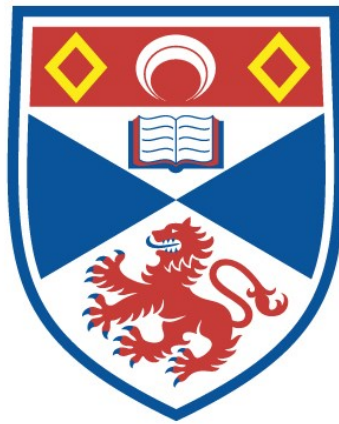


THE 'DOUBLE MOVEMENT' : PARODY IN THE WORK OF  
ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO UN RÉGICIDE

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is entitled 'The "double movement": parody in the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet, with particular reference to Un Régicide'.

The principle objective of the thesis is to illustrate how a re-assessment of Pour un nouveau roman (1963) can explain the reasons behind the paradox of Robbe-Grillet's fiction and lead, consequently, to the reader's appreciation of the tension between meaning and meaninglessness in his novels.

The thesis sets about this task in the following way: firstly, it examines the existing confusion over Pour un nouveau roman, and exposes the analytical weaknesses of both established interpretations of Robbe-Grillet's theory. Secondly, a new perspective of Pour un nouveau roman is offered - one which underlines the central significance of the paradoxical movement between the creation and destruction of meaning as outlined in the compilation. Next, this 'double movement' is identified as inherent to all literature, engaged in the dual process of textual assimilation and dissimulation. The self-conscious, ludic nature of the 'double mouvement de création et de gommage' of Un Régicide is revealed to be essentially that of parody, since the reconstruction of past literary material within its narrative is later exposed and destroyed. Robbe-Grillet's first novel, rich in literary allusions and references, is a particularly dramatic conflict between the forms which it incorporates and their imminent

subversion. In this sense, Un Régicide is seen to constitute the paradox of all Robbe-Grillet's writing, in which the initial creation of meaning leads, through the deferral of a single, determinate significance, to an ultimate déception.

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INTRODUCTION

## OUTLINE OF THESIS

The intention of this thesis is to reconcile the apparent differences between the theoretical principles set out in Pour un nouveau roman, on one hand, and the practice of Robbe-Grillet's novel-writing, on the other (1). In order to achieve this desired reconciliation, the following approach is taken: first of all, a survey of the existing two opposing interpretations of Pour un nouveau roman is carried out before a new analysis of the compilation is drawn from a heightened awareness of their weaknesses. This constitutes Part One of the thesis, and involves a detailed investigation of the 'objectivist' (2) and 'subjectivist' (3) readings of Robbe-Grillet's essays, from which a third interpretation - a synthesis of the two critical camps - is produced, and points towards the relationship between Pour un nouveau roman and the process of creation itself (4). Part Two relates the findings of this examination - that literature is constantly engaged in the 'double movement' of creating and destroying textual meaning - to Robbe-Grillet's first novel, Un Régicide (5). After establishing that all art is involved in a reconstruction of pre-existent forms, and that parody, in particular, dramatises this operation, Part Two concentrates on the specific techniques of parodic representation of literary genres in Un Régicide. In Part Three of the thesis the perspective is reversed in order to analyse the second stage of the 'création-destruction' (6) movement: here the means by which literature as a whole deviates from

conventional 'material' is discussed before establishing the distinctive role and function of parody in subverting that material (7). Un Régicide is seen to fulfil the 'double mouvement de création et de gommage' by systematically dismantling those forms which, <sup>as seen</sup> in Part Two, it had begun to construct (8). Finally, the Conclusion suggests that the link created between the dual operation expounded in Pour un nouveau roman and the parodic 'mouvement paradoxal' of Un Régicide provides a guide for the reader's participation in Robbe-Grillet's other novels (9).

## PART ONE

Chapter One is entitled THE 'OBJECTIVIST' INTERPRETATION OF POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN and examines the compilation of essays in accordance with that interpretative approach. In the first sub-section, THE 'TRADITIONAL' NOVEL, the thesis analyses Robbe-Grillet's conception of conventional literature, since the whole thrust of Pour un nouveau roman is based upon the conflict between 'de nouvelles formes romanesques' and 'des formes du passé' and it is, therefore, essential that the terms of this struggle be clearly defined (10). Before the specific techniques of the 'traditional' novel are identified, however, the 'philosophy' (11) behind the literary form is extracted: it is here that Robbe-Grillet's condemnation of the anthropocentrism and 'humanism' underlying such literature is seen to be at the centre of his attack in Pour un nouveau roman, for 'le regard de l'humanisme' is held responsible for the creation of a false 'solidarité' between man and the world (12). Fundamental to this 'humanist' 'pont d'âme' is the desire of the 'traditional' novelist to establish a significance in inanimate phenomena which reflects his own image and thus confirms man's dominance over his surroundings (13). Included in this analysis of the 'philosophical' implications of the 'traditional' narrative is an attempt to appreciate Robbe-Grillet's repudiation of tragedy, which he believes is but a 'nouvelle forme de solidarité' which distorts the actual absence of a meaningful relationship between the human and

the non-human by ironically attributing a sense of tragic 'solitude' to the refusal of objects to signify (14). The conclusion reached by the author - that tragedy and other forms of 'humanism' 'contaminate' the world through endowing it with meaning - constitutes the end of this opening investigation (15).

Having depicted the view of the world essential to the 'traditional' novel, Chapter One proceeds to identify the particular techniques with which that perspective is realised in literary terms. Robbe-Grillet's rejection of the 'vieux mythes de la "profondeur"' is committed but vague and the formulating of a cohesive argument is, to a certain degree, frustrated by the loose and disparate nature of the texts (16). Nevertheless, in deducing the common factors of such argumentation, the 'vieux mythes' can be located and represented in systematic form. This is done on two levels: firstly, the general devices through which is contrived a 'humanist' "'profondeur"' are inspected: the 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' of 'traditional' narrative is discovered to consist of such techniques as character-portrayal, the creation of an ordered, linear plot and intrigue, and the construction of thematic issues - all of which perpetuates the subservience of textual form to content (17). This initial analysis of technical devices responsible for the generation of 'humanist' values in the 'traditional' novel is, however, incomplete without a more specific inspection of the language employed in the 'romantisme systématique' of Nature and things (18). Metaphor and analogy,



in particular, form 'l'expression de cette solidarité' (19) which Balzac's convention fabricates between the individual and the world; in order to demonstrate the depth of influence of 'traditional' description, Robbe-Grillet exposes this same subterranean operation in the literature of Sartre, Camus, and Ponge whom he considers to be, according to the perception of modern criticism, 'revolutionary' (20). (As with the discussion of other artists elsewhere in Pour un nouveau roman - these include Beckett, Bousquet, Roussel, Pinget, and Kafka - the significance of their presence is not derived from the relative validity or invalidity of Robbe-Grillet's interpretation, but rather from their role as agents for a particular argument.) In concluding, the first sub-section draws attention to the common purpose of the above techniques, as portrayed in the compilation - to appropriate the non-human world through anthropocentric description.

The second sub-section of Chapter One, THE 'OBJECTIVIST' NOVEL, presents the lines of argument followed by the critic in his appreciation of the theoretical principles in Pour un nouveau roman as 'objectivist' (21) - that is, in their insistence upon a literature which, while cautiously guarding against the 'naïf souci d'objectivité', exacts the lucid representation of the true distance between man and things (22). Just as in the portrayal of the 'traditional' novel, the intention here is not to support or contradict the theory in question, but to review systematically the components of and reasons behind a particular hermeneutic statement. Firstly, the concept of

liberté (23) is identified as that which, according to Robbe-Grillet, should characterise our mode of perception and re-establish the independence of material phenomena from their human perceiver; again the terminology of the 'objectivist' ideal implies an extra-literary, or 'philosophical', intention and the notions with which the 'humanist' 'pont d'âme is replaced are defined (24). Secondly, this is followed by an investigation of those techniques through which liberté is generated in fiction. The overall device of regard (representing a non-anthropomorphic attitude to the world) is divided into its various components whose functions are closely analysed : the common aim of all of these elements is that they emphasise 'un monde plus solide, plus immédiat' than that invested, in the 'traditional' récit, with symbolic and metaphorical profundity, and thereby focus the reader's attention on the true distance separating himself from Nature and things (25). In order to appreciate the interpretation of these novelistic principles as 'scientific' or 'dehumanising', Chapter One analyses the relationship between these misconceptions and the theories expounded in Pour un nouveau roman and discovers superficial evidence in the essays to substantiate those claims. However, the chapter concludes by exposing the flaws of the 'anti-human' argument, although it rests the case for the technical devices of the nouveau roman being interpreted as 'anti-"humanist"' or 'objectivist' (26).

