailing nostalgic longing for the past, in which a representation of the authentic is subordinate to the needs of the tourism industry.
Both novels are therefore rooted in the ideas of postmodernism, which Mike Featherstone discusses in *Undoing Culture*: Postmodernism is marked by 'a movement away from the universalistic ambitions of master-narratives where the emphasis is upon totality, system and unity towards an emphasis upon local knowledge, fragmentation, syncretism, 'otherness' and 'difference'.' The development entails a 'collapse of the distinction between high and popular culture', and a 'movement towards a simulational consumer culture in which an endlessly reduplicated hallucinatory veil of images effaces the distinction between appearance and reality.' Postmodernist ideas emphasise the 'decentring of the subject, whose sense of identity and biographical continuity give way to fragmentation and superficial play with images [and] sensations.'[1]

Brian Moore's protagonist Anthony Maloney is unsatisfied with his life in a sober, rational, disenchanted world. He dreams up a complete collection of all Victoriana known to him, even including objects he could never have seen or read about, but the enlightened, rationally thinking public does not accept his explanation of its creation. His dream is provoked by a longing for the preservation of the past, but his vision of the Victorian past is highly nostalgic. Maloney feels out of place in his contemporary

[1] Featherstone, Mike: *Undoing Culture.* Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1995, 43f.

world and is obsessed with the Victorian past, which he imagines to have been a time of innocence and wholeness, a time when people could still believe in marvels.
Julian Barnes' characters, too, are dissatisfied with the postmodern, disenchanted world. Sir Jack Pitman creates wholeness in hyperreality, embracing the collapse of the distinction between high and popular culture, and between original and copy, and thus creates a theme park replicating everything he reckons to be distinctively English. In contrast, Barnes' protagonist Martha Cochrane endeavours in a lifelong search to find her true identity.
Postmodernist theories debate the paradigms of modernism, and question the fundamental ideas of the Enlightenment: The ideas of the Enlightenment premise a stable, coherent, knowable self, a self that knows itself and the world through reason, or rationality, and can produce an objective form of knowledge, namely science. The knowledge produced by science is 'truth', and this knowledge will always lead to progress. Reason is the ultimate judge of what is true, and freedom consists of obedience to the laws that conform to the knowledge discovered by reason. Science thus stands as the paradigm for any and all knowledge.[2] The postmodern view emphasises epistemological doubt and thus highlights the constructedness of our world.

2.1 Focus on fragmentation

Modernity is fundamentally about order, about rationality and rationalisation, and about creating order out of chaos. Rational thought constitutes all the social structures and institutions of a modern nation state: democracy, law, science, ethics and aesthetics.[3]
The rise of capitalism demanded an ordered society, with centralised markets and systems of administration, taxation and education, which brought out the importance of the nation state. Nations and nationalism were products of rational, planned activity. They were designed for an age of revolutions and mass mobilisation, and central to the attempts to control the processes of rapid social change that the rise of capitalism and idustrialisation involved.[4]

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[2] Klages, Mary: *Postmodernism.* http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html, 2.5.2008.
[3] Klages, Mary: *Postmodernism*.
[4] Smith, Anthony D: *Nationalism and Modernism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 22.

Postmodern criticism highlights, that modernity has been imposing notions of unity and universality on thought and the world, imposing order on disorder.[5]
In modern societies, Jean-François Lyotard argues, totality, and stability, and order are maintained through the means of 'grand narratives'. Every belief system or ideology has its grand narratives. These are theories and philosophies of the world, such as the belief in the progress of history, the belief that nations are deeply rooted in history, and the belief in the truth of knowledge produced by science.
Postmodernism then is the critique of grand narratives, the awareness that such narratives serve to mask the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice. Lyotard argued that our age is marked by an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'.[6] In rejecting grand narratives, postmodernism focuses on the explanation of small practices and local events, opposed to large-scale universal concepts. Postmodern 'micro-narratives' are provisional and temporary, and do not claim to represent universal truths, to create stability, or to provide answers to ontological or ethical questions.
Modernism in literature and arts is characterised by a blurring of genres, self-conscious narratives, an emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives, and random-seeming collages of different materials. It is marked by a rejection of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' or 'popular' culture, both in choice of materials used to produce art and in methods of displaying, distributing, and consuming art. Postmodernism follows these same ideas. Yet, while modernism presents the fragmented view of human subjectivity and history as something tragic, as a loss of unity, the postmodernist view celebrates fragmentation and provisionality.[7] This postmodern notion of incoherence and randomness is displayed as an achievement, the postmodern mind is said to have outgrown the need for grand narratives. Rejecting large-scale universal theories, one allegedly prefers to knowingly accept the haphazardness of identity, the unreliability of sources of knowledge and the resulting meaninglessness of life.

[5] Featherstone, 10.
[6] Lyotard, Jean-François: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: MUP, 1984, 22.
[7] Klages: *Postmodernism.*

2.2 Epistemological doubt

Lyotard argues that all aspects of modern societies, including science as the primary form of knowledge, depend on grand narratives. Yet he rejects the possibility of grand-scale explanations of the world, and thereby introduces doubt on our sources of knowledge. If the truth produced by science and rationality reflects a generalising theory about the world, its objective truth can be doubted.

Other sources of knowledge, particularly of our knowledge about the past, are more obviously forged. Discussions of historiography draw attention to the unreliability of possibly biased contents of historical sources, and the probability of intentional omissions.

A historian depends on 'indirect knowledge', his sources in many cases report events that have been chosen to be documented, possibly with a certain intention, and from a subjective point of view. Furthermore, the historian apprehends sources from his contemporary pattern of thought.[8] These factors make the possibility of objective knowledge about the past seem very unlikely.

Julian Barnes highlights the epistemological issues related to historiography. *England, England* is a work of historiographic metafiction, concerned with an enquiry into the epistemological status of history, historical explanations, and historiography.

Vera Nünning points out:

> Barnes' novel is unique, however, in the way it employs these by now familiar ploys of 'historiographic metafiction'. Moreover, the exploration of the limits of historical knowledge is not central to the novel, but ancillary to Barnes' wider concerns: It highlights the impossibility of ever knowing what Englishness consisted of in the past, and it deconstructs the notion that there is either a continuity between past and present Englishness, or something like essential 'Englishness'.[9]

Barnes emphasises an anti-realist notion of truth, which states that there is no ultimate truth to be found, given its socially constructed and relative nature. According to this, notions of Englishness rely on a constructed progressive narrative of highly reworked past realities, whose validity is hardly appraisable.

[8] Bloch, Marc: *The Historian´s Craft.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, 44.
[9] Nünning, Vera: *The Invention of Cultural Traditions: The Construction and Destruction of Englishness and Authenticity in Julian Barnes'* England, England. *Anglia* 119, 2001: 58-76, 72.

Barnes repeatedly addresses the flexibility of truth and reality, and ultimately the secondariness of these notions in a postmodern society. One example is Martha Cochrane's interview for the position of the 'Appointed Cynic'. Sir Jack examines her CV, and asks:

> 'Lets see, you are forty. Correct?' – 'Thirty-nine.' [...] 'But if I said I was thirty-nine you'd probably think I was forty-two or –three, whereas if I say I'm forty you're more likely to believe it.' [...] – 'And is the rest of your application as approximate as that?' – 'It's as true as you want it to be. If it suits, it's true. If not, I'll change it.'[10]

The postmodern pattern of thought is marked by a habitual sceptical approach to any kind of information. In this exchange, Martha anticipated Sir Jack's scepticism and decided to falsify her date of birth, in order to make it appear more believable. This hints at the postmodern idea of hyperreality, which suggests that the fake can appear more real than reality.[11]

Barnes shows that truth seems to be a matter of acceptance – the approved version is presumed to represent the truth, which is thus a matter of interpretation. This emphasises the postmodern notion of the constructedness of truth and reality.

Brian Moore's *The Great Victorian Collection* plays with postmodern notions of the nature of knowledge and reality. Moore emphasises the authority of the secular, rational world. He describes a surreal creation: Anthony Maloney dreams about a collection of rare and unique Victoriana, which then overnight miraculously appears on a parking lot in California.

However, miracles have no place in the paradigm of the postmodern reality. The public and the media treat this incident as an entertaining, sensational event, but in principle everyone considers it to be a hoax. Despite the fact that there is no possible way Maloney could have arranged this Collection unnoticed, and the fact that some of the objects are in their reproduction dualities of unique copies which evidentially still exist in their original places in British museums, the general public refuses to accept a miraculous creation. Maloney's explanation of how the Collection was created is irrational, and unacceptable in its reference to supernatural events. The grand narratives of modernity reject notions of magic or irrationality.

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[10] Barnes, Julian: *England, England.* London: Picador, 1999, 45.

[11] Eco, Umberto: *Travels in Hyper Reality: Essays.* San Diego : Harcourt Brace & Co., 1990.

The authenticity of the objects Maloney created in his dream is discussed by experts on the subject, with little reference to their supernatural creation. The one thing the experts agree on is their disbelief in Maloney's explanation of the creation:

> 'I don't for one moment believe they're the result of someone's dream. Do you?' – 'Of course not.' – 'Excuse me, gentlemen,' said the Reuters reporter. 'Do I take it that both of you reject Professor Maloney's explanation?'
>
> At this point the two experts exchanged glances; then, as though performing some prearranged vaudeville routine, they raised their eyebrows, shrugged, and nodded their heads affirmatively.[12]

The kind of knowledge they can experience is limited by the paradigm of rationality. Even though there is no natural explanation for Maloney's creation, in a rational world the reaction to this inconsistency is denial. The discussion about the authenticity of the objects largely ignores their supernatural creation, and seemingly results in the opinion that the objects are valuable: 'Other kinds of experts – historians, antiquarians, collectors – remained interested but tended to ignore its supernatural aspects.'[13] Brian Moore depicts how the truth and valuableness of objects is negotiated and determined by experts on the subject. However, he presents these experts as not reliable, but instead as biased and bribable. Thereby he casts doubts on expert opinion and objective knowledge.

For the tourism industry, the collection, and especially its unexplained origin, is a blessing. The discussion about its miraculous creation brings publicity, and most of the tourists happily accept the reworked version of the collection which they are offered in the purpose-built Great Victorian Village, a theme park outside Carmel that combines a nostalgia for the Victorian past with staged experiences, erotic shows and souvenir shops.

In the postmodern consumer culture, the question of authenticity and reality is secondary, since any reality will be reworked for consumption.

[12] Moore, Brian: *The Great Victorian Collection.* London: Flamingo, 1994, 58.
[13] Moore, 188.

2.3 Decentring of the subject

One feature of the postmodern condition is the demand for inauthenticity.
In her interview, Martha Cochrane did not tell the truth about her age in order to enhance her credibility, and she also invents a divorce, to present herself in a light that she thinks might appeal to her future employer.
Within the consumer culture which developed in the twentieth century, 'the actor's skill of presenting a colourful self, and the modern notion of mask-wearing and celebrity', are, as Mike Featherstone points out, replacing 'the more traditional virtues of *character*, which emphasized moral consistency, sincerity amd unity of purpose.'[14]
A shift in etiquette books in late nineteenth-century America has been detected by John F. Kasson, whose research discloses a decreasing emphasis on authenticity:

> a new focus from proclaiming the virtues of moral character to acting as guides for individuals who must learn to read and portray techniques of self-representation in a complex urban environment with the ever present possibility of deception. The perception of the self as a series of dramatic effects, of learned techniques as opposed to inherent good moral characteristics, leads to a problematization and fragmentation of the self.[15]

In the postmodern world, inauthenticity and role-play is demanded. Jacob Golomb highlights in *In Search of Authenticity*: 'Everything in social life pulls us away from being ourselves, for the simple reason that society works best by making people into cogs in the machinery of everyday life.'[16] The world of everyday life 'runs most smoothly when people identify with their roles and fulfill their functions without questioning or running against the grain.'[17] Jean-Paul Sartre cites as an example the 'dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavor to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer.'[18] Social pressures pull us toward inauthentic role-playing, but this results in the feeling of a lost wholeness.

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[14] Featherstone, 69. (Italics in original.)
[15] Kasson, J.F: *Rudeness and Civility*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1990. Referred to in: Featherstone, 69.
[16] Golomb, Jacob: *In Search of Authenticity*. From Kierkegaard to Camus. London: Routledge, 1995, 5.
[17] Golomb, 5.
[18] Sartre, Jean-Paul: *Being and Nothingness*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956, 59.

Martha knows how to present herself in a world where the boundaries between believable illusion and reality are blurred. Nevertheless, all her life she searches for truth, trying to find meaningful relationships, and, most notably, trying to find her true, inner self.

The basic assumption built into the ideal of authenticity is that there is a 'true self' lying within each individual. This real, inner self contains 'the constellation of feelings, needs, desires, capacities, aptitudes, dispositions, and creative abilities that make the person a unique individual.'[19]

Martha tries to determine her true self through introspection. She attempts to examine her memories, but, as Julian Barnes highlights on the first page of his novel, Martha knows that memories are unreliable. They are not 'solid, seizable things', they are 'lies', 'processed', 'coloured by what happened in between', 'propaganda', 'self-deception', 'impure and corrupted'.[20]

Memory, in the fashion of grand narratives, imposes unity on the events of one's life, constructing coherence and meaning: 'childhood was remembered in a succession of incidents which explained why you were the person you turned out to be.'[21] But in her old age, Martha notices that her memory loses its practical, justificatory attributes, and instead reveals its randomness:

> Nowadays there was more slippage – a bicycle chain jumping a cog – and less consequence. Or perhaps this was your brain hinting at what you didn't want to know: that you had become the person you were not by explicable cause-and-effect, by acts of will imposed on circumstance, but by mere vagary. You beat your wings all your life, but it was the wind that decided where you went.[22]

Martha perceives a fragmentation between her brain and her self, and between her heart and her mind: 'So while her heart opened, her mind remained anxious.'[23] She also detects a divide between her younger and her older self, when, finding a once, in her childhood, meaningful oak leaf, she fails to remember what it had meant: 'She had failed her younger self by losing the priorities of youth. Unless it was that her younger self had failed by not predicting the priorities of age.'[24]

[19] Guignon, Charles: *On Being Authentic*. London: Routledge, 2004, 6.
[20] Barnes, 1-7.
[21] Barnes, 242.
[22] ibid.
[23] Barnes, 135.
[24] Barnes, 247.

Martha's habit of introspection shows in her internal dialogues between apparently different selves. She gives herself advice: 'Watch your tongue',[25] 'Careful, Martha',[26] and engages in a disputation of her relationship with Paul:

> '– Look, it's just getting going, this relationship. – It's just getting going and instead of all that old hopefulness and lovely self-deception and ... ambition you used to have, you're making sensible adjustments and sensible excuses. – No I'm not. – Yes you are. You are using words like very enjoyable. – Well, maybe I'm getting middle-aged. [...]
>
> – No, it feels like this: no games, no deceptions, no pretence, no betrayal. – Four negatives make a positive? – Shut up, shut up. Yes, by the way, they might. So shut up. – Didn't say a word, Martha. Sleep well. Just out of interest, why do you think you woke up?'[27]

One of the core ideas in the postmodernist discussion is the 'de-centering' of the subject. Charles Guignon describes in *On being authentic* that humans are seen as 'polycentric, fluid, contextual subjectivities, selves with limited powers of autonomous choice and multiple centers with diverse perspectives.'[28]
Thus, postmodernist theory radically undermines the very notion of a cohesive self. As early as 1890 the American psychologist William James, reflecting on the multiplicity of roles people play, considered the possibility that a normal, healthy individual might be seen as containing multiple selves and not just wearing multiple masks.[29]
Julian Barnes' protagonist Martha Cochrane represents what for Jean Baudrillard is the characteristically postmodern condition of anomaly. Baudrillard sees the subject 'as a locus for a 'fractal multiplication of body images': a space or site in which an individual combines any number of identities.'[30]
In the postmodernist discussion, Fredric Jameson coined the phrase 'multi-phrenic intensities', which he used to describe what he regards as an effect of postmodern tendencies that have emerged in the postwar culture of the consumer society. It refers to 'a breakdown of an individuals' sense of identity through the bombardment of fragmented signs and images which erode all sense of continuity between past, present and future, all teleological belief that life is a meaningful project'.[31]

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[25] Barnes 46.
[26] Barnes, 120.
[27] Barnes, 97.
[28] Guignon, 110.
[29] Guignon, 110.
[30] Hill, Tracey & Hughes, William (Ed.): *Contemporary Writing & National Identity.* Bath: Sulis Press, 1995, 21.
[31] Featherstone, 44.

