THEATRICALITY AND THE CHRONOTOPE IN *THE MAGUS* BY J. FOWLES AND *ENGLAND, ENGLAND* BY J. BARNES

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ABSTRACT

THEATRICALITY AND THE CHRONOTOPE IN *THE MAGUS* BY J. FOWLES AND *ENGLAND, ENGLAND* BY J. BARNES

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The thesis reveals the main principles of the theatrical chronotope and examines the ways in which it is embodied in the novels of two postmodern authors – *The Magus* by John Fowles and *England, England* by Julian Barnes. These are analyzed as presenting two different variants of texts that employ the theatrical chronotope to exploit its different possible semantic implications.

The thesis argues that in *The Magus* theatricality is employed to convey the author's philosophical and aesthetical thoughts. The main qualities of the theatrical universe, actualized in the novel, are its epistemological potential determining the protagonist's quest in the "heuristic mill" of the metatheatre, and the multileveled structure of theatrical reality, combining different degrees of conventionality, which serves to posit the question of the relationships of aesthetical and actual reality. In *England, England*, theatricality is used to investigate the nature of modern society presented as a kind of totalitazing spectacle. Accordingly, the theatrical chronotope is used to construct a simulative reality, manifesting that of the modern society in replacing the actual reality and experience of living with the illusory pseudo-experience of consuming the images of reality and living, in its role-imposing and transforming abilities manipulating both personal and national identity.

Key words: Theatricality, Chronotope, Spectacle, Barnes, Fowles.

ÖZ

J. FOWLES IN *MAGUS* VE J. BARNES IN *ENGLAND, ENGLAND* ROMANLARINDA TEATRELLİK VE KRONOTOP

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Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Edebiyatı Programı
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Bu tez teatrel kronotopun temel özellilklerini ortaya koymakta ve bu özelliklerin iki postmodern yazarın romanlarında nasıl gerçekleştiğini incelemektedir. Bu romanlar, John Fowles ın *Magus* ve Julian Barnes ın *England, England* adlı romanlarıdır. Bu eserlerde teatrel kronotopun farklı anlamsal çıkarımlara ulaşmak için nasıl iki farklı değişken sunduğu araştırılacaktır.

Bu tez, *Magus* romanında teatralliğin yazarın felsefi ve estetik fikirlerini iletmek için kullanıldığını savunmaktadır. Romanda görülen teatrel dünyanın özellikleri, başkahramanın metatiyatronun 'sezgisel değirmeni'nde yaptığı yolculuğu belirleyen epistemolojik potansiyeli ortaya koymaktadır; bu, teatrel gerçekliğin gelenekselliğin farklı boyutlarını birleştiren ve estetik ve hakiki gerçeklik arasındaki ilişkilerin ortaya konmasını sağlayan çok katmanlı yapısıdır. *England, England*'da teatrellik bütünleştirici bir çeşit gösteri olarak sunulan modern toplumun doğasını araştırmak amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. Buna göre, teatrel kronotop gerçekliğin bir tür simülasyonunu kurmak için kullanılır. Bu da modern toplumun hakiki gerçekliğin ve yaşam deneyiminin yerini aldığını ve gerçeklik ve yaşam imgelerini tüketen yarı-deneyim yanılsaması yaşama durumunu göstermektedir. Teatrel kronotop bunu rol yükleyen ve kişisel ve toplumsal kimlikle oynayan dönüştürücü yetileri ile gerçekleştirmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Teatrellik, Kronotop, Barnes, Fowles.

To my Mother and my sister Natalya

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Concept of Theatricality

Theatricality is a conceptual and interpretive term which today is widely used in many disciplines and fields of study. French theatrical semioticians are credited with having first coined the term theatricality (*theatralité*), meaning by it the specificity of theatre as constituted by the special position of theatre as an aesthetic system and the specific organization of a theatrical code as the language of the theatrical art (Fischer-Lichte 139). In modern culture, theatricality appears as a capacious multifaceted philosophical and aesthetical phenomenon related to different areas of human thought and, though initially originating from the art of theatre, transcending its boundaries and manifesting itself in all kinds of artistic experience[1].

The idea of theatricality has been essential throughout the whole history of European culture. Elizabeth Burns notices that the "part played by the theatrical metaphor as a compelling image in Western literature makes explicit the continuing presence both of theatricality, and of our awareness of it" (8). The perception of the theatre as a model of the universe characterizes some prominent cultural phenomena concerned with the investigation and comprehension of the nature of human existence, such as the Latin concept of *theatrum mundi* or the Shakespearian artistic philosophy coined in the numerous adages of his plays, often considered as anticipating the ideas of the modern theatre of the absurd:

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[1] See such works, studying theatricality in different arts, as Auslander, Philip. *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006; Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988; Rushton, Richard. "Absorption and Theatricality in the Cinema: Some Thoughts on Narrative and Spectacle". *Screen* (48:1) 2007: 109-112.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. (*Macbeth*. Act V, Scene V)

The end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, an epoch from which many of the important processes of the modern art originated, was characterized by a notable inclination towards the mutual attraction of different kinds of art, the attempt to produce new artistic effects by combining the languages of different arts and transcending their distinctive limitations. In this situation the attraction of theatre as an inherently synthetic art was increased. The idea of theatricality was again reactualized. It can be claimed to be an integral part of the culture of this and the following periods when theatre becomes an object of versatile and profound artistic exploration. The turn of the century witnessed the revival of dramatic art, and the rapid upsurge and prosperity of new theatrical practices and theoretical ideas. The competing staging principles and acting methodologies were conceptually formulated[2]; for the first time in the history of Western theatre stage directing arises as an independent professional art central for dramatic performance. Theatre attracted increased attention from artists of different literary movements. However, though such significant literary figures as Ibsen, Shaw and Chekhov accomplished the development of realistic drama in its most representative forms, the idea of theatricality per se was primarily activated by practices opposite to 19th century realism, those of modernism and the avant-garde. Searching for new forms of artistic integration and expression and "moving beyond the requirements of realism", these new playwrights reconceived the visual and verbal codes of theatre. The leaders of Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, rejecting the codes and logic of realism, located the defining traits of their artistic programs in the overt exploitation of theatre's 'stagedness' (Davis and Postlewait 12).

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[2] For the detailed outline of the most interesting conceptions of theatrical art in the 20th century see Blumenfeld, Robert. *Using the Stanislavsky System: A Practical Guide to Character Creation and Period Styles.* (New York: Limelight Editions, 2008: 277-359) and Roose-Evans, James. *Experimental theatre from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*. (London: Routledge, 1989).

Thus, the stage became an important arena of audacious artistic experiments, which later resulted in an extraordinary variety of new theatrical conceptions, from Bertold Brecht's epic theatre to the theatre of the absurd. Moreover, at that time theatre was widely viewed as a phenomenon whose principles are valid beyond the art of the stage as such[3]. It was not only considered as the centre of aesthetical and stylistic experiments of the period but it assigned to itself the task of scrutinizing the dialectics of the social and spiritual life of the epoch, which witnessed an intensive intrusion of art into empirical reality and the conscious aesthetization of everyday life (this is evident, for example, in the modes of behaviour and art, fusing artistic and everyday practices, of Joris-Karl Huysmans, Oscar Wilde, Andrey Block, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Tristan Tzara, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti etc.). This inspired a desire to carry theatre from the stage into every-day, non-artistic life, beginning with characteristic attempts to destroy the boundaries of the aesthetical and the non-aesthetical undertaken by avant-garde artists such as Tristan Tzara and Andre Breton, and the development of theories of artistic life-creation important for the ideology of aestheticism and symbolism, as found in the writings of John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, Andrei Bely, and Andre Breton etc.

Furthermore, after the appearance of self-reflective postmodern art and philosophy in the second half of the XX century, the concept of theatre emerged as a subject of intensive practical and theoretical reflection, for instance in the writings of Eugene Ionesco, Jacques Derrida, and Roland Barthes. The uniqueness of theatre as a phenomenon present in almost all cultures and societies and capable of producing additional models of human existence has instigated attempts to explain and interpret it from different methodological positions – sociological (Guy Debord), anthropological (Milton Singer, Geertz Clifford), and psychological (Erving Goffman). Nowadays, especially with the proliferation of mass media's manipulative influence on conscious and unconscious human

[3] Among the playwrights, who adhered to these ideas, such dramatists as Maurice Maeterlinck, August Strindberg, Luigi Pirandello, Alexander Block, and Bertold Brecht can be considered.

behaviour, theoreticians of different humanities and social disciplines readily support and cherish the idea of the total theatricality of the modern life, as well as the theatricality of the ways of perceiving it. The social consciousness of the modern period has been thought over as based on the principle of game and the spectacle: "Now a human and the world are united not in myth but in the reality which has become a spectacle through which a human comprehends himself" (Hrenov 47, my translation). Numerous researchers, such as Guy Debord, Johannes Birringer, Susan Melrose, Juri Lotman, and Worthen[4] have developed theoretical models of analysis based on the concept of performance, acknowledging that the cultural consciousness of the XX century is dominated by the ideas of theatre, role-playing, ritual, carnival, and stage directing. As Marvin Carlson states,

> With performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our conditions and activities, into almost every branch of the human sciences — sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics. [...] performativity and theatricality have been developed in these fields, both as metaphors and as analytical tools. (qtd. Davis and Postlewait 30)

The theatrical, masquerading character of social life has been especially emphasized in these kinds of studies, for its politics, economics and art have been perceived as transformed into a kind of all-embracing commercialized show managed by the essential traits of stagecraft. Society in these conceptions is considered a result of artificial ritualization of both political behaviour and everyday social activity.

The widest interpretation of the expansive concept of theatricality has obtained in modern philosophical studies, where it is enlarged and applied to

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[4] Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1954; Birringer, Johannes. *Performance on the Edge: Transformations of Culture*. London; New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000; Melrose, Susan. *A Semiotics of the Dramatic Text*. Macmillan, London, 1994; Lotman, Juri. "Theatre and Theatricality in the Structure of the Culture in the beginning of XIX century" in *Selected Articles*. Tallinn, 1992: 269-287; Worthen, W. *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

human existence as a whole. It is endowed with an ontological meaning as an essential, primary quality of reality itself. The idea of *Theatrum mundi* was reflected and conceptualized as early as in Plato's *Laws*: "Every creature is a puppet of the Gods—whether he is a mere plaything or has any serious use we do not know; but this we do know, that he is drawn different ways by cords and strings" (29). Nowadays, Peter Ouspensky in *A New Model of the Universe* defines the organization of the universe in theatrical terms and states that humans are inherently theatrical because the nature surrounding them always tends to ornamentality and theatricality. Nature itself enjoys the opportunity "to be or to seem something different from what it in fact is at this time and in this place" (33, my translation). The art of the stage, its principles and structure, are seen as isomorphic to the "world theatre", as its equivalent and authentic embodiment. "The spectacle is the universal category in which species the world is seen" (Barthes, in Pavis 346).

As a result, the meaning of the Shakespearian adage "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It,* Act II, Scene VII), has been re-actualized in the new social and cultural context of the XXth century and has appeared to be highly suitable for reflecting the modern experience and the mechanisms of its comprehension. At the same time, along with such an expansion of the concept of theatricality and the proliferation of the spheres to which it can be applied and which consider theatricality among their research interests, the theoretical problems of its definition arise naturally, for it appears almost limitless in its possible meanings. In a wide variety of theoretical works theatre has become a universal, all-inclusive, and hence indistinct, concept: "the idea of theatricality has achieved an extraordinary range of meanings," say Davis and Postlewait (1). Thus, in spite of the intense attention of researchers, the term remains undesirably diffuse. This plethora of applications naturally causes a need to define more precisely the content of the concept if it is going to be, as in this thesis, applied as a model for analysis to a concrete field of study. The theoretical chapter that follows discusses the various uses and definitions of theatricality, concluding that a semiotic definition works best for the task in hand.

1.2 Scope and Aim of the Study

This thesis studies theatricality as one of the constitutive principles of the novel. It should be indicated at the outset that this study deliberately leaves aside questions of generic features of plays and functioning theatricality in dramatic works per se, focusing upon the functioning of theatricality particularly in the novelistic forms. Examining the novel is considered as especially representative for the purpose of studying theatricality in non-dramatic genres, due to its specific generic nature as understood and explicated by Bakhtin. In his conception, the novel as a genre is distinguished by openness, incompleteness and the lack of a strict canon, which enables the novel to incorporate various generic conventions and produce different modifications of itself (Bakhtin 43). Further, as can be inferred from Bakhtin's arguments, the novel is the most reflective genre of modern literature, and as one of the main objects of its reflection, has its own generic essence. Being in close contact with contemporary life and directly deriving its inspirations from the ever developing and complicating reality, it is in a continuous search for its own authenticity, exploring and violating its own limits, establishing and destroying its own principles. This presupposes a great integrative capacity for the novel, which readily employs the principles of other literary (as well as non-literary) forms as material out of which to construct its own modifications and to evaluate its own potentiality. In this sense, the art of theatre as a culturally significant and generically distinct phenomenon is supposed to serve a similar function and to fulfil one of the most urgent generic needs of the novel. Besides, as has been well acknowledged, the novel is an inherently self-reflective genre, hence it needs constantly to construct an outer point of view of itself, there is a "need for an auditorium", "the necessity to constitute the audience" (Lotman 1998: 599, my translation).

Thus, in this thesis theatricality is used as a descriptive term and interpretative concept, as one of the possible codes of reading and analyzing multiply-coded postmodern novels. The purpose of this study is to investigate theatricality as one of the constitutive principles of the modern novel considering

its contextual historical aspects and theoretical applications. Its main research intention is to examine the ways in which the idea of theatricality is substantiated in novelistic discourse, i.e. how the structural features of theatre as a specific aesthetic system are introduced in literary texts, and how theatricality, in turn, manifests the artistic conception of the authors, i.e. what functional role it has in generating the meanings of the novels.

As the material of analysis, the novels *The Magus* by John Fowles (1966, 1977) and *England, England* by Julian Barnes (1998) are taken. The choice of these novels as representative for analyses of theatricality is motivated by several reasons. Firstly, John Fowles and Julian Barnes are authors who, though not without some reserves, are acknowledged as representing early and contemporary postmodernism in British literature. Regarding theatricality, the thesis' particular interest in this mainstream movement of XXth century art and humanities is determined by the fact that this period has been especially noted for theatricality becoming an important cultural concept, a part of the integral artistic style of the epoch. The general cultural, sociological, and political context of the postmodernism era is, as has been stated above, openly theatrical. Picking up the baton from modernism, its successor sees theatre as an efficient epistemological model, appropriate for investigating the life beyond the stage per se. It actively expands theatricality into the neighbouring arts and literary genres, including the novel.

The postmodernism tradition is oriented to the primacy of an artistic form, overtly concerned with theoretical issues, such as the processing and mechanisms of narration. (Thus, Fowles defines *The Magus* as "a deliberately artificial, model-proposing novel, a good deal more about fiction that any 'real' situation" (qtd. Conradi 52)). Postmodernism's aesthetic principles are generally defined by its multi-systemic and multi-coded artistic practices. Employing pastiche – one type of postmodernist parody, and techniques of intertexuality, postmodernism has become capable of adopting a variety of forms, structures, and alternative approaches to constructing a literary text. As a self-reflective art, investigating its own nature, postmodernism is interested in constructing multileveled polyphonic narratives capable of producing the effects of multiple reflections, which makes

the fabrication of the text emphatically tangible (Waugh 28). It therefore consciously employs the discourses of other arts and different artistic languages to explore the ultimate boundaries and authenticity of phenomena, as well as the effects of their transgression and hybridization.

Theatricality as the language of theatrical art has been naturally adopted for these purposes and, along with the concept of play, has become inherent in the nature of postmodernism. As Davis and Postlewait argue, theatricality is to be considered as "the definitive condition or attitude for postmodern art and thought" (1). Hence, on the one hand, without considering it, any deep comprehension of this art is actually insufficient; on the other hand, due to the overtly histrionic character of postmodernist culture, studying its artistic works is found to be particularly illuminating for revealing the nature of theatricality itself.

In postmodern literature, theatricality can be considered as one of the devices used in realizing its self-reflexivity, the novel's metafictional nature. As Patricia Waugh formulates, "*[m]etafiction* is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2). She later explains that metafiction does this by drawing on the traditional metaphor of the world as book modified in terms of contemporary philosophical and literary theories (3); this, in its basic metafictional implications, is analogous to the metaphor of the world as a theatre.

The theatre metaphor as a means of arranging the metafictional quality of the novel is approached by Waugh in the section of her book named "All the word's a stage" where she mostly examines fictionality as characters "'playing roles' within fiction" (116). Actually, in many of her postulates she coincides with those of Abel on metatheatre. For example, while discussing Muriel Spark's *The Public Image,* she explains the attempts of the novel's protagonist, who has realized the fiction-making process determining her life and tries "to step out of [her] image" (116), in a similar way to Abel's explanations of Hamlet's and Don Quixote's metatheatrical consciousness.

Abel sees their awareness and conscious creating of their own roles as ways to escape being manipulated by outer scripts. Thus, it can be concluded that the

postmodern novel employs theatricality in the function of exploring and exposing its metafictionality.

Though the idea of theatricality has been in various degrees productive throughout many historical and cultural periods, this study is concerned with that type which has been formed in postmodern culture and reflected in postmodern literature. It has appeared to coincide with the principles of aesthetical conceptions of postmodernism, which thrives on the actualized features of theatricality, and, in turn, has influenced the concept as well as its theoretical comprehension.

John Fowles and Julian Barnes, as authors belonging to the era of self-conscious postmodern fiction, also intentionally introduce in their works motifs loaded with culturally reflected meanings, which is one of the prominent functions of theatricality. Their novels exhibit the general principle of play at the narrative level and use polyphonic and nonhierarchical narrative strategies, which, as Bakhtin claims, are characteristics of the carnavalized. This results in generic ambiguity and hybridity, which serve as the base for constructing their multi-generic texts.

It is noteworthy that Fowles' career as a writer was mostly developing at the time of the revival of English theatre, which was reflected in a new profusion of trends, from the socially oriented dramaturgy of the "Angry young men" – a group of working and middle class British playwrights – , to the opposite conceptions of the theatre of the Absurd and experiments of Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz, which became vehicles for imparting Antonin Artaud's ideas into the English theatre. Besides, the text of *The Magus*, openly referring to the theatrical ideas of Stanislavsky (338), Brecht, Pirandello, and Artaud (404), reveals Fowles's intent interest in theatre as potentially contributing to the novel's innovations. It is also interesting to note that in 1963, i.e. three years earlier than the publication of the first edition of *The Magus*, the American critic and playwright Lionel Abel published his famous *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Fiction,* in which he coined the term itself, and also elaborated on the concept of metatheatre, which he traced back to Shakespeare, including in it also Miguel de Cervantes, Pedro Calderón, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Luigi

Pirandello, Bertold Brecht, Jean Genet, and Samuel Beckett. In *The Magus*, this idea of metatheatre becomes the overriding metaphor. Borrowing Gadamer's expression, *The Magus* can be considered the entire "self-representation" of theatre, for it employs metatheatre as the master trope of the whole novel.

If Fowles is generally a writer of one developing invariant theme, revolving around the issues of a human's self-realization in terms of his or her quest for "the very essence of things" (434) and "the pure essence of freedom" (478)[5], Barnes is the author who makes play the principle of his career. The diversity of his works, which might be seen negatively as the lack of a stable individual style, at the same time prevents any solidification of aesthetical principles which could be considered beyond a playful relationship with the previous tradition, including that of his own previous novels. Because of this Barnes is called "the chameleon of British letters", who changes his color as soon as you approach a definition of his creativity with some label. "Barnes's novels range from the epic to the miniature, and continually experiment with novelistic form. His prose style adapts moodily to the character of his subjects so that no two novels are alike. His subjects? Better yet, what's not a subject?" (Stout 67).

In *England, England*, the main subject is "the simulacrum of national identity", as Guingery's work of the same name claims (Guingery 104). So, the model of theatre as an art based on the simulative sign, doubling the reality and possessing the power to make an illusion believable (Lotman 1992: 283, my translation), is naturally employed.

Thus, the concept of theatricality is considered as manifesting the characteristic features of these two novels as works of the postmodernist art, as well as manifesting their authors' individual artistic intentions. The thesis is concerned with studying theatricality as an aesthetical principle employed by the novelists in the named novels for organizing their formal and thematic structures.

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[5] *The Magus* is the second of Fowles published novels. However, considering its importance in articulating the main thematic concerns as well as narrative techniques valid during his whole artistic career, it is considered as a kind of "Ur-novel for the corpus [of all his writings]", which "called powerfully upon his creative resources for most of his career" (Cooper 52-53).

Further, as has been concluded from delving into the theory of theatrical semiotics, which is going to be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis and which serves as its directing theory, the decisive aspects determining theatre as an aesthetical system are theatrical space and time. On this ground, this paper argues that one of the most significant structural elements through which theatricality is substantiated in novelistic discourse is that of the theatrical chronotope, and hence it is the most expedient feature to use in the study of theatricality as applied to an analysis of the novel. Using theatrical conventionality, the novel reflects and thematizes, literally or metaphorically, the constitutive qualities of theatre as an aesthetical system, which become the subjects of artistic reflection.

Thus, the primary aim of the thesis is to reveal the constitutive principles of the theatrical chronotope and to examine the ways in which it is embodied in the novel. For this purpose, *The Magus* by John Fowles and *England, England* by Julian Barnes are analyzed as presenting two different variants of texts that employ the theatrical chronotope to exploit its different possible semantic implications.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This chapter will discuss some problems of studying theatricality in the novel caused by the ambiguity of the term and the elusiveness of its possible theoretical implications. In this respect the chapter, further, will present a discussion of the main features of theatricality as identified and identified by semiotic studies, which is considered as a way to avoid this elusiveness and to define the term more precisely. This discussion will be channeled towards an understanding of which features of theatricality could be most useful in analyzing theatricality in novels. To come to the working definition of theatricality which this paper will use for its analyses of the novels, it is also necessary to reveal the essential cultural nature of the phenomenon of theatre, due to which theatricality will be identified as a culturologem[6].

2. 1 Some Problems of Studying Theatricality in Literature

In literary criticism, the concept of theatricality also has been introduced in the XX century though being applied retrospectively to the works of previous epochs. It is usually used to define an additional structure-forming component of literary texts, mostly dramatic ones. For example, *Hamlet,* with its masterly structure of *theatre in the theatre,* as well as a complex of philosophical ideas reflecting the notion of theatre, is often claimed to be a classical example of the embodiment of the idea of theatricality: "it is a compendium of the *theatrum*

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[6] Culturology is a branch of humanities that studies the diversity of cultures and their modes of interaction and functions as a metadiscipline within the humanities, encompassing the variety of cultural phenomena studied separately by philosophy, history, sociology, literary and art criticism, etc. "Culturologem" is one of the terms of culturology which is defined as a universal cultural motif which obtains its particular meaning from being actualized in a particular historical and cultural context (*Culturology: Essential Terms.* Moscow: Moscow State University, 1999: 39, my translation).

mundi heritage, as if Shakespeare had pulled together in one complex dramatic action all of the various ideas in Western culture on the symbiotic relation between theatre and human existence" (Davis and Postlewait 10). Likewise, Lionel Abel sees Shakespeare as a forefather of the tradition of pan-theatrical views, and presents Hamlet as a person with a theatrical consciousness who refuses to act in the plays imposed on him by both Claudius and the ghost. Being "uncomfortable in this kind of play, [Hamlet] was forced to 'write' his own, to dramatize himself. The result was a 'metaplay,' the first in drama" (Gliman 327). For Abel, Hamlet's consciousness, impregnated by theatrical ideas, causes his tragic inability to act (48). He explains that any action binds a person with a definite kind of reality, it implies acceptance of certain values and meanings while theatre plays with ideas and sanctions the relativity of any of them. Hamlet's theatrical consciousness generates his rejection of any definite reality or truth except those produced by an individual creative imagination, and this self-reflection destroys his willingness to act in any of these subjective and relative pictures of reality. Thus, the main concerns of the play as Abel sees it, are not centered on psychological issues, but on the problem of theatrical form itself.