Chapter Two, entitled THE 'SUBJECTIVIST' INTERPRETATION OF POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN, aims to set out the 'subjectivist' theory, which upholds the view that Robbe-Grillet, far from seeking a non-anthropomorphic literature, is concerned with highlighting the least impartial characteristic of description (27). The opening sub-section, LOCATING AND IDENTIFYING THE 'SUBJECTIVIST' THEORY, deals with the initial problem of fixing the exact point at which the compilation diverges from 'objectivist' to 'subjectivist' stance, and finds that, although decontextualised passages appear to lend weight to this hypothesis, there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that Pour un nouveau roman comprises an inner, radical shift in emphasis. This is followed by an examination of another category of criticism, according to which Pour un nouveau roman represents Robbe-Grillet 'Number One' (whom Barthes describes as 'chosiste'), while his fictional works reveal Robbe-Grillet 'Number Two' ('humaniste'), thus exposing the discrepancy between the theoretical declarations of the novelist and his practice (28). Further complicating the matter is the fact that several critics detect a practical revolution in the novels themselves - a viewpoint at first apparently substantiated by Robbe-Grillet's own pronouncements (29). However, the comparison between Pour un nouveau roman and the novels is seen to be invalid, for it ignores numerous warnings against regarding either the compilation as 'pure' theory - it is, rather, an investigation of formal constructions - or the novels themselves as an implementation of the author's literary principles.

Far more textual support can be found for the interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman as consistently proposing a highly 'subjectivised' narrative. The 'subjectivist' theory evolves from a rejection of the 'traditional' novel: whereas the "'bon romancier"' (30) repeats the technical conventions of his predecessors, the nouveau romancier is aware of the need to invent new forms 'capables d'exprimer (...) de nouvelles relations entre l'homme et le monde', thus demonstrating his greater concern for human affairs in his process of creating (31). How, then, can this be reconciled with Robbe-Grillet's condemnation of the 'vérité humaine'? (32) The answer proposed by the 'subjectivist' interpretation is that 'humanism' is repudiated on the grounds that it imprisons man - often causing great suffering, as in 'humanisme tragique' (33) - in a false relationship with the universe, stifling his creative spirit through its imposition of a pre-established order (34). The particular technical innovations of the nouveau roman are designed to 'liberate' the artist from the fallacy of omniscient narration (whereby the narrator and, by extension, the novelist, seek to present the world 'objectively') by drawing attention to the emphatically 'subjective' quality of perception. Instrumental in this highly 'personalised' recording are the numerous devices proposed by Robbe-Grillet that are modelled on cinematography, which succeeds in relating events and situations 'par la conscience du héros' (35). This 'internalisation' process has far-reaching implications in the narrative: firstly, the absence of an omniscient narrator prevents reflection on behaviour and action and so banishes

the 'traditional' 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique'. Moreover, this permits, through the direct presentation of phenomena, an ~~often~~ unrestricted insight into the mind of the narrator which, ironically, the convention of analysis obstructs (36). The 'subjectivist' interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman is presented as reasonable, well-substantiated theory, drawing more than adequate support from Robbe-Grillet's description of the 'présent de l'indicatif', whereby the narrative dramatises directly the actual process of perception and, consequently, of its own creation (37).

The second sub-section of Chapter Two, 'OVER-SUBJECTIVIZATION', studies the ramifications of the 'subjectivist' argument and concentrates, in particular, on the tendency amongst many critics to ~~draw~~ ~~unsubstantiated~~ inferences from that approach. This operation of 'over-subjectivizing' involves the unjustified association of Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic principles, as outlined in Pour un nouveau roman, with philosophical statements. Such interpretation is discovered to be erroneous on two accounts: firstly, in spite of the extra-literary significance of certain of Robbe-Grillet's notions (liberté, regard, distance), at no point in the compiled texts does the author adequately or even deliberately associate these ultimately artistic notions with the discipline of philosophy; secondly, in contriving the fallacious connection between the theoretical model of the nouveau roman and phenomenology and existentialism, no definitive or consistent distinction is drawn between Robbe-Grillet's novels

and his theory - an analytical weakness which has permitted a direct correlation to be falsely formed between the author's fiction and his conception of reality (38). The same flaw is detectable in the efforts to attribute other meanings to the view of the world expressed in Pour un nouveau roman: this category of interpretation arises from the critics' awareness that it is impossible to establish and substantiate a specific link between Robbe-Grillet's 'subjectivist' conception and any philosophical movement, and results in the persistent relating of other vaguer notions (such as a 'new' 'humanisme', or pessimism, or atheism) to Pour un nouveau roman via a reading of the novels (39). Chapter Two concludes, therefore, that while the 'subjectivist' analysis of the technical innovations of the nouveau roman is well-founded, the 'over-subjectivization' is not.

Chapter Three, CREATIVITY AND THE 'DOUBLE MOVEMENT' IN POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN, is an attempt to re-examine that work in such a way as to expose the shortcomings of both 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' approaches. In its first sub-section, THE INTENTION OF CREATIVITY, Chapter Three presents a new perspective in an analysis of Robbe-Grillet's principle of creativity which emerges from the systematic repudiation of literary realism: in underlining the obligation of vérisme and vraisemblance (between which no distinction is made by Robbe-Grillet) to transcribe reality, Pour un nouveau roman argues that art should not be subservient to external phenomena but

should, instead, create its own: 'Je ne transcris pas, je construis' (40). Only through its refusal to represent can art fulfil its creative potential. If such a principle has implications for the author's conception of the real world, it is only insofar as it encourages the reader 'de participer à la création permanente du monde de demain' and not in its reflection of reality (41).

The second sub-section of Chapter Three is entitled THE 'DOUBLE MOVEMENT' OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION and is designed to illustrate how the theory of creativity in Pour un nouveau roman involves both the refusal to signify (as is fundamental to the 'objectivist' interpretation) and the constant proliferation of meaning (as suggested by the 'subjectivist' argument). The basis of this approach is the belief that an elucidation of the 'mouvement paradoxal' of the process of writing will resolve the dispute between, on the one hand, those who regard Robbe-Grillet's fiction as a contradiction of his theoretical principles and, on the other, those who disagree in their analyses of Pour un nouveau roman itself (42). For, in focussing the reader's attention on the compositional elements of its récit, the nouveau roman at once creates 'traditional' signifying structures and, in reflecting upon itself and experimenting with new formal constructions, effects their destruction. This dual process has, as Chapter Three shows, been related by critics to the fiction of Robbe-Grillet, but with confusion since the tension between a significant and insignificant narrative has been consistently and mistakenly interpreted as an

unintentional conflict inherent in Robbe-Grillet's activity. In reviewing the penultimate and ultimate essays of Pour un nouveau roman ('Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' (1963) and 'Du réalisme à la réalité' (1955; 1963)) (43), this sub-section identifies the ingredients which constitute a theoretical model of the literature of déception (44). Finally, the question must be addressed: What is the specific significance of this 'double movement'? The answer is discovered in referring the reader back to Robbe-Grillet's principle of achieving creative potential: for not only does the 'construction-destruction' paradox dramatise the independence of art from external reality in its constant refusal to represent 'objectively', but it succeeds, furthermore, in overcoming the semantic and hermeneutic restrictions of the 'traditional' fulfilment of a single, central meaning in the text (45). Thus it is hoped that the re-investigation of Pour un nouveau roman will allow a new reading of the author's novels (46), where the 'double mouvement de création et de gommage' has perplexed readers (47).