The postmodern philosopher Richard Rorty rejects notions of truth and rationality, and follows the emphasis upon a decentred self by arguing that there is no underlying coherent human essence behind our various social roles. Rather than being something unified and consistent, the self should be conceived as 'a bundle of conflicting 'quasi-selves', a random and contingent assemblage of experiences.'[32]

In the postmodern view, the 'true self' is thus impossible to detect.

Also, it remains questionable whether in the contemporary world the ideal of being true to one's self is maintainable. The ideal of authentic life demands not only to find one's true self, but also to express the feelings, desires, needs and dispositions of this particular self authentically. Since the true, inner dispositions of a person are not necessarily consistent with life in a contemporary close-knit society, with its dependence on role-play and representation, this behaviour would be unwanted and out of place.

Still, according to the ideas of existentialism, the individual is entirely free, and, therefore, ultimately responsible to create an ethos of personal responsibility for themselves, outside of any definite belief system.

Martha Cochrane tries to construct meaning for her life based on the idea that she can consciously build her character and become who she always wanted to be, a mature personality. She admits her mother's rule, enhancing it to her own: 'they made their mistakes, now you make yours. And there was a logical consequence of this, which became part of Martha's creed: after the age of twenty-five, you were not allowed to blame anything on your parents.'[33]

Martha is torn between the existential demand to freely create her inner world, her own self and her own truths and convictions, while trying to fulfil expectations of the outer world. In the final section of *England, England* she thinks back about her attempts to create her own identity, and reasons that, in the end, it was not in her hands. A neighbour's child calls her an old maid:

> Well then, that's what they saw.
>
> Yet it was a strange trajectory for a life: that she, so knowing a child, so disenchanted an adult, should be transformed into an old maid. Hardly one of the traditional kind, who acquired the status by lifelong virginity, the dutiful care of ageing parents, and a tutting moral aloofness. [...] Perhaps she could be a born-again old maid. And perhaps it was also the case that, for all a lifetime's internal struggling, you were finally no

[32] Featherstone, 45.
[33] Barnes, 22.

> more than what others saw you as. That was your nature, whether you liked it or not.'[34]

Martha settles into the role of an old maid, and finally gives up her search for her true self. She spends her old age solitary and contemplative, reading the *Mid-Wesses Gazette* and going for walks. She thinks that the human spirit should divide itself between the entirely local and the nearly eternal. 'How much of her life had been spent with all the stuff in the middle: career, money, sex, heart-trouble, appearance, anxiety, fear, yearning.'[35] She accepts the meaninglessness of life in the absence of grand narratives, and gives up the pointless search for truth, facing the unreliability of all knowledge and the randomness of a subject's identity. But Julian Barnes displays this awareness of incoherence and randomness rather as a feeling of capitulation, instead of, as postmodern thought suggests, a feeling of achievement.

2.4 Decline of nationalism

Along with the postmodern rejection of notions of a unified and consistent self, the reality of nation states has been challenged. In the 1970s and 1980s there emerged a series of critiques which have called into question the basic assumptions of the psychological power and sociological reality of nations and nation-states; critiques which on the one hand revealed the nation as an invented, imagined and hybrid category, and on the other hand as modern version of far older and more basic social and cultural communities.[36]

Nations can be seen as the product of modernity. The sociologist and philosopher Ernest Gellner identifies three main stages in history: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian and the industrial. In the third, industrial, stage, the state has become inescapable. Industrial societies require a homogeneous culture, providing a stable society in which everyone is mobile.[37] Yet the postmodern world has different needs. Anthony Smith, who specialised in nationalism studies, describes the reasons for the decline of nation states:

[34] Barnes, 259.

[35] Barnes, 261.

[36] Smith 1998, 3. Benedict Anderson's theory about 'Imagined Communities' will be discussed in chapter 4, and Hobsbawm's and Ranger's thoughts on the 'Invention of traditions' in chapter 5.2.3.

[37] Smith 1998, 30.

> The central point is that today, nationalism has lost its state-making and economy-forming functions. In the nineteenth century, nationalism was plainly at the centre of historical development: it carved out states and constituted territorially bounded 'national economies'. But globalisation and the international division of labour has removed these functions, and the revolutions in mass communications and international migration have undermined the possibility of territorially homogeneous nation-states. Nationalism is simply irrelevant to most contemporary economic and social developments, and the basic political conflicts have little to do with nation-states.[38]

The focus on fragmentation perceives subjects as a bundles of selves. In the same fashion nations are reconsidered and need to be redefined in a more fragmented, yet inclusive, way, since 'national identity is perceived as no longer convincingly fixed or static, but rather fluid and polysemous.'[39]
Attempts to pinpoint the character of a nation often result in lists of rather random features, usually the images of a nation are highly subjective and contradictive among each other. One parodical, but nevertheless truthful list of characteristics of Englishness, is to be found in Julian Barnes' *England, England*. In the investigation *The English. A Portrait of a People*, Jeremy Paxman discusses a list made by the tabloid newspaper *The Sun*, one by John Fowles, and his own list of characteristics of Englishness, all of which present Englishness in very different ways.[40]
John Major, in his famous 1993 speech promoting the entry of Britain into the European Union, presented a vision of the essence of Englishness, speaking of 'long shadows on the county [cricket] grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers ... an old maid bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist'.[41]
Tracey Hill and William Hughes contrast Major's image of Englishness with a statement from the novelist Margaret Drabble: 'England's not a bad country – it's just a mean, cold, ugly, divided, tired, clapped out, post-imperial, post-industrial slag-heap covered in polystyrene hamburger cartons.'[42] Major draws upon the notion of an ideal, imagined England, whereas Drabble's view is realist and rather negative. There is an almost infinite number of different combinations of impressionist pictures of England, all of them subjective.

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[38] Smith 1998, 124.
[39] Hill & Hughes, 3.
[40] Paxman, Jeremy: *The English. A Portrait Of A People.* London: Penguin Books, 1999, 21f.
[41] Quoted in Hill & Hughes, 151.
[42] ibid.

The strongest source for the definition of a nation is the exclusion of the outside, a definition against otherness:

> Human groups are constituted in a process which defines an outside against an inside. Just as the individual ego is brought about through the mechanisms of disavowal and denial until the 'I' is defined over against the 'Other', so the group identifies itself as an 'us' over against a 'them'. As Freud points out, the process exaggerates differences in the Other, 'the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot', while differences within the group are elided or overlooked in the name of an imaginary unity.[43]

Jeremy Paxman discusses the speech of John of Gaunt in Shakespeare's Richard II: 'In this understanding of England, its first privilege is to be isolated from the rest of Europe. There were obvious practical benefits. Living on an island gives you defined borders: lines on maps are arbitrary, beaches and cliffs are not.'[44]
But, Anthony Smith explains, after the Second World War there arose a desire among many to 'put an end to internecine conflicts and build a supranational continent free of national lines of division.' The new generations in the West are accustomed to travel, migrants and the mixing of cultures, in the age of globalisation people no longer feel the full force of ancient national memories, traditions and boundaries.[45]
This development, though, involved a problematisation of the feeling of belonging. Globalisation brings about the demand to live the life of an itinerant cosmopolitan, to live like 'the Lyotardian *bricoleur*, one who 'listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and "retro" clothes in Hong Kong', all apparently without any concomitant national identification.'[46]
Brian Moore grew up in Ireland, but spent his later life living mostly in Canada and America. He is known as a Canadian, American or Irish writer. In the Brian Moore Issue of the *Irish University Review*, John Cronin gives an account of a story Brian Moore used to tell:

> He will tell with wry satisfaction how he once went into a Dublin bookshop and asked for books by "the Irish writer, Brian Moore", only to be told that they knew of no such person but could offer him instead some novels by "the Canadian writer by the same name"! Reference works list him variously as Canadian, Irish or American. He holds

[43] Hill & Hughes, 148.
[44] Paxman, 30.
[45] Smith 1998, 2.
[46] Hill & Hughes, 4.

> Canadian citizenship, though he has not lived in Canada for many years.[47]

Brian Moore managed to shed his national belonging. However, as Cronin points out, Moore is keenly aware of the 'hazards which such a peripatetic exile poses for a writer:'

> The major disadvantages, I've found, in twenty odd years of exile in different countries, is that the habit of moving on becomes hard to break and, eventually, one becomes a wanderer who belongs to no community and who has no fixed audience for his stories. The nineteenth-century novelist was a part of his community, a recorder of a world he knew and understood. But today's writer, particularly if he is an exile, tends to become what Mary McCarthy called a machine à écrire. I am an Irish writer, who is a citizen of Canada and who lives in the United States. By now, very few people know, or care, where I live. I am not associated with any group, or school of writing. My novels are published, usually simultaneously, in London, New York and Toronto, and, later, in places like Germany, and Scandinavia and Poland. Yet I do not really know my audience.[48]

The audience of a writer can thus still be defined through national limits, or in other categories like a school of writing. Brian Moore does not belong to an overall category and feels detached. This feeling of detachedness involves a certain freedom from expectations, but it also generates a feeling of homelessness.
Remarkably, when Brian Moore describes the feeling of true identity and belonging, he does not relate to his native place, where he grew up and where he was a part of the community, but he situates the feeling of belonging in Victorian times, some particular point in the distant past. Moore refers to the stereotypical nineteenth-century novelist, who allegedly was an integrated part of a community, in contrast to today's writers detachedness.
Moore argues from a nostalgic perspective, he does not point to a particular novelist, or a particular community, but just assumes that people once felt a stronger feeling of belonging and identity, which has been lost in modern times. This generalisation emanates from an imagined notion of the past, similar to the image John Major conjured up in his 1993 speech.

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[47] John Cronin: *The Resilient Realism of Brian Moore*. In: Murray, Christopher (Ed.): Irish University Review: A Journal of Irish Studies. Vol 18, No 1, Spring 1988: Brian Moore Issue. Dublin: Irish University Review, 1988, 24-36, 24.
[48] Brian Moore, "The Writer as Exile"*,* *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 2 (1976), 15. Cited by John Cronin, IUR, 24 f.

Moore's protagonist in *The Great Victorian Collection*, Anthony Maloney, is obsessed with the idea of collecting, seizing, or recreating the Victorian past. Maloney dreams up a collection of all Victoriana known to him, and is then preoccupied with guarding it.

He is incapable of having sex with his temporary secretary Mary Ann, because to him, she embodies his ideal of Victorian innocence and chastity, which he finds most attractive. His idealisation and longing for inaccessible Victorian times results in a feeling of loneliness and alienation.

Brian Moore notes about his life in exile: 'I discovered a subject which was, over the years, to become central to most of my writing. It is loneliness. It is, in particular, that desperation which invades the person who discovers his life has no meaning.'[49]

He sums up the postmodern experience: after the deconstruction of the self and the rejection of grand narratives, there only remains a feeling of meaninglessness.

2.5 Local culture

Postmodern thought is marked by a fragmentation of unifying theories, and, consequently, by a turn towards 'micro-narratives'. In contrast to the modernist attempt to find an overarching theory that unifies all the complexities and contradictions of a nation, postmodern theories explore local cultures.

Mike Featherstone explains that local culture is often taken to refer to the culture of a relatively small, bounded space in which the individuals who live there engage in daily, face-to-face relationships, which describes the opposite of a global culture. In postmodern theory, the emphasis is upon the taken-for-granted, habitual and repetitive nature of the everyday culture of which individuals have a practical mastery:

> The common stock of knowledge at hand with respect to the group of people who are the inhabitants and the physical environment (organization of space, buildings, nature, etc.) is assumed to be relatively fixed; that is, it has persisted over time and many incorporate rituals, symbols and ceremonies that link people to a place and a common sense of the past.[50]

[49] Brian Moore, "The Writer as Exile", *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 2 (1976), 10. Cited by John Cronin, IUR, 25.
[50] Featherstone, 92.

The theories of the Marxist tradition, of crowd psychology, and Sigmund Freud's later work have a common approach, namely the belief in the dislocating nature of modernity, its disorientation of the individual.[51]
Tracey Hill and William Hughes underscore that most theories of modernity point to a narrative which suggests a prehistory of organic communities, which were rooted in the origins of human history. These communities were based in 'unchosen relations in which (apparently) everyone knew everyone else and was bound into a series of collective rituals and obligations.' Theories of modernity denounce the development of the mechanically organised rational society to have destroyed this formerly coherent sense of identity and community. Modernity is said to have created a society of strangers, in which commitment, or a sense of responsibility for others, is optional:

> The crisis of modernity can be phrased in terms of identity and identification. Here I am in my eighteenth-century English village where a small, relatively closed community reflects back to me a strong and relatively stable sense of who I am, one to which i can imagine few alternatives; now I am walking down a street in Manchester in 1844 where, as Frederick Engels puts it so eloquently, I am a 'monad', bound to others only by the rule of not bumping into them, though free to wander where I want, my horizons unlimited.[52]

The belief that 'true' communities once existed, but that they have been destroyed in the course of modernism, leaves the modern 'monad' with a feeling of incompleteness and loss.
Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, an optimistic and realist view of nations and nationalism prevailed.Theorists of nationalism seemed to agree on the psychological power and sociological reality of nations and nation-states. They spoke of the need to 'build' nations.
The historian Raphael Samuel published a collection of essays on patriotism which, in contrast, shows that the unifying idea of a homogeneous nation only resulted in a feeling of being out of place. Samuel suggests a molecular view of the nation:

> The national 'we' is always in some way a fiction and [...] 'us' and 'them' distinctions are a normal component of national life. Such a view is not necessarily inimical to the craving for oneness. As the conservative philosopher Edmund Burke put it: it is by our attachment to the 'little platoons' that we become a member of the great society.[53]

[51] Smith 1998, 13.
[52] Hill & Hughes, 150.
[53] Samuel, Raphael (ed.): *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* Vol II, London and New York: Routledge, 1989 , xxxiv f.

In contrast to large-scale theories, the local examination of culture promises to reveal more authentic information on the psychological and sociological reality of communities. A local view on culture does not necessarily diminish a feeling of wholeness, instead, a fragmented view might result in a more inclusive concept.

2.6 Authenticity

Postmodern thought rejects the modern notion of unified, authentic identities. Mike Featherstone explains that for Friedrich Nietzsche and, following him, for Max Weber and Georg Simmel the genuine heroic person was characterized not by what they do, but by what they are. They assumed a person to have inherent qualities, hence they saw genuine personality as a matter of fate. Weber, for example, held in contempt the development of the modern notion of personality which is associated with mask-wearing and celebrity.[54] In contrast, existentialist theories doubt that inborn qualities define the character of a person, and the postmodern pattern of thought reveals the self to be fragmented. The discussion about the existence and nature of a 'true self' remains unresolved, but in any event the consumer culture, which developed in the twentieth century, demands role-play and therefore requires inauthentic behaviour. Consequently, within the consumer culture, new popular heroes are less likely to be warriors, statesmen, explorers, inventors or scientists and more likely to be celebrities, albeit, as Mike Featherstone points out, that some of the celebrities would be film stars who would play the role of these former heroes.[55]

In the postmodern culture, the boundaries between the authentic and the copy, between pretence and genuineness are blurred. According to Jean Baudrillard, in a postmodern society there are no originals, there are only copies.

For Baudrillard, the logic of commodity development has opened up a new era 'of cultural disorder in which the distinctions between levels of culture – high, folk, popular, or class – give way to a glutinous mass that simulates and plays with the overproduction of signs.'[56]

The postmodern society is a world of copies – or, in Baudrillard's terms, 'simulacra'. One example are music recordings, where there is no 'original', as in an original

[54] Featherstone, 68.
[55] Featherstone, 69.
[56] Featherstone, 19.

work of art like a painting or statue, rather, there are millions of copies, that are all the same, and all sold for approximately the same amount of money.[57]

In Julian Barnes' *England,* England, the activities of the Pitman company highlight the problem of authenticity, an issue that is of central concern in postmodern English literature. The whole project of rebuilding replicas of the 'quintessences of Englishness' is based on the premise that the authentic has lost its value, that postmodern subjects prefer the well-made simulacrum to the real thing.[58]
While Julian Barnes presents this approach to authenticity more or less as taken for granted, Brian Moore's *The Great Victorian Collection* assumes a significant distinction between authentic and inauthentic objects. The difference between fake and original is openly discussed, Maloney's collection needs to be authenticated in order to be accepted, because only the authentic is valuable. The collection is supposed to be authenticated on the basis of expert knowledge, but the discussion between the experts achieves no results, and eventually the collection is authenticated by one contemporary witness, on whose memory the claim to authenticity relies.
The parodic presentation of the experts, who are more interested in self-portrayal than in a serious evaluation of the authenticity of the collection, alludes to the idea that the authentic has lost its value.
Fred Vaterman, the ambitious journalist in Brian Moore's novel, pinpoints: 'Never mind if you dreamed it up or not, have you ever listened to what serious people say about it? Why, they say it isn't relevant, it's completely out of date, it has nothing to do with our contemporary reality.'[59]
Eventually, Brian Moore comes to the conclusion that the postmodern mind prefers a convenient replica. This explains the great success of the hyperreal Great Victorian Village.
In *Travels in Hyper Reality,* Umberto Eco describes this cultural phenomenon of 'instances where the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake; where the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehood is enjoyed in a situation of "fullness".'[60]

[57] Klages: *Postmodernism*.
[58] Nünning, 18f.
[59] Moore, 184.
[60] Eco, 8. Eco's Travels in Hyper reality will be discussed in chapter 6.1.