Moreover, it is important that in modern literary criticism theatricality starts to be viewed not as a purely dramatical phenomenon, but in a broader sense as significant for a large group of prose texts which employ it as an organizing principle in their structure. "Theatre is moving from the real stage into the imaginary stage; we shall acknowledge the emerging of such a literary phenomenon as '*theatre in the novel*'" (Polakova 93). As representative examples of the novels which openly demonstrate such generic syncretism[7] are named, among others, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, *Mysteries* by Knut Hamsun, *Master and Margarita* by Bulgakov, and *Last love in Constantinople* by Milorad Pavich. Despite acknowledging the phenomenon of theatricality in the novel and using the term for analysis of novelistic discourse, literary theory still does not

[7] Syncretism is a reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties. Modern Language Association: "syncretism." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 13 Nov. 2009. < http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/syncretism>.

consider theatricality as an independent self-contained category, however. There is no satisfying definition of theatricality or elaborated methodology for its study; its potential functionality in the novel is not specified. The researchers who use the term when applying it to literary prosaic works seem to take it for granted, and do not discuss what exactly is meant by theatricality in terms of its theoretical status or practical specificity. There are, however, some studies which name and analyse it among specific characteristics of some literary works. The most interesting among these are *Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* by Lynn M. Voskuil, *The Dickens Theatre: A Reassessment of the Novels* by Robert Garis, and *Caught in the Act: Theatricality in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel* by Joseph Litvak. As a rule, the problem of theatricality in these studies is related to the following aspects: specifics of dramatic literary works and their staging; presence of dramatic elements such as dramatic conflict, type of plotting and protagonist etc. in non-dramatic texts; adaptations of non-dramatic literary texts for staging in theatre and movie; and revealing thematic reminiscences and allusions referring to theatre and theatrical art.

Though even these narrow aspects can be fruitful for interpreting literary works, obviously the content of theatricality cannot be reduced to some selected features of genre, mode or style. Therefore, none of these approaches itself can lead to a theoretical generalizing of theatricality as a literary category. For in XX century Western culture, theatre gains the status of a specific reality capable of reflecting and producing the specific types of meanings crucial to the modern cultural consciousness, and precisely as such it is employed, and thus should it be studied, in analyses of the modern novel.

The problems of such a theoretical approach to theatricality in the novel are also determined by the ambivalence of the concept derived from its doubled – non-generic and generic – nature. Elusiveness of the term and its uncertain status among literary concepts often cause those who would attempt to study it in correlation with neighbouring, better established theories, which can be useful only on the condition that a distinction between the adjacent ideas is clearly realized. Otherwise, a failure to make the required distinctions could lead to the conclusion that it is unnecessary to introduce the new term of theatricality since

the meanings it is meant to specify have already been covered by existing, named concepts.

Thus, for instance, as a non-generic concept, a specific type of world perception and a type of mentality and behavior caused by it, theatricality is most frequently equaled to play, whose functioning in culture is well acknowledged and has been more deeply studied in such works as *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* by Nietzsche, *Homo Ludens* by Johan Huizinga, *Truth and Method* by Hans-Georg Gadamer, and *Games People Play* by Eric Berne.. There are some important similarities between the notions, which makes some researchers put the idea of play as the unifying concept and see the correlation *play-theatre* as formed by genus-species relations. Besides, like theatricality, the concept of play has been especially actualized in postmodern art, where it functions as a base for realization of such central features of postmodernism as self-irony, self-parody, and self-reflectivity (Ilyn 155). There are some attempts to study theatricality in the novel as one of the forms of realizing the play principle[8]. In practice this approach seems quite reasonable, for in a sense theatricality does realize the play principle, which can be seen as a base for constituting what is considered to be theatrical. If theatre is regarded as a type of institualization of play behaviour, then it is possible to see dramatic action as one of its most evolved kinds.

However, for the sake of theoretical accuracy, it is necessary to distinguish more precisely between the two. To acknowledge the subsumption relations between play and theatricality, the former is to include the latter with all its essential qualities without any contradictions. Yet, in some sense, the concept of theatricality demonstrates features revealing its nature as different from that of play, which is determined by the specificity of theatre as a cultural system. For example, play does not necessarily require an outer perceiver distanced from the action and can consist of its participants only, while for theatricality a spectator is

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[8] See, for example, the works, where theatricality is discussed not as a self-sufficient concept, but as an element of that of the play: Franklin, J. Jeffrey. *Nineteenth-century discourses of play and the British Victorian novel*. Miami: University of Florida, 1995; Osipenko, Elena. *Principles of the Poetics of Play in the Novels by Murdoch*. St. Petersburg, 2004.

one of the constitutive components (Fischer-Lichte 7). As Lotman remarks, "in the space of the play the audience is not required, there might be only participants" (1998: 586, my translation). Further, theatricality is by nature an aesthetical practice and this distinguishes it in principle from the other forms of playing behavior and thinking. While in play aesthetical purposes are possible but not obligatory – for example in such forms as rituals, sport or children's games it can go without artistic values at all; theatricality essentially demands artistic completeness and is to be aesthetically significant.

A theatrical performance is necessarily an action which is stage-managed according to an initial authorial design. That is why, to be accomplished as a work of art, it inevitably needs an outer spectator and, thus, a specific communicative structure prescribing the multilevel positions of its subjects, which is not essential for play which does not depict but only imagines. Davis and Postlewait explain this distinction: "Theatrical forms have no purpose without the audience. This is not true for rituals, sports, play activities, games, or face-to-face verbal interaction, despite their theatrical qualities" (33). Therefore, it is to be admitted that though play is in a way included in the notion of theatricality – most obviously in the acts of role-playing – these two concepts do not cover each other and should be considered as distinct, though often accompanying each other and manifesting close artistic intentions.

Further, as a concept closely related to a certain kind of literature, namely to the drama, the theatrical is often used as synonymous to the dramatic. There is an obvious connection between the two and the qualities of the one can be easily transferred onto the other by synecdoche. Their principle difference in this case is ignored. The features characterizing dramatic genres, such as the type of composition structured around a dramatic conflict, intensive dramatic tension engineering a specific dramatic plot, dominance of speech organized in dialogues and monologues, and character types, are ascribed to theatricality.

However, such identification leads to an undesirable confusion of phenomena quite different in nature. A clear distinction should be made here, for drama as a kind of literature has its own prominent influence on the novel, reflected in its adoption of the categories of tragic and comic, the principles of

dramatic plotting and conflict development, etc. Yet, the concept of theatricality is merely related, but not restricted to or defined by, the generic characteristics of drama. It manifests itself far beyond the limits of the art of writing and in forms not necessarily constitutive for drama. Though close to it, theatricality should be correlated not with drama but with theatre as a model determining its system of representative principles. Thus, for example, by a dramatic character and a character typical of theatre we should understand in principle different things. The fact that sometimes these characteristics can coincide and be equally relevant for theatre and drama – such as expressiveness and demonstrativeness, the role of mimicry and gestures in representation of a character, etc. – are caused by drama itself being influenced by theatre and, to be successfully performed, having to obey its requirements. Thus, the theoretical and methodological distinction is needed, for dramatic elements as such cannot be directly used to infer the specifics of theatricality. While analysing the latter in novels, it is necessary to dismiss from it the generic meanings of the dramatic literary kinds such as melodrama, comedy, farce etc. since they belong not to the phenomenon of theatre itself but to the drama and thus do not characterise theatricality as a literary term.

Thus, to examine theatricality in the modern novel, it is more reasonable first of all to consider the essential characteristics of theatre as a specific artistic reality and as a distinct aesthetical system generating its meanings under distinct conditions and in a distinct manner. Such a study, analyzing theatre on the systemic level, can be found presented in works of theatrical semioticians, where the conceptual meaning of this category has been elaborated. For this reason, while not being semiotic methodologically, this study employs their research as its theoretical framework.

2.2 Theatricality in Semiotic Studies

Such theoreticians as Marvin Carlson, Roland Barthes, Martin Esslin, Erika Fischer-Lichte and Patrice Pavis, have made “the most significant attempt[s] to construct an interpretive model for understanding theatricality” (Davis and Postlewait 9). The importance of their works for this study is determined by the

fact that they seek to establish the strict terminological boundaries of the concept through revealing and indicating the constitutive features of theatre as a system. Recognizing the problem of the elusiveness of theatre as a phenomenon related to a great variety of practices as well as existing in very different forms in almost every particular culture, epoch, or social grouping, semiotics attempts to constitute the concept first of all as a theoretical construct, abstracted from any factual example of theatre but consisting of the essential elements "from which each form of theatre can draw, however widely it may differ from the others" (Fischer-Lichte 11).

It also attempts to avoid the evaluation of theatricality in terms of any ideological validity, as theatre researchers of the previous trends tended to do in coming to conclusions of an axiological rather than theoretical character. On the contrary, as Davis and Postlewait notice, semioticians designate theatricality as

> a descriptive term to identify the essential qualities of any dramatic performance. The idea of theatricality in their study is used to describe the traits of performance that meet a minimum standard of 'stageability' […] The aim of theatre semiotics is to describe […] theatrical codes that make up performance. (21, 23)

By so doing, semiotics develops comprehensive models for an analysis of theatre and formulates the premises, which can be also adopted as a mainframe for the literary study of theatricality.

It is important that semiotics' primary interest is to analyze theatre as one cultural system among others. This means that theatre is understood and examined first of all as "a world where everything that is perceived is perceived as a signifier which must be judged to have a signified, i.e., a meaning" (Fischer-Lichte 1). Thus, it is seen as having the general function of any cultural system, namely that of producing meaning. Further, theatre is to be specified as a cultural system *sui generi.* To distinguish it from other systems, Fischer-Lichte suggests a method according to which the object to be defined or studied is to be considered with regard to the way in which it fulfills its general function (6). Thus, theatre is viewed as "significantly different from other cultural systems because of the special functions which it alone fulfills" (Fischer-Lichte 1), as well as because of

realizing special principles of generating meanings and prescribing the types of these meanings. These principles, or rules, of producing and interpreting complexes of signs generated by the cultural system of theatre are termed and studied as the internal *aesthetic code of the theatre.* Since it is stated that both the formulating and the understanding of the theatrical message function on the basis of this code, semiotic study is concerned with discerning and describing the components of this code, which can be appropriately used as interpretive terms and instruments for literary analysis.

According to Fischer-Lichte, these principles, determined by the specifics of the stage medium and forming the theatrical code, are generally bounded by two sets of factors: (1) the ontological state of theatrical artworks, by which performances are understood; (2) and the conditions for the performances' production and reception (6). Each of these basic determinants structures a theatrical performance as a network of signs, from which the typical features of theatre as a meaning-generating system can be inferred.

The formula that serves as a base for semiotic reflection on the ontological status of theatrical performance is enunciated as follows: "[T]he minimum preconditions for theatre to be the theatre are that person A represents X while S looks on" (Fischer-Lichte 7). This premise, though apparently laconic and elementary, introduces the main constitutive factors of theatre, specifies their functionality and manifests some important qualities of theatre.

The focus which is made in this formula is that of the inseparability of a theatrical performance from the process of its production. This fact determines many of the essential features of theatre. Thus, it results in the specific experience and organization of time in theatre, which is considered as one of the constitutive elements of the theatrical code. Due to the ontological state of a theatre performance, which can exist - and thus can be perceived - only in the moment of its recreating, its production and reception are necessarily synchronous, which, above all, makes the performance as an artwork extremely responsive to audience reaction.

> The moment an actor produces the sign by means of which he wishes to generate and communicate particular meanings, that sign is perceived by the audience who in turn produce

> meaning by attributing particular meaning to this sign. That is, in the case of a theatre performance, we have to do with two aspects of the process of constituting meaning which occur simultaneously. (Fischer-Lichte 7)

Fischer-Lichte terms this typical dependence of theatre on simultaneity "*complete contemporaneity*", meaning that theatre only occurs as an actual experience and thus is especially concerned with the present time, while the past and the future can only be the objects of its theoretical reflection. She explains:

> [w]hereas I can observe pictures that were painted many hundreds of years ago, read novels that were written in times long past, I can only watch theatre performances that occur today, in the present. I can […] only involve myself theoretically, and not aesthetically, with past theatre performances. For the web of signs of the performance is indissolubly bound up with the actor who creates them, present only in the moment of their production. (6-7)

Thus, time in theatre is confined within the ever recommencing present, which theatre senses as its main temporal stratum. "The present becomes the source of the theatrical time" (Pavis 44). However, besides this present time of stage performance, there is an extra-stage temporal dimension – the time of the events of the story performed, which has its own chronology. Theatrical time hence is formed in this dual relation between the two temporal dimensions, which are to mingle with each other in the audience's perception. A spectator "lives in the present but loses the connection with it, transcending into another temporal layer" (Pavis 44), which produces an important theatrical effect of "presence in theater" (Pavis ibid.) i.e. a psychological situation of being immersed into some atemporal present of theatre.

The specific theatrical present is that which, due to its atemporality, is able to contain all other times. This temporal dialectics, experienced by theatre as its structural component, explains theatre's particular sensitivity to the philosophical theme of time, which always makes it especially attractive for reflective and philosophically oriented cultural epochs.

The theatrical code also regulates the conception of theatrical space and its specific qualities. "This is the first characteristic of a theatre: the events it depicts

are not indifferent of their placement" (Weber 4). To be constituted as theatrical, the space has to be heterogeneous for it is required to be capable of containing opposite kinds of activity. The theatre undermines the integrity of place by submitting it to the theatrical principle of oppositions.

First, theatrical space is arranged in zones or different segments, "for the actors, on the one hand, and for the audience, on the other – and the particular appearance of the spatial segment in which the actors move" (Fischer-Lichte 14). Such spatial organization regulates interaction between actors and audience, who are included in different types of space, prescribing the manner of their interaction, as well as their correlation with the whole of the performance. These zones in fact present different types of reality, endowed with different kinds of significance, whose distinctiveness and at the same time interdependence are essential for theatrical identification. As Fral explains, "[b]inary awareness is crucial to theatricality, which is understood as a *process* that has to do with a 'gaze' that postulates and creates a distinct, virtual space belonging to the other, from which friction can emerge" (qtd. Davis and Postlewait 29).

For some researchers, the duality "stage - auditorium" creates the phenomenon of theatricality itself, it denotes the specific conventional space inside which some of the basic theatrical oppositions are formed. An opposition *existence – nonexistence* is related to the nature of realities of the two different spatial segments – stage and auditorium. From a spectator's point of view, "an auditorium ceases to exist from the moment the performance starts. Its actual existence becomes invisible and gives way to a totally illusive reality of the stage action" (Lotman 1998: 588, my translation).

To fulfill their function, spectators are to ignore everything occurring in the auditorium and immerse themselves into the aesthetical world of the artistic stage space, nevertheless remaining distanced from it. At the same time, from the perspective of the stage, the auditorium also does not exist during the performance since it is to remain outside, not directly included in the reality of the spectacle. (The fact that in some experimental plays, such as, for example, *The Bed for the Three* by Milorad Pavich, the audience is to participate directly in the stage action does not abrogate the specificity of the two kinds of space but rather manifests it

producing some effects caused by transgression of existing opposition as well as by disturbing the generic unity of the play). However, in this case the invisibility of the auditorium has a different, to a large degree playful, character. The actors included in the stage space are to balance in the doubled existence. They have to be a part of the inner world, which is real for itself, i.e. to exist as personas, as the integral elements of the stage space, and at the same time they have to be a part of a larger outer world, that is to exist as signs of the personas, as the elements of the theatrical aesthetical space as a whole. "What is […] constitutive of theater is the tension between existence and the signified […] The difference that sets off theatricality from aestheticality emerges in this tension" (Fischer-Lichte 140).

Due to this dual position, the performers are included in two different kinds of interrelations: explicit communication with the participants of the performance occurring within the stage space and implicit communication with the public set off in the auditorium space (Lotman 1998: 589-9, my translation). Thus, the separateness of the two zones necessarily includes their intensive dialogical interaction. That is why performance requires its addressee to be present at the time of its production, for theatrical communication is uniquely inter-directed. A performance as an artwork presupposes immediate, and not retrospective, dialogue with its addressee and interpreter, who becomes its real and immediate co-creator.

Realizing its dialogical nature, a theatrical performance perceives and uses the latent answer, the responsive attention of the auditorium, in order to accomplish its being, each time creating a newly modified version of itself. Therefore, the notion of the single canonical text is totally foreign to the theatre. It can only exist as a unique, currently recreated version, in a variety of variants and possibilities, conflicting with and destabilizing the structure of some abstractly existing invariant.

Thus, a theatrical artwork emerges as the product of dialectic relations between the stability of the text and versatility of its variants, it is momentary and constant at the same time, which makes it capable of flexibly reacting to the audience and the result of this can not be totally predicted or determined. This distinguishes theatrical performance and makes it especially attractive as a model

for manifesting some pluralistic artistic conceptions, such as, for instance, that of postmodernism.

Another typical opposition reflected in the duality of theatrical space is stated as *significant – insignificant* (Lotman 1998: 589, my translation). This opposition is caused by the specificity of the stage space characterized by a high degree of sign density, which is the key idea in Roland Barthes' definition of theatricality: "What is theatricality? it is theatre-minus-text, it is a density of signs and sensations built up on stage starting from the written argument" (75). Every object which is involved in this space, essentially changes its nature becoming a sign of itself. Fischer-Lichte concludes that theatre occurs "in such instances in which the body and the objects of its surroundings are used in their given material form as signs" (140). This different character of significance above all raises the problem of boundaries of the stage space which are to be distinctly sensed, either to be exactingly kept or meaningfully transgressed.

Thus, the stage space is an innately isolated one, with specifically marked – by decoration or lighting in traditional theatre – boundaries, which preserves its specificity by strictly delimiting itself from other types of reality which are not on stage. "Theatrical and non-theatrical spaces are separated by such a strong border that normally they can only inter-correlate but not interpenetrate" (Lotman 1998: 618, my translation). The idea of the closure, further concentrating the sign density of theatrical space, emphasizes and intensifies the modeling universalizing function of theatre. It therefore is always naturally considered as a model, as an embodiment of the actual reality in its most generalized form, which is evidently reflected in the rich metaphorical potential of theatre in cultural consciousness.

Further, specific theatrical temporal and spatial organization depends on and at the same time ensures the specific status of the subjects within a theatrical universe and a type of their communicative interaction. The conditions of production of a performance, discussed by Fischer-Lichte, determine its inherent components as they are formed in the theatrical system, as well as their specific functionality. The relations between the participants of theatrical communication are first of all determined by their specific functions imposed by the system: person A represents X while S looks on. Thus, there is a tripled communicative

structure formed in theatre. To exist, a performance requires subjects who produce it, for a theatrical event "cannot be separated from its producers, the actors" (Fischer-Lichte 6) and subjects who receive it directly at the moment of its production, the audience. Theatricality, in this sense, is defined by the communicative nature of the performer's actions and the spectator's reactions "in the making of 'the theatrical event'" (Davis and Postlewait 23). Besides, several different dimensions of communication occur at different levels of this system: between the performers themselves, between the stage and the audience, on the one hand, between the stage and the author/producer on the other hand. The status of the subject included in the theatrical communication is further complicated by the fact that in the typical tripled communicative structure there are two positions which are occupied by the same subject – the performer. This becomes possible due to the above mentioned doubled existence of an actor on stage - as a character and as a sign of a character.

Therefore, the specificity of a subject is importantly determined by the nature of a theatrical sign, which is another fundamental characteristic of performance as discussed by semioticians. The uniqueness of a theatrical sign as different from those of any other cultural system is defined as its ability to serve as *a sign of a sign*, to generate "signs for the signs created by the other cultural systems […] [A]ll the theater's signs in turn denote signs" (Fischer-Lichte 9). This characteristic of being signs of signs, first formulated by P. Bogatyrev, is fundamental for the semiotic study of theatre, it is considered as a conceptual function for defining theatre. As Davis and Postlewait claims, "when the semiotic function of using signs as signs of signs in a behavioural, situational, or communication process is perceived and received as dominant, the behavior, situational, or communication process may be regarded as theatrical" (24). This function of a sign in theatre endows the theatrical image with some important features.

Firstly, theatre has a specific "doubling" ability, caused by its requirement to create meanings by representing things as different from what they really are, as Fischer-Lichte puts it, by "donning a different appearance and acting in a different way in a different space" (8). Everything in theatre is to signify

something which in turn refers to something else. Borrowing Fischer-Lichte's example, if A manufactures a jug while depicting X in the presence of an audience, it is not to signify something about A, neither is it in order to use the jug for some practical purpose, but to produce a sign of something related to X, such as X's ability to make a jug, or X's being compelled to produce jugs, etc. (9). Therefore, the pragmatic appearance and behavior of a person, as well as pragmatic space where this person operates, which normally are characteristic for this person or have another utilitarian function, in theatre are transformed into representative iconic ones, having a specific function of signifying the appearance, behavior and space of something else. Thus, in a theatrical system, the originally inherent characteristics and qualities of individuality appear to be detached from it; they begin to function in a different way, providing possibilities for their various transformations. This statement indicates an important simulative nature and elusiveness of the signs produced by theatre. For instance, a special theatrical space

> whose function consists of signifying a random number of other spaces [e.g. a church, a school, a meadow etc.] can be realized in any particular space. For when A acts in order to portray X, then the space no longer denotes its original utility function, but rather the special space of performance; in other words, it signifies whatever particular space X finds herself in. (Fischer-Lichte 9)

Therefore, any objects coming under the influence of the theatrical system and transformed into theatrical signs obtain a high degree of semantic mobility resulting from their function to be signs of signs. Besides, semiotic study reveals the essential specificity of theatrical signs as opposed to those of all other aesthetical signs – poetic, musical, etc. Firstly, while other signs necessarily "differ in terms of material nature from all the nonlinguistic and nonmusical signs they may be intended to signify" (Fischer-Lichte 130), the signs of theatre can in principle be identical in their material form with those they represent: a linguistic sign can depict a linguistic sign, a musical sign can stand for an equivalent musical one. What is important here is this characteristic opposition of possible material identity of things and their essential difference and mutual substitutability

existing along with it, which provides the ground for the investigation of the problems of identity and self-identity as characteristic theatrical issues.

Theatrical signs are also unique in the sense that they are heterogeneous, i.e. derived from different primary sign systems. Unlike homogeneous signs, they are not strictly bound to a certain material substance and can be articulated in various ways: by words, stage décor, gestures, sounds etc. "A theatrical sign can […] function not only as a sign of a sign that it itself depicts materially, but can in addition function as the sign of a sign which may belong to any other sign system at random" (Fischer-Lichte 130). Thus, on the one hand, in theatre different signs can have identical functions; a particular meaning is not sternly conditioned by the type of the signs used to constitute it; their meaning generating effectiveness is expanded as not being restricted by the capacity of a particular system or material. On the other hand, the heterogeneous signs can easily be interchanged and substituted by one another for the main function to be a sign of a sign can be equally fulfilled by any of them.