## PART TWO

Part Two of the thesis examines the processes by which meaning is constructed in literature in general, and in parody and Un Régicide in particular. The intention of Chapter Four, THE THEORY OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION IN PARODY, is to assess the practice, common to all texts, of assimilating pre-existent literary material and to apply this activity to the specifically parodic function of Robbe-Grillet's first novel, thereby setting forth the theory and illustrating by example the first stage of the 'double movement'.

The opening sub-section of Chapter Four, THE INEVITABILITY OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION, sets out to prove that, with varying degrees of consciousness, all art is created from other art. By drawing from a selection of literary criticism the validity and detail of this thesis are established: firstly, the inevitability of textual assimilation is guaranteed by the fact that the conventions in and against which literature is invented represent the very possibility of its discourse and, consequently, artistic originality is never absolute in the sense that it is conceived in the re-working of pre-scribed compositional elements. The individual text is regarded as the parole within a literary langue and, as such, is dependent upon the institutionalised language of literature for its existence (48).

The next sub-section, PARODY AS A DISTINCT FORM OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION, places parody within the convention of repeating textual material, while at the same time distinguishing it as a unique kind of assimilating activity. To this end, modern literary theory of parody is investigated especially closely, since it lays a significant emphasis on the reasons behind the internal reconstruction of the parodied text within the parodying text itself. First of all, it is suggested that contemporary parody is a vital and serious response to the urgent call to establish a means of dialogue with the past. Secondly, as a self-conscious, self-reflexive phenomenon, parody is required to enact a 'faithful' - if incomplete and ultimately unfulfilled - representation of those technical devices of its 'victim-text' in order to highlight the structural elements upon which it is based (49). Thirdly, parody is, in a sense, common to all modern poetics: the realisation that originality is limited has focussed the contemporary artist's mental energies on to creating through a re-combination of old forms. If, as Robbe-Grillet maintains in Pour un nouveau roman, 'tout se passe comme si le faux - c'est-à-dire à la fois le possible, l'impossible, l'hypothèse, le mensonge, etc - était devenu l'un des thèmes privilégiés de la fiction moderne', then this is best dramatised in parody where the initial creation of an illusion or the deceptive promise of reconstruction constitutes the necessary first stage of déception (50). Therefore, parody is part of the inevitable process of textual assimilation, but is distinctive in its overt exposition of the 'double movement' of 'construction-destruction' (51).

The final sub-section of Chapter Four, TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION IN 'UN REGICIDE', starts by drawing together critical support for the claim that Un Régicide reconstructs literary material through allusion. This provides an insight into the exact procedures of reference forming: it is discovered that the reconstruction techniques employed in the novel can be categorised into the 'formal' (in which the specific structural elements are repeated) and the 'thematic' (through which is evoked a particular textual or genre 'atmosphere'). Chapter Four ends by emphasising Robbe-Grillet's own intention to create in Un Régicide a tension between two narrative levels - referred to henceforth as the 'political' and 'fantasy' levels - and stresses the importance that each should feature in the novel as a serious assimilated form before it is dismantled in the destructive phase of the 'double movement' (52).

Chapter Five, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE, analyses how the one narrative 'register' consists of the re-building within Un Régicide of the 'political' novel (53). In the first sub-section, THE 'POLITICAL' BACKGROUND, the two processes of allusion are explained: on the one level, the novel alludes to the general criteria of the selected genre, with which it reconstructs the 'political' context in which the September Revolution takes place. (This 'backgrounding' technique is seen to include not only recognisable literary models but

also contains extra-literary sources, particularly those direct experiences of Robbe-Grillet himself, such as are identified in Le Miroir qui revient (54).) On another level, the 'political' background is consolidated by reference to specific texts under that generic category: the allusion to La Nausée (1938) (55) and L'Etranger (1942) (56), focusses the text on specific models for its reconstruction of Boris's alienation from society, while its similarities with the techniques of Zola's series Les Rougon-Macquart (1873-1891), define a point of reference for the description of the working-class conditions in Un Régicide, etc (57). (Robbe-Grillet's own intentions as regards the particular texts being parodied are of no relevance here; what is significant is the arrangement of material in such a way that allusion is an intrinsic part of the reading process (58).) The reconstruction of appropriate genre material permits Boris's development from social outcast to revolutionary.

The second sub-section of Chapter Five, THE PERSONAL CONFLICT, shows how Un Régicide fulfils the 'balancing' effect between political and individual crises inherent in the 'political' novel. Boris's 'personal conflict', or sense of alienation, is considered on two levels: firstly, it is manifested in his relationship with other individuals: Boris and Laura form a literary parallel with Kyo and May of Malraux's novel La Condition humaine (1933) (59). Secondly, Boris's 'conflict' is seen in an analysis of his political involvement where his act of regicide is more a celebration of his solitude than of his identifi-

cation with the cause of the Revolution: in this respect he echoes Malraux's character of Tchen. Chapter Five concludes by attributing the reconstruction of the 'political' narrative in Un Régicide to the allusions to texts or parts of texts of that genre.

Chapter Six bears the title, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE. In it are analysed the methods by which the second 'register' of the novel, the 'fantasy' narrative, is produced: it transpires that the same methods of allusion as revealed in Chapter Four are employed - the general 'backgrounding' is achieved by a representation of the genre conditions, while these are re-inforced by reference to more specific textual material. The first sub-section, THE 'LOW FANTASY' NARRATIVE, establishes how the fantastic context is created in Un Régicide: on the one hand, constant references to Robbe-Grillet's own fiction are made, forming an easily recognisable series of links with the later Le Voveur and Dans le labyrinthe, in this novel. On the other hand, a parallel can be established by the reader between the setting and the issues of Boris's 'isolement' (60) and those of Les Réveries du promeneur solitaire (1782). - an association greatly enhanced not only by certain formal similarities but, moreover, by the recurrence of leitmotifs - the protagonist's solitude, his quest for self-knowledge and self-betterment, the metaphor of physical infirmity for his mental condition, etc - common to both texts (61).

Sub-section two of Chapter Six, THE 'HIGH FANTASY' NARRATIVE, discusses the second level of the fantastic in Un Régicide, itself divisible into two parts: the 'Odysseus' parallel and the 'poetic'. Boris's voyage is seen to refer at numerous points to that of Homer's Odyssey: the vaguer resemblances of the hardships encountered, the trials endured, and the actual, progression of the hero's journey, are enhanced by the constant resurgence in Un Régicide of specific mythological references. The other 'high fantasy' narrative in Un Régicide is the 'poetic': here the language of the 'vieille chanson' (62) and Malus's 'promesse' is related to the poetry of Valéry, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud (63). Both imagery and specific linguistic constructions are employed in the reference to late nineteenth-century French poetry, with the intention of heightening the sense of fantastic escapism in Boris. Chapter Six and Part Three close by explaining how the tension between the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives, reconstructed through various allusive techniques, creates and reflects the artistic conflict between the voices of the literary il and the 'poetic' je (64).

### PART THREE

Part Three of the thesis is intended to show how literature in general, and parody and Un Régicide in particular, are engaged in the process of dissimilating the other texts. Chapter Seven, entitled THE THEORY OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION IN PARODY, reveals how all art is original and how parody exploits its difference from the text incorporated within it; Un Régicide exemplifies this parodic operation.

The sub-section at the start of Chapter Seven, THE INEVITABILITY OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION, identifies the second stage in the 'double movement' of writing as one in which the individual text diverts from the practice of representation and thus effects a difference from the convention of its own discourse (65). This is substantiated by looking at a wide range of critical theory, the consensus of which is that originality, although never absolute is, by virtue of the necessary reworking of compositional elements, nonetheless an inevitability.