The absolute fake is presented as ‘more real than the Real’, a concept we find in both *England, England* and *The Great Victorian Collection*.

2.7 Consumer capitalism

According to Frederic Jameson, modernism and postmodernism are cultural formations which accompany particular stages of capitalism, and which dictate particular cultural practices. He defines three stages of capitalism: The first is nineteenth-century market capitalism, which is associated with particular technological developments, and with a particular kind of aesthetics, namely realism. The second phase occurred from the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century; Jameson associates this phase, monopoly capitalism, with modernism. The third, contemporary, phase is multinational or consumer capitalism, with an emphasis on marketing, selling, and consuming commodities. This phase correlates with postmodernism.[61]

The phase of consumer captitalism developed a ‘consumer culture’, a term that points not only to the increasing production of cultural goods and commodities, but also ‘to the way in which the majority of cultural activities and signifying practices become mediated through consumption, and consumption progressively involves the consumption of signs and images.’[62]

The fragmentation and overproduction of culture is the key feature of consumer culture, and is often regarded as the central feature of postmodernism.

The postmodern mind is used to encounter reworked realities, processed for convenience and easy consumption.

With regard to postmodern exhibitions and theme parks, Umberto Eco points out: ‘for historical information to be absorbed, it has to assume the aspect of a reincarnation. To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real. The “completely real” becomes identified with the “completely fake.” Absolute unreality is offered as real presence.[63]

England, England and *The Great Victorian Collection* describe the construction of theme parks which offer replicas, inventions, and incarnated myths, fictional characters and stereotypes. These theme parks make visitors take part in the scene,

[61] Featherstone, 44.
[62] Featherstone, 75.
[63] Eco, 6f.

who thus become participants in that ‘commercial fair that is apparently an element of the fiction but in fact represents the substantial aim of the whole imitative machine.’[64] Eco supports the view, that the postmodern mind demands the replica:

> A real crocodile can be found in the zoo, and as a rule it is dozing or hiding, but Disneyland tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands. When, in the space of twenty-four hours, you go (as I did deliberately) from the fake New Orleans of Disneyland to the real one, and from the wild river of Adventureland to a trip on the Mississippi, where the captain of the paddle-wheel steamer says it is possible to see alligators on the banks of the river, and then you don’t see any, you risk feeling homesick for Disneyland, where the wild animals don’t have to be coaxed. Disneyland tells us that technology can give us more reality than nature can.[65]

Umberto Eco describes museums, collections and parks that promise to the visitor an experience of the past. By means of reconstructions, with the help of actors and staged events, participation, special light, music and even smell, visitors can, allegedly, experience the authentic past. This makes Eco wonder whether an exhibition today is anything more than an adult Disneyland.[66]
Mike Faetherstone suspects that there is a difference of experience between a visitor to the Great Exhibition and a visitor to a postmodern theme park:

> It is hard to argue that for the respective audiences we can necessarily assume that there is a greater suspension of disbelief today when one considers the sense of wonder on the faces of participants at earlier spectacles. What there may be is a greater capacity within consumer culture to be able rapidly to switch codes and participate in an ‘as if’ manner, to participate in the experience and then to switch to the examination of the techniques whereby the illusion is achieved, with little sense of nostalgic loss.[67]

The postmodern visitor does not expect or demand authenticity, and is therefore not disapppointed by the detection and awareness of constructedness in the exhibitions. These ‘postmodern spaces’ have been designed to produce a sense of disorientation, wonder and amazement, in their simulation of aspects of past traditions and childhood fantasies.’ Theme parks, contemporary museums and the whole heritage industry play

[64] Eco, 41f.
[65] Eco, 44.
[66] Eco, 293.
[67] Featherstone, 77.

to this sense of recreating a home which takes one back to a past experienced in fictional form.'[68]

The popularity of these opportunities to experience the past can be seen as a reaction to the fragmentation of the postmodern world.

According to Featherstone, such postmodern spaces could be regarded as commemorative ritual devices which reinforce, or help people regain, a lost sense of place.[69]

[68] Featherstone, 96.

[69] Featherstone, 96f.

3. Nostalgia

The postmodern state of mind is marked by a sense of disorientation. Demands of role-play, mobility and flexibility left postmodern beings feeling a loss of sense of place, and feeling uncertain about their own identity. In the postmodern consumer culture, the explanations of grand narratives are widely rejected, and only replaced by an endless stream of images and a sense of meaninglessness reinforced by the circularity of production and demand of commodities.
In diametrical opposition to the postmodern embrace of fragmentation, provisionality, and instability, in today's society, there prevails a desire to return to the pre-postmodern era, to regain the modern, humanist mindset.
This desire feeds from a nostalgic image of the traditional community with a high level of normative integration and order. It is a vision of prior harmony, simplicity and unity, that implies an idea of a fall from grace, a lost innocence.

3.1 Definition

The term 'nostalgia', derived from the Greek *nostos*, which means 'to return home' and *algos*, which means 'pain', was coined in 1688 by a 19-year old Swiss student in his medical dissertation as a sophisticated way to talk about a literally lethal kind of severe homesickness. This medical-pathological definition of nostalgia allowed for a remedy: the return home, or sometimes merely the promise of it.'[70]
Linda Hutcheon describes the development of the term: nostalgia was seen as a physical and emotional 'upheaval ... related to the workings of memory' and thus was seen as a 'disorder of the imagination' from the start. But by the nineteenth century the word began to lose its purely medical meaning, and by the twentieth century nostalgia became less a physical than a psychological condition. It also went from being a curable medical illness to an incurable condition of the spirit or psyche. What made that transition possible was a shift in site from the spatial to the temporal. Nostalgia was no longer simply a yearning to return home.[71]

[70] Linda Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.* http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html, 10.4.2008.
[71] ibid.

> As early as 1798, Immanuel Kant had noted that people who did return home were usually disappointed because, in fact, they did not want to return to a place, but to a time, a time of youth. Time, unlike space, cannot be returned to - ever; time is irreversible. And nostalgia becomes the reaction to that sad fact.[72]

The feeling of nostalgia for the past did not develop in the postmodern society. Yet the shared imagination of a 'home' in the unknown past, for example the idealisation of Victorian times in contemporary England, is a strong feature of postmodernism.

3.2 Home in the past

The longing for an unknown past is based on the belief that there once was an innocence and a feeling of wholeness which we have lost. Doubt, critical reflection and science have undermined former belief-systems. The world is, as Max Weber states, 'disenchanted': the universe is conceived as a collection of objects in efficient, push-pull causal interactions, with no mysterious or supernatural principles at work anywhere.[73]
Brian Moore's protagonist Anthony Maloney longs for a past that could accept the supernatural. Amidst his Collection of marvellous Victoriana, he ponders about the sense of wonder the modern world has lost:

> Sentimental and literary, these paintings reminded him that, in the time of the old Queen, something like this Collection would first have been announced to the world in a series of artist's drawings in The Illustrated London News as a marvel, a far-off miracle, to be accepted by most of the populace as yet another wonder. But, today, in this age of instant distrust, who would believe it? He knew then that he would be challenged, cross-examined, probed. His brainwaves would be monitored, his childhood investigated, his body fluids tested, his privacy destroyed. And for what?[74]

Maloney yearns for an inaccessible ideal world, which is not only unreachable to him because it is set in the past, but also on the grounds that his image of the Victorian past is highly fictional. If he had the chance to time travel to Victorian times, he would be just as disappointed as those described by Immanuel Kant, who suffered from nostalgia and could not be healed by a return home.

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[72] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[73] Guignon, 31.
[74] Moore, 29.

The idealised simple, pure, ordered, easy, beautiful, and harmonious past is constructed in conjunction with the present. The present, in turn, is constructed as complicated, contaminated, anarchic, difficult, ugly, and confrontational.[75] Maloney's strong longing for an idealised past debars him from living a contented life in the present. He likes and desires Mary Ann, but although they come closer, Maloney cannot act out his feelings, since they are based on an idealised, distorted image of Mary Ann as a chaste Victorian girl:

> As his vision cleared, he found himself staring into her dark eyes, eyes like those of the older of the pubescent sisters in Baxter's Victorian portrait, and for a moment it seemed to him that he held that innocence, that long-ago girlishness re-created as flesh and blood. [...] 'Let's go to my room,' she whispered.
>
> Her voice broke the spell. It was her voice, American, not that long-ago English lisp.[76]

Maloney mourns an innocence he imagines to have existed in Victorian times, an innocence which he cannot find in the disenchanted present.

Nostalgia exiles us from the present as it brings the imagined past near. Postmodern nostalgia is less a matter of simple memory than of complex projection, where the invocation of an idealized history merges with a dissatisfaction with the present.[77] Critics who challenged the radical Enlightenment outlook were convinced that, with the rise of the disenchanted outlook of modernity, a primal unity and wholeness in life has been lost since humans find themselves cut off from nature:

> When nature appears as a brute object of sense perception, as something merely on hand to be mastered and controlled, it can no longer speak to us of life-guiding purposes and meanings. The result is that humans find themselves cut off from nature, unable to experience the natural world as their proper home. Even more unnerving, the invidious distinction between reason and feelings leads people to feel torn apart within themselves, torn away from the inner resources that give us a sense of what is truly important. As a result of the divisiveness and fragmentation created by the Enlightenment outlook, life loses the quality of integrity and meaningfulness it was thought to have in earlier times.[78]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau suspected modern society to be the primary cause of the loss of wholeness and unity characteristic of contemporary life. He contrasts life in society with life in the 'state of nature', a way of life he imagines humans to have once lived:

[75] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[76] Moore, 158.
[77] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[78] Guignon, 50f.

free beings, enjoying simple, uncomplicated lives. He was convinced that the emergence of society, and the mutual dependence, inequality, servitude and oppression it creates, caused a deformation of human nature.[79]

Life in the 'state of nature' is thus considered to be authentic, unified and meaningful. It is this feeling of wholeness that the postmodern frame of mind imagines to have lost, and which causes nostalgic yearnings.

The movement of romanticism supposed that the natural state of earlier times is accessible by turning inward, through introspection. Yet, from a postmodern perspective what is discovered through introspection is the awareness that the self is just a bundle of numerous fragmented selves, and that the 'enchanted garden of olden times' is enchanted only because it is created by the mind itself.[80] Therefore, a turn inward cannot satisfy the longing for wholeness.

3.3 Wholeness

In the postmodern atmosphere, with its emphasis on fragmentation, and disorientation, a sense of longing for a unified identity, for truth and wholeness prevails.

Even in the eighteenth-century, the movement of romanticism rejected the scientific reality, and attempted to recover a sense of oneness and wholeness that appeared to have been lost with the rise of modern, enlightened societies. The predominant conviction was that real 'truth' can be discovered not by rational reflection and scientific method, but by a total immersion in one's own deepest and most intense feelings. This led to the discovery, that the self is the highest and most all-encompassing of all that is found in reality. In conclusion, the only true reality was to be found within the self.[81]

But the reality found within oneself cannot provide the life-guiding purposes and meanings that were once found in nature. In the distant past, according to the Platonic reading of Socrates, humans were regarded as 'parts of a wider cosmic totality, placeholders in a cosmic web of relations in which what anything *is* – its *being* an entity of a particular sort – is determined by its place and function within that wider whole.' According to Socrates, to 'know thyself' is to know above all what your place

[79] Guignon, 55f.
[80] Guignon, 64f.
[81] Guignon, 51.

is in the scheme of things.[82] In this scheme of things, the individual does not personally have to decide upon existential or moral questions, the fulfilment of one's role as a part of the wider cosmic totality promises a meaningful, morally valuable way of life.

A grand narrative like this can provide answers to the existential questions of life, and thus the feeling of wholeness and meaningfulness that seems worthwhile but unreachable in the postmodern society.

With regard to the image of a 'home in the past', Charles Guignon points out, that it would be absurd to glorify the premodern form of experience as if it were some sort of idyllic state:

> From the standpoint of our modern technological advances and scientific reasoning, it must look like an abyss of dark confusion and superstition. But it is worth noting that, given such an outlook, it was possible to have a fairly strong sense of life's meaning – an ability to feel oneself to be part of some overarching scheme of things that ultimately [...] made sense. In such a worldview, you just are what you do. A person just is what he or she does in performing socially established roles and carrying out the functions necessary to the smooth functioning of the wider context of the world.[83]

No doubt, the rise of modernism entailed a disorientation of the individual, but it also rendered possible a personal freedom to make choices in life, a liberty that this premodern normative notion of social life precludes. Nevertheless, the fragmenting tendencies of postmodern culture seem to enforce a longing for the totality of fixed roles.

In his novel *England, England*, Julian Barnes describes different approaches to the achievement of wholeness. Martha Cochrane tries to find wholeness in her true self, which she attempts to uncover through introspection. Most of Barnes' characters do not try to find a true unified self, instead, they choose to adopt roles.

The last part of the novel is set in a village that resembles the nostalgic notion of a village in Victorian times. The inhabitants of this village embody roles, they seem to *be* what they *do*, performing socially established roles, but Julian Barnes presents them with a hint of parody. There is Mr Mullin the schoolmaster, with a respect for book-learning, there is Reverend Coleman, whose clerical status arrived by the post, and Jez Harris, the blacksmith and yokel on occasion. The inhabitants of the village try to fit into the roles of villagers in premodern times, but they cannot shed their

[82] Guignon, 13. Italics in original.
[83] Guignon, 24. Italics in original.

enlightened frame of mind. Thus, Jez Harris enjoys entertaining tourists with invented myths, and the schoolmaster doubts the knowledge recorded in books: 'I wish he wouldn't *invent* these things. I've got books of myths and legends he's welcome to. [...] They'd be *our* stories. They'd be ... *true*. [...] Well, maybe not true, but at least recorded.'[84] Reverend Coleman knows that the villagers are not truly religious, and, in his opening speech at the Village Fête, he does not even allow himself a ritual remark about the 'Good Lord' making the sun shine upon the village for this special day: 'Ecumenically, he even made a point of shaking hands with Fred Temple, who had come dressed as a scarlet devil.'[85] The humour in this section stems from Barnes' description of the efforts the villagers undertake in order to fit into their stereotypical roles, while trying to readjust these roles to the conveniences of social life in the modern world. The inhabitants of the village live every day in a virtually 'authentic' village from the past, yet they struggle to truly identify with the stereotypical roles, and slowly begin to create their own reality.

In comparison, the actors who are hired to represent famous persons, legends or stereotypes for Sir Jack's project, completely adopt their roles. At the beginning they only carry out their jobs, which means playing the part of the shepherd, milkmaid, or smuggler, and then to go home to the 'Pitco' company accommodations. But after a while, they start to adopt their roles, they begin to prefer to sleep in their 'tumbledown cottages', despite the absence of modern facilities.[86]
Martha, during her time as Chief Executive Officer, notices the changes:

> within a few months of Independence, certain members of Backdrop could no longer be addressed as Pitco employees, only as the characters they were paid to inhabit. Their case was initially misdiagnosed. They were thought to be showing signs of discontent, whereas the opposite was the case: They were showing signs of content. They were happy who they had become, and didn't want to be other.[87]

After Sir Jack's coup d´état, which turned the Isle of Wight into an independent nation state, the inhabitants of the island begin to identify with their new home. The actors adopt the roles they are supposed to play.

[84] Barnes, 245. Italics in original.
[85] Barnes, 262.
[86] Barnes, 198.
[87] ibid.