The theatrical reality in principle admits any object to be replaced in its signifying function by any other one, including a human being to be substituted by another human being or even by an object. In fact, theatre encourages their interchangeability to manifest its nature – the dominance of secondary signs which can take on a theoretically almost unlimited number of meanings. As Fischer-Lichte exemplifies, "a chair can […] be utilized to signify not only a chair, but also a mountain, a staircase, a sword, an umbrella, an automobile, an enemy soldier, a sleeping child, an angry superior, a tender lover, a raging lion, etc." (131). The signs transcend normal practical and social matrices which prevent their mobility. On the contrary, this mobility and mutual interchangeability in theatre becomes their typical characteristic, for it accepts "a human being to be replaced by some other human being at random, an object to be replaced by another object at random, or even an object to be replaced by a human or vice versa" (140). Therefore, another fundamental characteristic of theatrical signs is their polyfunctionality, their ability to create a great diversity of different meanings. Thus, signs of performance are characterized by semantic flexibility and multivalency, which has various effects on the nature of theatrical image.

Taking into consideration this specificity, Roland Barthes defines what is crucial for theatre's being attractive and widely adopted as an epistemological model by modern philosophical, sociological and artistic thought. Discussing the semiology of the text, he gives special consideration to theatre which can be seen as an ideal mechanism for the generating meanings. He compares theatre with the cybernetic mechanism directing to the audience a succession of messages. These messages are conveyed synchronically: at every moment of the spectacle you are receiving information from several sources (decorations, costumes, lighting, gestures and mimicry of actors etc.). Barthes calls it an informative polyphony, which he considers as the phenomenon of theatricality itself. He concludes that theatre as a semiotic system "represents a privileged semiotic object, for its system is clearly original – *polyphonous* - compared with language, which is linear" (qtd. Fischer-Lichte 134; emphasis added). The qualities which make a theatrical sign specific (either in their nature or in the degree of intensity of a particular quality) – its potential for a double nature, its mobility, multi-functionality, plurality and diversity of media – define the specificity of a subject in theatre, and makes the potential of theatrical imagery attractive for other kinds of art.

Thus, to summarize the expounded semiotic theory of theatre as seems to be relevant for a literary study of theatricality, the indispensable factors which ensure a theatrical specificity are (1) the typical time and space conditions and (2) the specific status of the signs, i.e. of the objects and, more importantly, the subjects within theatre as a system. This approach is confirmed by semiotic study itself, which eventually states that the two categories "to which all types of theatrical signs refer [are] the character *and* the stage's space" (Fischer-Lichte 134). Regarding the novel, these categories are to be studied as the organization of an artistic chronotope and specificity of a literary character.

2.3 Theatre as a Culturologem

Having identified the main structural aspects of theatricality in the novel, it is further necessary to amplify our understanding by acknowledging its essential

cultural determinacy. Theatre is one of the fundamental cultural concepts whose significance in human society allows it to be immensely active in producing metaphorical meanings, which in some historical and cultural contexts can behave very aggressively, even becoming the model of the whole universe. Due to this quality, the idea of theatricality might be applied to a range of nontheatrical phenomena. As has been mentioned, the variety of spheres which naturally employ the idea of theatre for interpreting human experiences is remarkably wide, "from folk cultures and social ceremonies to gender identities and political actions" (Davis and Postlewait 31). Throughout its historical development, theatricality has revealed itself in different modifications; the meanings to which it has been attached and which it has claimed to express have been variously transformed:

> Sometimes this performative idea is located directly in religious practices, sometimes in myth and mythic thinking. In other cases, it is expanded to embrace everyday life, conventional behavior, and social rituals (Bell). In yet other cases, it takes the form of the concept of cultural play and social games (Huizinga). Or it can be tied to ideas of folk culture, festival, and carnival (Bakhtin). And it can also be understood as societal role playing (Goffman) or psychological identity (Winnicott). (Davis and Postlewait 28)

The multidimensionality of the concept and the diversity of the meanings it is able to imply make it difficult to find a common denominator, to unify "the protean idea of theatricality" (Davis and Postlewait 34). This makes it necessary to search for another base to constitute its conceptual unity, accepting this diversity of meanings in the notion of theatricality itself. In this sense, theatre should be considered as a form rather than as content; it includes only the possibility of a type of meaning rather than any particular meanings themselves. Every concrete cultural situation actualizes this possibility in a certain specific way. This quality brings theatricality extremely close to the concept of the mythologem (an idea that originates from the mythology structural matrix), which forms meanings but does not contain them. It is possible to state that the concept of theatricality functions like a mythologem in many ways: in its ability to structure typical meanings without being restricted to a concrete content, to

accumulate and generate complex metaphorical and symbolical models, which can be unfolded according to the potentials of each new hosting system, and to reproduce itself throughout history, being actualized in some possible sense within each new context. Above all, like a mythologem, the concept of theatricality serves human reflective thought as an integrating form, substantiating the fundamental features of human activities, psychological and sociological behaviour, and artistic practices; it suggests a kind of language capable of describing these issues. It is also interesting that both the concepts of myth and the idea of theatre often become equally important to artistic life in the same historical and cultural periods. This was a prominent feature of the ancient Greece period, and also occurred in Europe in the 1910s-30s.

However, theatricality differs notably from mythologems, for the latter are generated by the mythological consciousness, which is characterized by the principle of synthesis, the absence of differentiation between the main oppositions of rational thinking, such as subjective and objective, real and imaginary, time and space, including that of the cultural and the natural (Meletinsky 44). Mythologems therefore more immediately reflect the notions of deep psychological processes as simultaneously general and intimate, for they are originally formed by these processes. The relative stability of the core characteristics for mythologems depends on the respective stability of these deep psychological structures which it ultimately represents.

Theatricality, on the contrary, is essentially a product of cultural practices and cultural development. It is first and foremost loaded with culturally accumulated meanings based on the notion of theatre as a cultural phenomenon. Since the concept of theatricality has been formed in cultural space, it appears to be more dependent on the contemporary cultural context, namely on its contemporary comprehension of theatre as a socio-cultural institution as well as on the development of theatrical art itself. Accordingly, it is at different periods attributed with different particular meanings, negative or positive, which serve as a base for its further conceptualizing in philosophical, artistic, sociological, etc. thoughts. Therefore, the concept of theatricality exhibits a more active mobility and appears capable of representing different, sometimes opposite ideas. Thus, in

one period theatre was the model for Plato's famous cave, meant to symbolize the limits and imperfection of human beings as confined spectators in a kind of ontological theatre[9], and theatrical practices were in another period interpreted as those of hypocrisy and distorted authenticity, when realism was a dominant literary method; in contrast, modern conceptions regard theatre as a space of creative freedom, and of ideological and psychological polyphony.

So, theatricality is essentially the "product of what the members of the culture have experienced […] it is shaped by history" (Fischer-Lichte 2). This is the culture which turns theatre into a kind of laboratory for meaning-generating, for contemplating and solving the fundamental problems positioned by it. In this sense, it is more reasonable to see theatricality not as a mythologem, but as a culturologem, a universal structural matrix generated from cultural phenomenon and conceptualized by cultural consciousness. As such, theatrical effects have been reflected and instilled in other arts, abstracted from the realms of theatrical performances.

Furthermore, strongly dependent on the cultural context, theatre itself has a crucial function within culture, which is to provide culture with a standpoint for self-observation and self-reflection. Theatre is able to fulfil this position due to the specificity of theatrical signs, namely their existence only as signs of signs produced by other cultural systems. Due to the secondary, more abstract and inherently reflective level of theatrical signifying, a performance creates a characteristic theatrical perspective, from which the culture as a whole is reflected and comprehended. "The new function given to the signs in theater, namely, that of being signs of signs, enables the culture in question to take a reflective stance on itself" (Fischer-Lichte 10). This allows us to see theatre as a specific phenomenon existing wherever the culture needs to constitute and examine itself. The nature of theatre as a culturologem, formed and actualized by the cultural consciousness of the period, presupposes the considerable role of theatricality in

[9] About theatrical connotations in Plato's *Republic* see Weber, Samuel. *Theatricality as Medium*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2004.

reflecting and manifesting the significant tendencies of the historical, social and spiritual context of the time.

Thus, to overcome the elusiveness of the concept and to determine its terminological and substantial boundaries, it is necessary to consider theatricality as a category (1) preserving the relatively stable constitutive structural features characteristic for theatre as a system and (2) actualized by the particular culture, which provides the structural qualities of theatre with particular meanings making it a means of reflecting what is substantial for culture issues. As Sauter states, "theatricality is meant to represent the essential […] characteristics of theatre as an art form and as a cultural phenomenon" (qtd. Davis and Postlewait 22).

Therefore, the theoretical background of this study has included a review of the works of theatre semioticians and in the course of the analysis essays concerned with the aesthetics and philosophy of theatre by such XX century authors as Artaud, Mamardashvili, and Derrida are going to be referred to. It is supposed that the semiotic research provides a framework to investigate the ways in which the theatre as a cultural institution and aesthetical phenomenon intersects with the novel, as exemplified in the preceding paragraphs.

This premise allows us more precisely to map out the ground which is proposed to be covered in this study. Theatricality in this thesis is understood first of all as a quality of the type of creative ideation that originates in the phenomenon of theatre as both a specific aesthetical system and a specific reality formed and conceptualized by the culture; a type of artistic integrating and comprehending reality. Applied to the novel, it is to be considered as an organizing principle of its thematic and formal structure. Becoming the base for the modelling of its artistic reality, theatricality inspires a certain organization of the text's formal and thematic structure, presenting life and constituting the text according to the principles of a theatrical performance. Following the findings and conclusions of the semiotic theory of theatre, this study considers the typical theatrical spatial and temporal organization and the specific status of a subject as the main characteristic structural features of theatricality.

On this ground, it argues that the concept of theatricality in a literary text involves two main aspects: the structure of the chronotope and that of the

character in the novel. This thesis will concentrate on the analysis of the chronotope of the novels in question while sporadically referring to the specificity of their characters where relevant.

This thesis employs Bakhtin's term "chronotope". Though Bakhtin studies mostly chronotopes of narrative forms in their historical context as corresponding to the particular genres capable of reflecting and developing different aspects of time and space, this paper follows his understanding of the chronotope as a spatio-temporal matrix of the narrative text, which "emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel" (Bakhtin 250). As Bakhtin argues, every literary image, as well as the whole of the literary work, is necessarily chronotopic (251). He mentions the theatrical chronotope as not related to a particular genre but as applicable in the same manner as he denotes the chronotope of threshold, chronotopes of mansion, street and square, etc. that is, as a general spatio-temporal image in which the novel constitutes its meanings. "The chronotope of theatre" (166) Bakhtin considers as substantiating a specific carnival form of being related to the characters of the rogue, the fool and the clown. He argues that, operating within a theatrical chronotope, these metaphoric figures obtain their specific functions "to confuse, to tease, to hyperbolize life […] not to be taken literarily, not 'to be oneself' […] to treat others as actors […] to rip off masks" (163). As his example of a novel demonstrating such a chronotope, Bakhtin names *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray.

This thesis, taking into consideration Bakhtin's ideas of the theatrical chronotope, digresses from his special concern with theatre as a carnival form and also does not much concentrate on the types of character as they are determined by the theatricality. Thus, for this study it is more important to follow the general premises of Bakhtin's study of the chronotope and consider it as a fundamental element of the text, structuring the entire image of the artistic world of the novel. It is also important that for Bakhtin the chronotope has the decisive role in the realization of the thematic implications of a literary work. "All the novel's abstract elements – philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate towards the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work" (Bakhtin 250).

Thus, paraphrasing Bakhtin, it is possible to say that theatricality can enter the novel only through the gates of the chronotope.

It is also necessary to note that the repertoire of the particular devices used to manifest these features in literary texts can vary and has unequal significance within different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, taken out from the theatrical context, they do not have a stable sense of theatricality and can be attributed different implications.

CHAPTER 3

NOVEL ANALYSES

3.1 The Chronotope of Metatheatre in *The Magus* by John Fowles

As has been argued, the chronotope of the novel reflects some constitutive features of theatre as an aesthetic system and thus can provide some unifying factors and principles of theatricality as it is employed in novelistic discourse. In *The Magus*, the chronotope ensures the realization of the idea of *theatrum mundi* that presents the world as theatre and theatre as the world. As has been mentioned, in Fowles's novel this ancient idea is revived in the concept of "metatheatre" as designated by Abel (this term was introduced by Abel three years earlier than *The Magus* was published), who characterizes it "by two principles: one, that the world is a stage, and two, that life is a dream" (Gliman 327).

The chronotope in *The Magus* is revealed as an extremely complicated multidimensional system organizing the tangled development of the novel's philosophical and aesthetical problems. Like the chronotope of any sophisticated artistic work it can be variably, and probably endlessly, described from the perspectives of different methods and for the concrete purposes of different analyses[10]. This chapter argues that its complexity can be understood and interpreted on the base of the theatrical model of spatial and temporal organization, whose essential features it employs for constructing its artistic world.

First of all, theatricality presupposes the structural and semantic division of the temporal and spatial continuum. This division is based on the main set of material theatrical oppositions, concerning the specific relations between its

[10] The most interesting in this respect is an attempt to describe the specificity of Fowles's time models presented in the book by Fawkner. H.W. *The Timescapes of John Fowles*. London & Toronto, 1984.

elements – the outer space of the theatre as a whole and the inner space of the stage performance, and the outer time frame of the theatre-goers and the inner time frame of the play: "Theatre maintains a framed separation between the 'show' and external reality throughout the duration of the performance" (William O. Beeman 379). The characteristic qualities of the theatrical chronotope are, thus, the principles of distancing and enclosing, that preserve the required authenticity and distinctness of its elements as well as ensure the specific theatrical communication. In this sense, *The Magus* reflects the heterogeneity of the theatrical chronotope, which in the novel is reified by its initial clear-cut division between two kinds of space – those of London and the island of Phraxos.

At the level of its outer composition, *The Magus* consists of three unequal parts; its plot unfolds in clearly delineated temporal and spatial scopes. The action takes place first in England, then moves to Greece, and then returns to England again. The actual time of the novel's plot is limited to a period between the end of August, 1953 and the 31st of October, 1954. These coordinates generally organize the chronotope as relating the narration within an empirically reliable context. However, the most important semantic implications of the novel are developed in the area of tension between the London and Phraxos spaces, which ultimately represent two kinds of reality. Both the structuring of the text and the realization of this text's meanings are determined by the marked ideas of *distance* and *boundary.*

The first part of the novel presents the main character, Nicholas Urfe, in London. Its depiction is generally submitted to the realistic principles of representation. This is the maximally verisimilar world recognizable in its historical and cultural specificity - the educated bohemian living in a still puritanical London of the 1950s. An Oxford graduate, Urfe perceives and describes himself as one of the inhabitants of a solid and definite reality, whose careful and accurate depictions Fowles maintains with a variety of autobiographical details - the names of the familiar and representative for details of time, streets, movies, journals etc., which detailing also roots the narration in a definite empirical reality. This is the reality of some shared philosophical beliefs ("There we argued about being and nothingness and called a certain kind of

inconsequential behaviour 'existentialist'" (17)); of approved fashionable attitudes towards life ("I was too green to know that all cynicism masks a failure to cope – an impotence, in short" (17)); and of typically romanticized and practically effective forms of behaviour ("I had my loneliness, which, as every cad knows, is a deadly weapon with women. My 'technique' was to make a show of unpredictability, cynicism, and indifference. Then, like a conjurer with his white rabbit, I produce the solitary heart" (21)).

For Urfe, who is, as Fowles remarks, "a typical inauthentic man of the 1945 - 50 period" (qtd. Conradi 44), this reality is "the world customary and habitable and orientated" (495). In terms of artistic time, it is oriented by the time-forward arrow of the "ordinary temporality" (Ricoeur qtd. Wilson 397) which is reflected in the character's experience of time. In Urfe's sense of time Fowles emphasizes the chronological aspect, which is also called "physical time" (Saveleva 115, my translation), comprehended by its measurements in definite units – minutes, days, months, etc. which are imposed on time and actually replace it in perception. Nicholas' life in London, and especially his experience of his relationships with Alison, is conveyed according to this exteriorized time, apprehended by structuring it in a definite, one-dimensional way. The priority of this type of time organization and perception is manifested in Urfe's persistent and accurate registration of the time units, reflecting his attachment to "ordinary temporality": "I waited for about twenty minutes, near the door, and then I slipped out and went back up to my own flat. I rang the bell. There was a long pause, then there was a voice behind the door. 'Who is it?' 'Twenty minutes'" (25); "'Wait a minute.' I waited several." (25); "'You go first. I'll come in a minute.' She slipped away, and I went up to my flat. Ten minutes passed, and then she was in the doorway, a faintly apprehensive smile on her face." (28); "Three days later she received a letter saying that she had been accepted for training, to start in ten days' time" (37); "Ten days remained before I was due to go. I had to give up the flat in Russell Square and we spent three frustrating days looking for somewhere for her to live" (40).

Thus, the first, London part of the novel presents the geographically and chronologically definite perspective of empirical reality, "the quotidian world […]

typified in the novel by London" (Cooper 56). It contains the experience of a typical representative of the historical and cultural period and, in this sense, is to provide the point of view of spectators', who "present themselves as representative of a larger group or a larger reality" (Beeman, 379) and from whose perspective another, different reality is going to be perceived. This makes it generally analogous to the space of the audience in a theatre's auditorium, participating in the stage action precisely from this perspective. Urfe, who is also the principle narrator and focalizer of the novel, serves to introduce and reveal this perspective against the different authenticity of another reality, whose border he is to transgress. According to the novel's plot, having become bored with his trivial deadlocked life in his home country and with his own inadequacy, having discovered that "[he] was not the person [he] wanted to be" (15), Nicholas takes the position of a teacher of English at the Lord Bryon School in Greece, on the small remote Greek island of Phraxos. There he finds his way to Bourani, the residence of an enigmatic wealthy loner, Maurice Conchis. In Bourani Urfe becomes a participant in sophisticated psychological experiments, which their organizer himself defines as "metatheatre" (106).

Thus, the perspective of the audience, which is supposed to be spatially distanced from the stage space, is in the novel directly inserted into it, which complicates and at the same time foregrounds the traditional relations between these theatrical oppositions. The characteristic indirect involvement of the audience in the performance is manifested in the literal inducting of the spectator into the theatrical space, accentuating the inter-directedness of theatrical communication. Besides, the required distinctness between "the observer and the observed" remains valid, becoming the source of their intensive dialogical interrelations. In the heterogeneous organization of the novel's chronotope, Phraxos represents the stage reality, the reality of performance, "a distinct, virtual space belonging to the other" (qtd. Postlewait 29).

The space of the Greek island dominates the novel's narration. In the first part, which consists of nine chapters, Nickolas goes to Phraxos, in the third part, containing ten chapters, he leaves the island. All the remaining fifty nine chapters of the second part unfold in the space of the island. Thus, it becomes the centre of

the narrative whole of *The Magus,* of its artistic space and of the time created within it.

An island, as an emblematic spatial image, is in some ways analogous to the image of theatre. It is traditionally used in literature as related to similar spatial ideas, such as distance and enclosure, which, as it has been mentioned, are the most important images of the theatrical chronotope. In *The Magus,* as Fowles himself confesses, the image of the island is also in a way autobiographical, for it has a prototype - the real Greek island Spetsai, where Fowles worked as an English teacher in 1951-52 in a private school (7). However, in the novel the island is given rather as a model, as "that symbolic location which is crucial to Fowles's imagination and his novelistic creativity" (Cooper 55) than as "a true portrait of [Spetsai]" (7). In addition, its being a Greek island invokes Ancient Greece as the origin of the European theatrical art, thus providing the ground for its interpretation in a theatrical context.

The idea of the border between the two kinds of reality is emphasized in the novel in many ways, introducing and defining the spatial and semantic oppositions of the novel. In the "Foreword" to the second edition of *The Magus*, Fowles calls his imaginary island "my island of Phraxos (the 'fenced' island)" (7), further underlining his intention to constitute it as a characteristically framed space commensurate with and limited by its own inner logic, which subsumes it to the principles determining the theatrical universe. As semioticians reveal, being such a necessarily isolated universe, stage space seeks to preserve its essential otherness. This isolation enables it to structure (and enables the audience to perceive) the special reality of performance as opposite to that of the empirical life. In *The Magus* this opposition is realized as that between "the tedium of daily reality" and "the magical enclosure, the *domaine sans nom*" (Cooper 55). Fowles significantly echoes these postulates of theatrical semiotics when he discusses the ways in which the novels of other authors - Alain-Fournier and Richard Jefferies - have influenced *The Magus*: "*Bevis* shares a quality with *Le Grand Meaulnes,* that of projecting *a very different world* from the one that is - or was to the middle-class suburban child I had outwardly to be" (6, emphasis added). So, the idea of the distinctiveness of the isolated world which is to be experienced and

comprehended by a "middle-class" representative was important for the writer's conception of the novel.

The profound uniqueness and strangeness of the new, islanded, world of Bourani, which is perceived by Urfe as pertaining to the Other, is continuously foregrounded. Nicholas expresses his obsessive desire to change the way he has lived for something excitingly and promisingly different and unusual: "I didn't know where I was going, but I knew what I needed. I needed *a new land*, *a new race, a new language*; and, although I couldn't have put it into words then, I needed *a new mystery*" (19, emphasis added). Characteristic in this sense is the phrase which ends the first part of the book, describing Nicholas' '*normal'* life: "But then the mysteries began" (63). Situated at the end of a structural part, that is, in the semiotic strong position of the text (in a structuralist sense), and beginning with an adversative conjunction "but", this phrase is openly meant to signify the boundary between two different kinds of worlds, which the protagonist is to go through.

It is important that this otherness and distancing of the new world is, in a most decisive way, established in terms of time and space: "The whole island seemed to feel this exile from contemporary reality" (56); "It was like a journey into space. I [Nicholas] was standing on Mars […] I looked down at my pale London hands. Even they seemed changed, nauseatingly alien, things I should long ago have disowned" (49). Urfe's experience in Bourani is structured beyond the coordinates of historical chronology and empirical topology. Concrete details determining the chronotope of his ordinary life are abandoned as not significant within this world from which perspective the London reality "seemed far away, not in distance, not in time, but in some dimension for which there is no name" (49).

In the aesthetics of theatre, this required isolation of theatrical space is considered as necessary for the characteristic completeness and wholeness of stage reality, which enables theatre to fulfil its epistemic functions. As Mamardashvili explains, due to its outer enclosure and resistance, the stage concentrates and intensifies the processes within it. The epistemological value of the theatrical universe is determined by its ability to grasp and present phenomena

as complete in themselves and, thus, as revealing their ultimate nature and meanings. (That is probably the reason why Bakhtin considers theatre as the opposite of the novel, whose generic nature, in his opinion, prevents any form of completeness and, on the contrary, deals principally with the phenomena of developing and becoming, the "inconclusive context" of which "continues to unfold" (30)). The specific completeness and isolation of theatrical space and time, as different from those of empirical reality, provides conditions in which the presented things can be comprehended as having fully developed their ultimate potential, and thus revealing their inner substance which in the everyday reality is obscure and mingling. As Mamardashvili explicates,

> [T]heatre creates time and space exactly for this purpose. For in real life nothing is completed. In real life we always deal with the scraps of beginnings and ends never knowing where the beginnings and endings themselves are. Therefore, we can never grasp the completeness and thus the sense of the empirical history [...] Reality of the stage, that is space and time in which endless meanings are completed, makes the senses of our life observable for us [...] Theatre makes visible the ways in which the senses are formed. [...] It is an instrument of reception which enables us to accomplish the senses and witness the process of their forming. (107, my translation)

Similarly, in *The Magus*, the main artistic concerns are those of revealing the phenomena of human existence in its purified ultimate essence, "the very essence of things" (434), as well as "the ways in which the senses are formed". The novel's "fenced island" becomes the place where the character is to undergo his mystical experience of involvement in a kind of theatrical mystery. Being significantly limited by the boundaries of the isolated space of Bourani, in which he is absorbed, Urfe is placed in a position of intensive intellectual and spiritual acting, put in the "heuristic mill" (12).