The second sub-section, PARODY AS A DISTINCT FORM OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION, distinguishes parody not only from that inevitable course of original composition, but also from other modes of assimilation-dissimilation with which parody is often confused: pastiche, satire, travesty, burlesque, and irony are all defined in terms that differen-

tiate their purpose from the parodic. And what is the purpose of parody? This is best answered by examining the precise way in which it functions: the parodying text, having reconstructed its model, is now seen to untie that model in the analytical manner of a deconstructionist operation (66). For just as deconstruction unravels the mysteries of literature by dismantling the structural components which make up the whole, so parody bares the very devices it had employed in its stage of reconstruction. In doing so, parody forces the reader to consider the process of creating not only as a technical activity but, moreover, as one taking place in the present, as he is reading. Thus, reader-participation is necessary to complete the parody, in the same way that his involvement had been demanded in the initial forming of literary allusions. Finally, three sub-operations of parody are considered: the first of these, enchâssement, or narrative embedding, engages writer and reader in the inclusion of one text (or more) in another, and relates closely to the technique of mise en abyme, or internal mirror structures (67). Secondly, the device of alternance (68) whereby the text alternates between two narratives, is considered a form of 'inter-parody', since both récits illuminate the structural elements of the other genre as it struggles for textual dominance (69). Last of all, the technique of 'multiplicity' is outlined: here the interaction of a plurality of meanings obstructs the fulfilment of a main narrative (70). Common to all three parodic devices is the deferral of a single determinate significance within the text, and a constant reflection on the



interacting narrative structures.

Chapter Eight, THE SUBVERSION OF THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE and Chapter Nine, THE SUBVERSION OF THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE, share the same critical approach: the purpose of these two chapters is to illustrate how the novel subverts the genre material which it had convincingly initiated. The first sub-section of Chapter Eight and Nine analyses the methodology of enchâssement: both the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives are discovered to 'fall short' of completion by deceptive mirror structures which, despite their superficial function of reflecting the récits in which they appear, in fact undermine those discourses by generating a counter-productive narrative.

The second sub-section of these two chapters follows the procedures of alternance in the subversion of the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives: here the text oscillates between the construction of two mutually destructive récits which, initially, had seemed to share a common intention and direction. On the one hand, the 'political' narrative is in conflict with the 'regicide', while the 'high fantasy' narrative is constantly foiled by the 'low fantasy'. In both cases, the alternance proves subversive on account of the fact that the 'parallel' récits ultimately require a different set of values: this includes the implementation of a structural

hierarchy, linguistic register, and content-focus. The conclusion reached by Chapters Eight and Nine is that the co-existence of two narrative strands is necessarily detrimental to both, since they are ultimately mutually 'subtractive' (71).

The final chapter of Part Three and the thesis proper is Chapter Ten and is entitled INTERACTION AND OBSTRUCTION OF THE 'POLITICAL' AND 'FANTASY' NARRATIVES IN UN REGICIDE (72). Its aim is to prove *that* the proliferation of textual meaning impedes the construction of any single unifying significance in the novel. Un Régicide generates meaning in two ways, firstly, meaning is achieved through the continual experimentation of a self-conscious narrative, and, secondly, it is created by the uncontrollable reproduction of significance through word - and image - association.

The first sub-section of Chapter Ten is entitled THE ADVENTURES OF A SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATIVE and *observes that*, in both the 'political' and 'fantasy' récits the narrator can be observed, in his creative process, constantly deviating from the main narrative lines in his efforts to establish a single, dominant text. What the narrator at first 'discovers' to be a complementary 'lead' (73) to the 'political' or 'fantasy' intrigue diverts his attention from the central movement and, therefore, becomes a subversive 'sub-text' (74). In turn, the sub-texts are seen to generate their own problems of construction,

either because they distract the narrator from his initial task or because they 'fail' to fulfil a promise. Furthermore, sub-textual narratives, instead of resolving the conflict between 'political' and 'fantasy' récits, multiply the inner struggles of the novel ad infinitum (75).

The second sub-section of Chapter Ten, SUBVERSION THROUGH WORD - AND IMAGE - ASSOCIATION, concentrates on the technique of exploiting the multiplication of meaning in the text by allowing the intrigue to be determined by language associations. Whereas the 'narrative adventures' are created by a self-conscious narrative in its search for novel status, here the 'sens multiples' are emphatically 'irresponsible' inasmuch as they operate against the dominance of a central signifying structure (76). Firstly, the colour imagery of Un Régicide is analysed: in a 'double movement' of creation and destruction, the colours which begin by producing the 'regicide' récit transfer their 'allegiance' to the 'high fantasy' which, in turn, generates a colour-scheme that develops another sub-text, until eventually the roles and functions of colours are involved in a débordement, precluding, in the resulting semantic chaos, any definitive symbolic meaning in the colour imagery (77). A study of the word - and image - association of sound in Un Régicide reveals the same subversive operation in which language dramatises its autonomy from external criteria by refusing to comply with the 'realist' principle of providing a complete, intelligible, and uncontested representation.

It is the intention of this thesis to demonstrate, through an analysis of all these devices of the 'double movement', that the construction-deconstruction paradox expounded in Pour un nouveau roman is that which is practised at a parodic level in Un Régicide.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE:

THE 'OBJECTIVIST' INTERPRETATION OF POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN

## THE 'TRADITIONAL' NOVEL

This chapter reviews the theory that Pour un nouveau roman expounds an 'objective' literature, in which the external world is transcribed devoid of human interpretation. Fundamental to this 'objectivist' reading of Robbe-Grillet's theoretical compilation is an acceptance of the author's condemnation of the 'traditional' novel. In order to appreciate Robbe-Grillet's conception of the 'traditional' novel, two areas must be examined: firstly, it is necessary to analyse what, according to Pour un nouveau roman, is the view of the world expressed in such literature; secondly, those techniques charged with perpetuating that view will be investigated.

Although at no stage in the compilation is there an explicit or comprehensive account of how the universe is regarded in the 'traditional' novel, 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' presents a clear picture (1). Here is explained the premise of 'traditional' literature: man's dominance over his environment. Through a process of systematic 'recuperation', by which is exercised human supremacy, man invests objective phenomena with his own attributes. For Robbe-Grillet, this represents the principle of 'humanism':

'Enfin, il faut ajouter que le propre de l'humanisme, chrétien ou non, est précisément de tout récupérer, y compris ce qui tente de lui tracer des limites, voire de le récuser dans son ensemble' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 46).

An inevitable consequence of 'humanism', whereby the external universe is forced to adopt human properties, is the advent of 'signification' whereby meanings are erroneously attributed to Nature and inanimate objects. So the world, according to the 'traditional' novel, is one permeated with 'une certaine atmosphère anthropocentrique, vague mais baignant toutes choses, donnant à toute chose sa prétendue signification (...) ' (p 47). This, in turn, creates an interior of human significance in the object, 'l'investissant de l'intérieur par un réseau plus ou moins sournois de sentiments et de pensées' (p 47). Endowed thus with a symbolic 'réalité profonde' (p 51), the universe is falsely drawn into an analogous relationship with man, affirming "'Le monde, c'est l'homme"' (p 47). (Robbe-Grillet affirms that, within the 'traditional' context, opposition to this would be considered a 'crime contre l'humanité' (p 47).) Whereas a world empty of meaning exposes the distance between the human and the non-human, their bridging together secures a solidarity: 'Véritable pont d'âme jeté entre l'homme et les choses, le regard de l'humanisme est avant tout le gage d'une solidarité' (p 48). The attributing of human properties and significance to objects, their contrived adoption of a 'réalité profonde', and the construction of a 'pont d'âme' between man and his surroundings, are all essential contributory factors to a common essence or nature in the world:

'Cette nature, par surcroît, n'appartient pas seulement à l'homme, puisqu'elle constitue le lien entre son esprit et les choses: c'est bien à une essence commune pour toute la



"création" que nous sommes conviés à croire.  
L'univers et moi, nous n'avons plus qu'une  
seule âme, qu'un seul secret' (p 51).

Such is human egocentrism, argues Robbe-Grillet, that it is not the image of a god we see reflected in Nature but that of man: at the heart of all creation is an essence which, 'éternelle et inaliénable, n'a plus besoin d'un Dieu pour la fonder' (p 51).

'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' accuses the 'traditional' novelist, furthermore, of participating wilfully in perpetuating the anthropocentric myth. For even in perceiving the error of the 'pont d'âme', he designates to the true gulf separating man and the world the misnomer of tragedy. Tragedy is regarded, by Robbe-Grillet, as an act of deception in which, despite evidence of the world's indifference to the 'humanist's' needs, is effected 'la dernière invention de l'humanisme pour ne rien laisser échapper' (p 53). Tragedy is the deliberate misinterpretation of the silence of Nature and things: the absence of an answer to man's questions becomes the refusal to answer, and not absence itself. 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' presents its most lucid *entertaining* analysis in the form of a *dramatised response to silence* :-

'J'appelle. Personne ne me répond. Au lieu de conclure qu'il n'y a personne - ce qui pourrait être un constat pur et simple, daté, localisé, dans l'espace et le temps - , je décide d'agir comme s'il y avait quelqu'un, mais qui, pour une raison ou pour une autre, ne répondrait pas' (p 54).