Mike Featherstone highlighted the ability of the postmodern mind to participate in staged events in an 'as if' manner, in which the awareness of inauthenticity creates only 'little sense of nostalgic loss'.[88] The actors' contentedness with their precast roles underpins the idea that the replica is more satisfying, and even more real than the original. The wholeness of the precast roles apparently seems to them more satisfying than their disoriented and fragmented usual selves. The actors on the island can easily, within a few months, settle into their new precast identities, whereas the inhabitants of 'Anglia' have to create their identities in a long-winded, and disorientated, process. They, too, try to adopt roles, but in contrast to the precast characters on the island, the inhabitants of the village in Anglia need to create and define these roles themselves.

Julian Barnes describes the process of identity creation, in which the villagers form their identities on the basis of their nostalgic image of premodern times. It becomes evident, despite the nostalgic glorification of the past, that the villagers object to a complete return to old times, since, for example, they do not attempt to revive a powerful class system or try to abolish women's rights.

Nevertheless, from Martha's point of view, the village approaches the archetype of a premodern, secluded small village in an authentic, more realistic way than the nostalgic ideal suggests: 'Finally, she became accustomed to the quiet and necessary repetitiveness, the caution, the incessant espionage, the helpfulness, the mental incest, the long evenings.'[89] In contrast to the idealised nostalgic image, this view of a tightly structured, normative small village presumably mirrors life in such a village more accurately.

[88] Featherstone, 77.
[89] Barnes, 257.

3.4 Grand narratives

The tendencies involved in postmodernism, fragmentation, performance, and instability, intensify the wish for wholeness, stability and unity and result in the nostalgic desire to return to the pre-postmodern era. This desire tends to get associated with conservative political, religious, and philosophical groups. One could say that one of the consequences of postmodernism seems to be the rise of religious fundamentalism, as a form of resistance to the questioning of the 'grand narratives' of religious truth.[90] In contrast to the disenchantment and meaninglessness of postmodern society one might try to find answers to existential questions in religion. Raphael Samuel points out that in the western world, the concept of the nation developed as a secular equivalent to religion, in the sense that it constitutes a broad scheme that offers to provide meaning. Religion once was the basic form of belonging and identification for an individual:

> Religion, of course, is a far more ancient form of belonging in this country than any notion of national allegiance. As a primary definition of the self it was still very much alive in late Victorian Lancashire – in the slums of Ancoats, Manchester, for example where, as census enumerators complained in 1871, the Irish poor were apt to return their nationality as 'Catholic'.[91]

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nations became the predominant form of belonging, worth living and dying for. When the scientific explanations of the world gained importance, the concept of nationality replaced that of religion as means to provide meaning and order.
Yet Max Weber noted that modern culture could not provide a viable replacement for the solutions proposed by religious theodicy. For Weber these secular ethics merely fuelled desire without providing an ordered cosmology which would fulfil the psychic need for a meaningfully ordered life.[92]
Modernism brought about the rise of nationalism, which reached its peak in the twentieth century. In the postmodern phase of consumer capitalism we experience the decline of the importance of nations. In this phase, the dominant postmodern culture does not allow for the stability of grand narratives. The deconstruction of all overarching theories is seen as the achievement of postmodernism, but nevertheless, a

[90] Klages: *Postmodernism.*
[91] Samuel, xxix.
[92] Featherstone, 49.

collective longing for unity, belonging and meaning is easily detectable, especially in the shared nostalgic image of a home in the past.

3.5 Belonging

The concept of the nation draws upon a shared notion of the past. The nation is perceived as something very real, a concrete community, in which we may find some assurance of our own identity and even, through our descendants, of our immortality.[93]

This shared image of the past is highly nostalgic, it is a myth of premodern stability, coherence and community.

Jeremy Paxman wonders about the success of John Major's 1993 speech, which was intended to promote a deepening relationship with the European Union. Major's speech painted a highly nostalgic picture of England:

> 'Fifty years from now,' he said, 'Britain will still be the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pool fillers and – as George Orwell said – "old maids cycling to holy communion through the morning mist".'[94]

Paxman is amazed about where this picture came from. He cites Major, who claimed to have quoted some poetry, 'to illustrate that the essential characteristics of our country would never be lost by a deepening relationship with the European Union.'[95]

Astonishingly, the audience did recognise the picture of England that John Major referred to. Paxman suspects that 'in the collective unconscious from which John Major drew his pictures, there exists another England. It is not the country in which the English actually live, but the place they *imagine* they are living in.'[96]

According to Jeremy Paxman, what has happened is that in their minds the English have become exiles from their own country.

Their picture of England is based on the nostalgia for an imagined past, a past which is idealized through memory and desire. In this sense, however, nostalgia is less about the past than about the present. It stems from a discontentedness with a disenchanted

[93] Smith, 140.
[94] Paxman, 142.
[95] Paxman, 144.
[96] ibid. Italics in original.

present, which fails to provide a deeper meaning, and fortifies the longing for simplicity and unity.
John Major referred to the way the English like to see themselves, to the shared constructed image of Englishness. It is based on the idea that the modern, urban world the English live in is bad, and that the real England is is out there in the countryside.

3.6 Being out of place

The English perception of the land they live in is that of a nostalgic image of a rural village set in a pre-industrial countryside. Yet this image of the 'real' England, which is to be found in the countryside, does not reflect the everyday reality of the English population, since England is a predominantly urban society. Furthermore, as Jeremy Paxman points out, this imagined England is not only rural rather than urban, it is also southern rather than northern.[97] Therefore, the common concept of Englishness excludes most of the population from an idea of what their county is about. .
The unifying modernist notions of universality create a feeling of being out of place. Frank Cotrell Boyce, who grew up in Liverpool, describes the effect this forged idea of Englishness had on his childhood.
A popular pastime for children in the 1950s were the I-Spy books, which were spotter's guides written for British children. A child would get points, and eventually a reward, for each time it spots things 'worth seeing'.

> The casual tone of the books – the implication that if you just stuck one in your pocket and took a stroll outside you'd run up a decent score in no time – suggested the possibility of a different Britain, something over there, where this was indeed the case, a Britain teeming with things worth seeing, a proper Britain, where otters did sun themselves obligingly on handy rocks and adders were easily distinguished by the characteristic V shape on the back of the head, where the organ grinder played and the schoolboys wore straw hats.[98]

The declared aim of the I-Spy books was to encourage a closer scrutiny and a greater appreciation of the environment. Yet the environment towards which they directed their readers' attention was an ideological construct**.**[99] It presented one version of the

[97] Paxman, 157.
[98] Cotrell Boyce, Frank: I-Spy, 10f. In: Samuel, 9-17.
[99] Cotrell Boyce, Frank, 13f. In: Samuel, 9-17.

English landscape as a standard, or an ideal. This ideal represented in no way the urban environment in which most of the children grew up, and was in its essence antiquated, which made even children who lived in a rural region feel shut out.
The idea that true Englishness can only exist in a peaceful rural village makes people feel dislocated, and convinces them that 'England' happened years ago.[100] This supports the feeling of being out of place and time, and fortifies the nostalgic idea that true identity is to be found in the past.

3.7 Identification

Mike Featherstone argues that the feeling of nostalgia for an idealised past with strong rural communities can be seen as related to the phase of globalisation, which has taken place since the 1960s, and which is associated by many commentators with postmodernism. In response to the globalising processes, fragmentation and migration, nation states have to reconstitute their collective identities along pluralistic and multicultural lines which take into account regional and ethnic differences and diversity.[101]
The adherence to an identification with a nation state is based upon the yearning for a belonging to a durable community. Nationalism, according to Anthony Smith, is to be seen as a product of the discontents of modernity:

> Just as the world religions constituted a much earlier response to the predicament of humanity in agrarian societies, with their natural disasters and social cataclysms, so the nation and nationalism represent the fundamental response to the crisis of identity so many human beings faced with the onslaught of modernity on the traditions of their ancestors.[102]

The transhistorical nation, Smith argues, is seen as the only available replacement for the extended family, neighbourhood and religious community, all of which have been eroded by capitalism and westernisation.[103]
The decline of the nation states, and at the same time the postmodern emphasis on mobility and fragmentation, enforce the nostalgic image that belonging and true

[100] Paxman, 172.
[101] Featherstone, 95.
[102] Smith 1998, 97.
[103] Smith 1998, 97.

identity and wholeness is to be found in the past.

A sense of home is sustained by collective memory, which itself depends upon ritual performances, bodily practices and commemorative ceremonies. Mike Featherstone points out that our sense of the past does not primarily depend on written sources, but rather on enacted ritual performances and the formalism of 'ritual language': 'This may entail commemorative rituals such as weddings, funerals, Christmas, New Year, and participation or involved spectatorship at local, regional and national rituals (e.g. royal weddings, nation days, etc.)'[104]

These rituals enforce the feeling of belonging to a transhistoric group:

> National identity promises to present the state as culture, an atomised society as a living human community, the socially constructed as direct experience. And so, amid the proliferating estrangements of modernity, nation would reflect back to me an effect of identity as a total presence.[105]

The globalising tendencies of postmodern culture leave people with a sense of loss of belonging, and, at the same time, the emphasis on fragmentation and role-play unsettles the individual and results in the loss of a stable sense of identity. The yearning for wholeness leads to a glorification of the past and to an identification with the nostalgic image of a transhistorical nation.

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[104] Featherstone, 94.

[105] Hill & Hughes, 150.

4. National Identity

According to Anthony Smith, nationalism is a modern phenomenon. In the postmodern perspective, nations and nationalism are regarded as a historic specificity, a phenomenon 'whose era of dominance was rooted in the revolutions of modernity and which is now gradually coming to its close.'[106]

Postmodern theories emphasize the socially created quality of all collective identities, thus nations are regarded as in no sense ancient or memorial, but, on the contrary, the concept of nationalism is exposed to be a relatively recent development.

> We could not, and should not, read the elements of modern nations and nationalism back into earlier, pre-modern collectivities and sentiments [...] nations were not the product of natural, or deep rooted, historical forces, but rather of recent historical developments and of the rational, planned activity made possible and necessary by the conditions of the modern era.[107]

Nations are based on the identification of citizens with a public, urban high culture. This shared high culture, Mike Featherstone points out, is composed of a set of more or less coherent images and memories which deal with the crucial questions of the origins, difference and distinctiveness of a people. In this sense, the nation has a quasi-religious basis, as it is able to answer some of the questions of theodicy in a world which is subject to processes of secularization.[108] But, Jeremy Paxman underlines, all nations are places of the mind: the idea of a country is what informs its laws, its politics and its art.[109]

Benedict Anderson argues that nations are imagined political communities. A nation is '*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[110] He explains that the nation is sovereign, because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of divinely-ordained structures:

> Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism

[106] Smith 1998, 4.
[107] Smith 1998, 19.
[108] Featherstone, 109.
[109] Paxman, 264.
[110] Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities*, London/New York: Verso, 1991, 6.

> between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.[111]

Human groups are constituted in a process which defines an outside against an inside. In the same fashion, nations gain their strength through the notion of an imagined 'us' against 'them'. Nations are imagined as limited because they have finite, if elastic, boundaries which define them against other nations. The nation is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. This fraternity is ultimately makes it possible for so many people, throughout centuries, to die for their community.[112]

Since the feeling of community is based on a shared high culture and a common history, modern nation states have a unified education system that assure this feeling of belonging.

Ernest Gellner underlines the invented, even artificial, nature of much of the high culture of modernity, given that we identify with the 'public taught culture' in modern society.[113] The taught 'national past' then serves the preoccupations, needs and interests of present-day leaders and followers, as is evident in the many territorial claims made by nationalists everywhere.[114] The history of a nation taught in national education systems is selected and biased by the needs of the present.

4.1 English National Identity

One way of defining a nation, and creating a feeling of unity, has always been to emphasize the superiority of this nation in contrast to other countries.

As Freud points out, the process of group formation exaggerates differences in the 'Other', for example, he noted that 'the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot', while differences within the group are elided or overlooked in the name of an imaginary unity.[115]

This is most evident in the causeless contempt that the famous and celebrated Englishman Dr Johnson held for the Scottish, who claimed that 'Seeing Scotland is only seeing a worse England', and whose opinion was that 'the noblest prospect

[111] Anderson, 7.
[112] ibid.
[113] Smith 1998, 38.
[114] Smith 1998, 42.
[115] Hill & Hughes, 148.

which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England.'[116] Jeremy Paxman comments, that even Johnson himself was unable to explain his prejudice. The English usually defined themselves in contrast to the allegedly inferior peoples of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and against Europe. In Shakespeare's Richard II, the speech of John of Gaunt suggests that it is a privilege to be isolated from the rest of Europe, and today, still, the English feel distanced from the European mainland. They 'go to Europe' when they cross the English channel.

In the past, the Empire gave the English the chance to feel blessed. By the end of the nineteenth century the British way of doing things was a model for the rest of the world. The English found themselves masters of the greatest empire in the world, which, in Jeremy Paxman's words, 'went to their heads.' He quotes Cecil Rhodes, who was convinced that to have been born English was to have won the first prize in the lottery of life, and that the English 'happen to be the best people in the world, with the highest ideals of decency and justice and liberty and peace.'[117]

According to the sociologist Krishan Kumar, the fact that England was the leader of a great Empire in the past now, after the break-up, causes problems for the definition of 'Englishness': 'all commentators on 'the English question' have acknowledged the blankness of the English tradition on just this matter of English national identity.'[118]

> The Welsh, the Scots, the Irish, even the Ulster Protestants, all have something to fall back on, even if a considerable amount of inventiveness has gone into constructing their national cultures and traditions. The English, having for so long resolutely refused to consider themselves as a nation or to define their sense of nationhood, find themselves having to begin from scratch. All nations are, to a degree, invented, but the novelty of England's enterprise is startling and is bound to make the task especially hard. All that the English can really call upon is the highly selective, partly nostalgic and backward-looking version of 'cultural Englishness' elaborated in the late nineteenth century and continued into the next.[119]

The English locate their national identity in a glorified past, yet they find it hard to bridge the divide between the nostalgic notion of the good old days of the Empire – and the opposing morals of the late twentieth century. Those conservatives who advocate the traditional values of 'good old England' sound dangerously xenophobic in a postmodern world of mobility, globalization and migration.

[116] Paxman, 48.
[117] Paxman, 66.
[118]Kumar, Krishan: *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge: CUP, 2003, 209.
[119] Kumar, 209f.

Jeremy Paxman quotes Michael Wharton, ‚Peter Simple' of the *Daily Telegraph*:

> In the past 50 years they [the people of England] have seen everything that is distinctively English suppressed and derided. They have seen all the evils that flow from the gutters of America – vile entertainment, degenerate pop music, feminism, 'political correctness' – infect their country.
>
> They have seen their decent manners and customs corrupted. They have seen sexual deviance elevated in official esteem and even officially commended. They have seen parts of their country colonised by immigrants and been forbidden by law to speak freely of the consequences.[120]

In this light, Britain's entry into Europe has been hailed by many commentators as a heaven-sent opportunity for the British to renegotiate their identities, both among themselves and in relation to other peoples, in Europe and beyond.[121]
Paxman points out that generally the English can be proud of their achievements in the field of race relations. Especially the country's youth culture is largely colour-blind.[122] England's popular and influential modern music scene, the functioning multicultural society with its emphasis on equal rights, and the political importance of Britain in contemporary times, suggest that England turned into a successful postmodern society, and left behind the colonial past.
But the prevailing nostalgia for the Victorian past shows that, despite the prosperity of the country, the common opinion is that 'England is over'.
When Richard Ingrams, the former editor of *Private Eye*, tried to compile an anthology of writing about England he was so struck by the prevailing pessimism that he decided it would have been as easy to pull together a collection called *Going to the Dogs*.[123]
This pessimism might be a reaction to the proceeding fragmentation in postmodern times. Devolution, the revival of nationalism in Scotland and in Wales, and the need to solve the Northern Ireland question, have been one set of forces threatening the traditional unity and integrity of the United Kingdom.[124]
But both Jeremy Paxman and Krishan Kumar see this development as a chance for England to reinvent its identity. 'New constitutional patterns now seem possible, such

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[120] Paxman, 70f.
[121] Kumar, 241.
[122] Paxman, 74.
[123] Paxman, 14.
[124] Kumar, 240.

as regionalism and federalism. [...] They suggest, at least potentially, a new set of identities within the British Isles, and new kinds of relations between the different peoples making up the once United Kingdom.'[125]

Jeremy Paxman imagines a new kind of nationalism: It is modest, individualistic, ironic, solipsistic, concerned as much with cities and regions as with counties and countries. It is based on values that are so deeply embedded in the culture as to be almost unconscious. In an age of decaying nation states it might be the nationalism of the future.[126]

England, in Paxman's view, needs to reinvent itself just like the 'New Labour' party in 1997, 'with most of its ideological baggage discarded'.[127]

But far from that, the success of the National Trust shows that England is reluctant to part with the past: one seventh of the entire population belongs to this organization devoted to preserving the past. Paxman assumes that 'a sense of history runs deep in the English people. It may not be particularly well informed (a surprising number of people are unsure precisely how many wives Henry VIII had), but it is deeply felt and is one of the things that makes the people what they are.'[128]

4.2 History

Julian Barnes once said in an interview: 'I am interested in what you might call the invention of tradition. Getting its history wrong is part of becoming a nation.'[129]

What holds the nation together is a shared imagined past. In the imagined past of a nation, the community has always been unified and homogeneous, knowing that the nation unifies peoples from varied origins, and despite a reported history of civil wars and territorial fights. Jeremy Paxman emphasizes that there has never been an 'English race':

> According to eighth-century historians, the first 'English' English arrived in England in three small ships that bumped ashore on the pebbles of Pegwell Bay in Kent in the middle of the fifth century. (They, too, were warriors.) The two or three hundred soldiers who plashed up the beach had either (according to one account) been invited by the King Vortigern to repel Pictish raiders, or (according to another) been offered refuge as exiles. Either way, the first thing you discover about the

[125] ibid.
[126] Paxman, 265f.
[127] Paxman, 238.
[128] Paxman, 152.
[129] Quoted in: Nünning, 58.