Further, again as in the theatre, within this internal chronotope of stage another principle, opposite to that of enclosing, is operating: the outer isolation of the theatrical world coexists with its inner endlessness. The boundaries of time and space of the world that Nicholas enters seem to be penetrable and unnaturally plastic. Firstly, this idea is given metaphorically, as the psychological effect of transcending the limitation of time due to communing with the eternal quality of

Greek nature. Nickolas conveys this as follows: "I knew that on the island one was driven back into the past. There was so much space, so much silence, that one too easily saw out of the present, and then the past seemed ten times closer than it was" (76).

Later, this metaphor, used to describe the subjective impression of the mysterious island, is realized literally. The boundaries of time and space appear to be flexible enough to embrace objects and people from different epochs within some universal present. Thus, among other examples, Conchis, discrediting the value of fictional literature, encourages Nicholas to read a real record by Robert Foulkes, which he wrote while awaiting his execution in 1677. After a while, a man dressed in 17th century clothing appears in front of Nicholas gazing at him – "disturbingly authentic and yet enormously out of place – a heavy, solemn man with a reddish face. Robert Foulkes" (141).

Conchis, the master of this world of Bourani, also claims that the material limitations of time and space are permeable: "I lived a great deal in other centuries […] I travel to other worlds" (105-106). He also, importantly, rejects the validity of physical time in the reality of Bourani, proving the possibility of reversing time, and encouraging Urfe to see events in their unfolding perspective from the future towards the past:

> I was here and this house was here, you and I and this evening were here, and they had always been here, like reflections of my own coming. It was like a dream. I had been walking towards a closed door, and by a sudden magic its impenetrable wood became glass, through which I saw myself coming from the other direction, the future. I speak in analogies. You understand? (109)

However, the reliability of these transcending acts in the novel is openly subverted, it is emphatically suggested for the narrator's – and for the reader's – interpretive judgment. The appearance of personages from remote times is suspected by the narrator to be just clever theatrical performances. Conchis' claim is collaterally subverted by some ambiguous remarks, such as his answer to Nicholas' question as to whether he travels to other worlds literally, in the flesh: "If you can tell me where the flesh ends and the mind begins, I will answer that"

(106). This ambiguity, which is an important part of the novel's artistic world, is created by and in turn manifests the receptive character of the theatrical universe, its ability to signify "a random number of other spaces [...] in other words, it signifies whatever particular space [and times] X finds herself in" (Fischer-Lichte 9).

Thus, the initial temporal specificity and forward unidirectionality, as well as topological consistency of the narration are rejected. The time and space of the Bourani world "flow into mystery, into distorting shadows and currents, like objects sinking away, away, down through shafted depths of water" (529). They are transformed in a specifically theatrical way, which presupposes the coexistence of the temporal and spatial levels determined by the typological polydimensionality of the theatre. "The temporal and spatial attributes of the reality of metatheatre are discrete; metatheatre plays with the temporal levels, confronting them in every particular scene, in every particular object" (Smirnova 99, my translation). In *The Magus* this confrontation of different temporal levels is one of the prominent devices employed for revealing the ambiguous nature of Urfe's time-organizing theatrical experiences in Bourani.

For example, on his way from Conchis' villa after his first visit, Urfe picks up a glove which is marked with attributes of both the past and the present: it seemed "unreasonably old, something from the bottom of a long-stored trunk" (the past) and yet keeps a fresh scent "like sandalwood" (89) (the present). In another episode, when Urfe is supposed to meet the dead girl from Conchis' past, an object belonging to contemporary reality seems strangely out of place and time: "I stole looks at the sunshade. It was newly made. I supposed a ghost from 1915 would have been carrying a new sunshade; but somehow it would have been, more authentic, though less logical, if it had been old and faded" (198). On the contrary, during his encounter with German soldiers, who are supposed to be from the Second World War, Urfe is bewildered by objects from the past presented in the present:

> The younger soldier felt in his tunic top-pocket and tossed me down three cigarettes […] The one I smoked tasted very stale, at least ten years old, as if they had been overthorough and actually

> used cigarettes from some war-issue tin. In 1943 it would have tasted fresh. (381)

The verisimilitude and objectiveness of temporal characteristics are meaningfully dissolved by their occasional and inconsistent attachment to the objects which they are supposed to identify. The "extraordinary" temporality serves as the manifestation of that theatrical atemporality due to which it is able to embrace different time dimensions. Time in the metatheatre contains different yet coexisting layers, laying bare its conventionality.

Thus, being enclosed and isolated from outside, Bourani's 'stage' universe is necessarily open, infinite, and inclusive from within. "There is no place for limits in the meta-theatre", Conchis claims (106). The outwardly, externally limited space is expanded due to the specifics of theatrical space, its conventionality and also to its ability to signify different spaces regardless of the original utility function of the concrete place where it is realized. It demonstrates the multi-functionality of space which can signify at once the Greece of the present and the England of the past. Like the semiotic system of the theatre, which at different levels of abstraction exists as simultaneously both a part of the world – included in the empiric reality - and the entirety of the world – a self-contained aesthetic reality –, Bourani presents a limited model of unlimited space, combining temporal finitude with temporal infinity.

Further, the name of Phraxos is derived from the Greek word for design or plan (Conradi 45), which accents its meaning as a place for artificially organized manipulations, and authoritatively governed actions. Thus, within the space of the island as submitted to the principle of theatricality, the specific spatial positions postulated by the theatrical "gaze, which immediately establishes the division between his own real world and the fictional universe" (Pavis 351) are reconstituted. According to the functions of the theatrical communicative system, there are the positions of an organizer of the space and the action within it – a stage-director, of a performer who is observed and a spectator who is to perceive the action. These functional positions, however, are not strictly attached to particular characters, manifesting themselves in the semantic relations of the watching and the watched. Peter Brook describes this operation of transforming

space into a theatrical one by establishing such semantic relations in the following terms: “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged” (qtd. Pavis, 400).

In *The Magus*, Bourani is presented as a space which constructs the observing – performing opposition. Thus, finding himself in Bourani, Urfe becomes both a spectator and a participant in Conchis’s theatrical performances, an unconscious and unwilling actor in his spectacles. He experiences the sensation of being constantly watched, being exposed to an outer observer whom he cannot himself directly perceive, which provides the narration with a scenic perspective. Besides, Urfe’s feeling of being watched usually occurs while accompanying some experiences perceived by the narrator as extraordinary and inexplicable in the given conditions, which suggests their artificial origin. For example, when on the pronouncedly deserted seashore he finds an anthology of modern English verses, some lines of which are apparently meaningfully marked, Nicholas remarks:

> It was so unexpected that I remained staring stupidly down with the idea that it was in fact my own copy, stolen [...] I put the book back beneath the towel and faced the hill in a rather self-conscious way, convinced by now that I was indeed being watched. (70)

This gaze, the “being watched” feeling, marks the episodes as deliberately designed, and encourages the reader to interpret them in a theatrical context, as planned and elaborated scenes. The character involved in them is seen as manipulated by outer directing, as in the episode of Urfe’s unsuccessful suicide which he himself perceives as his desire to commit a somehow aesthetisized, accomplishing act instigated by the appropriate scenery:

> All the time I felt I was being watched, that I was not alone, that I was putting on an act for the benefit of someone, that this action could be done only if it was spontaneous, pure - and moral. Because more and more it crept through my mind with the chill spring night that I was trying to commit not a moral action, but a fundamentally aesthetic one; to do something that would end my life sensationally, significantly, consistently. It was a Mercutio

> death I was looking for, not a real one. A death to be remembered, not the true death of a true suicide, the death obliterate.
>
> And the voice; the light; the sky. (62)

Thus, by the theatrical gaze Urfe is placed in the position in which his feelings and actions become predefined and even prompted by some artificial design which ensures his position as performer within a theatrical space. At the same time, he recognizes himself as the only spectator of the mystery shows, readily consenting to be involved in the theatrical experiments:

> I had somehow landed myself in the centre of an extraordinary old man's fantasies. That was clear. Why he should hold them, why he should so strangely realize them, and above all, why he should have chosen me to be his solitary audience of one, remained a total mystery. But I knew I had become involved in something too uniquely bizarre to miss, or to spoil, through lack of patience or humour. (143)

Accordingly, Urfe's behaviour, like the behaviour of a person engaged in some non-pragmatic ceremonial space, requires to be submitted to a certain etiquette the violating of which might destroy the whole system. In the world of Bourani, it is submission to the theatrical illusion which is required for proper communication to occur. Urfe is to adequately respond to the semiotic convention that governs the theatrical situation, "the semiotic principle according to which there should be a represented action" (Fishelov 93), which Conchis urges him to do: "I am not offended, Nicholas. I do not ask you to believe. All I ask you is to pretend to believe. It will be easier" (137).

Further, the artistic space, as characterized by the objects that it contains and the ways in which they can function within the given space, also demonstrates the features of theatre. It tends to be turned into artificial scenery representing some reality, rather than being this reality.

First, artificial nature is imparted by the kind of the narrator's perception of the island's settings. Particularly, in Urfe's perception of the island, the focus from the beginning is on its decorative, aesthetical qualities: grandeur, beauty, and expressiveness.

> When I reached the central ridge, I looked back. From that particular point the house was invisible, but I knew where it lay.

> The sea and the mountains floated in the steady evening sunshine. It was all peace, elements and void, golden air and mute blue distances, like a Claude. (71)

They are given in the context of Nicholas's intertextual cultural consciousness, in which they are viewed not directly but mediated through some artefacts ("like a Claude", "a deliberate imitation of Goya's *Maja Desnuda*" (527) etc.). These allow them to be perceived as aesthetic objects rather than as natural ones, subverting the difference between the two. Such descriptions abstract the perception away from natural reality, mediating it through earlier artefacts. Reality is presented as a result of a doubled reflection, having already been reflected by the cultural tradition, and thus, turned into a sign of something produced by culture.

Serving as the settings of Conchis's micro-spectacles, in which Conchis's life-story and his parables are playing themselves out, the space betrays its artificiality. The objects function as "objects for the actor's acting," (Fischer-Lichte 17) i.e. they are presented as props creating the proper context for the performance.

Fowles uses various devices from the theatrical repertoire calculated to accomplish the efficacy of Conchis's performances. To emphasize its artificial nature, the scenery is depicted in terms of traditional stagecraft with its recognizable stage effects, "a series of conventions such as the raising or lowering of a curtain, changes in lighting levels, or the use of music to announce the beginning or end of a performance" (Beeman 379). Thus, after the story of his desertion during the First World War, and following Nicholas's refusal to keep his promise to pick up the cyanide-filled pill, he hears the famous soldier march "Tipperary" and senses the smell of putrefaction, which are to contribute to the educative influence of Conchis's lesson and at the same time to complete it as a theatrical scene.

The natural phenomena surrounding Conchis's spectacles are to be perceived in the context of the specific language of theatre, transforming them (as Claude does) into the signs of theatrical imagery and reflecting the conventionality of the performance. They, for example, are endued with "a

specific quality of light" (Fischer-Lichte 15), in other words natural light is presented as produced and functioning as a theatrical sign, namely, lighting, which organizes the scene of the spectacle:

> I came towards the main ridge. As I walked I overturned a loose stone here and there, but otherwise *the landscape was totally silent*. Far below, over the crumpled grey velvet of the outstretched pine-tops, the sea glistened obscurely under the spangled sky. *The world belonged to night*.
> […] Under the silver nailparing of a moon, I felt, though without any melancholy at all, that sense of existential solitude, the being and being alone in a universe, that still nights sometimes give.
>
> Then from behind me, from somewhere up on the ridge, I heard a sound. […] A man was standing on top of the bluff, *ashily silhouetted against the night sky.* Then a second man, and a third. I could hear the faint noise of their feet on the rock, the muffled clink of something metallic. Then, like magic, there were six. Six grey *shadows standing along the skyline*. One of them raised an arm and pointed; but I heard no sound of voices. (372) (emphasis added).

The settings seem to be artificially created and carefully arranged according to some stage design. Again, the micro-images of the novel are constructed to carry the specific theatrical semantics of observation and watching implied in the meanings of isolation, distancing and confinement, which is to present the action as organized within the concentrated, controlled and governed space where the character is taken and fixed in a position of the observing audience or an observed performer. Natural surroundings are transformed into decorations providing the action with a presentational frame:

> my way over the gulley the week before. There was a path across, with some rough-hewn steps. On the other side, over a further little rise, we came on a small hollow, like a minute natural amphitheatre facing the sea. In the centre of its floor, on a pedestal of unshaped rock, stood the statue. (210)

The totality of the objects within this space is turned into a kind of "stage set" (Fischer-Lichte 19), which betrays their simulative nature. Functioning in this way, the objects lose their primary meanings to produce fictional ones instead: "In the glaring light, the racket of cicadas, the events of the night seemed in some way

fictional; as if I must have been slightly drugged. But I felt perfectly clear-headed" (135). With such a scene and such a perception, the events and actions obtain the status of a theatrically staged show, a kind of mise-en-scène – organized according to some planned design.

This stage-managed space represents the reality of simulacra, of an elaborate fake, a forgery. The objects there being abstracted from their primary utilitarian functions are not what they purport to be, presented like empty signifiers having no signified, such as the items of art which Conchis exposes to his guest – the presumably original paintings by Modigliani and Bonnard, a fifteen-century Venetian colonnade, etc. (92,97). They function as signs serving to authenticate and certify Conchis's social status as well as his spiritual and intellectual superiority and, later, as soon as the performance is over, characteristically appear to be just fabrications, taken away by the scene-shifters.

Thus the space is presented as overtly artificial, disclosing the mechanisms of its construction as an artefact, as implied in Nicholas's remark: "This scene was so well organized, so elaborate. I fell under the spell of Conchis the magician again. Frightened, but fascinated" (376). However, the artificial nature of this space, created by submitting its presentation and perception to theatrical principles, is never confirmed by any rational explanations such as a direct and unambiguous recognition of the extraordinary events as Conchis's masquerade. On the contrary, the possibilities of such explanations are necessarily discredited, and any supernatural explanations, which would promote the narrative into the realm of the uncanny, are also rejected. Nicholas reflects on this incongruity: "Conjectures flew through my head. The people I had seen, the sounds I had heard, and that vile smell, had been real, not supernatural; what was not real was the absence of any visible machinery - no secret rooms, nowhere to disappear - or of any motive" (156). No reliable realistic motivations or hypotheses are given to the character or to the readers, to naturalize the inexplicable happenings. They remain unrecognizable in their origin, occurring just because this "in some way fictional" (135) reality, inserted in the essentially different objective one, allows them to occur. The violation of objectivity is again proffered as aesthetical conventionality, to be accepted by "pretend[ing] to believe":

> For a few moments I had let my mind plunge into darkness, into a world where the experience of all my life was disproved and ghosts existed. But there was something far too unalloyedly physical about all these supposedly 'psychic' experiences. Besides, 'apparitions' obviously carry least conviction in bright daylight. It was almost as if I was intended to see that they were not really supernatural; and there was Conchis's cryptic, doubt-sowing advice that it would be easier if I pretended to believe (141)

While natural objects in Bourani space appear to be simulative decorations, the spectacle-like things seem to be real. Thus, Urfe's comments on the authenticity of the Second World War German soldiers: "I looked sideways at the rifle the man to my left had slung over his shoulder. *It looked real; not a stage property*. He also looked *really German:* not Greek" (375, emphasis added). Thus, the objects are revealed to be theatrical phenomena which have a different kind of authenticity, being the elements of the theatrical space. Voloshin describes this specificity in *Theatre and Dream*:

> An ordinary, real object on the stage ceases to be plausible and cogent; while the absolutely conventional and primitive symbols, viewed through the prism of theatre, become reliable and convincing. Thus, in order to present the 'heart of the beloved' a real sheep heart was used without any impression while a scarlet flannel heart produced the strongest effect. Perhaps, the reason is that theatre deals not with things themselves, but only with their signs (352, my translation).

Thus, in the theatrical universe of *The Magus*, which possesses the power to make illusions credible, artefacts are presented as pretending to be 'real', revealing their genuineness as phenomena of artistic reality as "self-referential" signs or simulacra. Distinguishing the real from the unreal becomes ambiguous and eventually impossible due to the double-oriented nature of theatrical objects and also due to the possibility of attributing to them different kinds of authenticity. By playing with these attributes and manipulating their perception as belonging to different realities – objective and aesthetical - Fowles sets up and smashes illusions, challenging the boundaries between appearance, simulation and reality, which have in his novel become impossibly blurred. The distinctions between them are clearly recognized by neither the character nor the reader.

Further, the representative nature of theatrical space determines its ability to signify abstract ideas by material spatial images. In *The Magus*, this is reflected in the relative isomorphism of physical and intellectual space, the space of consciousness, which allows them to function interchangeably. “In the theatrical existential space of the otherness, not physical but psychological possibilities of an individual are realized” (Mamardashvili 107, my translation).

As Abel notices, the consciousness, and more precisely the artistic consciousness, is the fundamental theme of metatheatre. According to him, metatheatre creates a new type of conflict generated by the consciousness which constitutes itself as well as the picture of the world in terms of theatrical space, on the basis of ideas about the pan-theatrical character of reality (65). For him, the technique of metatheatricality reflects the world as an extension of human consciousness. To represent and investigate this process, Fowles in a way makes the specific theatrical space analogous to that of consciousness.

Thus, Bourani as a whole can be considered as an abstract model of the individual consciousness, which is maintained by the Conchis’s explanation that the name of his villa in Albanian means both “skull” and “gourd” (83), probably evoking Abel’s metaphoric remark that the skull is the most perfect mask and thus represents the theatre in the purest form (65). Along with the additional emphasizing of the presentational frame of theatrical space - its semantic and structural enclosure, this implies a synecdoche transferring the physical model of space into an intellectual one. Nicholas’s moving about within Bourani space, away from it, towards it (in the course of the novel the protagonist several times transcends the border leaving the island for the mainland and coming back) composes the picture of his intellectual wandering, his spiritual search. Bourani, where the character is manipulated and led through some revealing experiences by its master Conchis, becomes a kind of inner space where Urfe is to realize his quest for self-knowledge.

Nicholas’s intellectual processes/consciousness is exteriorized in the spatial images. For example, Urfe’s sensation of being constantly watched, that is of occupying the spatial position of an actor in the theatrical communicative universe, is later turned into and realized as the way of his psychological self-

identification in real life, based on self-delusion, lack of individual freedom and responsibility.

> [A]lways I had acted as if a third person was watching and listening and giving me marks for good or bad behaviour - a god like a novelist, to whom I turned, like a character with the power to please, the sensitivity to feel slighted, the ability to adapt himself to whatever he believed the novelist-god wanted. (539)

The theatrical 'gaze' becomes a Sartrian look of recognition, falling into the "bad faith" of self-deceit. Phenomenological concepts merge with the spatial ones, "the succession of phenomenological aspects accretes a spiralling series of vertiginous spaces (comparable to a switchback, or to op art)" (Conradi 55).

Recognizing his psychological state in terms of physical space is one of the important markers of the protagonist's spiritual development. Thus, Nicholas firstly realizes his inner space as a cage for a prisoner directly corresponding to his physiological situation leading to his attempted suicide:

> Years later I saw the gabbia at Piacenza: a harsh black canary-cage strung high up the side of the towering campanile, in which prisoners were once left to starve to death and rot in full view of the town below. And looking up at it I remembered that winter in Greece, that gabbia I had constructed for myself out of light, solitude, and self-delusions. (62)

This image correlates with that of the island used by Conchis to exemplify his concept of existential isolation of humans: "Every one of us is an island. If it were not so we should go mad at once. Between these islands are ships, aeroplanes, telephones, wireless - what you will. But they remain islands" (146). Urfe describes his sense of reality as a "gravity" that he has to resist (209), and which is opposed to the liberating theatrical experience in Bourani. Borrowing Fowles's words, he becomes able to release his reality from "cages of banality, of false parallels, of anthropomorphic sentimentality, of lazy thinking and lazy observations" (1998: 267). "Like Dante in The Inferno, disoriented by crossing the Devil's privates, he passes a moral-gravitation frontier" (Conradi 55).

In such an abstract, modelled reality the meaning-producing function of the objects i.e. their functioning as signs, becomes the primary one, which constitutes

the "sign density" (Barthes) of the theatrical space that was discussed above. Theatrical consciousness implies the symbolical perception [semiotization] of space, in which an abstract allegorical sense dominates the semantic of the image. Theatrical semiotics also indicates this immanent quality of theatre, claiming that symbolic reality serves to differentiate theatre and spectacle from other performance genres such as public speaking, exhibitions, and demonstrations (Beeman 379); it also importantly distinguishes an object in the theatre from other aesthetical symbols, seeing the difference in the dual procedure of attributing to the object the meaning of 'sign':

> If the body is not interpreted solely as a sign, but is also presented to others as a sign, then a theatrical process can be said to have occurred […] In other words, theater ensues in such instances in which the body and the objects of its surroundings are used in their given material form as signs. (Fischer-Lichte 140)

The Magus reflects this 'sign' nature of theatrical performance, where objects are given as initially presented and then read, not in their utilitarian function but in their capacity to produce and communicate additional, surplus meanings. In the novel "[e]ach detail is irradiated with intention" (Conradi 57), which Urfe, as a spectator, is to perceive and reflect in an interpretative process. His activity as a spectator enables him to see the presented reality as signifying something different from what it is, conveying some extra information: "Second meanings hung in the air; ambiguities, unexpectednesses" (85). Urfe's cultural memory attributes to these objects meanings mostly derived from art, as, for example, he comments on Robert Foulkes's apparition: "I thought, it's Henry James. The old man's discovered that the screw could take another turn" (141)); and he reads the objects of the carefully staged performances in their abstract emblematic senses: "She stood plumply in the door […] Light from outside distorted the shadows round her figure, isolated her face, so that she looked like a Munch lithograph. *Jealousy; or Envy; or Innocence*" (638, emphasis added); "She raised the flue-brush to her lips, shook it, forbidding me to move, to say anything, and she smiled. It was like some genre picture - *The Secret. The Admonition*." (155, emphasis added).

As in the case of the theatrical spectacle, to ensure the required communication Nicholas is concerned whether his interpretations of the objects presented as symbols coincide with those intentionally implied by their author:

> 'The elect?' 'The elect. The chosen by hazard.' I heard his chair creak. 'Look over there. The lamp-fishermen.' Away at the far feet of the mountains there was a thin dust of ruby lights in the deepest shadows. I didn't know whether he meant simply, look; or that the lamps were in some way symbolic of the elect. 'You're very tantalizing sometimes, Mr Conchis'. (17)

Thus, reflecting the symbolic reality of the theatre brings up the problem of the right reading of another's text. The simulative theatrical reality which is capable of endlessly transforming and revealing its own fictional ambiguity, i.e. a kind of always changing, protean stage, does not allow the establishment of any definite rules for its contemplation and to organize it into a comprehensible system. Reflecting the nature of a theatrical sign, it is characterized by ambivalence and semantic plurality. Thus, the reading of these signs becomes a process of "exploring ambivalence" (294) caused, among other reasons, by the fictitiousness of reality, as Nicholas admits: "I nodded, cautious, not concerned with understanding; because underlying everything he did I had come to detect an air of stage-management, of the planned and rehearsed" (109).