Ironically, the 'silence' in tragedy becomes the symbol of a relationship which, in reality, does not exist: 'Le silence qui suit mon appel, n'est plus, dès lors, un vrai silence; il se trouve chargé d'un contenu, d'une profondeur, d'une âme - qui me renvoie aussitôt à la mienne' (p 54). The distance separating man from the universe, a factor of human misery, is transformed into 'une distance intérieure, une fausse distance', designed to contrive an ultimate 'réconciliation' (p 56). A 'nouvelle forme de solidarité' is therefore constructed, since the 'divorce' is now itself 'une voie majeure pour la rédemption' (p 54). Robbe-Grillet believes tragedy to represent the most ironic of 'humanist' devices to establish contact with and control over the universe, for it elevates 'solitude' to the ranks of a 'nécessité supérieure' or a 'sublime nécessité' (p 55). The 'essence commune' which bonds together the individual with the rest of creation is awarded, through tragic suffering, an exalted status. In conclusion, whether Nature and things are seen to reflect a harmonious accord with man or whether their union is the result of a 'tragification systématique de l'univers', Pour un nouveau roman insists that, in either case, 'contamination' has taken place: 'Tout est contaminé' (p 56).

It remains now for the link between such a view of the world and the 'traditional' novel's techniques to be established. 'Une voie pour le roman futur' states that, conventionally, the novel should reflect the prominent position held by man (2). This has been achieved, in the main,

by concentrating on subject matter of exclusively human interest: a "bon roman" has become synonymous with an 'étude de passion' (p 15). In this sense, Robbe-Grillet reasons, contemporary novelists (with the exception of the 'nouveaux romanciers') continue in the tradition of Balzac - 'la seule conception romanesque qui ait cours aujourd'hui est, en fait, celle de Balzac' - and Madame de La Fayette (3), since 'la sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' is still the most highly revered narrative property (p 15). This point is re-iterated and examined more closely in 'Sur quelques notions périmées' (4), where the sub-section 'Le personnage' (5) reveals how the literary character and, therefore, human psychology, is an essential constituent of 'cette prétendue "nature" du roman en quoi l'on voudrait nous faire croire' (p 25). Indeed, the 'traditional' novelist's reputation depends on his depiction of character: 'C'est même là qu'elle (la critique traditionnelle) reconnaît le "vrai" romancier: "il crée des personnages" ...' (p 26) (6). As support for this claim, Robbe-Grillet argues that the most highly reputed novelists are celebrated for their memorable characters: Balzac for Père Goriot, Madame de La Fayette for the Princesse de Clèves, Dostoevski for the Brothers Karamazov (p 27). What must be the constituents of such character portrayals? In order to analyse the psychology of the literary hero, the 'traditional' novelist is required to possess the génie with which to probe deep into that personality (p 22). The image conjured up in 'Une voie pour le roman' is one in which the artist descends to the 'abîme des passions humaines' and from there transmits messages of great depth to the surface, where

the reader lies in expectation of new revelations about human character (p 22). Robbe-Grillet emphasises that the novelist's journey is one which takes him to an unexplored level of profundity, because the personnage represents one of the 'vieux mythes de la "profondeur"', responsible for generating the belief that at the centre of all existence is a 'nature humaine': 'Le rôle de l'écrivain consistait traditionnellement à creuser dans la Nature, à l'approfondir (...)' (p 22). In order that the reader may experience the 'messages de victoire', sent up by the author, as his own, the character portrayal must, while appearing sufficiently unique to arouse curiosity, reflect characteristics of a generally applicable nature (p 22). 'Le personnage passage admits that a protagonist, particularly one which restores faith in the 'apogée de l'individu' (p 28) (7), should be afforded 'assez de particularité pour demeurer irremplaçable', but refrains from over-emphasising the individual's uniqueness: 'On n'exagéra pas, cependant, dans cette voie (...)' (p 27). It is essential that the personal identification of that protagonist resemble the reader's perception of his own identity :-

'Un personnage, tout le monde sait ce que le mot signifie. Ce n'est pas un il quelconque, anonyme et translucide, simple sujet de l'action exprimée par le verbe. Un personnage doit avoir un nom propre, double si possible: nom de famille et prénom. Il doit avoir des parents, une hérédité. Il doit avoir une profession. S'il a des biens, cela n'en vaudra que mieux' (p 27).

The details of the hero's situation are unique, yet they are familiar in kind, and so he possesses 'assez de généralité pour devenir universel' (p 27). Because the basic personality and domestic context are those with which the reader is familiar, he adopts the position of supremacy, exercised by the literary character, as his own: 'Et le vertige sacré qui envahissait alors le lecteur, loin d'engendrer l'angoisse ou la nausée, le rassurait au contraire quant à son pouvoir sur le monde' (p 22). Just as the personnage is a technique towards the whole novel's 'exercice d'une domination' (p 28), so the histoire, or plot, contributes to this end (p 29). 'L'histoire' (8) reveals, firstly, how important it is for the good of the traditional novelist that he narrate well: 'Un vrai romancier, c'est celui qui sait "raconter une histoire"' (p 29). The ultimate function of the histoire is to create a credible portrait of an anthropocentric universe, under which category the most common and desired model is that representing 'tout un système, rationaliste et organisateur'. Robbe-Grillet considers such a portrait of the external world, epitomised by Balzac's La Comédie humaine (9), as that most likely to establish in the reader 'la confiance en particulier dans une logique des choses juste et universelle' and, therefore, the most appropriate style of  récit, or narrative, through which to regenerate the myth of 'humanisme' (p 31). (The sub-section, 'L'engagement' (10), implies that, although Robbe-Grillet identifies the 'traditional'  récit closely with that of Balzac, other narrative genres, in particular the historical or social (as exemplified in the works of socialist realism), reflect a similar 'vérité humaine profonde'

(p 39).) Narrative criteria must be selected to present this portrait: an equilibrium should be sustained, allowing interest to be aroused through the unfamiliar while reassuring the reader through the familiar ('Plus encore que de distraire, il s'agit ici de rassurer' (p 30)); the plot is narrated coherently to inspire confidence in an orderly universe, and any substantial deviation from linearity is considered detrimental to the whole work ('Le jugement porté sur le livre consistera surtout en une appréciation de la cohérence de celle-ci (l'intrigue) (...)') (p 29)); above all, the narrative should avoid a lapse or rupture lest it should weaken the 'rondeur' or 'vivacité' of the plot ('Un trou dans le récit, un épisode mal amené, une rupture d'intérêt, un piétinement, seront les défauts majeurs du livre' (p 29)). The more specific components of the narrative - the use of the Past Historic to relate events, narration in the third person singular, the adherence to chronology, linearity, the creating and rewarding of suspense, - are all intended to reproduce 'l'image d'un univers stable, cohérent, continu, univoque, entièrement déchiffrable' (p 31) (11). The importance which Robbe-Grillet attaches<sup>to</sup> this point is indicated by the echo, in 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' (12), that the central function of the 'traditional' narrative is to transcribe the universe according to the comforting 'image de l'homme' (p 126). Finally, the sub-section 'La forme et le contenu' (13) stresses the high priority given to the '"signification profonde"' (synonymous with the 'humanist' 'essence commune') by drawing attention to the sacrifice, in the 'traditional' novel, of form for content (p 41).

This re-emphasises the importance in the "'grand" roman' of the anecdote capable of conveying 'une vérité humaine profonde' (p 39).