> English is that they are not English – in the sense of coming from England – at all. They had arrived from Jutland, Anglen and Lower Saxony. The 'English race', if such a thing exists, is German.[130]

The English history is based on contradictory sources, all of which point out that troughout England's history there has been constant migration and commingling of peoples. When Daniel Defoe heard the English people disdaining foreigners as having corrupted blood,[131] he commented on the English:

> The well-extracted blood of Englishmen...
> ...A True Born Englishman's a contradiction!
> In speech, an irony! In fact, a fiction![132]

Nevertheless, in the national imagination the English are a proud, distinguished race with a coherent and glorious history.

Linda Hutcheon describes the process of reinterpreting the past: 'The past is crystallized into precious moments selected by memory, but also by forgetting, and by desire's distortions and reorganizations.'[133]

In Julian Barnes' *England, England*, Martha remembers her history lessons at school, where they were taught the 'precious moments' of a shared past:

> The chants of religion were said in a hurrying mumble; but in history Miss Mason, hen-plump and as old as several centuries, would lead them in worship like a charismatic priestess, keeping time, guiding the gospellers.
>
> 55BC (clap clap) Roman Invasion
>
> 1066 (clap clap) Battle of Hastings
>
> 1215 (clap clap) Magna Charta
>
> 1512 (clap clap) Henry the Eighth (clap clap)
>
> Defender of Faith (clap clap)[134]

Julian Barnes alludes to the replacement of religion by the grand narrative of the nation. At Martha's school, the emphasis of the teacher is to educate the children in their national history, while the religious education is secondary.

Martha remembers that Miss Mason led them in and out of two millennia, 'making history not a dogged process but a series of vivid and competing moments, beans on

[130] Paxman, 54.
[131] Paxman, 58.
[132] Daniel Defoe: *The True-Born Englishman*, 1701.
[133] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[134] Barnes, 11.

black velvet.'[135] The 'beans on black velvet' were Martha's first encounter with a clever marketing strategy, which repeatedly helped a Mr A Jones' best beans to win the first prize at the Agricultural Show, and which Julian Barnes relates to the presentation of historical events.

The history of England, and of all nations, is presented in a comparable way: it emphasizes 'precious moments', and draws off the attention from unfavourable details. The aim of history lessons is to create a steady feeling of a shared national identity, thus, history is presented as a coherent national narrative. The emphasis is not on pointing out the dubiety of historical sources, or their conflictive interpretations. A feeling of national identity is created by an imagined common past – the authenticity of that shared image of the past is secondary.

Jeremy Paxman points out that, although a sense of history is important to the English, they often are not particularly well informed.[136]

In Julian Barnes' novel, one part of Sir Jack's project of building a theme park that represents the quintessences of Englishness, is to find out how much English people know about their own history. Dr Max, the project's Official Historian, thus tests a 49-year-old Englishman, who is presented as a representative of the English self-image:

> Caucasian, middle-class, of English stock though unable to trace his ancestry beyond three generations. Mother's origin Welsh borders, father's North Midlands. State primary education, scholarship to public school, scholarship to university. Had worked in liberal arts and professional media. Spoke one foreign language. Married, no children. Considered himself cultured, aware, intelligent, well-informed. No educational or professional connection with History, as requested.[137]

In the course of the interview with that Englishman it becomes obvious that the average, well-educated Englishman, a representative of the project's target group, only knows key events in English history.

> 'The Subject was asked what happened at the Battle of Hastings.
>
> Subject replied: '1066'.
>
> Question was repeated.
>
> Subject laughed. 'Battle of Hastings. 1066.' Pause. 'King Harold. Got an arrow in his eye.'

[135] Barnes, 12.
[136] Paxman, 152.
[137] Barnes, 80.

Subject behaved as if he had answered the question.[138]

Julian Barnes' presentation of the interview parodies the average Englishman's knowledge of history. The shared image of a nation's history constitutes its identity, but the interest in history is only superficial. The 'Subject' is unable to confidently identify the participants of the Battle of Hastings, or suggest possible causes of the conflict or its consequences. In Julian Barnes' conclusion, knowledge of history is not the foundation of a national identity: 'It seemed to Dr Max positively unpatriotic to know so little about the origins and forging of your nation. And yet, therein lay the immediate paradox: that patriotism's most eager bedfellow was ignorance, not knowledge.'[139] Dr Max himself habitually doubts the possibility of true knowledge about the past, but he gets upset about the obviously prevailing indifference for historical matters.

The project's results show that the popular 'knowledge' of English history hardly differentiates between myths and reported events. In the shared image of Englishness, stereotypical or fictional characters are as real and important as historical figures. Despite a creative approach to the representation of historic figures such as Nell Gwynn, that is 'reworked' beyond recognition, Jeffrey, the project's Concept Developer, objects to the 'repositioning' of the Hood-myth 'for modern times,' because 'everyone *knows* about Robin Hood.'[140]

Dr Max explains his view on historical knowledge:

> Everyone knows about Robin Hood is a myopic formula which makes an historian's hackles rise. Everyone knows, alas, only what everyone knows, as my investigations on behalf of the Project have all too sadly shown. But the pearl richer than all his tribe is You can't start messing around with Robin Hood. What, my dear Jeff, do you think History is? Some lucid, polyocular transcript of reality? Tut, tut, tut. The historical record of the mid-to-late thirteenth century is no clear stream into which we might trillingly plunge. [...] History, to put it bluntly, is a hunk.[141]

Throughout the second part of the novel, Dr Max introduces epistemological doubt on the possibility of knowledge about history: 'no true historian believes neutral non-interpretation to be possible.'[142] He states, that the greatest and grossest of all

[138] Barnes, 80.
[139] Barnes, 82.
[140] Barnes, 148.
[141] Barnes, 148.
[142] Barnes, 151.

intellectual misconceptions he encountered in his life was the naive idea 'that the past is really just the present in fancy dress:'

> Strip away those bustles and crinolines, doublet and hose, those rather haute couture togas, and what do you discover? People remarkably like us [...] Peer inside their slightly under-illuminated brains and you discover a range of half-formed notions, which, when fully formed, become the underpinnings of our proud modern democratic states. Examine their vision of the future, imagine their hopes and their fears, their little dreamings about how life will be many centuries after their deaths, and you will see a dimly perceived version of our own delightful lives. To put it crudely, they want to be us.[143]

Dr Max, the 'Official Historian', is convinced that we cannot understand the past. People thought differently in the past, since they had very different lives. He rejects the idea that we could find a neutral interpretation of our sources from the past, therefore, we must always doubt our knowledge.

Images of a national identity rely on the nation's shared history. But history seems to be a matter of choosing, as Linda Hutcheon put it, history is made from 'precious moments selected by memory, but also by forgetting, and by desire's distortions.' [144] From a postmodern point of view, history is to be seen as a bundle of unconnected events, which only the unifying tendencies of modernism formed into a coherent narrative.

Tracey Hill and William Hughes support the view that the history of a nation is artificially constructed:

> The principle, as one would expect, is that Dunkirk goes in but Drogheda and Dresden stay out. Do the exclusions constitute an authentically oppositional alternative to the national narrative or is it rather that there is something like a consensus on SAVE versus DELETE and, as with 1966, it is the reading of the agreed events which counts?[145]

Jean-François Lyotard, too, highlights that the important question for postmodern societies is who decides what knowledge is.[146] Knowledge is then seen as negotiable, since notions of truth have been deconstructed and shown to be just a matter of the point of view suggested by an overarching belief system.

[143] Barnes, 195.
[144] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[145] Hill & Hughes, 152.
[146] Lyotard, 12.

Nevertheless, in Julian Barnes' novel, the success of the island state 'England, England' shows that a nation's shared history, though it may be largely imagined, is crucial for the national identity. The project invents a new history for the Isle of Wight: 'the long struggle for liberation on the part of the Islanders, a struggle marked by courage and sacrifice down the centuries.'[147] The islanders actually accept this version of history and begin to identify with their small new nation.

As an effect of Pitman's successful project 'England, England', which copied everything distinctively English, England's past is now associated with Pitman's island, and England – now Anglia – has lost its history.

The inhabitants of Anglia follow the need to reinvent a shared identity, and thus revive very old customs and invent new ones.

[147] Barnes, 172.

5. (Re-)Creating the Past

Contemporary theories see national identities and their historical background as constructs. Modern nation states create and enforce the image of a coherent culture with a shared history, by means of a totalized education system that ensures the participation of all citizens in the national culture.
In the twentieth century, Western nation states revived, reworked and introduced traditions, and institutionalised the preservation of the national past in public collections, museums and heritage centres. National identity is based on complex interrelations between reworked and new traditions and customs, and the nation's shared heritage and collective memory. All notions of national identity are based on selective knowledge about the past, which is subject to nostalgic projection.

5.1 Memory

Linda Hutcheon relates the nostalgic notion of the past to memory: 'the past is idealized through memory and desire.'[148] Personal as well as national identities are based on images of the past, yet these images are blurred and changeable, and hardly seizable. Even though memories are not a reliable source for objective knowledge about the past, the blurred images it preserves constitute identity.
But memories can only provide subjective truths, since the process of forming a memory constantly selects and reworks information. Every impression is reworked, classified and compared to prior knowledge and categorized; and later reconstructed in the course of retrospection. An 'objective interpretation' of memories is impossible, since a memory is always coloured by various factors.
In Julian Barnes' *England, England*, the protagonist Martha Cochrane tries to find her true self on the basis of introspection, and through the examination and interpretation of her memories.
Martha does not believe in unprocessed memories: 'It wasn't a solid, seizable thing [...] A memory was by definition not a thing, it was... a memory. A memory now of a memory a bit earlier of a memory before that of a memory way back when.'[149] She

[148] Hutcheon: *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern.*
[149] Barnes, 3.

knows that memories undergo a process of interpretation that falsifies the true historical event:

> People assertively remembered [...] a pram, the view from a pram, falling out of a pram and striking their head on an upturned flower-pot which their brother had placed to climb up on and view the new arrival (though many years later they would begin to wonder if that brother had not wrenched them out of sleep and dashed their head against the flower-pot in a primal moment of sibling rage...).[150]

In Martha's view, first memories are not seizable, therefore she constructs her first memory, 'her first artfully, innocently arranged lie.'[151] Julian Barnes parallels Martha's inability to seize a true, unprocessed memory with a country's inability to commemorate its true 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. [...] An element of propaganda, of sales and marketing, always intervened between the inner and the outer person.[152]

Martha is aware that identity-formation on such an unreliable basis relies on self-deception: 'Because even if you recognized all this, grasped the impurity and corruption of the memory system, you still, part of you, believed in that innocent authentic thing – yes, thing – you called a memory.'[153]

Again, Julian Barnes parallels the individual with the nation: Martha finds out that Sir Francis Drake was a dubious character. At school, the 'memory system', she learned that Francis Drake was 'an English hero, and a Sir and an Admiral and therefore a gentleman.' But in a discussion with a Spanish girl, she learns that from another point of view Francis Drake was a pirate, but Martha 'knew' that this was 'the comforting if necessary fiction of the defeated. A look into the British encyclopaedia tells her that Francis Drake was a 'privateer' and that he plundered, and therefore may be called a pirate, 'but even so Sir Francis Drake remained for her an English hero, untainted by

[150] Barnes, 3.
[151] Barnes, 4.
[152] Barnes, 6.
[153] Barnes, 6f.

this knowledge.'[154] Julian Barnes shows that images of the past are always partial and contain an element of fiction.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau nevertheless believed that memories render information about the essence of the past:

> Even though our memory of objective facts is coloured by present feelings and motivations, the essence of the past is nevertheless preserved and made accessible by reporting those feelings. For the essence of the past consists not in facts about what occured, but in the feelings one now has about the past.[155]

Martha remembers that as a child she was told to build her character, but she did not understand about building character: 'It was surely something you had, or something that changed because of what happened to you'.[156] As an adult, she still tries to locate her true nature, because she thinks that knowledge of one's true nature is the prerequisite to happiness. She thinks that 'most people locate[d] their nature in childhood: so they entranced self-reminiscences, the photographs they displayed of themselves when young, were ways of defining that nature'. But when she looks at a photo of herself when young, frowning against the sun, she wonders: 'was this her true nature or only her mother's poor photography?'[157]

Barnes shows how memory reworks the past, and how the human mind tries to form sense and a coherent narrative from the random bits of memory they can recall. Martha remembers her favourite childhood pastime, the Counties of England jigsaw puzzle. She remembers that her dad used to tease her by hiding one of the pieces. When she would get to the end of the puzzle, a piece would be missing:

> whereupon a sense of desolation, failure, and disappointment at the imperfection of the world would come upon her, until Daddy, who always seemed to be hanging around at that moment, would find the missing piece in his pocket [...] and her jigsaw, her England, and her heart had been made whole again.
>
> This was a true memory, but Martha was still suspicious; it was true, but it wasn't unprocessed.[158]

[154] Barnes, 7.
[155] Guignon, 68.
[156] Barnes, 14.
[157] Barnes, 226.
[158] Barnes, 5f.

When her dad left the family, he still had one piece in his pocket. Martha remembers a missing sense of wholeness, which she relates to the puzzle, but also to the feeling of abandonment she felt when her dad left.

To a certain extent, it is possible to locate Martha's character in her childhood, it is shaped by what happened to her. The feeling of abandonment, along with her mother's repeated advice that 'women had to be strong and look after themselves because nobody else could be relied upon to do it for them' influenced her character and made her an independent, distrustful adult. But it is impossible to find the 'essence' of her character in her childhood self, because everything that happened between the childhood and the present of the reflecting adult has had an influence on the adult's self.

In the same fashion, a nation's identity cannot be located at some point in the past. Vera Nünning argues that 'rather than being encapsulated in an earlier stage, a nation's identity is constantly changing, with the nation constructing its history as it goes along.'[159]

As for the construction of her character, Martha is unsure whether she is meant to remember or to forget the past: 'She hoped there was nothing wrong with thinking so much about the Show; in any case, she could not stop it glowing in her mind. Their last outing as a family.'[160] Martha knows that this is a nostalgic memory of wholeness, her family was still united, and the Agricultural Show embodies total order: 'there was something about the lists – their calm organisation and their completeness – which satisfied her.'[161]

Memories of the childhood are comparable to the history of a nation: 'Most people remembered history in the same conceited yet evanescent fashion as they recalled their own childhood.'[162] Meaningful events, like Martha's last outing with her family, 'glow' in a nation's collective memory, are reworked, remembered, and endlessly referred to – and thereby create an image of the nation.

Julian Barnes emphasizes that 'the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself.'[163] Martha, as a child, constructed a story around the disappearance of her dad. She found an oak leaf that reminded her of a piece of a puzzle, and in her childhood logic she created a meaningful narrative that explained

[159] Nünning, 73.
[160] Barnes, 17.
[161] Barnes, 9.
[162] Barnes, 82.
[163] Barnes, 6.

why her dad had left her, and that he would come back if she kept the leaf. This explanation helped her to remember her dad in a positive light, and it filled the hole in her that her father caused when he left. But years later, she meets her father again, and his version of the story forces her to abandon the explanations she made up: 'This all seemed – what? – not untruthful, but irrelevant, not a way of filling the exact, unique, fretsaw-cut hole within her.'[164]

Julian Barnes shows that deceptive explanations and narratives help to constitute both our personal and our national identity. Martha's encounter with her dad forces her to acknowledge the deceptiveness of her childhood memories. Her dad does not remember the jigsaw-game, and by telling her this, he not only weakens her strongest memories of him, but also puts into question the process of identity formation, which now seems meaningless and random, and thus destabilizes Martha's sense of identity.