Another feature of the theatre which is valuable for Fowles's artistic philosophy is also related to the specific character of experiencing time. Depending on the complex relations between temporal levels, theatre makes time particularly palpable and presents it as a subject predisposed for reflection, which leads to theatre's preoccupation with the philosophical theme of time.

It is here worth making a small digression, to remind ourselves that the problem of time is central to artistic reflection in the XX century. The fundamental scientific rethinking of the notion of time, whose origin is mostly associated with Albert Einstein's concept of the space-time continuum, as well as the changing ways of experiencing time as it has been transformed by new technologies, induced a searching of the ways of reformulating the bases of human existence in terms of its structuring in time. Such significant concepts of modern art as the epiphanies of Joyce, the instinctive memory of Marcel Proust,

and the "insightful moment" of existentialism have been generated in this process, offering specific conceptions of time experienced and comprehended in a certain way. This concern often makes modern artistic works "tales of time" and "tales about time".

For the works of John Fowles, with their strong philosophical inclination, the comprehension of the phenomenon of time is also one of their most significant insights. Critics observe that challenging the traditional narrative structures, Fowles problematizes the concept of time, which he sees as a "nebulous" structure in which "all times lie parallel". "He believes in what he calls a 'spinning top' model of history and holds as an ideal vision the perception of all these tenses at once" (Tarbox 5-6). In this sense, a theatrical universe provides Fowles with adequate means for reifying his reflections.

As has been discussed, the ontological state of theatre performance, which can exist exclusively in present, in the process of its production, presupposes its complete and principle contemporaneity. As Gadamer claims: "[i]ts proper and preeminent function [is] to represent present and nothing but present" (Gadamer). Having therefore the present time as the only form of its existence, theatre significantly translates and experiences the other temporal dimensions as an actual present. "All narrative forms transfer the present into the past; all theatrical forms make the past the present" (Polyakova 38-39, my translation).

This ability to communicate the "present being" (Fowles 1998: 63), which is provided by the theatre, is also one of the main concerns of John Fowles's artistic and philosophical works. In the introduction to *The Timescapes of John Fowles* by Harald William Fawkner, Fowles defines an important feature of his creativity as a preoccupation with searching for and exploring "timelessness" (12). The writer remarks that this philosophical and grammatical concept, essential for his artistic world, is foreign to the novel as such and adopting the practice of dramatic genres is therefore required. For Fowles, interrelations between the novel and drama develop in a struggle for the present time:

> this explains why we [novelists] have such an ancient love-hate relationship with playwrights […] Never mind that Aeschylus or Shakespeare are dated by archaic circumstance, setting, language; when their characters speak, they are eternally now,

> inalienably in the narrative present. Something about the narrative past of most prose fiction has always seemed dark and dead for me. (Fawkner 12)

Thus, the essential nature of theatre's quality which Fowles consciously seeks to adopt is its "immediate access to an eternal present" (12). The writer's preoccupation with the exploring of the artistic potential of the timeless present, as he calls it, "this obsessive pursuit of timelessness" (Fawkner 12), closely relating his fiction to theatricality, is the dominant one in *The Magus*. Fowles himself articulates this concern in the essay "Behind *The Magus*": "A form of that 'is-ness', that present being, runs – however clumsily I expressed it – through *The Magus*" (63). The motifs connected with this specific "is-ness" penetrate the novel.

Bourani is presented as the world where Nickolas is to discover reality as purified from everything which is accidental, secondary, and time-dependent. In this sense, timelessness in the novel is analogous to spatial enclosure, which has an intensifying, concentrating function. Nicholas experiences this situation through his participation in Conchis's spectacles. Being involved in the situation of "presence in theatre" (Pavis 44), he realizes his "quest through time for the ultimate reality" (Fawkner 56) parallel and concurrently with his quest for ultimate self-knowledge. To gain awareness of this intensive "time […] like a point of fulcrum" signifies the full realization of oneself as a time-independent phenomenon. Conchis claims this: "At that time you must accept yourself. It is not any more what you will become. *It is what you are and always will be"* (109).

Further, the theatrical 'timeless present' is a temporal dimension which is pregnant with all other possibilities existing in their everlasting potentiality, which is determined by the nature of a theatrical text. Being realized in the present performance in a unique and concrete form, the theatrical text in principle implies all the possible versions of its realization in the past and the future. So, paradoxically, it combines its own continuous "being" and momentary "becoming", presenting endless dynamics kept in an unalterable constancy. "This is what is to be called the effect of theatricality [...] Theatre is the place where the things are completed and at the same time are coming into existence"

(Mamardashvili 108, my translation). Though not openly describing his insights as theatrical, Fowles essentially echoes the statements of the philosophy of theatre which considers the theatrical chronotope to be a specifically intensive space and time in which "everything is arising for the first time, an individual is springing up" (Mamardashvili 107, my translation). Fowles formulates the same thought in the "Foreword" to *The Magus* through the image of "an eternally blank page waiting for a note or a word" which "gave the most curious sense of timelessness and of incipient myth" (10).

These ideas are directly expressed in their most elaborated form in Nicholas's account of the hypnotic séance which Conchis urges him to undergo as a stage of his performances, an "even stranger scene [of] the masque" (192). In fact, this account can be read as a phenomenological essay delving into and explicating the nature of theatrical art and its influence on the spectator, so it appears not unworthy of deeper consideration. Considering the general theatrical modus of the novel, the act of hypnotizing can be seen as displaying the submission of the audience under theatrical illusion. For, like the hypnotic state Nicholas experiences under Conchis's magnetizing manipulations, it requires from the audience the same obliviousness to the actual physical being, abstracting from the immediate context. Theatrical involvement presupposes a kind of conventional "non-existence" (Lotman) of the audience (this is part of the audience's suspension of disbelief), as well as its receptive immersion into the presented reality of illusory performance.

Nicholas's descriptions read in terms of theatrical semiotics present quite accurate comments on many essential aspects of a theatrical performance given from the perspective of the audience: the state of the spectator and his participation as a distanced receiver and respondent; the multi-media nature of the theatrical semiotic system (Fischer-Lichte 132); its sign character:

> There was no word, it arrived, descended, penetrated from outside. It was not *an immanent state, it was a conferred state, a presented state. I was a recipient.* But once again there came this strange surprise that the emitters stood all around me. *I was not receiving from any one direction, but from all directions*; though once again, direction is too physical a word. I was having feelings that no language based *on concrete physical objects, on actual feeling, can*

> *describe*. I think *I was aware of the metaphoricality of what I felt* […] Reality kept rushing through; and yet *I could not get out to fully exist in it*. (238-239)

Urfe describes his state under the hypnosis as equal to that which theatrical aesthetics considers to be the immanent effect of "the present of involvement" (Mamardashvili 109), that is, as achieving the "consciousness of being" (239).

> For theatre, like cultic ceremony, also represents a genuine creation: something drawn from within ourselves takes shape before our eyes in a form that we recognize and experience as a more profound presentation of our own reality. This overwhelming truth is summoned up from hidden depths to address us. (Gadamer 60)

Echoing these words, Nicholas reports his experience:

> From this stage I moved to one where it dawned on me that this was *something intensely true and revealing*; this being something that drew all this light upon it. I mean *it seemed to reveal something deeply significant about being; I was aware of existing,* and this being aware of existing became more significant than the light […] this state without dimensions or sensations; awareness of pure being. (238, emphasis added)

And later, again the narrator almost verbatim relates the effect of the timeless theatrical present as described by scholars of theatre. This effect involves experiencing reality as constituted by opposites, and at the same time as embracing and unifying them for they exist simultaneously in the continuous completeness and its transitory dynamics of the theatrical time; the heightened awareness of the presence of the Other:

> *That reality was endless interaction*. No good, no evil; no beauty, no ugliness. No sympathy, no antipathy. But simply interaction. The endless solitude of the one, its total enislement from all else, seemed the same thing as the total inter-relationship of the all. *All opposites seemed one, because each was indispensable to each*. The indifference and the indispensability of all seemed one. I suddenly knew, but in a new hitherto unexperienced sense of knowing, *that all else exists* […]
>
> An enormous and vertiginous sense of the innumerability of the universe; an innumerability in which *transience and unchangingness seemed integral, essential and uncontradictory* […]

> At the same time a parabola, a fall, an ejaculation; but the transience, the passage, had become an integral part of the knowledge of the experience. *The becoming and the being were one*.
>
> I think I saw the star again for a while, the star as it simply was, hanging in the sky above, *but now in all its being-and-becoming*. It was like walking through a door, going all round the world, and then walking through the same door but a different door. (239-240, emphasis added)

Further, just as the enclosure of the theatrical universe coexists with its unlimitedness, the theatrical present is a specific atemporal dimension capable of encompassing all other temporal layers and, importantly, of presenting them as existing right now, eliminating and re-actualizing their remoteness.

This "atemporal present", structured by theatre, presupposes some specificity of the theatrical chronotope as organizing and determining the events it contains. Being the newly actualized variants of some invariant, theatrical happenings are "at once *here* and *elsewhere*" (Weber 13). They simultaneously belong to the temporal and spatial scopes where they take place and they are independent from this place as they are to be always re-ongoing and re-enacting in any other random number of places. "They can be said, then, in a quite literal sense, to come to pass. They take place, which means in a particular place, and yet simultaneously also pass away – not simply to disappear but to happen somewhere else" (Weber 13).

This ability of theatre to refer simultaneously to different spaces and times and, more importantly, its function of re-actualizing the past as the present make the events from the past to be "in a mysterious way [...] contemporary with the distant present" (Gadamer 59). This significantly bespeaks the purpose of the temporal and spatial shifts in *The Magus*. Conchis's performances are to include Nicholas in the wider reality, where he is to expand his personal intellectual space through re-enacting his life within this wider reality.

Firstly and most expressively, the theatrical world of Bourani is expanded by embracing the mythical past, which it is able to do due to an inherent similarity between theatre and myth, which is determined by their genealogical relations. Freed from the limits of empirical chronology and strict determinacy, theatrical

time is linked to the sacred time of myth, which Fowles acknowledges in the remark about his island experience which gave him "the most curious sense of timelessness and of incipient myth" (10). Theatrical and mythical forms of chronotope resemble each other in the sense that both deal with events which are reiterative, ever unchangeable and ever recommencing, that is, with "a specific, rhythmical recurrence that elevates it above the flow of time" (Gadamer 60). They are both submitted in their epistemic intention to the principle formulated by Derrida:

> The truth is always that which can be repeated [...] The possibility of the theatre is the obligatory focal point of this thought which reflects tragedy as repetition. The menace of repetition is nowhere else as well organized as in the theatre. Nowhere else is one so close to the stage as the origin of repetition, so close to the primitive repetition. (55-56)

Gadamer describes this similarity, which lies in the notion of "enactment", again significantly indicating the co-existence of different temporal dimensions in the unity of the theatrical "present of involvement": "[I]n the enactment, time becomes the *nunc stans* of *an elevated presence in which past and present become one* in the act of remembrance" (59, emphasis added). The mythical past has been included in the world of Bourani as its present, that is, as actually and currently experienced. The episodes from mythology unfolding themselves there are perceived as something quite appropriate and acceptable by its inhabitants. Due to this, the theatrical chronotope, which motivates the presence of the mythical dimension in *The Magus*, makes Bourani serve as an ideal place for the ritual of initiation, which obviously structures the plot of the novel. There are some typical motifs rather overtly introduced in the narrative to organize it according to the classical pattern of the heroic monomyth and to present the protagonist as undergoing a ritual of initiation. Among these motifs are an "elect" hero, "chosen" (87) by the mystagogue (the magus), wandering in a deserted unknown land, presented by Bourani; experiencing the unconscious, trance states and divine visions (238), encounters mythical creatures which function as priests of initiation (199); and ritualistic death via descending into a symbolical underworld (497). This reference to ritual is also maintained by various allusions

which mostly provide the appropriate myth context and parallel Nicholas's experience with that of mythical heroes.

In this sense, Fowles follows the process described by Peter Brook: "theatre, having hardy disengaged itself from rite and ceremony, is seeking [...] to return to them, as if that matrix of a sacred theatre" (qtd. Pavis 273). In *The Magus*, Fowles revives theatrical practices in their primordial forms – as an ancient Mystery play, performance of the story of the dying and resuscitated god, whose primary purpose, its "original and still vital essence [...] is creation and elevation onto a transformed state of being" (Gadamer 59).

Through participating in Conchis's theatre, Nicholas is able to go through the mythical past as through his own personal experience. Characteristically, in his account of this experience, he emphasizes his sensation of a newly re-created universe, which is restored to its original, pre-historical conditions to provide the hero with the grounds for a new individual en-acting of the universal mythical story:

> The events of the week-end seemed to recede, to become locked away, as if I had dreamt them; and yet as I walked there came the strangest feeling, compounded of the early hour, the absolute solitude, and what had happened, of *having entered a myth*; a knowledge of what it was like physically, moment by moment, to have been young and ancient, a Ulysses on his way to meet Circe, a Theseus on his journey to Crete, an Oedipus still searching for his destiny. I could not describe it. It was not in the least a literary feeling, but an intensely mysterious present and concrete feeling of excitement, of being in a situation where anything still might happen. *As if the world had suddenly, during those last three days, been re-invented, and for me alone*. (157, emphasis added)

Mythical loci are invoked as immediate reflections of Nicholas's spiritual situations, while his individual cultural memory, actualized by the myth-like experience as the collective, universal memory, naturally invokes them for self-reflection and self-recognition. In this way he becomes able to project his personal life story into mythical history, just as he re-conceives his uneasy self-centred filial relations through the Oedipus myth:

> Afterwards we passed the crossroad where *Oedipus is reputed to have killed his father*. We stopped and stood among the sere thistles by a dry stone wall; an anonymous upland place, exorcized by

> solitude. All the way in the car up to Arachova, prompted by Alison, I talked about *my own father*, and perhaps for the first time in my life without bitterness or blame; rather in the way that Conchis talked about *his* life. (254, all emphases mine, apart from the last one)

Thus, the individual space is expanded though participating in the enacted events of transpersonal history. The experience of transpersonal mythical figures is adopted and assimilated as a personal one. The crucial role here displays Nicholas's double function, imposed on him by Conchis's metatheatre. It shifts his position from a spectator to a direct performer, as in the key episode of the mock-trial, where he is forced not only to watch a dolorific for him scene, but also to act. This "attempts to [...] encroach upon the spectator's real space, to question the security of that place where one may watch without getting involved" (Pavis 351).

Considering this cultic, ritualistic dimension of theatre, Conchis functions as a mystagogue, a shepherding figure who is at a higher level of understanding and who initiates the neophyte into the secrets of sacred knowledge. Characteristically, he declares the ultimate truth to be symbolized by the smile of a stone head, which he shows to Nicholas to oppose the superficiality of his self-confident and self-imposed, abstract pessimism. Urfe conveys his impression of this smile, emphasizing its ambivalence which, like the ritual of initiation itself, is both wholesome and implacable:

> But the power of the fragment was in the face. It was set in a triumphant smile, a smile that would have been smug if it had not been so full of the purest metaphysical good humour [...] At the same time I realized exactly what I disliked about it. It was above all the smile of dramatic irony, of those who have privileged information (147)

This "implacable" smile again implies the festive nature of the theatre practiced in Bourani. It invokes a kind of festive celebratory laughter, conceptualized by Bakhtin in his notion of the carnivalesque, and at the same time alludes to "a never-ending and superhuman serenity, an eternal, divine laughter" of the immortals of Hesse's "magic theatre". In this respect, Bakhtin's ideas about the chronotope of theatricality can be referred to. He considers it in relation with

carnival, as the space of existence of metaphorical figures of the fool and the clown who represent the metamorphosis of tsar and god (161). They are granted with the right "to confuse, to tease, to hyperbolize life […] not to be taken literarily, not 'to be oneself' […] to treat others as actors […] to rip off masks" (163), which is precisely what the function of Conchis involving Urfe in the performances of his Godgame is. Thus, Fowles foregrounds the meaning of the mysteries as actions destroying the limits of social structures, with the established values of these structures, and hence liberating from them those who participate in these mysteries, as Nicholas does. He is shocked in recognizing that: "[he] was [...] frightened; but [his] fear came from a knowledge that anything might happen. That there were no limits in this masque, no normal social laws or conventions" (199).

Not only the mythical, but also the historical past is included in the world of Bourani, and these pasts become the material for theatrical reflections. Thus, Conchis's stories about his war experience are played in front of Nicholas again as paralleling his personal situations. Through these stories Urfe is initiated into the epoch's "grandest and most horrible mystery" (Conradi 49), against which he is tested. The implications of this mystery in *The Magus* mostly revolve around the issue of freedom, which is the key word for the whole novel. The experience of war is employed here as a manifestation and exemplification of the main concept of existentialist philosophy, for which the Second World War served as one of the strongest catalysts. As Conradi explains,

> Sartrean existentialism drew heavily on a folklore derived from the Second World War. Making inwardness a function of action, and perceiving the will as always in extremis, it was in a sense a philosophy of mobilization which memorialized engagement. The type of the inauthentic man was surely the quisling, the man whose internal contradictions were so dramatically consequential. (49)

So, Urfe, as a "typical inauthentic man", besides once considering himself as an existentialist, is to enter this past which once again becomes the present in Conchis's theatre, and he is to witness the concepts of choice and freedom not as those "metaphorical descriptions of complex modes of feeling" which "were not supposed to be realistic" (17) but as "a freedom that must be responsible for its

actions; something much older than the existentialist freedom, I suspected - a moral imperative, an almost Christian concept" (441). Paradoxically, the former, taken literally as "straightforward prescriptions of behavior" turns out to be conventional and superficial, while the latter, presented through the staged spectacle, becomes "more real than reality" (338):

> suddenly the night was torn open by a tremendous cry. It came from the other man, the noble brigand, from the very depths of his lungs and it must have been heard, if anyone had been awake to hear it, from one side of the island to the other. It was just one word, but the most Greek of all words [Ελευεθερια].
> I knew it was acting, but it was magnificent acting. It came out harsh as fire, more a diabolical howl than anything else, but electrifying, right from the very inmost core.
> [...] In three strides [the colonel] was in front of the Cretan and had delivered a savage smashing slap across his face. It knocked the man's head sideways, but he straightened up at once. Again it shocked me as if I was the one hit. The beating-up, the bloody arm could be faked, but not that blow. (379-380)

Thus, history and myth are presented as equal in Conchis's metatheatre. Characteristically, Nicholas confirms their indistinctness when, in the scene with German soldiers in which Urfe is accused of being a traitor, he re-actualizes his sexual treachery. Though represented in the historical context of the Second World War, it gives to him a sensation of undergoing some mythical experience: "I also felt, beneath my anger, a return of the old awe for what Conchis was doing. Once more *I was a man in a myth*, incapable of understanding it, but somehow aware that understanding it meant it must continue, however sinister its peripeteia" (381, emphasis added).

The time-determined historical reality is equalled by the timeless reality of the myth; they are coalesced in a kind of unified cultural heritage due to the same function they serve in Conchis's theatre—that is, to construct a multi-levelled reality simultaneously manifesting the immediate actual present and its counterparts in eternity, combining the personal and transpersonal – historical, social, mythical — time.

Thus, Bourani represents the theatrical universe inclined to embrace the whole of the culture. It is "an existential place where the space of the Individual

and the space of the Culture meet" (Smirnova 29, my translation). The theatre participates here in mediating between the "contemporaneity of the present and the presence of our historical and cultural heritage" (Gadamer, 62). This provides an opportunity for different times and places to be experienced, enacted and re-lived as a personal intimate experience. In *The Magus*, this is the theatrical way in which Nicholas realizes his quest for self-knowledge. Mamardashvili comments on this unique knowledge-obtaining possibility which depends on the recurrent enacting provided by theatre: "[it] always deals with the things which in principle cannot be known in advance but which can be learned in the specific space of occurrence [...] Theatre is the very representation of what can be learned only by coming through it *over and over again* (108, my translation).

Further, Conchis's performances, as has been argued, are formally organized according to a ritualistic scheme, and have the function of including their participant in universal experience. They significantly differ from mystery plays, however, whose partakers directly live out the mythical story sharing the communal experience, and not only through observing and interpretation. Unlike this, Nicholas's reception of the Conchis's plays is consistently estranged. He is rather a sceptical and ironical spectator than a genuine participant in the performance. Interestingly, to indicate this audience-like distance, which is never eliminated and keeps Nicholas's perspective distinct from the spectacle in spite of its involving effects, he again employs a mythical image: "I rejected my own age, yet could not sink back into an older. So I ended like Sciron, a mid-air man" (56). Nicholas describes one of the mythological scenes he witnesses in Bourani that he is supposed to perceive as authentic and well-known:

> With electrifying suddenness a horn clamoured out of the darkness to the east. I thought immediately of an English hunting-horn, but it was harsher, more archaic [...]
>
> I said to Lily, "What is it?"
>
> She held my eyes for a moment; with a strange hint of doubt, as if she half suspected *me of knowing perfectly well what it was*.
>
> "Apollo." (180, emphasis added)

However, openly conflicting with this supposed authenticity, the staged and artificial nature of the scene is deliberately emphasized by the overt exposing of

the properties of stagecraft, such as "a *coup de theatre,* a much stronger beam shone out from directly beneath where we [Nicholas and Lily] stood" or the final inversion of the ancient gods into "the two pale shadows, turning away now with the rather mundane haste of actors eager to get offstage while the lights are down" (182). In another scene, Urfe also indicates this demonstratively flaunted fabrication of the scene, which repels him:

> There was almost immediately, after the first visual shock, something vaguely grotesque about it; it had the overdone macabreness of a horror-magazine illustration […] It certainly touched on some terrifying archetype, but it shocked common sense as well as the unconscious (199)

This deliberate distancing keeps Nicholas clearly aware of the artificiality of the scene, in the manner of a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, as his ironical remarks confirm: "Someone seems to be mixing metaphors"; "I just wish I had a programme. That's all" (180). He is not emotionally involved, but intellectually shocked by the nakedness of the actors and the obscenity of the scene. The estrangement effect prevents him from accepting the conventional suspension of disbelief in order to transcend it, but forces him to focus on the formal features of its production, which wound his puritan sensibilities: "I felt unsure, out of my depth, a lot more innocent and unsophisticated at heart than I liked to pretend" (182). This reaction interestingly contradicts his reactions to the paintings of Bonnard, which by no means shock Nicholas. The accepted conventionality of the artistic language neutralizes the nakedness of the girl in the picture, for the perception is proceeding beyond the artistic code onto the higher level of aesthetical contemplation: "It was an unforgettable painting; it set a dense golden halo of light round the most trivial of moments, so that the moment, and all such moments, could never be completely trivial again" (97).

Unlike this, in the scene presenting the Artemis and Apollo myth, the "estrangement effect" serves to ensure not the spectator's involvement, but a critical reflecting attitude towards the spectacle itself. Nicholas is to recognize that the scene personifies the situation in which he finds himself, and his attitude towards Lily is paralleled with that represented in the scene: a lascivious satyr chasing an innocent nymph and then being punished by the immortals with death.

In due time, Urfe becomes able to understand this parallel and to acknowledge: "I became the satyr; but then, remembering what had happened to him, realizing now what lay behind that little bit of classical hocus-pocus, I opted for detumescence and dressing. I too was beginning to learn to wait" (233).