Pour un nouveau roman also investigates how language contributes to the anthropocentric myth. It is in the essay 'Une voie pour le roman futur' that Robbe-Grillet issues his first warning of the rôle of the smallest literary component in advancing the 'traditional' novel's view of the world: 'Le mot fonctionnait ainsi comme un piège où l'écrivain enfermait l'univers pour le livrer à la société' (p 22). Although impressionistic, the portrait of how language functions, which is presented in 'Une voie pour le roman futur', is clear: through a process of 'appropriation systématique' (p 18) objects of description have become saturated with "'significations"' (p 20) (whether psychological, social, or 'functional' towards another end), such that the text operates 'comme une grille, munie de verres diversement colorés, qui décompose notre champ de perception en petits carreaux assimilables' (p 18). Thus sifted through the 'grille d'interprétation' (p 18), what is perceived by the human eye is invested with a "'cœur romantique des choses"' (p 20) (14). Robbe-Grillet describes this as the primary stage in the 'romantisme systématique', in which descriptive techniques combine to attach a deeper, human quality to Nature and things (p 22).

'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' constitutes a more detailed analysis of the contributory factors in 'traditional' narrative towards 'tout un

système métaphysique' (15), whereby metaphor and analogy are responsible for producing a 'humanised' depiction of the world (p 49). Robbe-Grillet's doubts about the role and function of metaphorical descriptions are raised because he feels that their avowed intention - to enhance the visual impact of the object through comparison - is not realised: '(...) en tant que comparaison, elle est presque toujours une comparaison inutile, qui n'apporte rien de nouveau à la description' (p 49). Instead of creating an image through which the reader can more successfully 'perceive' the object, metaphor 'contaminates' that object by replacing its own objective, insignificant existence with a human quality. This process is carried out, Robbe-Grillet upholds, not to reveal a profound resemblance between man and Nature, but rather to contrive one which, in reality, does not exist. Much in the same way as tragedy distorts the true silence of things by endowing it with symbolic significance, so metaphor and analogy construct a 'pont d'âme' between perceiver and perceived: 'Dans le domaine littéraire, l'expression de cette solidarité apparaît surtout comme la recherche, érigée en système, des rapports analogiques' (p 48). The raison d'être of such description is clearly a 'communication souterraine' which, 'mouvement de sympathie' ou d'antipathie' (p 49), is motivated by the desire to insert into the object of that description a human 'réalité profonde' (p 51). This line of argument is substantiated by examining certain recurrent images of the 'traditional' narrative: to describe the weather as 'capricious', the mountain as 'majestic', to write of the



'heart' of the forest, of the sun as 'ruthless', of the village as being 'tucked away' in the hollow of a dale, transfers the focus of the reader's attention from Nature to man himself. After the realisation that metaphorical description 'fait déjà autre chose que rendre compte de données physiques pures' comes the acknowledgement that the motive ulterior to the comparison is to establish a 'rapport constant entre l'univers et l'être qui l'habite' (p 49). Furthermore, such language is self-perpetuating: the implication that it is the mountain which first communicates the feeling of majesty incites in the character (and, by extension, the reader) other related sentiments, such as a sense of grandeur and pride; ultimately, these new sentiments are transposed to other phenomena, allowing the circular movement to start again. That the narrator appears to neglect the origin of those qualities he bestows on Nature permits the fundamental fallacy that they represent an essence common to all creation: '(...) ces éléments affectifs seront bientôt considérés comme la réalité profonde de l'univers matériel, la seule réalité digne de retenir sur lui mon attention' (p 51). Robbe-Grillet concludes that, because of metaphor and analogy, man has lost the ability to perceive objects in their actual superficial existence; the pursuit of symbolism, inspired by both the belief in human supremacy and the will to exercise that position of control, forces the eye past the surface and, therefore, beyond the reality of things, for 'L'idée d'une intériorité conduit toujours à celle d'un dépassement' (p 52).

Having begun 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' by exposing the more evident examples of anthropomorphic description, Robbe-Grillet proceeds to unveil the workings of metaphor and analogy in the less obviously 'traditional' fiction. Setting out to prove that 'toutes les analogies sont aussi dangereuses' (p 52), this essay analyses first the ironic failure of Camus's L'Etranger (1942) to depict the outside world in its true étrangeté (p 57). For despite the intention of absurdist literature (under which category Robbe-Grillet places L'Etranger) to portray 'l'abîme infranchissable qui existe entre l'homme et le monde, entre les aspirations de l'esprit humain et l'incapacité du monde à les satisfaire' (p 56), it is clear that, in this case, Meursault engages in a 'connivence obscure' with his environment (p 57). Those areas of L'Etranger where indeed a form of 'langage (...) lavé' (16) is achieved are, significantly, conceived 'pour des raisons morales' to communicate the protagonist's intellectual and ethical non-conformism (p 57). Robbe-Grillet contradicts Sartre's assertion that L'Etranger 'refuse l'anthropomorphisme' (17), by pointing out that the 'scène capitale' of the novel 'nous présente l'image parfaite d'une solidarité douloureuse' (p 57). Camus's notion of the absurd is adjudged 'une forme d'humanisme tragique' (p 58).

Similarly, Sartre's 'nausea' proves a false 'separation', insofar as Roquentin establishes an 'intimité louche', albeit 'illusoire', with objects (p 58). The highly sensuous nature of the description of things

in La Nausée (1938) - reflecting the experiences of touch, odour, and sight - implies the protagonist's desire to re-unite with the objective world. Robbe-Grillet focusses on Roquentin's identification with the chestnut tree, which appears as the culmination of a conspiracy with non-human phenomena; of this communion is born the sensation of 'nausea' itself, thus symbolising not separation but bondage. If, indeed, there exists a distance between Roquentin and the viscous chestnut tree root, that distance is interior and, therefore, symbolic, reflecting his nauseous sensation. In the 'univers entièrement tragifié' of La Nausée objects represent 'l'impossibilité même de réaliser un véritable accord', yet it is this very impossibility, the distance between the protagonist and his surroundings which, ultimately, in characterising that relationship, effects the 'récupération finale de toutes les distances (...)' (p 60) (18).

The third and final text under scrutiny in 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' is Francis Ponge's Le Parti pris des choses (1942). Ponge's determination to represent an objective perspective by describing the world through the eyes of things betrays, according to Robbe-Grillet, 'l'anthropomorphisme le plus ouvertement psychologique et moral' (p 62). This it does because it implies an interior in objects from which they consider the field of vision, whereas in truth their existence is purely superficial: 'Affirmer qu'il parle pour les choses, avec elles, dans leur cœur, revient dans ces conditions à nier leur réalité: leur présence opaque (...)' (p 62).

The consequence of Ponge's réflexion is twofold. Firstly, the investment in objects of a 'réalité profonde' diverts human perception from the things-in-themselves: 'Noyé dans la profondeur des choses, l'homme finit par ne même plus les apercevoir (...)' (p 61). Secondly, the ostensible aim of analogous description to draw a comparison between two phenomena in the hope of enhancing a visual image is, <sup>Robbe-Grillet argues,</sup> counteracted by the absolute fusion of human and non-human: '(...) dans cet univers peuplé de choses, celles-ci ne sont plus pour l'homme que des miroirs qui lui renvoient sans fin sa propre image' (p 62). Analogy and metaphor have, for Ponge, ensured the taming of the once-strange world: 'Tranquilles, domestiquées, elles (les choses) regardent l'homme avec son propre regard' (p 62). Robbe-Grillet's interpretation of Ponge's descriptive technique as one designed to restore 'l'établissement d'un ordre humain, général, absolu', can be considered representative of what Pour un nouveau roman regards as the underlying principal of anthropocentric literature: a simultaneous reflection and perpetuation of the 'vieux mythes de la "profondeur"', the basis of which is man's total appropriation of the objective universe (p 62).

## THE 'OBJECTIVIST' NOVEL

Robbe-Grillet's criticism of the 'traditional' novel is productive in the sense that from it emerge his principles of the nouveau roman (19). Just as the condemnation in Pour un nouveau roman of certain literary conventions is based on a rejection of 'l'humanisme traditionnel', so the novelistic techniques proposed by this compilation themselves reflect and generate an 'objectivist' view of the world in which things are seen to exist independently of signification (p 65). 'A quoi servent les théories' (20) represents the author's attempt to broaden the field of discussion in Pour un nouveau roman beyond the literary, and this he does by refusing his role of theoretician: 'Je ne suis pas un théoricien du roman' (p 7). Robbe-Grillet repeats this point in claiming that 'ces textes ne constituent en rien une théorie du roman' (p 9), and again, finally, when he concludes that 'il n'est pas question, nous l'avons vu, d'établir une théorie' (p 11). These opening statements declare the intention to communicate ideas beyond the bounds of literary theory, and suggest a desire to argue and deliberate on a level beyond that of aesthetics.