Similarly unsettling is the effect the postmodern emphasis on fragmentation has on the identity of a nation. It points out that all memories and knowledge about the past is dubitable. As Tracey Hill and Terence Hughes point out, a nation's image is based on a process of selection. They assume that 'Dunkirk goes in but Drogheda and Dresden stay out', and wondered whether the exclusions constitute an authentically oppositional alternative to the national narrative.[165]

Julian Barnes emphasizes that a shared image of the past is crucial for a nation:'Old England had lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself.'[166] Only the past that is commemorated or kept alive in traditions and customs serves as a basis for the image of a national identity.

Vera Nünning points out that Barnes' novel suggests that 'one of the major functions of a nation's collective memory lies in its importance for forging its national identity.' Although it is impossible to retrieve 'authentic' past manifestations of Englishness, their exploration still helps to construct and stabilise a sense of identity.[167]

Along with the postmodern enlightenment about the constructedness of the national narrative, the twentieth century is marked by a growing importance of collections, museums and heritage centres. These institutions secure the collective memory of a nation. Yet, the collected past mirrors the needs of the present. It is a selection of

[164] Barnes, 24.
[165] Hill & Hughes, 152.
[166] Barnes, 251.
[167] Nünning, 73.

memories or objects that the present estimates to be worth exhibiting or examining, and it is always interpreted from the point of view of the beholder.
Julian Barnes shows, how an object fails to provoke the right memory: All her life, Martha kept the once meaningful oak leaf she collected the day her father left the family. But in the last section of the novel, in her old age, when she finds that leaf again she cannot remember why she kept it:

> She must have picked it up, all those years ago, and kept it for a specific purpose: to remind herself, on just a day such as this, of just a day such 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.[168]

Martha cannot recollect her younger self. Julian Barnes stated that the past is, what made the present able to live with itself.[169] But the needs of the present change. Barnes shows that we cannot understand the past, people in the past, or even our younger selves, thought differently, and records or objects from the past fail to transport their original meaning.
Martha forgot what the oak leaf meant in her earlier life. In the same fashion, the collective memory of a nation, though collected, preserved and exhibited in public institutions, cannot convey the original meaning. Julian Barnes demonstrates that, anyway, the present refers to the past in order to find or create meaning that serves present needs – in doing so, being true to the original is secondary.

[168] Barnes, 247.
[169] Barnes, 6.

5.2 The national past

The knowledge we find in encyclopaedias, museums, collections or heritage centres is reworked and recreated to be acceptable and enjoyable for the contemporary reader or visitor, and to suit a certain image. This explains why Martha cannot find the word ‘pirate’ in relation to Sir Francis Drake in the British encyclopaedia, whereas the words ‘privateer’ and ‘plunder’ frequently appear.
Knowledge about the past expresses contemporary cultural norms.
This becomes most obvious in the case of women in history. For centuries, women just had no place in history:

> Historians – the vast majority of them male – in looking for a justification for the study of history make grand claims. History, we are told, is concerned with ‘the totality of man’s past experience’. That totality apparently does not extend to women. History gives a society ‘a sense of its own identity’. Yet women are only now beginning to discover theirs. History ‘tells us about man in his various activities and environments’. Women are seen as unchanging in history, their activities much the same whatever the environment. They play no part in that grand advance of history.[170]

In general, women have been regarded as less important than men. It took the efforts of a strong feminist movement to succeed in the struggle for equal rights. The changed morale does not only affect contemporary times and the future, it also demands a reconsideration of women’s history.
Jeremy Paxman gives an account of the situation of women in history when Victorian scholars began to compile a history of the people who made the nation great, twenty-two volumes of the *Dictionary of National Biography*:

> it turned out to be an overwhelmingly masculine compendium. Of the 28,000 people listed from the beginnings of British history to 1900, only 1,000 were women. Its editor, Sidney Lee, remarked that ‘Women will not, I regret, have much claim on the attention of the national biographer for a very long time to come.’[171]

Paxman considers two possible explanations: ‘Either women genuinely played a very minor part indeed in the nation’s history. Or the editors were purblind to their achievements.’[172]

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[170] Bridget Hill: *The first feminism*. In: Samuel: *Patriotism*, 123-139, 123.
[171] Paxman, 218.
[172] Paxman, 218.

In the hundred years following the publication of the first twenty-two volumes, the *Dictionary* produced supplements giving obituaries of important persons who had died recently. These showed a slow increase in the prominence of women through the twentieth century.[173]

In the politically correct 1990s, efforts were made to re-write the nation's history with a high priority to increase reporting of the role of women in history: 'After five years of research, the editors had discovered an additional 2,000 women who had been influential in the nation's history. It tripled the number of women singled out for recognition. But it was still a tiny fraction of the whole.'[174]

The efforts to increase the reporting of women in history cannot be called forgery, at least they are not more of a falsification than the original selection, since it is impossible to locate the exact point of corruption. The editors might deliberately have focussed on compiling a dominantly male history, in that case, a reconsideration and re-presentation of the nation's history could come closer to the truth.

In *England, England*, Julian Barnes comments: 'Nothing was set in concrete: that was the nature of History.'[175]

5.2.1 Museums

National museums represent and preserve history, they are institutions that stabilize the national identity.

Jan Magnus Fladmark, the editor of *Heritage and Museums – Shaping National Identity*, argues that museums can be viewed as the 'cathedrals of the late 20th century'. This implies that they are both the most visibly prestigious buildings of their period and that they have also in some way substituted for the spiritual role of great churches: 'It can certainly be argued that each age gives birth to public buildings characteristic of their times: museums can also be compared to the great palaces of the 17th and 18th centuries, or to the great municipal buildings of the 19th century.'[176]

He states, that these comparisons can help us to understand current expectations of museums, and in particular the growing representational function that they fulfil at the end of the twentieth century:

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[173] ibid.

[174] Paxman, 219.

[175] Barnes, 127.

[176] Fladmark, J.M. (Ed.): *HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS Shaping National Identity*. Shaftesbury: Donhead Publishing Ltd., 2000, 5.

> If we take cathedrals first, it is significant that they characteristically vied for the possession of relics which they elaborately housed and displayed in order to attract pilgrims from near and far. The chief generator of international tourism in the middle ages was pilgrimage, and the motive for pilgrimage was the visitation of relics.[177]

Fladmark discusses the creation of the Museum of Scotland, which opened in 1998. He observes that the faster the world changes, the more we need museums which can function as an anchor in the past: 'the accelerating pace of technological change pushes things ever more quickly into the past: the sense of nostalgia and of loss evoked, even by the more recent objects in the Museum of Scotland's Twentieth Century Gallery, is extraordinary.'[178]

Museums conduce to the preservation end exhibition of objects, they also explore, present and communicate culture. The Museum of Scotland was opened at the time of devolution, when Scotland obtained parliamentary independence.

The Twentieth Century Gallery of the Museum of Scotland shows, that in the late twentieth century in Scotland culture is not necessarily associated with the nation. It was decided to ask the public to choose things which, in their view, have made a major impact on life in Scotland over the last 100 years. For this selection, Sean Connery chose a milk bottle, Elaine C Smith selected her washing machine, and Irvine Welsh suggested Jim Baxter's shirt from the Scotland versus England football match at Wembley. Members of the public mostly either chose very personal objects, that were meaningful t their individual lives, or they chose objects that represented the technological advance in the twentieth century.[179]

To Fladmark, it seems 'that the majority of Scots who have contributed to the display have chosen objects which could just as easily have been chosen by people living anywhere in the developed world.' He notes that these objects, while able to give visitors of the future a glimpse of the twentieth century life in Scotland, would not necessarily give many clues as to a national identity.[180]

This supports the view that nationalism is on the decline. In a globalised world, dividing between national and global history can be difficult.

[177] ibid.
[178] Fladmark, 6.
[179] Fladmark, 53.
[180] Fladmark, 59.

In order to identify with a specific national identity, the contemporary nation needs to establish continuity with the national past. Museums communicate identity, as Fiona McLean and Steven Cooke point out:

> Identities are produced and consumed within discursive sites and practices by the articulation of 'specific enunciative strategies'. Within this conceptualisation, museums can be seen as sites of discursive formation, a space where the 'legends and landscapes' of the nation are presented and represented and where identities are made and re-made.[181]

The exhibits in museums can resurrect the feeling of historic continuity, which reassures individuals in their identities, especially in a time of mobility, disorientation and fragmentation. National museums tell the story of a nation, and thereby they not only preserve, but also shape and stabilize national culture.

5.2.2 Heritage

Jeremy Paxman pointed out the great success of the English Heritage Industry. One seventh of the entire population belongs to the National Trust. [182]

The term 'heritage industry' was used from the mid 1970s onwards to describe the preservation of sites of natural beauty or historical interest which are assumed to enshrine some aspect of the British national Heritage. The term also refers to the creation of industrial museums that bring the past to life through the use of reconstructed environments, costumed attendants, visual displays and participatory activities. David Macey emphasizes: 'The industry can be seen either as an expression of a popular, if nostalgic, conception of history, or as a transformation of British history into a Disneyfied theme park.'[183]

The term 'heritage' suggests a pattern of inheritance similar to that in a family, thus the National Trust reinforces the sense of belonging to what Benedict Anderson called an imagined community.

Macey highlights the critical point of view: 'the effect of the heritage industry is to redeploy existing images of the past, many of them rural and utopian, and to turn a

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[181] Fiona McLean and Steven Cooke: *Communicating Identity - Perceptions of the Museum of Scotland*. In: Fladmark, 147-160, 149.

[182] Paxman, 152.

[183] Macey, David: 'Heritage Industry', in: *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*. London: Penguin, 2000, 179.

history that has been purged of political tensions into a spectacle of a unified nation.'[184]

Magnus Fladmark notes, that heritage is often the domain of nostalgia, where past glories are exaggerated, the disease and inequality of working class life mythologised, agricultural life is sentimentally preserved. 'The fine line lies where perceived authenticity (where we believe things are real) is to be found, and where what we believe we are prepared to believe about the past fits, if at all, to agreed historical fact.'[185]

> Heritage is a concept to evoke contradictory images and meanings. There are things we associate with authenticity, like the nobility and order of the past, stately homes safely stewarded for future generations and our enjoyment now, the celebration of human ingenuity and craftsmanship and taste, the archaeology and archiving of the human story. On the other hand there are things, equally real in modern life, which associate with the artificial and commodified: the marketing hype of modern consumerism, the nostalgia, the Disneyfication of social and cultural history, making no distinction between hard and easy, high and low taste, past and present, local and international. Even the history itself can be manipulated and unreliable, and this we associate with the heritage industry and its styles of interpretation.[186]

Heritage preserves objects or landscapes of national interest, it stands for education but also for entertainment, therefore, to some extent, the heritage industry adjusts to the tourist market.

[184] Macey, 179.
[185] Fladmark, 357.
[186] Hannabuss, Stuart: How real is our past? Authenticity in Heritage Interpretation. In: Fladmark, 351-366, 351.

5.2.3 Invention of traditions

The historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger coined the term 'invented traditions,' a term used in a broad, but not imprecise sense:

> It includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity.[187]

In this sense, the royal Christmas broadcast, which was introduced in 1932, is a tradition that was actually invented and formally instituted, whereas the development of the practices associated with the Cup Final in British Association Football can be taken as an example for the less easily traceable introduction of a new tradition. Hobsbawm and Ranger argue, that in a rapidly changing world the invention of tradition can be seen as the attempt to 'structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant.'[188]

These invented traditions are 'responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.'[189] According to Hobsbawm, historic continuity has been invented through semi-fiction, by creating an ancient past as in the case of Boudica, or by forgery. He points out that much of what makes up the modern nation consists of constructs, it is associated with fairly recent symbols, like the national flag, or based upon 'suitably tailored discourse', such as 'national history.'[190]

He assumes that inventing traditions is 'essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition.'[191] Mike Featherstone agrees that the establishment of national symbols and ceremonies and the reinvention of traditions which were manifest in royal jubilees, Bastille Day, the Olympic games, the cup final, the Tour de france, etc. can be called an 'invention of tradition'. Modern nation states needed to produce homogeneous, integrated common cultures and standardized citizens loyal to the national ideal, which led to attempts to eliminate local ethnic and regional differences. Yet he emphasizes that 'the fact that such rites and ceremonies were invented should not be taken to mean

[187] Hobsbawm, Eric & Ranger, Terence (Ed.): *The Invention of Tradition,* Cambridge/New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1.
[188] Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2.
[189] Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2.
[190] Hobsbawm & Ranger, 14.
[191] Hobsbawm & Ranger, 4.

they were invented *ex nihilo*: they drew upon traditions and ethnic cultures which possessed plausibility.'[192]

Anthony Smith points out that the 'invented traditions' must resonate with the 'masses' if the idea of a particular nation is to succeed and retain its efficacy. Smith highlights that Hobsbawm, who precluded an account of pre-existing ethnic ties as fundamental to the invented traditions, provides no clue as to why nationalism has been so successful.[193]

Only suitable 'invented traditions' will be accepted as a part of the national culture, therefore the theory of the invention of tradition, though it correctly describes a process in modern nation-states, cannot explain the structure of the underlying culture.

[192] Featherstone, 95.
[193] Smith 1998, 129.

6. Authenticity and Creation

In the postmodern view, a nation, and therefore its history, is a social construction. Vera Nünning argues that although it is impossible to retrieve 'authentic' past manifestations of Englishness, their exploration still helps to construct and stabilise a sense of identity:

> The construction of a continuous history gives coherence to fragmentary experiences, makes it possible to establish patterns, and to provide explanations for what happened, both with regard to the history of a nation and the life of a person. The invention of a tradition is thus shown to be of essential importance for individuals and countries.[194]

The boundary between the authentic past and recent creation seems blurred. Anthony Smith explores the history of the *Eisteddfodau*, Welsh festivals of literature, music and performance, which, according to records, date back to at least the twelfth century. The history of the festival is recorded until the sixteenth century, when the official bardic contest died out with the decline of the bardic tradition. Yet, it remained alive at the popular level into the eighteenth century, when it was deliberately incorporated in the new festivals of Welsh poetry and music.[195]
Much of the distinctive culture of a community is unrecorded, transported through the ages in the form of popular customs. Efforts to define distinctive boundaries between the authentic and the creation or invention is a source of endless debates between experts, but an ultimate answer cannot be found, since new scientific methods or new discoveries are bound to shift our knowledge and opinion about the past.
Mary Bryden, who was responsible for the concept development of the new Museum of Scotland, explains:

> A key slogan in our advertising campaign was 'the story so far'. It conveyed the message that the Museum will hold the authenticated story, as far as we know it, but implied that fresh evidence and research may provide a new and challenging slant and the story may move on.[196]

This careful slogan suggests that the authentic past is unseizable, and that our knowledge about it is negotiable. In this light, the discussion about original and fake,

[194] Nünning, 74.
[195] Smith 1998, 129.
[196] Bryden, Mary: *Shaping and Selling the Idea - How the Product was Presented*. In: Fladmark, 29-39, 36.

the authentic past and the artificial creation, seems pointless, since we can never be sure that our judgement is based on true and sufficient information about the past.

6.1 Original and replica

In his novel *The Great Victorian Collection* Brian Moore discusses notions of authenticity and reality. Anthony Maloney dreams up a collection of Victoriana, including rare and even unique objects. While the supernatural creation of the Collection is widely ignored, the objects are discussed in terms of their authenticity. Jochen Mecke points out that authenticity is generally agreed to mean nativeness, unsophistication, genuineness and truth, while the antonyms of authenticity are understood to be copy, falseness and forgery. Modernism is marked by varying concepts of authenticity. While the rationalist approach defines authenticity on the basis of reason and logic, in contrast, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the movement of romanticism reject the rationalist approach and argue that authenticity can only be found in nature, in a state untouched by the influences of modern civilization.[197]
The postmodern focus on fragmentation and constructedness hardly allows for a clear distinction between the original and the replica.
Walter Benjamin argues in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that the development of art which can be produced in innumerable duplicates abrogated the differentiation between the original and the copy. In traditional forms of art, a distinction between the original and the reproduction is possible:

> 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.[198]

In his view, the innumerable reproduction of the work of art results in a loss of the 'aura' of the original:

[197] Mecke, Jochen: *Der Prozess der Authentizität. Strukturen, Paradoxien und Funktion einer zentralen Kategorie moderner Literatur.* In: Knaller, Susanne (Hrsg.): *Authentizität: Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs.* Paderborn: Fink, 2006, 82-114, 82ff.
[198] Benjamin, Walter: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936. http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm.