Thus, theatrical situations organized in Bourani are presented as the doubles of the events of Urfe's life in a different space and time. Fowles employs the Shakespearian metatheatrical technique used in *Hamlet*, that is, the play within the play, mirroring each other. Like Claudius, forced to watch "The Mouse-trap" (Act III, Scene II) he is constantly involved in watching spectacles which expose to him different aspects of his self. This device exploits an immanent ability of theatre to reveal the hidden essence of a situation. This is an illusory world which explains and illuminates the empirical one,

> [f]or theater, like cultic ceremony, also represents a genuine creation: something drawn from within ourselves takes shape before our eyes in a form that we recognize and experience as a more profound presentation of our own reality. This overwhelming truth is summoned up from hidden depths to address us (Gadamer 60).

Conchis at one point, while explaining his actions and describing Julie as a schizophrenic he is trying to cure, utters words which could be applied to Nicholas: "I wish to bring the poor child to a realization of her own true problem by forcing her to recognize the nature of the artificial situation we are creating together here" (282).

Similarly, each scene of Conchis's spectacle that Nicholas is to discern as his own, is represented and somehow deflected through theatrical prism actions. For example, while he is inclined to think about his feelings for the girl as a kind of mysterious spiritual affinity, he is forced to see himself as a destructive death-like force in the performance which he recognises as a "nasty twist in the masque, a black inversion of the scene on the beach":

> [T]he figure was all in black, shrouded in the sun, and wearing the most sinister mask I had ever seen: the head of an enormous black jackal, with a long muzzle and high pointed ears. They stood there, the possessor and the possessed, looming death and the frail maiden. (199).

The device of using a text within another text necessarily presupposes the problematizing of the relationship between the real and the unreal, reality and signs of reality. Lotman, discussing this narrative technique, concludes:

> A text inserted into another text becomes double coded; it is characterised by the second degree of artistic conventionality, which, by contrast, makes us perceive the main text as the reality [...] Combining the 'things' and the 'signs of things' in the same textual whole produces a double effect, emphasizing both the conventionality of the convention and, at the same time, its authenticity. (1998: 593, my translation)

Thus, Nicholas's reaction is determined by the clash of the episodes with different degrees of conventionality: the reality outside the spectacle, which becomes for Nicholas the spectator "like things in a mist, real yet unreal" (424); Bourani's natural settings, which betray an artificial nature; the behaviour of Conchis and Lily, which he uncertainly suspects to be just sophisticated role-playing; and Conchis's micro-spectacles, which are clearly conventional but still, in some sense, are true to real life and "real". The narrator is constantly asked to define and re-define his notions of the real and the unreal. This intensive modality of ontological hesitating, which Nicholas incessantly and tormentingly senses trying to disclose the truth under its again and again changing masks, prevails in the novel. This is to reveal a pluralistic nature of reality not restricted to stable rationally comprehended meanings, which the theatrical universe is constituted to signify.

Thus, by constructing a metatheatre, Fowles makes the self-reflection of the text immanent to the text itself, which reveals the function of theatricality as one of the metafictional techniques. Distinguishing between reality and illusion, which at the thematic level becomes the main moral concern of the character (and the reader), at the metafictional level positions itself as a modification of the inherent artistic problem of relations between art and life. Life and theatre are presented in *The Magus* as doubling each other and being just different productions of the same scenario, different possibilities of its interpretation, i.e. as almost equal in their ontological status. Artaud, contemplating the same quality of the theatre, points at the reciprocal mirroring relations between life and theatre: "I think I have

a suitable title for my book. It will be The Theatre and Its Double, for if theatre doubles life, life doubles true theatre" (qtd. Derrida 62).

Pretending to the status of universal reality, "more real than reality" (338), metatheatre states the question of its own limits. "The main problem of any metatext is the problem of self-violation of its own boundaries, of its purposeful self-transgression" (Smirnova 24, my translation). The limits of such an aesthetical world are always aggressively expansive but at the same time tentative and voidable. Firstly, Conchis describes his metatheatre as radically transforming the traditional structure of theatre, ignoring its restrictions to make it go beyond its conventional bounds. He declares:

> I conceived a new kind of drama. One in which the conventional separation between actors and audience was abolished. In which the conventional scenic geography, the notions of proscenium, stage, auditorium, were completely discarded. In which continuity of performance, either in time or place, was ignored. (404)

That is, a drama which is disposed to usurp the position of life itself. Later, according to this declaration, his mysterious psychodrama gradually extrapolates its principles from the enclosed domain of Bourani onto the outer world: to the rest of Phraxos and eventually onto London, that is, the space initially reserved for the quotidian, non-theatrical reality. Nicholas discovers that everybody he meets in his desperate searching for the truth and purpose of his Bourani experience is in some mysterious way involved in the immensely augmented performance.

And eventually, having transgressed its limits and expanded itself onto the outer world, metatheatre confronts the necessity of self-destruction, for which it seems to be naturally inclined. Depending on the consistence and integrity of its chronotope, the performance is eventually to be disintegrated, though just to begin again in one of its endless recurrences[11]. Conchis explains this discouraging Urfe from searching for the strict distinguishing the limits of "the play": "No real play

[11] This idea is perfectly realized in the final scene of the intensively self-reflective *Bold Soprano* by Ionesco. In this play, the ultimate dissociation of the elements of theatrical space causes the end of spectacle, but just for it to immediately re-begin again, with the different characters in the same roles.

has a curtain. It is acted, and then it continues to act" (442). His words seem to echo Artaud's idea, formulated by Derrida, about a performance as having no ending but being meaningful in its closure, which can and is to be contemplated: "Because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end. But one can conceive of the closure of that which is without end" (59).

The novel ends with the deconstruction of the theatrical chronotope, "the closure of representation" (Derrida), which is indicated in the destruction of the initial spatial opposition of the observing and the observed. "There were no watching eyes. The windows were as blank as they looked. The theatre was empty. It was not a theatre" (654). Just as Prospero, an intertextual double of Conchis, whose theatre serves as a model and inspiration for the Bourani magus, eventually denounces his doings, Conchis withdraws himself and his theatre from Urfe's life. Nicholas and Alison's last meeting is left without a watching eye and thus, presumably, without any further perspective of development, predetermined by the scenario and performance, which forces the narrator to face all these problems on his own, not reducing their acutely tragic and "implacable" nature by mediating artistic models or taking the predetermined functions of the character-like or audience-like positions. So, the final destruction of theatre appears necessary for accomplishing its own initial intentions.

> To think the closure of representation is thus to think the cruel powers of death and play which permit presence to be born to itself, and pleasurably to consume itself through the representation in which it eludes itself in its deferral. To think the closure of representation is to think the tragic: not as the representation of fate, but as the fate of representation. Its gratuitous and baseless necessity. And to think why it is *fatal* that, in its closure, representation continues. (Derrida 59)

In *The Magus,* the theatre, which cannot be ended since it has been begun, reaching its final consummation, bespeaks the open ending of the novel. For integrated and framed by theatre, designed and playful, refined and purified theatrical existence gives place to the unframed, spontaneous, unlimited, and obscure human living in the everyday reality.

Thus, the chronotope in *The Magus* is constructed on the typical theatrical oppositions, presupposed by the nature of theatre as a system, such as enclosure –

openness; present – eternal; stable – flexible; individual – universal, finality - infinity. The "otherness" of the stage space intensifies the narrator's initiation-like experience within the limited scopes of intensifying theatrical reality where his quest for self-knowledge and the ultimate reality is realized. Theatrical temporal and spatial multi-dimensionality serves to extend the narrator's inner intellectual space through doubling it within the theatrical reality. He is involved, as an actor, in enacting his experience in various forms of mythical and historical past, shaping his quest; while, as a spectator he is distanced and estranged, which provides him with a critical and reflective realization of his experience.

Contrasting the codes of "everyday space/representational space; reality/fiction; symbolic/indicative" (Postlewait 12), the novel juxtaposes the different levels of conventionality, positing the moral and artistic questions of distinguishing between them. Due to the structural and semantic duality of the theatrical chronotope, the novel reifies and doubles the borders between art and life within itself, making it the main concern of its own reflection.

3.2 Theatrical Chronotope as Constructing the Modern Utopia in *England, England* by Julian Barnes

This section puts forward the proposition that the theatre, being a culturologem, formed and actualized by the cultural consciousness of the period, plays an important role in reflecting and manifesting the significant tendencies of the historical and social development of the time in which it functions. In *England, England* by Julian Barnes theatricality is employed precisely for such reflecting and manifesting of the contemporary social medium, with which Barnes, as he himself confessed, was essentially concerned as a writer.

Barnes has defined the genre of *England, England* as "political novel", thus acknowledging its primary concern with the actual affairs of the contemporary British society. It is to be considered as a kind of the author's reflection and commentary on the present-day cultural, political and economical situation, as Barnes denotes it, "a letter to my own country at the turn of the millennia" ('History in Question(s) 70). Thus, naturally, the techniques he uses to convey the

novel's meanings are submitted to the task of such a reflection. Theatricality, as it is realized in *England, England,* is foregrounded in its essential features according to this artistic intention, first of all as a technique for investigating the nature of the modern society as the author comprehends it.

As has been discussed above, being a culturally determined phenomenon, theatre has great potential for such an investigation. As a social institution, it fulfils an important function of the culture's self-comprehension, which ensures its necessary presence in most of the developed cultures. This function theatre is able to fulfil due to the specific nature of theatrical signifying.

> Theatre [...] reflects the reality of the culture in which it originated in a double sense of the word: it depicts that reality and presents it in such a depiction for reflective thought [...] In this manner, theater becomes a model of cultural reality in which the spectators confront the meanings of that reality. In this sense, theatre can be understood as an act of self-presentation and self-reflection on the part of the culture in question. (Fischer-Lichte 10)

Further, being closely connected with the cultural practices, theatre has always been seen as projecting onto them its principles and, hence, as an essential and integrative part of social life. Thus, the founder of modern cultural history, Johan Huizinga, sees the origins of any human society in the game principle and presents theatre as a "higher" form of play. Moreover, the importance of theatrical practices for the functioning of modern society is a recurrent idea in some modern sociological studies. These practices are considered as essentially immanent to the contemporary social life shaped by the simulative practices of modern economy, politics, art, and globalized mass-media. Guy Debord, who is credited with initially developing this approach into a systematic theory, emphasizes the pervasive stage-like character of contemporary social life, consistently declaring that nowadays "all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles" (12); "the society of the spectacle [is] imposing itself as massive reality" (142); "[t]he society which rests on modern industry is not accidentally or superficially spectacular, it is fundamentally spectaclist" (15).

Thus, the aim of employing theatricality in *England, England* is, first of all, to take a reflective stance on contemporary culture, which itself is viewed as

essentially theatrical. In the novel, theatricality is used as an interpretive tool to investigate and display strategies of political and social behaviour. The object of Barnes's artistic reflection is the age characterized by Jean Baudrillard as "the era of simulation, or hyperreality" (Hegarty 91). According to Baudrillard, it is an age in which the real things are seen as completely preceded, determined and replaced by signs of things which are deprived of their definite referential connections. Theatre as the system constructing signs of signs hence appears to be in a way isomorphic to the nature of such a society. This is to say that in *England, England* the author uses the social nature of theatrical practices to explore the theatrical nature of social practices.

Further, this paper argues that, to achieve this goal, by means of theatricality Barnes constructs in *England, England* a kind of utopia,[12] the generic conventions of which he employs to portray a specific utopian universe aimed at observing the potential of society. The primary aim of utopia as a genre combining artistic and political purposes also consists in providing a critical standpoint for scrutinizing the present situation of the society. In this sense, it is close to the cultural function of the theatre:

> It is clear that utopic dialogue had a critical function. The representation of an ideal city, of its mores, institutions, and laws – precisely because it is picture and representation – conjures up, as a negative referent, real society; it thus encourages a critical consciousness of the society. (Marin 131)

A utopian ideal world is produced by the actual manifestation of the significant features available in a culture, which are often the most valued by it, as having accomplished their full maturity in reality, the properly organized nature of which promotes such a development. This links Barnes to a utopian writer, who "looks at his own society first and tries to see what, for his purposes, its significant elements are. The utopia itself shows what society would be like if those elements were fully developed" (Frye 26).

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[12] In the thesis utopia is understood in a broad sense as embracing its possible generic modifications, including dystopia or anti-utopia.

In the novel, which Barnes himself regards as a universalising "idea of England novel" (*Conversations with Julian Barnes* 27), he depicts a perfect commonwealth - the newly organized reality of *England, England* - as a kind of this probable, prosperous, and, even if only ironically, desirable, future. "The new Island state" is eagerly claimed by its apologists to "prove a role model for more than just the leisure business" (178).

It precisely manifests, borrowing Frye's expression, "what [Barnes's own society's] significant elements are", taken as having progressed by efficient organization: "The Island Experience, as the billboards have it, is everything you imagined England to be, but more convenient, cleaner, friendlier, and more efficient" (184).

Louis Marin in his article "The Utopic Stage" further develops this analogy between utopia and the theatre. He assumes that utopia is

> the textual place of production of a representative figure, of a picture within the text whose function consists in dissimulating, within its metaphor, historical contradiction [...] *by projecting it onto a stage*. It stages it as a representation by articulating it in the form of a structure of harmonious and immobile equilibrium" (Marin 115).

Thus, utopia naturally requires performative techniques as a matched form for its realization. Likewise, the England, England state requires them for ostentatiously displaying "[t]he best of all that England was, and is, can be safely and conveniently experienced on this spectacular and well-equipped diamond of an Island (185, emphasis added).

Though totally lacking any religious or humanistic foundations, which are essential for a classical utopia, the "Quality Leisure" Project nonetheless reflects the new social consciousness, acknowledged and displayed as characteristic of the society. This society is presented as a proper outcome of the heavily commercialized culture which, precisely as such, commercial society claims to be ethically valuable and socially justified. It is described as "a locus of uncluttered supply and demand, somewhere to gladden the heart of Adam Smith. Wealth was created in a peaceable kingdom: what more could anyone want, be they philosopher or citizen?" (202)

It is important for this study that the chronotopes of theatre and utopia reveal their structural similarity, which makes them expedient for analysis as mutually complementary. First of all, the typical division of the theatrical space in *England, England* reflects and supports a spatial demarcation which is also constitutive for utopia. Both result from similar mental preconditions, which allow reality to be presented as a dual entity, the different segments of which are loaded with different types of significance. In the case of theatre, it is the duality of the stage-auditorium opposition. Likewise, for utopia, the compulsory "dualistic mental structure [of man]" (Polak 285) ensures the comprehension of a specific interrelationship between segments of reality, presenting both the actually existent and the speculatively projected. Frederic Polak explains this precondition of utopian thought as follows:

> At some point [...] of the psycho-physical evolution of life on earth, the unique structure of the human mind emerged. This mental structure was unique in the sense that it had the capacity of dualism, [the ability] to pass the frontier of present reality", "consciously [...] to split reality into two: into the existent and the other. (282)

Polak further concludes that one who experiences utopian reality is, accordingly, to learn dual comprehension and behaviour. S/he is to "behave purposefully as a 'citizen-of-two-worlds'", living simultaneously in the here and now and in another world of his/her own creation. This other world may be quite different from the present one, even the opposite in many or all aspects (282), and this evokes the requirements of dual behaviour for a participant of theatrical performance as described by Lotman (1998: 585).

This constitutive spatial division is, in a way, reflected in the compositional organization of *England, England,* for in the course of the novel the narration successively moves its perspective from one "world" to another. The novel consists of three parts, for the titles of which the author uses toponyms, which, denoting the plot development in terms of space, foregrounds the significance of the distinctness of the parts' spaces. The first one, entitled "England", describes the protagonist's, Martha Cochrane's, childhood, which is retrospectively recalled. This part introduces the main novel's themes, including

the fallibility of human memory, and the search for authenticity and reliable reality, as related mostly to individual beings. The second part – "England, England" is devoted to describing the producing and functioning of the Project – a model of society in the form of a modern tourist destination organized on the Isle of Wight - the England, England of the novel's title. The last part again returns to the old pre-industrial "Anglia" which now, reflected and self-reflected against the prosperous England, England, exposes all signs of decay and tries to find its way to a new beginning. This kind of three-part composition, repeating in its structure and semantics that of *The Magus*, though by no means constitutive of theatricality in the novel, still seems to be highly suitable for it. For such a composition, in a sense, evokes the pragmatic situation of the audience in the theatre, which is to leave its world for the experience of the other reality (the performance), and then to return into it, somehow transformed by this experience. In this regard, Martha, being one of the dominant "external focalizers" of all three parts of the novel, i.e. through the meditation of whose "prism" the story is presented in the text (Rimmon-Kenan 71), serves as a carrier of the audience's perspective.

Thus, in the novel, according to both theatrical and utopian conceptions of the chronotope, the different segments included in the specific interrelationship are constructed. As such, for our purposes, can be considered the Old England, serving as the origin of the Project's modelling transferring activity and, in a way, providing it with the raw, crude material, and the New England, England - a replica England of the Isle of Wight - exposing itself as the artificially perfected, the other version of the old one, against which it can view itself. So, as is required, they present the two kinds of reality possessing different ontological statuses and can be termed, borrowing Debord's wording, the spheres of presentation, or the world "directly lived", and of its "re-presentation" (12) realized in the spectacle of the Theme Park.

The chronotope of the utopian vision of England, England, occupying about four-fifths of the novel, again dominates the narrative. A traditional journey-motif employed by utopias as the device of "a transition from the real to the imaginary and ideal" (Gerber 105), (functioning thus to enter a utopian world in order to display it - as well as the existent reality - for critical observation), in *England,*

England is modified into leisure touring, making Visitors from the outside world inner spectators watching the performative reality of the Island. The chronotopical division organizes and ensures the cultural division: "culture is accordingly divided up in theater into a culture of those who depict it and a culture of those who watch it [...] [T]heater becomes a model of cultural reality in which the spectators confront the meanings of that reality" (Fischer-Lichte 10).

Consequently, the relations between the two worlds, which are crucial both for theatrical communication and for the dialogue of utopia, are determined by the purpose of juxtaposing the two social and cultural orders. In *England, England,* this juxtaposing reveals an actual affinity of the worlds since the main principles on which the Project is based are shown as rooted in non-theatrical reality, being realized by Sir Jack's creative genius. Thus, the theme of the elusiveness and unreliability of memory as a perfidious guide for comprehending and securing any genuine past, the reconstruction of which is crucial for the Project's functioning, is firstly related precisely to the everyday experience in the ordinary world:

> 'What's your first memory?' someone would ask. And she would reply, 'I don't remember' […] 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 […] Martha Cochrane was to live a long time, and in all her years she was never to come across a first memory which was not in her opinion a lie. (3)

The attempts to obtain a secure world as an accomplished construction, like that of the Project in which the comforting wholeness that is missing in reality might be possible, are reflected in Martha's preoccupation with her Countries of England jigsaw puzzle. Disorder in this construction, like missing a piece of the whole, instilled her, as a child, with "a sense of desolation, failure, and disappointment at the imperfection of the world" (5).

Likewise, the slippery demarcation between the real and the artificial, an "authentic thing" (7) and "the replica", and challenging the value of the former in favour of the latter, for which a Theme Park England becomes a perfect exempla, is firstly discussed with regard to the old world. Thus, Sir Jack pointedly discredits the presumably natural things as a result of "Dame Nature […] going

about her eternal business", claiming the ability to artificially create and transform items to replace the authentic and original perfectly:

> The hill was an Iron Age burial mound, the undulating field a vestige of Saxon agriculture, the copse was a copse only because a thousand other trees had been cut down, the river was a canal and the pheasant had been hand-reared by a gamekeeper. We change it all, Mark, the trees, the crops, the animals. (60-61)

Further, role-playing as a main behavioural strategy is widely practiced and approved in the present culture. It is displayed as having originated in the general laws of social life. Thus, it regulates social intercourse in Pitco where individuals can be effectively identified by their role-like employee positions: an Ideas Catcher, an Official Historian, a Concept Developer, an Appointed Cynic, etc prescribing the stereotyped models of required behaviour. Their complete coincidence with their adopted functions secures the efficient, uninterrupted functioning of the social system. No individual surplus is permitted, as Martha warns herself when she becomes concerned with the unity of her role of Appointed Cynic: "Careful, Martha: don't confuse professional cynicism with amateurish contempt" (120). Even powerful Sir Jack is to submit his behaviour to the rules of spectacle and to act as 'Sir Jack' (75), consciously representing his self in public, thus confirming Alter's statement: "All social life is theatre where everyone plays roles determined by rules of social behaviour" (46).

This substituting of personality by some typified identity is fully manifested in a kind of professional name - Susie, the PA, - which is attributed to every new person assigned to the position, thus depriving her even of her individual name as a signifier of a distinct personality. This displays a characteristic loss of human individual spiritual significance in the society leading to neutralization and cancellation of individuality's distinction, as the narrator remarks: "it was not really her name he was unsure of, but her identity" (34). Thus, the question "to what extent was she real?" (34) is raised, as put by Sir Jack: "'Are you real, for instance — you and you?' Sir Jack gestured with mock courtesy to the room's other occupants [...] 'You are real to yourselves, of course, but that is not how these things are judged at the highest level. My answer would be No" (31).

This reveals the nature of the society in question as a spectacle seeking to neutralize individual existence by imposing on individuals some ready-made roles offered by the cultural ideology. Debord formulated this idea as follows: "In a society where no one can any longer be *recognized* by others, every individual becomes unable to recognize his own reality" (152).

Reflecting the flexible nature of theatrical signifying, the "old England" presents a society where there is no "certain communicative and practical, situative contexts and matrices [which] hardly permit a human being to be replaced by some other human being at random" (Fischer-Lichte 140). On the contrary, as Sir Jack declares to his employees, "I could have you replaced with substitutes, with ... simulacra" (31).

His conclusions significantly coincide with formulas of theatre theory, again emphasizing the nullity of individuals beyond their roles, "[f]or their material existence is of interest for theater with regard neither to its uniqueness nor to its specific functionality [...] What is crucial is not existence as such but rather the meanings to be created using existence as a sign" (Fischer-Lichte 140). Later, in England, England, this process of reducing humans and their activities to external functions and imposed attributes, i.e. to empty signifiers, is accomplished.

Martha indicates this ability of the Island's theatre-like reality to exteriorize the objects' internal characteristics and to detach them from the objects themselves: "Let's just say that, on the Island, on the *Island*, Nell is fifteen. Just as on the Island ... you're the King" (189). By the same token, Sir Jack reduces the function of the Island's Parliament to puppets acting, deprived of any substantial significance apart from that of serving as a sign of a sing, in a way mocking the real politicians' practices:

> The Project was [...] looking for non-speaking backbenchers able to master some simple choreography - rising to their feet at a signal from the Speaker, waving their order papers in mock urgency, and then flopping back on the green leather benches. They would also be required to utter various non-verbal but interpretable noises – contemptuous baying, sycophantic groaning, rabid muttering and insincere laughter being the main categories. [Sir Jack] thought they might be able to manage that. (173-4)

Thus, the direct source of the Project's model lies in the existent society itself. As a utopian universe, the Project exposes "what society would be like if those elements were fully developed" (Frye 26). Hence, the relationships between the two chronotopically separated worlds are those of the mutual correlation described by Alter. He argues that when the stage approaches reality, whether inspired by mimesis or transformation, "real-life situations, with their roles and rules, generate theatre situations, with their own rules and roles. In that sense, whatever the story it tells, a performance always also reflects those models of social behavior that prevail in a given society" (46-47). Echoing this idea of the "old England" social performances being embodied in the England, England staged shows, Sir Jack formulates the Project's intention as follows: "We want our Visitors to feel that they have passed through a mirror, that they have left their own worlds and entered a new one, different yet strangely familiar, where things [...] as if in a rare dream" (120). Therein, the Island just frames the general characteristics of the present society within the conventions of the stage, employing them as material, a part of the process of its own creation.