The principle underlining the 'objectivist' vision in Pour un nouveau roman is that the world should be perceived, as far as possible, with 'unprejudiced eyes' (21). Rather than suffer the investment

of human attributes and meaning, objects should retain their autonomous existence, although Robbe-Grillet is quick to expose the fallacy of a purely impartial mode of perception, or what Sartre calls 'l'objectivité du regard' (22):

'(...) il ne s'agit pas, ici, du naïf souci d'objectivité, dont les analyseurs de l'âme [subjective] ont beau jeu de sourire. L'objectivité au sens courant du terme - impersonnalité totale du regard - est trop évidemment une chimère' (p 18).

While it would be unreasonable to demand that man regard objects with total impartiality, every effort should be made to decontaminate his vision from the 'franges de culture' (psychological, moral, or metaphysical) (p 18). 'Une voie pour le roman futur' describes this process as one of liberation (liberté), whereby the world is free to exist without the imposition of meaning: 'Or le monde n'est ni signifiant, ni absurde. Il est, tout simplement' (p 18). The consequence of a non-anthropocentric way of looking at objects is the restoration of their 'réalité brute' (p 19) in place of the 'réalité profonde' assumed in symbolism (p 51). In turn, the liberation of things implies that of man, too, for the acknowledgment of their independent réalité helps to release us from our 'propres conventions' (p 19). The refusal of objective phenomena to reflect their observer's mental or emotional condition produces in that observer a 'choc de cette réalité têtue', and so creates an awareness that he might also escape from the constant signification

(p 18). As shown in 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie', the liberté of things implies also that of man :

'L'homme regarde le monde, et le monde ne lui rend pas son regard. L'homme voit les choses et il s'aperçoit, maintenant, qu'il peut échapper au pacte métaphysique que d'autres avaient conclu pour lui (...)' (p 53).

Thus both man and things can be retrieved from the 'metaphysical pact' (according to which they were bound together by the 'humanist' 'pont d'âme'), united by neither an 'alliance naturelle' nor a tragic 'souffrance' (p 63). With the single affirmation that 'les choses sont les choses, et l'homme n'est que l'homme' (p 47) is laid the basic condition for liberté 'in terms of the recognition of the distance that separates (man) from the world' (23). No longer do objects represent the 'humanist' image, for they exist 'sans signification, sans âme, sans valeurs (...)'; no longer does man exercise his mistaken position of superiority over things, for he is now 'une fois de plus en face des choses' (p 64).

That it is the responsibility of the nouveau roman to reflect this 'objectivist' vision is in accordance with what Goldmann describes as the 'homologie rigoureuse' between literary form and the novelist's observations of everyday relations in life (24). If the premise that

'the writer's presentation is inevitably biased or partial' (25) is indeed correct, what techniques are proposed to express Robbe-Grillet's conception of 'nouvelles relations entre l'homme et le monde (...)' (p 9)? Although the label of 'école du regard' (p 8) (26) is rejected as early<sup>on in the compilation</sup> as 'A quoi servent les théories', it is, nevertheless, an appropriate categorisation of those devices in Pour un nouveau roman through which is realised the 'entreprise de nettoyage' - the name given by 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' to the decontamination of objects of human significance (p. 52). It is notable that Sartre's 'pouvoir laveur du regard' receives Robbe-Grillet's closest attention: the latter cites a passage in La Nausée where Roquentin, suffering under the influence of an object's 'personality' (invented by the protagonist himself), has only to fix his eyes upon that object to restore it to its meaningless objective self:

"(...) je me suis arrêté net, parce que je sentais dans ma main un objet froid qui retenait mon attention par une sorte de personnalité. J'ai ouvert la main, j'ai regardé: je tenais tout simplement le loquet de la porte" (p 66) (27).

What is being suggested in Pour un nouveau roman is a way of perceiving things which consistently records the true distance between the individual and the object of his perception:

'La description optique est en effet celle qui opère le plus aisément la fixation des distances: le regard,



s'il veut rester simple regard, laisse  
les choses à leur place respective' (p 65).

Robbe-Grillet employs the terms 'description optique' (28), 'regard' (29), and 'vue' (30) as synonyms for the 'sens privilégié', since they are responsible for representing the general narrative technique of non-anthropocentric description (p 65).

In analysing the 'modalités du regard' (31), or the various components which together constitute a relatively impartial presentation, Olga Bernal concludes that they are all committed to the 'acte de non-engagement' (32). Similarly, Pour un nouveau roman states that fundamental to the overall device of regard (33) is that it creates a deliberately limited form of description, for fear of transporting the reader beyond the object itself:

'La description (...) est avant tout une limitation: lorsqu'elle dit "parallélépipède", elle sait qu'elle n'atteint aucun au-delà, mais elle coupe court en même temps à toute possibilité d'en rechercher un' (p 65) (34).

In order to attain this emphatically restrictive depiction of things, certain conventions must be challenged: 'Se borner à la description, c'est évidemment récuser tous les autres modes d'approche de l'objet' (p 63). If the narrative is to restore the purely physical appearance or thereness (35) of objects then it must employ a technique to jolt

the reader out of his expectation of things as significant phenomena, for such significance transports his perception beyond the thing itself to its 'vérité humaine supérieure' (p 20). For this purpose, Robbe-Grillet proposes the device of présence (36), which portrays the 'réalité brute' of objects and events, neglected by symbolic or metaphorical description in its quest to represent a profound being behind the superficial (p 19). Whereas symbolism and metaphor render the non-human world 'moins étranger, plus compréhensible, plus rassurant' (p 18), présence is designed to shock the reader out of that 'confort intérieur' (p 19) by selecting only those details capable of constructing 'un monde plus solide, plus immédiat', the physical existence of which refuses anthropocentrism (p 20). Towards this end Robbe-Grillet refers to the descriptive model of cinematography whose ability to focus on an object while excluding its context succeeds in presenting 'le caractère inhabituel du monde qui nous entoure (...)' (pp 19-20). Pour un nouveau roman's theory of présence demands the transcription of what the prefatory note in Dans le labyrinthe refers to as 'une réalité strictement matérielle [qui] ne prétend à aucune valeur allégorique' (37). In contrast to the 'ailleurs immatériel et instable, toujours plus lointain, toujours plus flou' implied beyond the superficial existence of things in the 'traditional' narrative, the device of présence signifies no 'dépassement' (p 21): this, according to Robbe-Grillet, is demonstrated in the work of both Joë Bousquet, where the 'présence (des choses) est telle qu'elle suffit à nous convaincre et à nous

satisfaire totalement' (p 87) (38), and Kafka, in which the presentation of the 'signification immédiate des choses' re-establishes the relations between man and the world as 'constamment directs et immédiats' (p 142) (39). Symbolism refers the reader past the object - 'car le symbole, en effet, est ce qui, un donné quelconque, nous invite à le dépasser' (40); présence restricts his field of vision to the concrete here-and-now:

'La réalité ne serait plus sans cesse située ailleurs, mais ici et maintenant, sans ambiguïté. Le monde ne trouverait plus sa justification dans un sens caché, quel qu'il soit, son existence ne résiderait plus que dans sa présence concrète, solide, matérielle; au-delà de ce que nous voyons (de ce que nous percevons par nos sens) il n'y aurait désormais plus rien' (p 37).