> One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence.[199]

This loss of aura, according to Benjamin, eventually leads to the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage.

In Brian Moore's novel, the protagonist Anthony Maloney dreams up a collection of Victoriana, which comprises reproductions of rare and unique objects. The authenticity of these objects is discussed by experts on Victoriana, but they cannot agree on a conclusive evaluation of the collection.
The expert from Yale, Professor Clews, classifies the objects as fakes, on the grounds that he cannot accept the supernatural aspect of the collection, which collides with his rational approach to the evaluation: 'in the majority of cases the things you see out there are copies of well-known originals which I know are stored elsewhere. Ergo, these copies here are just that. Copies. Fakes.'[200]
Another reason for his conviction that the objects are fakes is his irrational instant dislike of Maloney, the creator of the collection. Clews thinks that Maloney is untrustworthy: 'there is absolutely no reason to believe that his knowledge of Victoriana is that of an expert. There is, to my mind, something wholly untrustworthy about this young person. Perhaps he is insane.'[201] Professor Clews doubts Maloney's expertise in the field of Victoriana, since Maloney has a Canadian doctorate and Professor Clews mistrusts the quality of Canadian universities.
The expert from London, Sir Alfred Mannings, also rejects the story of the creation of the collection, but he considers the authenticity of the objects nonetheless.
Both experts account for their opinion on a press conference, which represents the postmodern confusion about the relation between the authentic and the replica.
Sir Alfred, the Director General of British Imperial Collections, states that every object of which he has first-hand knowledge 'is here reproduced in a form indistinguishable from its original.' He adds that 'not only that, many items known to

[199] Benjamin, Walter: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936.
[200] Moore, 54f.
[201] Moore, 54.

me only through book illustrations and other descriptions are here reproduced just as they must once have existed. It is truly an astonishing feat of copying.'[202] Maloney objects to Sir Alfreds remark, emphasising the fact that for some of these objects there is no original in existence, therefore they cannot be copies. But Sir Alfred points out: 'If you "dream up" something which you have already read about, I hardly think you can claim it as an original creation.'[203] Sir Alfred believes the objects to be neither original nor fake. He can attest that one of the objects is '*indistinguishable* from the original. It was as though today I became the first man in the world to look on something which has never been seen before: a unique object which has, mysteriously, become a duality.'[204] Sir Alfred refuses to commit his opinion to one category:

> I am not saying it's not a fake [...] Nor am I saying it's original. I am saying it may be something which has not been categorized before, an act of homage to a period, perhaps. I'm afraid I'll have to think about it. I simply say we mustn't be too hasty in assigning it a category.[205]

In the postmodern consumer culture, with its innumerable mechanical reproductions of commodities as well as of art, for example music recordings on CDs, the attempt to determine a distinction between the original and the replica seems pointless. Mass production defies the well-defined distinct categories of original and imitation and might need new categories.

Brian Moore shows that each expert comes up with his own opinion, and the most important influence on the authentication of the collection seems to be the reputation and qualification of the experts. Knowledge and truth appear to be a matter of discussion and definition, but on the grounds of rational reasoning the experts come to no conclusion.

The experts are gridlocked in the rational framework, and therefore their discussion misses the truly authentic element of the collection, which is the authentic act of its creation.

The act of creation is authentic and real, irrespective of the authentication of the objects.

[202] Moore, 56.
[203] ibid.
[204] Moore, 57.
[205] ibid.

Sir Alfred remarks that Maloney cannot claim to have dreamed up an original creation since he had already read about the objects, therefore his creation copies something that was in existence in the past. In this respect, a creation that relies upon the past is not an original creation, it is not an invention.

In this point of view, the term 'invention of tradition' is misleading. 'Invented traditions' rely on a certain cultural precondition prior to their creation, which allows for the new traditions to be accepted and perpetuated. Anthony Smith explains:

> The selection and reworking takes place within strict limits, and, I would suggest, must do so, if the 'invented' tradition is to be 'on the wavelength to which the public is ready to tune in', in Hobsbawm's phrase. These limits are set by the culture, or cultures, of the public in question – its language, law, music, symbols, memories, myths, traditions and so on.[206]

A continuity between the past and the moment of the 'invention' of the tradition is established, therefore 'invented traditions' are not original creations, but they are also not copies or fakes.

Postmodern critics eschew a distinction between the artificial and the real, or the original and the copy. In the twentieth century, the mass production and consumption of commodities and cultural artefacts within the consumer culture evokes the break-up of the old categories of original and replica, and demands for a new category, or the renouncement of categories.

One of the critics who reject a clear distinction between the artificial and the real is Jean Baudrillard. His collection of essays, *Simulacra and Simulation*, includes an analysis of Disneyland, which he presents as an example of what he sees as a model of a real without origin or reality, a 'hyperreal'. This 'hyperreal' or 'third order of simulation' is neither a representation of the real, what he calls a 'first-order' simulation, nor a blurring of the boundaries between reality and representation, which is in his terms a 'second-order' simulation.[207]

Umberto Eco explored the phenomenon of 'hyperreality'. He travelled through America to research into the success of the hyperreal. He visits the Getty Museum in California, which was founded by J.Paul Getty, in Eco's view 'in fact a cultivated

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[206] Smith, 129.

[207] Miracky, James: Replicating a Dinosaur: Authenticity Run Amok in the "Theme Parking" of Michael Crichton's Jurassic Park and Julian Barnes's England, England, in: CRITIQUE, 2004, Vol 45, No. 2, 163-171, 163.

person, who wants to show the Californian public only works of unquestionable worth and authenticity.'[208] The Getty Museum offers a replica of the Villa of the Papyruses, which has been reconstructed, and which in its completeness surpasses the original:

> We have crossed something that is more than the Villa of the Papyruses, because the Villa of the Papyruses is incomplete, still buried, the supposition of an ancient Roman villa, whereas the Malibu one is all there. J. Paul Getty's archaeologists worked from drawings, models of other Roman villas, learned conjectures, and archaeological syllogisms, and they have reconstructed the building as it was or at least as it ought to have been.[209]

The aim of the founder of the Getty Museum was to reconstruct a credible and 'objective' past. Eco points out that with regard to the reproduction of classical statues, the Getty Museum displays them all white, even though we know that many classical statues were originally polychrome and had a painted pupil in the eyes:

> The Getty Museum leaves the statues white (and in this sense is perhaps guilty of European-style archaeological fetishism); but it supplies polychrome marbles for the walls of the temple, presented as a hypothetical model. We are tempted to think that Getty is more faithful to the past when he reconstructs the temple than when he displays the statue in its chill incompleteness and the unnatural isolation of the 'correct' restoration.[210]

The Ringling Museum of Art in Florida displays copies of classical statues in its park. On one of the plaques Eco reads: 'Dancer. Modern cast in bronze from a Greek original of the fifth century B.C. The original [or rather the Roman copy] is in the Museo Nazionale in Naples.' He wonders about the meaning of 'fake' when applied to a plaster cast: 'But these are copies of sculpture, where if you observe certain technical criteria nothing is lost.'[211] Eco shows, that the Roman 'fake' is now classified as an authentic original, just on the grounds of its persistent existence through the ages. A fake can thus be authenticated if it is recognised as historical:

> New Orleans knows its own fakes and historicizes them: In various patrician houses in Lousiana, for example, there exist copies of Ingres's portrait of Napoleon enthroned, because many French artists came here in the nineteenth century saying they were pupils of the great painter, and they distributed copies, more or less reduced, and more or less

[208] Eco, 32.
[209] ibid.
[210] Eco. 34.
[211] Eco, 36.

> successful, but this was in a time when oil copies were the only way of knowing the original, and local historiography celebrates these copies as the documentation of their own 'coloniality.'[212]

Eco's observations show that there is no clear boundary between the original and the copy. He reveals that in postmodern times, for historical information to be absorbed, it has to assume the aspect of a reincarnation: 'To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real. The 'completely real' becomes identified with the 'completely fake'.'[213]

> This is the reason for this journey into hyperreality, in search of instances where the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake; where the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehood is enjoyed in a situation of 'fullness.'[214]

Brian Moore describes this preference of the 'completely fake' in *The Great Victorian Collection*. Maloney's collection is exploited as a basis for the creation of a Great Victorian Village, a theme park that capitalises on the publicity of Maloney's creation. In accordance with Umberto Eco's observations, the public in Brian Moore's novel prefers the fullness and falsehood of the theme park to the original collection. Although the tourists who visit the Great Victorian Village feel a nostalgia for the Victorian past, they are not necessarily interested in the authentic Victorian life which Maloney's objects capture and represent. They prefer the completely fake, the show and entertainment of the theme park.

Meanwhile, Maloney's original collection is fading. In Walter Benjamin's terms, it is losing its 'aura':

> The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. [...] Originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult. We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value.[215]

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[212] Eco, 30.
[213] Eco, 6f.
[214] Eco, 8.
[215] Benjamin: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936.

According to Benjamin, the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura rests on ‘the desire of contemporary masses to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction.’[216]

Maloney’s original collection is caught in a process of decay. Ever since the first pictures of the collection were taken, it began to look less authentic:

> The photographer approached the stall and, raising his camera, clicked the shutter. The objects he had photographed seemed to shimmer, fade for a moment, then reappear, not as they had been before but with a slight – I can’t quite explain it – well, a slight difference in their texture. [...] I had no idea why, but I saw that the original bloom was no longer present on these particular instruments. It was as though, by being photographed, they had lost some of their natural freshness.[217]

Maloney’s original creation loses its ‘aura’ the more it is reproduced. The collection is photographed, discussed, doubted and copied, thus it is losing its original ritual function. When the collection is eventually open to the public, the sense of wonder has vanished and the tourists mainly make the journey from the Great Victorian Village to the original site of the collection in hopes of seeing, like in a freak show, the creator of the collection, and the room in which he dreamed up the creation. The authentication of the collection is ultimately only of interest for historians, antiquarians and collectors. Maloney himself realises that a collection of antique objects, whether they are originals or not, cannot revive the past: ‘And, looking at it now, he saw it for the first time as it really was: a faëry place, ringed around by spells and enchantments, a web of artifice as different from the reality it sought to commemorate as is a poem about spring from spring itself.’[218]

Moore shows that collections or recreations of the past cannot help us to experience the authentic past. The novel suggests that the widespread nostalgia for the past can be alleviated in the hyperreality of a theme park, where visitors can find wholeness, whereas the encounter with the original object cannot evoke a similar feeling of contentment.

Julian Barnes, too, describes the construction and the success of a theme park. Vera Nünning remarks that although the deconstruction of the boundaries between the

[216] Benjamin: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936.
[217] Moore, 33.
[218] Moore, 168.

authentic and the copy is a major theme of quite a number of contemporary British novels, Barnes' novel goes 'quite a bit further in his treatment of this theme in giving yet another turn of the screw by illustrating the exchangeability of the real and the replica.'[219] Julian Barnes emphasises that there is no point in the past that can be regarded as authentic, therefore a differentiation between the real and the copy is impossible. Nünning points out that Julian Barnes furthermore demonstrates that 'even if we had the means of unearthing and representing the past in an objective way, there is no authentic Englishness to be found either in the remote past or, for that matter, anywhere else.'[220] This justifies the selective approach to the re-creation of the past which Barnes describes in *England, England*. He describes the process of the reinvention of Englishness in two very different approaches: Sir Jack's island state is based solely on marketing strategies, whereas the inhabitants of the mainland, 'Old England', seriously try to revive 'authentic' old Englishness.

6.2 Marketing and tourism

Sir Jack's first step in the planning of the project is to employ the consultant Jerry Batson. In this section, Julian Barnes establishes the idea that the history and the essence of a nation is a matter of marketing: 'It's a question of placing the product correctly, that's all.'[221] Batson is convinced that England needs to face the fact that it is 'no longer mega', but that England is nonetheless 'a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated wisdom.' To Batson, the history of England is 'eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate. Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, Industrial Revolution, gardening, that sort of thing.'[222] He hints at the postmodern longing for the distant past, which is the underpinning of the succes of the heritage industry.

On this note, Magnus Fladmark remarks that the historiography of heritage in the last few decades has tended to emphasise the artificiality of heritage interpretation: 'the critique has run along the lines that, since Britain cannot keep its industry afloat in a modern competitive world, and one of its main strengths is its past, it makes commercial and cultural sense to turn the country into a museum or a theme-park.'[223]

[219] Nünning, 75.
[220] Nünning, 76.
[221] Barnes, 39.
[222] ibid.
[223] Fladmark, 356.

Sir Jack tries to capitalise on the late-twentieth century British obsession with national heritage that is manifested, for instance, by 'living history'-ventures and theme parks like Wigan Pier or the Black Country Museum.[224]

The project faces numerous difficulties in representing the English past in a way that pleases contemporary visitors, but the project's consultant Jerry Batson points out that problem-solving and the re-invention of the truth is a traditionally English strength:

> We English are rightly known for our pragmatism, but it's in problem-solving that we display our positive genius. Tell you my favourite one. Death of Queen Anne. Seventeen whatever. Crisis of succession. No surviving children. Parliament wants – needs – another Protestant on the throne. Big problem. Major problem. Everyone in obvious line of succession is a Catholic, or married to a Catholic, which was equally bad karma at the time. So what does Parliament do? Passes over fifty – more than fifty – perfectly good royals with best, better, good claims, and picks an obscure Hanoverian, dull as ditchwater, can barely speak English, but one hundred percent Prod. And then they sell him to the nation as our saviour from over the water. Brilliant. Pure marketing.[225]

Julian Barnes highlights the constructedness of the English past.

Sir Jack's project is based on the conviction that there is no definite authentic truth about the past that we could know, but that we nonetheless try to find stability and reassurance of our identities in the past. Sir Jack capitalises on this nostalgic idea about the past, but Julian Barnes' deconstruction of the notion of 'the authentic past' leaves the reader with the impression that Sir Jack is rightfully 'giving people what they want.'[226] At the very beginning of the novel, Barnes points out the function of the past as a flexible foundation for our present sense of well-being: 'the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself.' He shows that even the historian's point of view could not object to the project, since 'what we are looking at is almost always a replica [...] of something earlier. There is no prime moment.'[227] Everything is reworked and changed, even nature, as Sir Jack tells his team:

> 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

[224] Nünning, 66.
[225] Barnes, 216f.
[226] Barnes, 83.
[227] Barnes, 132.

> hand-reared by a game-keeper. We change it all [...] the trees, the crops, the animals.[228]

With the example of nature, Sir Jack explains how the 'fake' becomes authentic:

> That lake you discern on the horizon is a reservoir, but when it has been established for a few years, when fish swim in it and migrating birds make it a port of call, when the treeline has adjusted itself and little boats ply their picturesque way up and down it, when these things happen it becomes, triumphantly, a lake, don't you see? It becomes the thing itself.[229]

Sir Jack's project invents an improved version of Englishness, which leaves out any unfavourable characteristics. On the Isle of Wight, renamed 'England, England', a 'repositioned patriotism' emerges: 'on the island, they had learnt how to deal with history, how to sling it carelessly on your back and stride out across the downland with the breeze in your face. Travel light: it was true for nations as well as for hikers.'[230] The islanders have discarded their history and accepted a more flattering version, which was offered by the hyperreality of Pitman's project. This reality is completely fake, but as the project's historian, Dr Max, explains, the public does not wish for authenticity and reality:

> 'R-eality is r-ather like a r-abbit, if you'll forgive the aphorism. The great public – our distant, happily distant paymasters – want reality to be like a pet bunny. They want it to lollop along and thump its foot picturesquely in its home-made hutch and eat lettuce from their hand. If you gave them the real thing, something wild that bit, and if you'll pardon me, shat, they wouldn't know what to do with it.[231]

This view suggests, that the public is looking for a flattering version of reality, which does not raise questions about truth, but which instead reflects a sense of wholeness and reassurance. Barnes' vision of an invented national identity in Sir Jack's theme park, where the inhabitants live happily in a completely fake environment, satirises the postmodern yearning for such hyperreal worlds, which is underlying to the great success of England's heritage industry. Barnes shows that the postmodern nostalgia for an imagined distant past can only be relieved by entering the world of fantasy. Stuart Hannabuss points out that the issues of 'staged authenticity' and 'spurious identification' lie at the heart of heritage interpretation:

[228] Barnes, 60.
[229] Barnes, 60f.
[230] Barnes, 203.
[231] Barnes, 133.