This kind of relationship between the two realities can be considered as corresponding to Baudrillard's first "phase of the image", which is formulated as "the reflection of a basic reality" (Baudrillard 1988: 170). However, the reality of England, England seeks not only to reflect, but rather to replace that from which it draws the images as its own objects. There are ultimately two competing versions of reality at issue – factual reality and its artificial representation.

To fulfil this framing function, the specific isolation and distancing of stage space is also used in the novel. These spatial characteristics are important both for theatrical and utopian chronotopes since both thrive on the modelling potential of isolated space. They also seek to establish a distance which provides an observing perspective. "[Theatre] places the culture at the scrutiny of a distanced and distancing gaze" (Fischer-Lichte 10). Likewise, utopia as a genre is also concerned with this self-reflection of the society, hence requiring features similar to those of the theatrical chronotope. A utopian universe tends to dissociate itself from reality in terms of both time and space. Gerber describes the typical space of utopia, presupposed by its generic conventions, as follows: "it was conceived to

be something quite different from the ordinary world and yet part of this world. Sometimes it was an island beyond the seas, sometimes a land situated underground, sometimes a country in the mountains" (3). To construct the other world of England, England, reflecting the present one, in the novel is to arrange an act of spectating, which distances the culture in question from itself and, in so doing, to realize the culture's self-representation.

As was mentioned in the second chapter, the idea of physical enclosure, manifesting the sign nature of theatrical space, also intensifies the universalizing function of theatre due to which it is naturally considered as a model, as embodiment of the actual reality in a generalized form. In this manner, in *England, England*, the model of the culture reflecting itself is projected onto an island, namely the Isle of Wight. It is described as a topographically ideal locale for embodying a social experiment, for utopian "conceptualization and visualization of change" (Polak 282):

> 'The island,' he began, 'as Sir Jack pointed out two weeks ago, is a diamond. Otherwise a lozenge. Some have compared it to a turbot. Twenty-three miles in length, thirteen across at its widest point. One hundred and fifty-five square miles. Each corner at a cardinal point of the compass, more or less […] In short, perfect for our purposes. *A location dying for makeover and upgrade*.' (73, 76, emphasis added)

The allusion to Shakespeare's passage celebrating England as "this precious stone set in the silver sea" (*King Richard II*. Act II. Sc. 1) again emphasizes the model quality of the Isle of Wight actually meaning the whole of Britain. As Pitman explains his generative idea: "England, as the mighty William and many others have observed, is an island. Therefore, if we are serious, [...] we in turn must go in search of a precious whatsit set in a silver doodah" (61).

Further, as the stage space is always concerned with marking its boundaries to preserve its own specificity and delimit itself from other types of reality, with which it "normally [...] can only inter-correlate but not interpenetrate" (Lotman 1998: 618, my translation), it naturally embodies the spatial and temporal isolation of utopia. Canonized by Thomas More's prototypical work, this isolation serves to prevent the purity of the ideal world from outside invasions. By the same

token, the Island is concerned with preserving its distinctness, for which purpose a new patriotism is eagerly promoted to engender "a proud new insularity" (203) by ignoring what remains outside:

> In the first months after Independence, when there were legal threats and murmurings about blockade, it had seemed daring for Islanders to take a surreptitious ferry to Dieppe, and for executives to dash across the Solent by Pitco helicopter. But this quickly came to seem wrong: both unpatriotic and pointless. Why become voyeurs of social strain? Why slum it where people were burdened by yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that? (203)

In England, England, the visual quality of the island metaphor as the place for social projecting, namely the island's observability, is also important. Realization of the idea of an ideal social construct demands the total conformation and elimination of exceptions, since utopia is always totalitarian and unifying. It requires a position of an omnipotent viewer capable of observing everything and at once, as described in the novel:

> From her office Martha could experience the whole Island. She could watch the feeding of the One Hundred and One Dalmatians, check throughput at Haworth Parsonage, eavesdrop on snug-bar camaraderie between straw-chewing yokel and Pacific Rim sophisticate. She could track the Battle of Britain, the Last Night of the Proms, The Trial of Oscar Wilde and the Execution of Charles I. [...] There were sights on the Island Martha knew so intimately from a hundred camera angles that she could no longer remember whether or not she had ever seen them in reality. (185)

Theatrical spectating is transformed into a utopian motif of surveillance, which is to ensure the totalitarian control over the constructed reality and the mechanisms functioning in this reality. Again, this is a perfected variant of Sir Jack's "Pitmanesque eye [that] surveyed [petitioners] through a spyhole in the tapestry" (185-186), which controlling gaze was widely practiced in the old world, now just expanding its principle onto the whole society's isolated model.

Further, the character of the chronotope as defined by the nature of the objects that it contains and the functioning of these objects is to be considered. In the novel, it is constructed out of objects functioning as theatrical signs of signs.

The instructive purpose of utopia, concerned with the perceptible presenting of an unknown world, presupposes the descriptiveness of this kind of novel. At the same time, the objects a utopia describes within its space cannot be directly experienced by definition but just abstractly comprehended, and all together their ontological status is rather ambiguous since they are presented as the objects of an absent time and an absent place. Thus, a lack of direct referential definiteness is characteristic of utopias. On this ground, Marin develops a comparison between utopia and theatrical performance as he argues that the reality of utopia, like that of spectacle, is "figured out as a simulacrum so that it can be contemplated" (122).

In *England, England*, the process of the construction of the artificial reality of the theme park is likewise thoroughly exposed. According to the novel's plot, this reality is initially planned and created for performative purposes. This is indicated as the creation of a perfected version of England aiming to double it through representation, which its name, produced by doubling the original toponym – England, England, - also suggests. So, the Isle of Wight as a whole is used as a stage space to be equipped with some set design and decorations. For this, it is intentionally reconstructed according to theatre's basic requirement, which is to present things as different from what they really are, or "donning a different appearance and acting in a different way in a different space" (Fischer-Lichte 8).

The space of the Island is presented as the special place of performance, that is as being able to repudiate its original utility function and signify any other space where the performer finds him/herself. Being itself intended to signify the space of England, it consists of spatial micro-images serving the same substituting function. Thus, "Parkhurst Forest easily became Sherwood Forest, and the environs of the Cave had been arboreally upgraded by the repatriation of several hundred mature oaks from a Saudi prince's driveway" (147); "the White Cliffs of Dover relocated without much linguistic wrenching to what had previously been Whitecliff Bay" (85); "Big Ben, the Battle of Britain, Robin Hood, Stonehenge: couldn't be simpler" (85).

Accordingly, such a space tolerates only those objects which, coming under the influence of the theatrical system, demonstrate a high degree of semantic

mobility and can function without any bonds as referents transformed into theatrical signs, that is, standing for something else:

> All, however, is not as it seems. [...] the guardsmen are actors, Buckingham Palace is a half-size replica, and the gun salute electronically produced. Gossip has it that the King and Queen themselves are not real, and that the contract they signed two years ago with Sir Jack Pitman's Pitco Group excuses them from this daily ritual. (178)

Furthermore, these objects aim to double the culture on the base of which the performances are played. Therefore, they are purposefully constituted to represent the popular concepts of the Englishness in those of its features which are most recognizable by the mass, which have been identified by the management team's survey. This reflects one of the main mechanisms of theatre's meaning-generation, which "interprets the signs generated by the culture [and] in turn uses as its own precisely those signs made available by culture, utilizing them as the theatrical signs of signs" (Fischer-Lichte 140). So, being signs, they refer not to objects of reality, but to other signs produced by the culture and manifesting this culture. Thereby, they fulfil the primary function of "signs engendered by theatre [which] respectively denote those signs produced by the corresponding cultural systems" (Fischer-Lichte 9).

Thus, being images referring only to other images, the objects of England, England reveal their simulative nature, i.e. they are presented as simulacra: copies "without reference to an original" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). This importantly bespeaks the function of theatrical space in England, England, which is constructed as hyperreality. As introduced and described by Baudrillard (Baudrillard's conception, likewise that of Debord, is openly authorized in the novel as the Project's philosophical base and instructive ideological strategy (53)), while the real is "that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction," the hyperreal is "that which is always already reproduced" (1993, 73). For Baudrillard, hyperreality is the result of the technological mediation of direct experience.

According to Barnes's interest in examining and displaying the nature of contemporary social affairs, this manifests the social and intellectual conditions of

an advanced industrial society characterized by the welcomed predominance of the technologically produced "replica" over "the original" (53). As the French intellectual summoned to address the Project's Committee declares:

> [W]e are talking of something profoundly modern. It is well established - and indeed it has been incontrovertibly proved by many of those I have earlier cited - that nowadays we prefer the replica to the original. We prefer the reproduction of the work of art to the work of art itself, the perfect sound and solitude of the compact disc to the symphony concert in the company of a thousand victims of throat complaints, the book on tape to the book on the lap. If you are to visit the Bayeux Tapestry in my country, you will find that in order to reach the original work of the eleventh century, you must first pass by a full-length replica produced by modern techniques. (53)

This reversed priority succeeds on the fear of the original, experienced as a kind of existential anguish by a modern human who prefers safely to surround him or herself with the governable and thus accessible for comfortable comprehension, copies.

> To understand this, we must understand and confront our insecurity, our existential indecision, the profound atavistic fear we experience when we are face to face with the original. We have nowhere to hide when we are presented with an alternative reality to our own, a reality which appears more powerful and therefore threatens us. (54)

Characteristically, Baudrillard's spatial example of the simulacrum, which he provides in his *Simulacrum and Simulation,* is alluded to in the novel, in regard of the Island. Referring to Jorge Luis Borges's fable "On Exactitude in Science", telling of an imperial map that made such a detailed copy of the empire that it eventually attempts to substitute it, Baudrillard employs territory-map relationships to explain those of the reality-simulacrum:

> Simulation is [...] the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory - *precession of simulacra* - that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose

> vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself*. (1988: 166)

Similarly, prefiguring the idea of the precession of simulacra realized on the Island, its abstract diamond-like image on the map, indicating its suitability to be a model of a real England, precedes the reality and "engenders the territory" of the future England, England: "'What's it like, Sir Jack?' asked Mark. 'What's it like? It's perfect on the map, that's what it's like" (62).

Thus, representing the old England, with every significant and typical cultural object presented in miniature, the reality of the theme park functions as a collection of simulacra. As Baudrillard explains,

> [n]o more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept; no more imaginary coextensivity: rather, genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. (1988: 167)

Being a kind of metareality, that is occupying one level beyond factual reality, the world of simulacra not only threatens the boundary between the true and the false, but seeks to usurp the place of the real, to absorb it within itself and, thus, to make itself the only reality available. In the novel, there is an initial annexationist endeavor of the reduplicated England, England to offer not just a copy but "*the thing itself*" (59). Pitman exemplifies this, describing the artificial object coming to function as the natural, and being eventually recognized as such:

> That lake you discern on the horizon is a reservoir, but when it has been established 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*. (60-61)

Thus, in England, England's space there is hyperreality presented as the terminal stage of simulation, in which a copy, intending to be the thing itself, needs no relation to any reality whatsoever, being "its own pure simulacrum"

(Baudrillard 1994: 6). In it, "what passes for reality is a network of images and signs without an external referent, such that what is represented is representation itself" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

Significantly, this simulative character of reality allows any transformations of its objects to generate their own realm of the "real". They appear beyond any factual justification. The theatrical way of representation allows their meanings to be re-interpreted and thus falsified according to the requirements and expectations of the socio-cultural context. In addition, such a falsification is maintained by the equally simulative nature of what is supposed to ensure such a justification, namely of an individual and cultural memory. As Martha reflects, "[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 then" (3).

Thus, the memory itself refers not to reality, but to only its own previous version produced by referring to an earlier one. In this manner, memory itself becomes similar to a sign of a sign, causing "the inevitable transformation, distortion and gradual disappearance of original facts" (Guignery 105). So, in the performative England, England, "all unflattering traits of Englishness are discarded, and all the major historical figures and episodes are caricatured and simplified" (Guignery, 109). Thus, national identity, that they are supposed to present, becomes irreparably lost, replaced by its volitional representations, which is one of novel's the most important insights. Moreover, as has been said, employed as the generative principle of creating England, England, the authorized replica is "seeking to abolish the reality of those old edifices" (54). This capacity of copies to replace the things themselves demonstrates "the murderous capacity of images: murderers of the real; murderers of their own model as the Byzantine icons could murder the divine identity" (Baudrillard 1988: 170). Accordingly, the flourishing of the replica Island causes the decay of the competitive original reality; access to which, like the access to the authentic past, becomes blocked by invasive distorted simulations: "Old England had lost its history, and therefore – since memory is identity – had lost all sense of itself" (251); "[t]he world began to forget that 'England' had ever meant anything except England, England, a false memory which the Island worked to reinforce" (253).

Thus, the correspondence between the two spaces and two realities, as it is presented in the novel, is not that of reflection or imitation, "it is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine" (Baudrillard 1994: 2).

As has been discussed, time as an object of reflection is one of the innate thematic concerns of theatrical art. In the novel, it is also claimed to be the main concept, the "keyword" (39) of the Project. Time, being realized as a commercial value, is turned into the object of creative, even though manipulative, activity of the England, England producers. As Jerry Batson, "the consultant to the elect", declares, proposing the conception of the Project, "what we do have, what we shall always have, is what others don't: an accumulation of time. Time" (39). So, time becomes the material from which to construct an artefact of England, and as such is subjected to purposeful rearrangement and representation as theatrical time or "spectacular time" (Debord 112).

Firstly, as has been mentioned previously, to provide conditions in which the existing phenomena can be presented as having fully developed their potential nature, always vague in ever continuous and ever developing reality, theatre constitutes its chronotope as a completed one. In this sense, theatrical "*complete contemporaneity*" (Fischer-Lichte 7) or atemporal present, providing such wholeness and completeness of the stage time, coincides with a utopian "frozen present" (Szacki 99), in which the reality is to exist as having reached its "perfect and static states" (Gerber 10). To fulfil their function, the utopian constructs are to be completely out of time. "The transitions from the ordinary world to the Earthly Paradise [...] are essentially journeys out of time. In the Earthly Paradise time comes to a stop" (Gerber 6).

Following these rules of utopian projecting, the Isle of Wight is to contain the vigorously implanted perfected reality, the immobilized static present. As Gerber points out, "[t]he utopian imagination cannot remain content with far-off bliss and perfection. It is characterized by an insatiable desire to pull heaven down to earth by a violent effort. It not only wants to effect a radical change here, it also wants it now" (45). Echoing this, Sir Jack enunciates the Project's main concerns

in similar terms as transforming the ordinary within the scopes of the immediate and isolated time and space: “We want *here*, we want *now*, we want the *Island*, but we also want *magic*” (120).

Characteristically, when depicting the situation in England, England as it has been eventually organized, the narration shifts from its retrospective past to the present:

> It is a classic springtime day outside Buckingham Palace. The clouds are high and fleecy, William Wordsworth’s daffodils are blowin’ in the wind, and guardsmen in their traditional ‘busbies’ (bearskin hats) are standing to attention in front of their sentry boxes. Eager crowds press their noses to the railings for a glimpse of the British Royal Family (178)
> This manifests the utopian temporal stop, the established that requires no further developing in the state of a perpetual bliss, in which reality is immobilized in some purposefully selected and intentionally frozen qualities: And what about the traditional chilly weather? That’s still around. There is even a permanent winter zone, with robins hopping through the snow, and the chance to join the age-old local game of throwing snowballs at the bobby’s helmet, and then running away while he slips over on the ice. You can also don a war-time gas-mask and experience the famous London 'pea-soup' fog. And if it rains, it rains. But only outdoors. Still, what would England, ‘original’ or otherwise, be without rain?” (184)

Thus, the utopian England, England reality allocates itself in the temporal, and hence ontological and historical vacuum, in some static eternity fixed by abstract conceptions. Consequently, this state of utopian accomplished perfectness lacks dramatic dynamics between the past and the future, structuring itself in “the form of a structure of harmonious and immobile equilibrium. By its pure representability it [utopia] totalizes the differences that the narrative of history develops dynamically” (Marin 115). Theatrical atemporality hence manifests itself in the novel as a utopian a-historicity. It makes possible the rupture with the historical continuum, which is one of the main principles on which the Project bases its ontological conception. It depends heavily on rejection of historical determination and the historical continuum, as is postulated by utopian thought:

> In comparison with the absolute bliss awaiting man outside time, the existence in time must be considered miserable, and

> the way out of time is the only satisfactory solution [...] In such a view time can be considered as a horizontal line, leading nowhere in particular. (Gerber 6-7)

By the same token, inclusion into historical time and history itself are acknowledged as an unproductive burden capable of disturbing the efficiency of the whole mechanism of England, England's utopia. Accordingly, the strategy of disposing of history is propagated and instilled into the citizens' social consciousness as corresponding to the new social reality; to repeat and expand a quotation partly given on page 81:

> Why slum it where people were burdened by yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that? By history? Here, 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. (203)

Further, the time and space multi-dimensionality of the theatrical chronotope, i.e. its ability to embrace other temporal and spatial dimensions, as well as its cyclicity, are also reactualized in *England, England* to display the essential break with history. Accordingly, they are reformulated as the eclectic combinations and pseudo-cyclicity respectively. As Debord argues, "[t]he end of cultural history manifests itself on two opposite sides: the project of its supersession in total history, and the organization of its preservation as a dead object in spectacular contemplation" (131-132). In the theme park, history is exposed as such an object of observation in collections of aesthetical-technological hybrids intended to manifest "everything you imagined England to be" (184). The temporal discontinuity is displayed in the spatial simultaneous co-existence of different segments of historical time. They are represented as images withdrawn from their original context and accumulated in a limited place: "It was also [Sir Jack's] original stroke of lateral thinking which brought together in a single hundred-and-fifty-five square mile zone everything the Visitor might want to see of what we used to think of as England" (179).

For this purpose, the nature of theatrical space and time, allowing any combinations of their units independent from the strict referential bounds, is used.

Borrowing semiotics' formulation, the construction of the theme park's reality depends on "theatricality [which] permits a regrouping of the significative structure by undertaking in the stage space a quasi-factual restructuring of the material structure of signs in that culture and presenting this to the audience" (141). Like theatre, it uses the materiality of the signs produced by other systems of the culture to regroup these "primary signs" into some eclectic totality in which all of them can co-exist. In this medium,

> [t]hey had a half-size Big Ben; they had Shakespeare's grave and Princess Di's; they had Robin Hood (and his Band of Merrie Men), the White Cliffs of Dover, and beetle-black taxis shuttling through the London fog to Cotswold villages full of thatched cottages serving Devonshire cream teas; they had the Battle of Britain, cricket, pub skittles, Alice in Wonderland, The Times newspaper, and the One Hundred and One Dalmatians. The Stacpoole Marital Memorial Pool had been excavated and planted with weeping willows [...] The National Gallery had been hung and varnished. They had Bronte country and Jane Austen's house, primeval forest and heritage animals; they had music-hall, marmalade, clog- and Morris-dancers, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stonehenge, stiff upper lips, bowler hats, in-house TV classic serials, half-timbering, jolly red buses, eighty brands of warm beer, Sherlock Holmes and a Nell Gwynn (142)

Thus, inside the stage space of the theme park, the geographical and temporal distances, keeping all these historically attributed objects apart, are abolished to include all the items of an "all-time list of The Fifty Quintessences of Englishness" (146). The Island is turned into a kind of historical museum, in which every exhibit is well-appointed with appropriate indicators, stereotypical tokens, ascribing it to a certain time and place and making it identifiable by visitors. These indicators are the material attributes related to the social, ethical, and cultural environment of a certain historical period typified by mass consciousness. Thus, the Robin Hood myth is properly furnished by Sherwood Forest and "the whole-ox barbecue" (147); Dr Jonson is provided with "the Cheshire Cheese" (111), in which the real Samuel Johnson is said to be a regular, and with his fellows Boswell, Reynolds, Garrick – famous figures from Samuel Johnson's circle, engaged here as his "tavern companions" (208); war heroes are

imparted with apt props, such as “sheepskin flying jackets”, “the wind-up gramophone” (190) and appropriate phraseology, uttered “in authentically clipped tones” (190).

Thus, the theme park of the Isle of Wright, housing all the major cultural attractions usually associated with Englishness, is constructed from “completely equipped” blocks of time” (Debord 111), or from different “chronotypes” (Volkovskaya 93), i.e. typified fragments of historical time furnished by some recognizable markers and essential for the self-identifying of the given culture and society. The Project attempts to reconfigure a complex, continuous historical environment by means of re-producing and re-integrating its decomposed elements, the chronotypes, in a new eclectic assemblage. There is a situation which Debord diagnoses as the following: if there is no historical continuum in which the society recognizes itself and which is able to subject the space of the spectacular twilight world to lived time, “the forces of historical absence begin to compose their own exclusive landscape” (126).

This historical absence is naturally constituted as the “accumulation of time” (39) claimed by Jerry Batson and realised in space. The utopian temporal cessation, demanding no further historical development, is manifested in this eclectic combination as a “form of a visible freezing of life” which can be articulated in Hegelian words as the domination of “the peaceful coexistence of space” over “the restless becoming in the passage of time [...] their motto could be: “On this spot nothing will ever happen, and nothing ever has” (qtd. Debord 121, 126). The frozen totality of the eclectic melange of chronotypes indicates the lack of historical movement, “the totalitarian vision [...] completed in the immobilized spectacle of non-history” (Debord 124).

Moreover, theatricality provides the possibility of representation that paves the way to “a recombination and regrouping of the culturally generated meanings [...] despite the fact that those meanings form a hierarchical structure in the social reality of that culture that cannot be restructured without specific consequences” (Fischer-Lichte 140). The manipulations of time and space reflect manipulations of the existing matrixes of meanings. This eventually leads to “the invention of tradition” and, as Barnes claims, to a “way [to] forget our own history”

(*Conversations with Julian Barnes* 27), which Barnes acknowledges as one of the main issues of the novel.

Abstracted from their historical real context and melted into the new unity of performance, the fragments of historical continuum in England, England appear to be malleable for any realignment according to a certain "ideological code" (Pavis) to meet that of the audience with which they are to be in agreement. The images that represent them are provided by characteristics adjusted to the modern social and cultural requirements, as well as to contemporary public "tastes of the present" (Nünning 65). As Martha acknowledges, "part of Project Development, was the repositioning of myths for modem times" (148). Thus, Robin Hood "a primal English myth" (164) is made politically correct and adapted to the visitors' expectations: "Band personnel had been realigned with great sensitivity; offensive elements in the scenario – old-fashioned attitudes to wildlife, over-consumption of red meat – had been expunged or attenuated" (222); a "little massaging" of Nell Gwynn has made her "older […] lose the children, lose the other mistresses, and lose the social and religious background" (94).

National myths and historical events are introduced in the forms in which they are utilized for contemporary exploitation and deprived from any relation to any reality whatever, being their own simulacra. The theatrical chronotope allows the whole totality of the national culture to be included in the stage reality, which, however, is realized in the Grand Project in a very specific way. Its elements, being essentially empty theatrical signs of cultural signs, are naturally relativized and neutralized by their similar function of being commodities. They, therefore, "can be admitted equally, because they no longer suffer from the loss of their specific conditions of communication" (Debord 135). The chronotope is characterized by a high variability, but at the same time it is essentially undifferentiated.