> It has always seemed an uneasy mixture between scholarship and marketing hype, fact and nostalgia, educating and entertaining, and monologues and dialogue. If it is all these things, then it is no surprise that issues of identity play a dominant part in the heritage experience. It includes what you are expected to know, and what the provider expects you to want to hear and like. As a visitor, it depends on what you understand, or what you are prepared to make the effort to understand. It is about who you are: a tourist or a local,[...] a pilgrim in search for spiritual uplift or a scholar in search of facts.[232]

Sir Jack's theme park is solely based on the rules of marketing. His aim is to place the product 'England' in a good light, and to capitalise England's past. Barnes describes in detail the construction of a favourable version of Englishness, while at the same time he deconstructs the idea that 'true Englishness' could be found in the past. The longing for a distant past is irrational, it relies on nostalgic ideas about a better world that supposedly once existed. This imagined 'home in the past' is a fantasy that visitors to heritage sites like to see confirmed. Heritage sites thus become a part of the consumer culture, as Stuart Hannabuss points out:

> Cultural tourism consists of many willing buyers who know what they like, and know providers know what they know they like. If denial of novelty does indeed take place through the invention of tradition, it suggests a heritage industry set on inventing tradition where it does not exist, and reinventing it in the supposed image of tradition itself, where it does, so that it is acceptable and accessible merely to the consumer. Such heritage interpretation will be reductionism, retrospective, consumerist, centred on the cultural consumer at the expense of its own integrity. In other words, a Disneyfied version of the real world, where the eye and purse of the beholder is the dominant criterion of authenticity and value.[233]

Sir Jack's project is purely consumer oriented. The aim is to make the consumer 'feel better', and to make them feel 'less ignorant' about English history, as the Project Manager Jeff explains to Dr Max: 'The point is that most people don't want what you and your colleagues think of as history – the sort you get in books – because they don't know how to deal with it.'[234] Jeff points out that 'people won't be shelling out to *learn* things [...] They'll come to us to enjoy what they already know.'[235]

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[232] Hannabuss, Stuart: *How real is our past? Authenticity in Heritage Interpretation*. In: Fladmark, 351-366,351.
[233] Hannabuss, 359. In: Fladmark, 351-366.
[234] Barnes, 70.
[235] Barnes, 71.

Barnes underlines that visitors to heritage sites or theme parks above all hope to find a confirmation of their nostalgic image of the world, which functions as a reassurance in their identities. Stuart Hannabuss argues that the concept of postmodernism is relevant in that respect:

> It examines the effects that late capitalism, urbanisation and global culture have had on lifestyles and aspirations. It has told us that culture presents us not just with the questions of understanding, as in art and music, but with the problem of what is true, as in the work of Magritte. Indeed, part of the problem is with the process of mediating and signifying meaning, as in heritage interpretation, which often makes it difficult to know what is real or true.[236]

It can be argued that, given the emphasis on fragmentation and the multiplicity of roles that the postmodern world demands, a perceived unease leads people to become cultural tourists and search for the past.[237]

Visitors to Sir Jack's island accept the events and of the holiday, but by not identifying with them in the knowledge that they are only staged events and experiences, the visitors act in a postmodern way. Hannabuss remarks on postmodern heritage experience: 'They are accepting contradiction, placing value in the heritage product and knowing that it is only a form of product management, knowing that their feelings as well as their wallets will be massaged by the product providers, and knowing that their feelings are still very much their own.'[238]

Nevertheless, the search continues as a spiritual pilgrimage until visitors find what is 'real' for them.[239]

Julian Barnes satirises an imagined future world that follows the logic of a consumer culture, in which the authentic has lost its value. The inhabitants of 'England, England' have given up on the idea of authenticity. The completely fake island is accepted by the rest of the world as a nation state, it is even praised by some as the new way of living:

> It's a pure market state. There's no interference from the government because there is no government. So there's no foreign or domestic policy, only economic policy. It's a pure interface between buyers and sellers without the market being skewed by central government with its complex agendas and election promises. [...] People have been trying to find new ways to live for centuries. Remember all those hippie communes? They always failed, and why? Because they failed to

236 Hannabuss, 352. In: Fladmark, 351-366.
237 ibid.
238 Hannabuss, 358. In: Fladmark, 351-366.
239 Hannabuss, 352. In: Fladmark, 351-366.

> understand two things: human nature, and how the market works. What's happening on the Island is a recognition that man is a market-driven animal, that he swims in the market like a fish in the sea. Without making any predictions, let's just say that I think I've seen the future, and I think it works.[240]

Although Mike Featherstone highlights the ability of the postmodern mind to participate in staged events in an 'as if' manner, in which the awareness of inauthenticity creates only 'little sense of nostalgic loss'[241], the inhabitants of 'England, England' cannot truly identify with their 'nation'. Obviously, a state that is run by a company, and whose 'citizens' have no rights and are deported in case of illness, cannot seriously be seen as the future model for nation states.
Yet, Julian Barnes describes the theme park as a great success with tourists, who prefer the convenient reproductions on the island to the original sites in England: 'From now on, only those with an active love of discomfort or necrophiliac taste for the antique need to venture there.'[242] In tourism, the authentic seems to have lost its value.
Hannabuss and Featherstone point out that the postmodern visitor to a theme park or heritage site takes part in the staged authenticity and enjoys the constructed wholeness, but does not perceive the experiences made in the hyperreal theme park environment as real. The visitors to the island, or in Brian Moore's novel the visitors to the Great Victorian Village, take part in the inauthenticity of the theme park knowing that it is all fake. Umberto Eco underlines: 'The consumer finds himself participating in the fantasy because of his own authenticity as a consumer.'[243] The postmodern mind can enjoy perfectly constructed inauthenticity without confusing the fantasy world with reality.

6.3 Authentic Englishness

In Julian Barnes' novel, a lot of the humour originates from his depiction of the islander's inability to distinguish between the real and the fantasy, and in his

[240] Barnes, 183f.
[241] Featherstone, 77.
[242] Barnes, 185.
[243] Eco, 41.

exploration of the marketable imagined Englishness versus some unfavourable but supposedly authentic English behaviour.

But, as Vera Nünning emphasises, at the heart of Julian Barnes' novel lies the discussion of a narrow image of Englishness that builds on the exclusion of otherness:

> Laying bare the process of invention and highlighting the project's nostalgic notion of 'Englishness', Barnes suggests that current conceptions of Englishness are anything but unproblematic. England, England foregrounds the parochial nature of any construction of Englishness, even more so since it shows that the Pitman committee's exclusion of anything Irish and Scottish - let alone anything European - is a salient feature of many constructions of Englishness. The novel also stresses the separatist tendencies inherent in Englishness, which leads to the independence of the Isle of Wight, and ultimately to the selling of northern territories of England.[244]

In the novel, Martha Cochrane sums up the problem: 'How do we advertise the English? Come and meet representatives of a people widely perceived, even according to our own survey, as cold, snobbish, emotionally retarded and xenophobic. As well as perfidious and hypocritical, of course.'[245] The widespread idea of Englishness places 'true' Englishness at some point in the imperial past. Although England in the twentieth century has pursued a completely different policy with an emphasis on integration and equality, the stereotypical self-image, and, according to the survey in Barnes' novel, the international image of Englishness is still based on imperial characteristics. Jeremy Paxman points out that in the course of England's decline 'the ruling class have signally failed to come up with a new design for the twenty-first century, which is why the English have found themselves walking backwards into the future, their eyes fixed on a point some time at the turn of the twentieth century.'[246]

Julian Barnes explores two consequences of the idea that true Englishness can only be found in the past. Sir Jack's project seems to be an attempt, in the climate of the decline of nation states, to rescue the valuable characteristics of Englishness into the hyperreality of a theme park, but Julian Barnes shows that this kind of Englishness has always been merely a nostalgic idea.

The inhabitants of 'Anglia' set a high value on authenticity in their recreation of old Englishness, which they place in the pre-industrial age. Julian Barnes envisions the

[244] Nünning, 76.
[245] Barnes, 108.
[246] Paxman, 234.

consequent ‘return’ to rural life, which the longing for an idealised past suggests. The inhabitants try to revive old customs, based on their memories and on old encyclopaedias. The envisaged ‘return’ to a ‘home in the past’ turns out to become yet another creation of Englishness, since the inhabitants of Anglia try to go back to an idealised version of the past that has never existed. The people of Anglia create a way of life that is partly based on their favoured idea of past Englishness, but that also comprises twentieth-century values about personal rights and equality.

At the end of the novel, Barnes describes the invention of a tradition in a village in Anglia: the inhabitants of the village revive the old custom of the Village Fête. Here, Barnes presumably depicts an authentic development of how traditions have been perpetuated and changed throughout the ages. There is an authentic core of Englishness in the structure of the Village Fête: the idea that there must be music, played by certain instruments, a parade, a Queen of the May, and locally brewed beverages like cider and beer. The people of the village change many of the traditional customs, but in doing so they perpetuate the tradition in an authentic way, since customs like a Village Fête have always been changed and renewed according to the needs and the liking of the present.

7. Conclusion

In *England, England* and *The Great Victorian Collection* theme parks are presented as popular tourist attractions, an observation which is in concordance with the success of the English heritage industry. Theme parks and heritage sites conduce to the feeling of belonging to a historical community and thus support the idea that a sense of identity and belonging is to be found in the past. The version of history that is presented and experienced in theme parks bears elements of fiction. History is reworked based on the needs of the tourism idustry in a capitalist culture that focuses on making profit. Instead of presenting history in a careful, questioning approach, theme parks and heritage sites represent realities in a way that pleases their customers. Tourists visit heritage sites and theme parks in search for entertainment and the feeling of wholeness a hyperreal environment can offer. Brian Moore highlights that, for the tourism industry, the authentic has lost its value. Tourists prefer the completeness of hyperreality to the imperfectness of the original, since in the postmodern world which offers innumerable reproductions they unlearned to experience the aura of an original.

The longing for an idealised past can be seen as a reaction to the increasing complexity of contemporary culture, which focuses on the deconstruction of traditional values and truths without providing alternative explanations of the world. Julian Barnes and Brian Moore explore the elusive nature of reality, and thus highlight the feeling of disorientation of the postmodern era. The postmodern notion of fragmented selves, and the rejection of any large-scale theories, support the belief that stable communities and identities once existed, but have been lost in the course of modernism and globalisation.

Barnes rejects the notion that 'true Englishness' is to be found in the past. He exhibits the biases and problems of current versions of Englishness, and presents two versions of Englishness that extrapolate the idea of a 'home in the past' which are not realistic or even desirable options for contemporary England. Ultimately, the obsession with an idealised version of historic Englishness forecloses a true exploration of the needs of the present, in which the importance of nation states declines in favour of transnational structures.

Julian Barnes' novel can be viewed as a contribution to the ongoing debate about Englishness, suggesting that England should discard its historical image and think

about what Englishness could mean in the postmodern world. He describes the contemporary English mistrust of the European Union, but in consequence of a rejection of supranational organisations he describes the decline of England. Julian Barnes suggests that England should leave behind the glorified yet inauthentic past, and look into the future, which promises prosperity within supranational structures.

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Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit diskutiert Auffassungen über Authentizität und Nationale Identität in Julian Barnes' *England, England* und Brian Moore's *The Great Victorian Collection*. Julian Barnes und Brian Moore bearbeiten postmoderne Themen in ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit Realität und Authentizität. Brian Moore diskutiert die Möglichkeit der Ununterscheidbarkeit zwischen Original und Replika, Julian Barnes verdeutlicht die Konsequenzen eines Nationalgefühls, das sich auf die Vorstellung einer verklärten Vergangenheit stützt anstatt sich den Problemen der Gegenwart zu stellen.

Die postmoderne Diskussion hinterfragt Theorien der Moderne. In der Moderne entwickelten sich Nationalstaaten zur grundlegenden politischen Struktur, die eine für den aufkommenden Kapitalismus unabdingbare Einheit und Gleichheit ermöglichte. Die postmoderne Kritik unterstreicht, dass diese Ordnung nicht natürlich ist, sondern auf ein tatsächliches Chaos von Fragmenten aufgezwungen wurde. Theorien der Postmoderne betonen die Uneinigkeit und Künstlichkeit von Nationalstaaten. Es wird aufgezeigt, dass ein Nationalstaat aus vielen verschiedenen und sogar untereinander gegensätzlichen Gruppierungen besteht. Die einheitliche Identifikation der Bürger mit einem Nationalstaat basiert auf der Vorstellung einer andauernden, geteilten Geschichte, und einer Betonung von Gemeinsamkeiten und vermeintlichen Unterschieden gegenüber Anderen. Diese Vorstellung von Einigkeit und Gemeinsamkeit wird in der Postmoderne als Konstrukt enthüllt.

In ähnlicher Weise betonen postmoderne Theorien die Konstruiertheit der Vorstellung eines einheitlichen, wahren Selbst. Das Selbst wird empfunden als eine Ansammlung von zahlreichen, untereinander teilweise widerstreitenden, Teilen.

Die Entwicklung der Industrialisierung im Kapitalismus der Moderne führte zur Auflösung bestehender lokaler Strukturen, und somit zu einer Entwurzelung der Individuen. Am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts verlangt der Konsumkapitalismus von den Menschen Mobilität und Wandelbarkeit. In dieser Phase der Globalisierung verlieren Nationalstaaten an Bedeutung. Persönliche Qualitäten wie Charakterstärke und Authentizität geraten in den Hintergrund, während die Fähigkeit zur Verstellung und ein hohes Maß an Flexibilität geachtet werden und Erfolg versprechen.

Diese Entwicklung bringt ein Gefühl des Verlustes mit sich, ein Gefühl von Heimatlosigkeit, Wurzellosigkeit, und Uneinigkeit mit sich selbst.

Die postmoderne nostalgische Sehnsucht nach einer idealisierten Vergangenheit basiert auf diesem Gefühl des Verlustes einer ehemaligen Einigkeit.
Die Besucher von Themenparks und heritage sites sehnen sich nach dem Erlebnis einer glorifizierten Vergangenheit, wobei die Authentizität der dargestellten Geschichte zweitrangig ist.
Julian Barnes und Brian Moore beschreiben die Errichtung und den Erfolg von Themenparks. Ungeachtet der Künstlichkeit der dargebotenen Shows und so mancher Ausstellungsstücke genießen postmoderne Besucher von Themenparks deren Hyperrealität, die ein Gefühl von Ganzheit und Einheit vermittelt.
Das erste Kapitel der Arbeit stellt zunächst die Gedankenwelt der Postmoderne dar. Die postmoderne Welt am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts verlangt Mobilität, Anpassung, und Verstellung. Hierin gründet das Gefühl der Nostalgie nach Ganzheit und Zugehörigkeit, welches im zweiten Kapitel untersucht wird. Das dritte Kapitel ist der Struktur des Nationalstaates gewidmet, die in einem komplexen Zusammenspiel von Politik, Geschichte, und den Bedürfnissen der Gegenwart eine Möglichkeit der Identifikation darstellt, welche Ganzheit und Zugehörigkeit verspricht. Das vierte Kapitel zeigt, dass die Identifikation mit einem Nationalstaat auf der Vorstellung einer gemeinsamen Geschichte basiert, wie sie in Museen und heritage sites bewahrt und bestimmt wird, und wie sie durch die Ausübung – oder Einführung – von Traditionen gelebt wird.
Das fünfte Kapitel diskutiert den Zusammenhang zwischen Authentizität und Erschaffung, und zeigt, dass die Grenzen fließend sind, da seit jeher Traditionen und Gepflogenheiten zugunsten der Bedürfnisse der Gegenwart abgewandelt wurden.
Julian Barnes und Brian Moore demonstrieren, dass in der Tourismusindustrie Authentizität an Wert verloren hat, da postmoderne Reisende, die an Simulationen gewöhnt sind, sich mit leichter erreichbaren Nachbildungen begnügen.
Abschließend lässt sich feststellen, dass die Vorstellung einer ehemaligen Vollkommenheit und Heimat in der Vergangenheit der Auseinandersetzung mit den Bedürfnissen der Gegenwart im Wege steht. Dies äußert sich letztlich politisch, wie das gegenwärtig vorherrschende Misstrauen gegenüber supranationalen Strukturen wie der Europäischen Union zeigt.

Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst wurde und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt sowie die Stellen der Arbeit, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen sind, durch Angabe der Quellen kenntlich gemacht wurden.

Ulrike Mättner