This displays and secures the totalitarian character of the spectacle society, the purpose of which is total "homogenization" (Baudrillard 1994: 35) of all events and things. Their individual distinctiveness becomes irrelevant to their functioning as images consumed by the spectacular society. In this way, in the novel, the whole culture itself is turned into the leading article of trade,

appropriately reduced to the 'digestible' list of the marketable items of national identity, the "Fifty Quintessences of Englishness". Thus, the spectacle being employed as an ideological system seeks to subdue and reduce the complexity of life and history, presenting them as fabricated, cartoonish simplifications to ensure their effective functioning in utopian ideal reality. "Everything on the Island worked, because complications were not allowed to arise. The structures were simple, and the underlying principle of action was that you did" (201).

Further, as Baudrillard remarks, "[a] hyperreal henceforth leav[es] room only for the orbital recurrence of models and the simulated generation of difference" (1994: 3). The simplified actions of England, England's spectacle are organized in recurrent successions, representing certain segments of time, extracted from the historical continuum and functioning within the eternal present. Historical and mythical micro-events considered as representative of the popular view of Englishness, such as "the Battle of Britain", "[t]he Trial of Oscar Wilde", "the Execution of Charles I" (185), and the matches of Manchester United (142) are evoked to manifest British history at its most favourable for the spectacle features. They are re-enacted, being staged at regular intervals, according to a time-table, organizing a kind of speeded up circular time. This again rejects development, promoting unchangeability of the repetitive events:

> Promptly at 11 o'clock, the tall double windows behind the balcony open. The ever-popular King and Queen appear, waving and smiling. A ten-gun salute splits the air. The guardsmen present arms and cameras click like old-fashioned turnstiles. A quarter of an hour later, promptly at 11.15, the tall windows close again until the following day. (178); Manchester United would play all its home fixtures at the Island's Wembley, the matches being replayed immediately afterwards at Old Trafford by substitute teams, who would produce the same result (142); [England] was, after all, the country from which the Mayflower set sail (it's Thursday mornings at 10.30 for 'The Setting Sail of the Mayflower') [...] (185)

However, this non-stop recurrence of cyclic time does not aim to provide a transpersonal (national, social, mythical) experience for the participants. Reality, constructed out of its disjointed parts, becomes a pseudo-reality which can be only

observed but not experienced. Theatrical cyclicity in such a spectacle loses its primary intention, which, as Gadamer states, has been inherited by theatre from its primordial forms of Mystery and Festivals, namely to include an individual into a personal re-living of transpersonal history and, thus, to accomplish his or her self-realization. On the contrary,

> [w]hile cyclical time was the time of immobile illusion, really lived, spectacular time is the time of self-changing reality, lived in illusion [...] The spectator's consciousness, immobilized in the falsified center of the movement of its world, no longer experiences its life as a passage toward self-realization and toward death. (Debord 113, 115)

Moreover, a personal reality also becomes social, fabricated by the demands of the social spectacle. The individual life-time, being involved in this pseudo-cyclicity and subdued to the rules of spectacle, becomes an empty recurrent image itself and, consequently, death as the main event of human existence is socially rejected. Thus, a utopian "dream of man's immortality […] whose realization depends upon transference into another world" (Gerber 27) is eventually reached in England, England's pseudo-cyclic time. Provided by the spectacle, "the social absence of life" (Debord 115) becomes identical to the social absence of death, as happens in the case of Sir Jack himself. Submitted to the "logic of marketing flam[ing] like a message on Belshazzar's wall: Sir Jack must live again" (258), he is emptied of his personal self and substituted by an image to be reproduced by the spectacle and to be consumed by the spectators. So, he is ever to continue as a re-enacted social pseudo-existence, as a sign of "Sir Jack", "who, with a little coaching and research, was as good as new. Sir Jack – the old one – would have approved of the fact that his successor had played many leading Shakespearian roles" (258).

Consequently, the purpose of the cyclic recurrence of time is to secure an external consummation of the images generated by the spectacle. This again reflects the nature of history and culture, turned by the commercialised show into a product for sale. Characteristically, most of the Island's guests "are first-time visitors making a conscious market choice between Old England and England, England" (184). Being a kind of theatrical entertainment production line, it

demands new humans passing through it, by means of which "the spectacle [...] is to be seen and reproduced, becoming ever more intense" (Debord, 112). Therefore, this pseudo-involvement of the audience is to ensure the existence and continuity of the spectacle itself becoming its single actual purpose (considering the commercial profitability of its continuation).

Accordingly, psychological and social communication between stage and spectators – visitors – is submitted to the aim of the performance. In *England, England*, the relationships between the stage and the audience, crucial for a theatrical universe and the meaning of its chronotopic structure, are also re-actualized. Within the pseudo-cyclical time of the spectacle, the same mediated and not directly lived experience is reserved for the audience involved in it. The reality of the fabricated and multiplied pseudo-events is alienated from the spectators by replacing direct experience with "its artificial recomposition in the commodity spectacle, the illusory representation of the non-lived" (Debord 132).

By the same token, there is a "not-lived", pseudo-communication ensured by the spectacle. This is paradoxically but effectively manifested in the acts of direct contact between the performer and the spectator provided by the England, England performances, intending to commit "a conceptual leap from decorative status to bonding possibilities" (110). Thus, most of their personages are made available for direct communication with the visitors:

> [t]he lolling shepherd must later be discovered in The Old Bull and Bush, where he would gaily accompany the pipe-playing gamekeeper in a selection of authentic country airs, some collected by Cecil Sharp and Percy Grainger, others written half a century back by Donovan. The haymakers would leave off their tourney of skittles to make menu suggestions, the poacher would explain his dodges, whereupon Old Meg crouching in the inglenook would lay down her clay pipe and disburse the wisdom of the generations. (109-110)

The traditional "stage-auditorium" distance is thus sometimes ignored, since it can provide new benefits for the Project popularity. This is, for example, the case with "the Heavens To Betsy Bunjee Experience, whose advantage was that it allowed Visitor participation" (123) or with visitors' passionate conversations with "Second Wold War soldiers": "[Visitors] could ask questions

of these heroes, and receive period answers in authentically clipped tones. Piece of cake. Bad show. Jerry sat on his own bomb. Thoroughly browned off. Mum's the word. Then the heroes would go back to their cards" (190).

However, this festive participation in the performances is actually nothing more than external consummation of sociability itself, which is sold in the manner of staged and predictable talk-shows or meetings with personalities, such as the visitors' dinners with Dr. Johnson. It is not shown to effect any changes or development on the part of the audience, which means that the presented world remains totally remote from them, remaining as only an object of external viewing, not of internal individual involvement.

Characteristically, as soon as Dr. Johnson, experiencing the adhesion of his fictive personality, becomes an individualized, and in a way a 'real' thinker, at least not the predictable cartoonish puppet of the Project's scenario, he begins to suffer from complaints from the visitors. There is no unifying place on the semantic border between their worlds for interaction between the two consciousness – that of the character and that of the spectator. As Debord reflects,

> [t]he spectator's consciousness, imprisoned in a flattened universe, bound by the screen of the spectacle behind which his life has been deported, knows only the fictional speakers who unilaterally surround him with their commodities and the politics of their commodities. (153)

Seemingly, the performances are represented in the form of some individualized segments of life producing some meanings to ponder over, while at the same time readily exposing themselves to be just falsified, simulative individualizations. Thus, watching the war heroes,

> warming their hands over paraffin stoves, dealing cards, and waiting for the dance-band music on the wind-up gramophone to be interrupted by the order to scramble [...] [v]isitors might reflect on the wider hazard that filled the lives of such men: sometimes fate played the joker, sometimes it turned up the scowling Queen of Spades. Those medals the King was about to bestow were thoroughly deserved. (190)

There is an ironical contradiction between the event, evidently fabricated as one of the parts of the show machinery, and the philosophical reflection it is

assumed to engender in the visitors. This displays the visitors' supposed reflection as similarly fabricated and mechanical, mocking the real process of generating meanings from the performance and audience's responsive participation in theatrical events.

Since the pseudo-objects of England, England are principally "empty" ones, bearing no encoded meanings behind them, the Visitors are not supposed to be concerned with the complex process of interpretation, decoding the theatrical signs by attributing them with some implied meanings. Their involvement amounts merely to a successful consuming of the artefacts which achieve the status of commodity. Being limited to consumption, such theatrical experience forfeits the base of proper theatrical communication. It engages the participants not in the double-oriented meaning-generating process but only in the simulative temporary uniting with a fashionable experience, concerned with obtaining some upmarket distinction, such as "being seen to spend" (182). Again, the performance reveals itself as its own only purpose. "The spectacle aims at nothing other than itself" for "even in those very moments reserved for living, it is still the spectacle that is to be seen and reproduced" (Debord 16, 112).

Consequently, these pseudo-events, being crowdedly accumulated in fixed time and space, and thus being neutralized in the inflation of their accelerated cyclical representations, merely inform the audience about themselves, and are not intended to include them in personal meaning-generating communication. No deep interpretive involvement of the audience is demanded. The performances have no serious intention to communicate a message, as Goffman states to be the case of all "mini-dramas" of real social life (qtd. Alter 47). In this way, an epistemological function of theatre is abandoned in favour of its secondary entertaining and commercial functions; as Sir Jack claims, "people won't be shelling out to learn things [...] They'll come to us to enjoy what they already know [...] So we don't threaten people. We don't insult their ignorance. We deal in what they already understand" (71).

Thus, England, England's "vulgarized pseudo-festivals, parodies of the dialogue" (Debord 113) also reformulate the characteristics of theatrical communication as spectacular consumption. The relationship between the

performance and the audience are realized in mere economical and social terms, being totally deprived from their epistemological or aesthetical substance. “It’s a pure market state […] It’s a pure interface between buyers and sellers” (183).

In fact, the only thing the spectacle demands is passive acceptance as an undeniable and satisfactory good, that is as a totalizing and monopolistic utopian conception. England, England being a “spectacle whose function is to make history forgotten within culture” (Debord 137) can ensure its being only in the case of the passivity and ignorance of the audience, due to which it exists.

As Martha approvingly remarks, “no one lost money encouraging others to be lazy” (47). It creates its own history as the spectacle which is the only reality available and accepted as such, thriving on the audience’s inertness and indifference:

> Well, the point of *our* history and I stress the our — will be to make our guests, those buying what is for the moment referred to as Quality Leisure, *feel better*. [...] 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. (70)

In fact, in this regard *England, England* reflects the fear of history and knowledge about it characteristic of any utopia for history always threatens stability and the very existence of utopias. As Gerber claims,

> knowledge about the past becomes [...] a danger; for the past contains not only all those forces [...] which led to Utopia, but also all those disruptive tendencies and disintegrating attitudes which prevented Utopia from being realized for such a long time. (124)

Therefore, the popular mass’s ignorance about “the origins and forging of your nation” (82) which was revealed by Dr Max’s research, is to be “historically manufactured and maintained; natural ignorance has been replaced by the organized spectacle of error” (Debord 125-126). Thus, as everything else in the simulative reality of England, England, an interpretative theatrical involvement of the audience is replaced by a simulated process of learning. As Sir Jack emphasizes, “[f]eel. We want them to feel less ignorant. Whether they are or not is quite another matter, even outside our jurisdiction” (70).

This manifests the nature not only of the spectacle, but of the audience (society) itself. The arraignment of theatrical space ensures their mutual interdependence and reciprocal influence. Being particularly sensible to the audience, on which its actual being heavily depends, the spectacle constitutes itself firstly on the ground of the audience's supposed expectations and then on the base of the audience's actual reaction. The spectacle capitalizes humans' inclinations as they have been formed by the society. "The spectacle subjugates living men to itself to the extent that the economy has totally subjugated them" (Debord 16).

Their desire for authenticity is replaced by the economically motivated desire for undisturbed apathy and secure distanced contemplation. Thus, real time and space are extracted from personal experience as inefficient forms of living, being substituted by the technologically fabricated, comfortable and commercialized time and space of the spectacle: "In our time-strapped age, surely it makes sense to be able to visit Stonehenge and Anne Hathaway's Cottage in the same morning, take in a 'ploughman's lunch' atop the White Cliffs of Dover" (179). As Debord puts it, "[t]he same modernization that removed time from the voyage also removed from it the reality of space" (120).

Thus, the constitutive principles of the chronotope in England, England allow it to be interpreted as a theatrical one, substantiating the theatricality of this novel. The main features of theatrical chronotope are employed to construct a utopian universe which presents the reality of an advanced industrial society as a hyperreality constructed out of models or simulacra – theatre-like signs and simulated events of England, England's performances.

The characteristic enclosure of the stage universe serves to arrange it as the place of utopian social experiment accomplishing the latent tendencies of the existent culture, in which the reality of power, production, desire, and political legitimacy "have become simulations, that is, signs without any referent, because the real and the imaginary have been absorbed into the symbolic" (*Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*). Theatrical "a-temporality", corresponding to utopian "a-historicity", reveals the rupture with the historical continuum as a means of its purposeful reconstructions. Theatrical multi-dimensionality is

realised as an eclectic totality and the mechanical re-combinations of the disjointed elements of the historical continuum. This exposes the processes of dissolving their unity and, thus, a sense of history and identity lost in the consciousness of a modern social being. The pseudo-cyclicity of the performances that re-enact historical and mythical figures and events essential for English national identity, and involves their spectators in the pseudo-communication and pseudo-participation, actually extracts real time and space from their experience replacing it with the external consummation of simulative images. This reflects the nature of the modern society presented in England, England as a commercial spectacle tuning the culture and the national history into a manipulated commodity. The idea of society as a simulative spectacle, that is realized in the novel, manifests the main problems of a novel concerned with issues of re-constructed national identity and history's subjection to distorting speculations and manipulations.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

As the analyses of *The Magus* by John Fowles and *England, England* by Julian Barnes have shown, in both novels theatricality determines the essential features of their artistic worlds as well as their formal structure. The artistic time and space of the novels can be considered as organized on the principles of theatre as an aesthetical system, the main features of which (such as heterogeneity of the theatrical chronotope, its enclosure and distance, "complete contemporaneity" and multidimensionality) have been elaborated by the semiotic study of theatricality and employed in this study as interpretive terms for the analysis. The chronotope appears to be a decisive means for substantiating theatricality in the text and actualizing the meanings of theatrical metaphor, the various implications of which are exploited in the novels. Paraphrasing Bakhtin (258) one can say that theatricality enters the novel through the gates of the chronotope.

It is important for this thesis that the novels employ, in many respects, similar structural qualities of the theatrical chronotope, while doing it in different ways, which are going to be summarized in the following paragraphs. This enables us to attest the basic features of the theatrical chronotope in the novel, formulated on the ground of semiotic theory, and at the same time, considering theatricality as a culturologem, to examine its potential for embodying different thematic issues and artistic ideas. These can therefore be revealed by means of theatricality as an interpretive concept.

Thus, in *The Magus*, theatricality is used to convey the author's philosophical and aesthetical reflections revolving mostly around existentialist problems such as a human's self-delusion and self-awareness, a quest for ultimate truth and reality, and the meaning of individual choice and freedom. Openly referring to the conceptions elaborated by contemporary theatre's theorists and practitioners, this novel exploits the ideas of Brecht, Artaud, and Abel, within which its theatricality can be comprehended. The chronotope in *The*

Magus serves to embody and to manifest structurally the idea of the "metatheatre", by which Fowles explores the theatre as a universal model of existence and art, echoing Virginia Woolf's thought that "the whole world is a work of art [...] we are parts of work of art" (qtd. Conradi 56); in the case of *The Magus* this is the work of the theatrical art.

The main qualities of the theatrical universe, actualized in the novel, are its epistemological potential determining the protagonist's experience in the "heuristic mill" of the metatheatre. In this respect, the theatrical heterogeneity of the chronotope serves to construct the "belonging to the other" reality, in which the protagonist is to realise his individual quest. The specificity of this reality, conditioned by the spatial and temporal characteristics of the theatre, shapes this quest. Thus, the theatrical spatial and temporal enclosure of the stage chronotope is realized as "the magical enclosure, the *domaine sans nom*" (Cooper 55) of Bourani. Its function, according to the philosophy of theatre, is to intensify the experience of the reality.

The chronotopic enclosure enables theatre to present phenomena as completed in themselves and, thus, as revealing their latent and elusive nature and meanings, which are made observable in the concentrated and the framed stage universe. Fulfilling this function, "the magical enclosure" of Bourani's *domaine* enables Nicholas to approach "the very essence of things" (434), to reveal "something deeply significant about being", to become "aware of existing" (238).

A particular concern of theatre with the present time, namely, a specific theatrical "a-temporal present", which was praised by Fowles as the "immediate access to an eternal present" (Fawkner 12), enables the novel to explore the philosophical theme of "timelessness"; its ontological and epistemological value for humans' attempts to reach the ultimate reality and the ultimate self. In *The Magus*, the protagonist is presented as experiencing such timeless moments of the situation of the "presence in theater" (Pavis 44) during his participation in Conchis's performances; and these experiences enable him to gain awareness of himself as a time-independent being, to "accept [him]self [...] not any more [as] what [he] will become. It is what [he is] and always will be" (109).

A characteristic of the theatrical chronotope, time and space multi-dimensionality coincides with Fowles's idea of time as a synchronous structure in which all times exist in parallel. In *The Magus,* this allows the author to introduce into the stage reality of Bourani the mythical and historical past as the actual present, that is, as actually and currently experienced by the protagonist. He is submitted to becoming a governed person in order to discover his psychological and moral immaturity, and this is reflected in his acceptance of self-imposed roles, securing him from the necessity of personal responsibility. Moreover, due to the cyclicity of theatrical time, his personal experiences are doubled by the impersonal ones of these roles and, thus, he confronts himself as the object of his own reflection. Through re-enacting and re-living the roles of archetypical heroes and historical (or pseudo-historical) figures, the protagonist realizes his own quest for reality and self-knowledge, borrowing the other's being to comprehend his own existence. However, inserted in the novel mostly in the form of a "theatre within the theatre", the mythical and historical performances emphasize their artificial and fabricated nature. By making itself known and exposed, theatricality raises questions of the boundaries and the truths of artistic reality.

Nicholas, confronting the complicatedly organized reality of the Bourani world, with its constantly shifting levels of artistic conventionality, is to define and re-define his own notion of reality and fiction, the relationships between them, and the limits and the nature of their conventionality. This actualizes the function of theatricality as a meta-fictional strategy and reveals the novel's concern with reflecting and commenting on its own nature.

Barnes's *England, England* is mostly concerned with not individual, but sociological and political issues; accordingly, theatricality in this novel is employed in a different function, namely, to investigate the nature of modern society. It can be considered as conceptualized mainly in the contexts of Debord's ideas of an advanced industrial society as a kind of totalitizing commercial spectacle, and of Baudrillard's conceptions of simulacrum and hyperreality, which he considers as the decisive qualities of the contemporary period. Both of them are mentioned in the novel as guiding theories of the spectacular reality of England, England that the novel presents. Accordingly, theatricality in the novel is

employed to investigate the affairs of contemporary society, which, being an "essentially spectacular" society of "simulacra and simulation," reveals its affinities with the sign nature of the theatre.

Structuring its chronotope on the same principles of theatrical time and space, *England, England* thematizes them according to the intentions stated above, therefore, examining them reveals their different functions and semantic implications. In the novel, they serve to constitute the world of utopia, a perfected reality of social experiment. Thus, the duality of the theatrical chronotope in the novel is to structure the opposition claimed by Debord between the "directly lived" world of old England and the "represented" world of its artificial double - England, England. This theatrical opposition embodies that of a utopia as an opposition between the actually existing reality and the reality speculatively projected as a utopian model of the former. In this regard, theatre is actualized as a cultural phenomenon capable of providing a critical, reflective perspective onto the very culture in which it is produced.

The characteristic enclosure of the stage chronotope, manifesting that of the typical utopian locus, serves to preserve the integrity of the projected social construct. It distances the culture under consideration from itself and engages it in the act of its self-representation, framing the characteristic qualities of the present society within the conventions of the stage, and thus exposing them to critical observation as fully developed. The spectacle of England, England becomes a model of cultural reality in which the spectators confront the revealed meanings of that reality.

Consequently, intending to duplicate the culture at issue, England, England's chronotope constructs itself out of the signs that represent the abstract concepts of this culture – the Quintessences of Englishness" (146), – i.e., the signs generated within this culture. Thus, being the signs, whose signifieds are not in reality but in other signs, they function as simulacra, constituting the hypperreality of England, England. Again, this is to manifest the cultural conditions of the represented society itself, which, according to Baudrillard, propagates the reversed priority of the technologically produced "replica" over "the original" (1994: 53), which it fears as incomprehensible and ungoverned phenomena.

The characteristic theatrical "a-temporal present" correlates with a utopian "frozen present" (Szacki 99), presenting a perfect static state of reality structured in a temporal vacuum. Thus, in *England, England*, it is employed to manifest the lack of dramatic dynamics between the past and the future, and eventually, a rupture with the historical continuum, immobilized in the "spectacle of non-history" (Debord 124). Theatrical "a-temporality" manifests in Barnes's novel a utopian "a-historicity". Similarly, the temporal and spatial multi-dimensionality of the theatrical chronotope is also reactualized in *England, England* to exhibit an essential break with history. It is realized in the form of eclectic combinations of different "chronotypes" - typified fragments of historical time essential for the self-identification of Englishness. They are presented in the collections of aesthetical-technological hybrids of England, England, manifesting "everything you imagined England to be" (184). The mechanical coexistence of these blocks of time, equipped with their appropriate attributes and withdrawn from their original context, are subjected to any number of re-constructions and re-presentations. Thus, inserted into England, England, the historical and mythical past is utilized for contemporary exploitation, and serves to exhibit history and national identity as "a dead object in spectacular contemplation" (Debord 132). Accordingly, regular re-enacting of the historical and mythical events in the Project's staged performances is realized as pseudo-cyclicity, deprived of the original function of theatrical cyclicity that includes its participations in a re-living of the transpersonal experience to accomplish the subject's self-realization. On the contrary, the recurrent performances of England, England ensure only the pseudo-communication and pseudo-involvement of the audience, i.e. the distanced consuming of fabricated images of living and communication.

Extracting real time and space from the spectator's experience and replacing them with economically effective simulations, the Project's spectacle stimulates the audience's passivity and ignorance, and by so doing secures its own being as a simulative hyperreality, turning history and culture into manipulated commodity. According to the novel's main thematic concerns, acknowledged by the author as the falsification of the past and fabrication of the national identity, the specificity of the theatrical chronotope is submitted to the revelation of these issues.

Thus, the essential characteristic of the theatrical chronotope as they have been inferred from the semiotic theory of theatre function to substantiate theatricality in both at the novels under consideration. They have been examined as constituting the chronotopic structure of the novels, which in each of them is differently realized to convey the novels' artistic reflections and which reflects the general cultural comprehension of the theatre's characteristic for the period, which has been put forward as the primary aim of this work.

Since this thesis has limited itself mostly to studying the basic features of the theatrical chronotope in the postmodern novel, it leaves outside of its boundaries many aspects significant to a further revelation of the nature of theatricality in the novel. The most important of these excluded aspects, in our opinion, is the specificity of theatrical self-identifying as it is realized in novelistic characterisation and in character type. Neither are the theoretical conclusions of this thesis sufficient for a strict definition of theatricality as a term of literary criticism or for definitively establishing its theoretical content. For such a purpose, the analysis (according to the same theoretical premises) of a wider corpus of novels, including those written within the system of different literary movements, is required. These issues are seen as the first concerns of the further study of theatricality in the novel.

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