As Robbe-Grillet's fiction has been regarded as a successful implementation of his theory against symbolic 'dépassement' (41), so the plays of Beckett appear to realise the anti-symbolic présence expounded in Pour un nouveau roman (42). Beckett's characters are emphatically there: 'le personnage de théâtre est en scène, c'est sa première qualité: il est là (p 95); the action and scenery are the manifestation of the present: '(...) seule compte la situation présente (...)' (pp 102-103); nothing in the spectacle refers the viewer to a past or a future: 'A cet ici inéluctable, répond un éternel maintenant (...)' (p 105). Where Beckett's 'thème essentiel de la présence' is of especial interest to

Robbe-Grillet, however, is in its dramatic, spectacular refusal to signify, since meaning is dependent upon a point of reference, denied existence by the here-and-now of the particular object or gesture:

'Sans passé, sans ailleurs, sans autre avenir que la mort, l'univers ainsi défini est nécessairement privé de sens, dans les deux acceptations du terme: il exclut aussi bien toute idée de progrès qu'une quelconque signification' (p 105)

' Meaning' is a word whose usage in Pour un nouveau roman requires careful consideration: in spite of the warning issued by the author that absolute absence of meaning is impossible, Jean Bloch-Michel interprets Robbe-Grillet's principle of présence as one which eradicates significance completely from description: '(...) la description de l'objet (est) à ce point dénuée de signification qu'il s'interdit ~~les termes~~ anthropomorphiques appliqués à des choses' (43). What in fact Robbe-Grillet suggests can be achieved through his descriptive technique is that meaning, which inevitably persists however genuine the attempt at an impartial recording, can be exposed as 'en trop face à la présence des choses' (p 38). The human significance attributed to things must be seen to come after the existence of those things and, therefore, to be secondary to their être-là (44): 'Dans les constructions romanesques futures, gestes et objets seront là avant d'être quelque chose (...)' (p 20). Compared with the 'présent perpétuel' (p 131) of objects - (...)

'et ils seront encore là après, durs, inaltérables, présents pour toujours, et comme se moquant de leur propre sens' (p. 20) , as 'Une voie pour le roman futur' explains: '(...) s'il arrive encore aux choses de servir un instant de support aux passions humaines, ce ne sera que temporairement (...)'

(p 20). The descriptive device of présence has, therefore, reduced the *status* of significance from primordial to a later, subjective act, and, secondly, from its 'traditional' role of essential and permanent to a temporary 'support', thus replacing the 'tyrannie des significations' with the 'tissu provisoire' of meanings unable to impose their will on the world of things (p 20).

To implement the principle of regard, that objects should be presented as insignificant - 'pour mieux montrer à quel point elles restent étrangères à l'homme' - a technique is required to stress the actual distance between the individual and things (p 20). The function of Robbe-Grillet's distance (45) is described in Olga Bernal's image in which is ruptured the false bond 'uniting' man and the world in the 'traditional' narrative: 'Les liens "naturels" que l'écrivain classique maintenait entre le monde, la nature et l'homme sont brisés' (46). 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' emphasises the importance of destroying this 'complicité' without the attendant risk of contriving, as in tragedy or the absurd, 'une solidarité malheureuse':

'Enregistrer la distance entre l'objet et moi, et les distances propres de

l'objet [ses distances extérieures, c'est-à-dire ses mesures], et les distances des objets entre eux, et insister encore sur le fait que ce sont seulement des distances [et non pas des déchirements], cela revient à établir que les choses sont là et qu'elles ne sont rien d'autre que des choses, chacune limitée à soi' (p 65).

In order to convey accurately the separation between man and things - 'mesurer les distances, sans vain regret, sans haine, sans désespoir (...) ' - the description must record with the greatest possible degree of precision and without human interest (p 65). Osten Södergard interprets such a measuring as 'mathematical': 'Il (Robbe-Grillet) choisit exclusivement la description géométrique qui permet d'enregistrer la distance entre moi et l'objet, la distance entre les objets' (47). Despite Robbe-Grillet's own resistance to the interpretation of his descriptive technique as 'objective', the depiction of the novel in 'A quoi servent les théories' as 'le travail patient, la construction méthodique, l'architecture longuement méditée' (contrasting it with the 'traditional' conception of literature as 'folie') lends weight to this evaluation (p 11). Evidence of the feeling that Robbe-Grillet's distance device is mathematically 'objective' is most obvious where critics condemn his description as indifferent to human interest: Dominique Aubier regards the author's perceptual precision as <sup>one whereby</sup> 'il'essai: de lacérer l'illusion, de la crever par la preuve mathématique de son peu de raisons d'être', as though the design to shatter the 'humanist' deception were an act of cruelty (48).

A.S.Labarthe writes, in his article entitled 'Histoire d'un échec', (1958) that the objective recording of the actual distance between man and the world is based upon the desire to deny insight: '(...) on ne nomme plus, on décrit objectivement, quasi-géométriquement, donc, on nie la magie au profit d'un genre inédit de la périphrase' (49). Similarly, the device of distance attracts comparisons to an 'activité rationnelle et anti-poétique qui met le monde en fiches, en catalogues, en analyses, en diagrammes' and becomes, as such, identified with an 'objective' science whose field of observation is restricted to the material and inanimate (50).

Pour un nouveau roman argues that the 'fixation des distances' between the individual and his environment be maintained by not only a precise 'mathematical' or 'scientific' description of objects, but also by a narrative eye confined to a superficial view (p 65). Barthes suggests, in 'Littérature objective', that Robbe-Grillet's technique of surface (51) is, like that of distance, 'anti-poetic':

'L'écriture de Robbe-Grillet est sans alibi, sans épaisseur et sans profondeur: elle reste à la surface de l'objet et la parcourt également, sans privilégier telle ou telle des ses qualités: c'est donc le contraire même de l'écriture poétique' (52).

'Une voie pour le roman futur' defines the function of surface as preventing any interpretation of what might lie beyond the object of description: '(...) la surface des choses a cessé d'être pour nous le masque

de leur cœur, sentiment qui préludait à tous les "au-delà" de la métaphysique' (p 23). Just as for Maurice-Jean Lefebvre symbolism leads inevitably to an 'au-delà' or a 'dépassement', so the presentation of the surface of things which is not symbolic of a 'vérité humaine profonde' forces the eye to rest on the surface of what is described and confront the full thereness (53). Barthes's contention that 'l'objet robbegrilletien n'est pas allégorique, ni dualiste' (54) is based on the analysis that the narrative regard does not penetrate the surface 'puisque'il n'y a rien à l'intérieur (...)' (p 48). Pour un nouveau roman best illustrates the restrictive technique of surface through reference to the work of Raymond Roussel, whose 'opacité or <sup>as opaque</sup> portrayal of objects renders impossible any symbolic interpretation: 'Comme il n'y a jamais rien au-delà de la chose décrite, c'est-à-dire qu'aucune sur-nature ne s'y cache, aucun symbolisme (...), le regard est bien obligé de s'arrêter à la surface même des choses (...)' (p 71). Recognising the urge of symbolic signification, Roussel employs the device of an 'opacité sans mystère', whereby the narrator lifts the lid off the superficial description to reveal what lies beneath, but '(...) il n'y a rien derrière ces surfaces, pas d'intérieur, pas de secret, pas d'arrière-pensée' (p 71). Similarly, Robbe-Grillet's narrative will occasionally invite the reader to search beyond the surface of objects described only to reinforce the absence of any profound meaning and re-establish Bernal's 'non-être au cœur de la réalité' (55). The descriptive technique



of surface, therefore, returns our attention to the physical appearance of the thing itself, to its 'chose-en-soi' existence (56). In accepting the limitation of literary description as necessarily superficial and the fact that '(...) seule la science, en revanche, peut prétendre connaître l'intérieur des choses' (pp 63-64) (57), Robbe-Grillet frees the narrative presentation of objects from the 'illusion de la connaissance' or 'la conception qui croit en la profondeur des choses et qui en recherche l'âme' (58). This is seen, in Pour un nouveau roman, as a process of liberation from the 'vieux mythes de la "profondeur"' in general and from the 'intérieurité suspecte' attached to the objects of description in particular (p 20) (59). A superficial presentation of material phenomena not only restricts the reader's perception to external appearance but also maintains the distance between man and his surroundings which is necessary for the independence of both: 'Décrire cette surface n'est donc que cela: constituer cette extériorité et cette indépendance' (p.64). Barthes's analysis of Robbe-Grillet's technique of surface implies that profondeur and signification are thwarted by the imposition of a non-symbolic silence on what is described:

'Le silence de Robbe-Grillet sur le cœur romantique des choses n'est pas un silence allusif ou sacral, c'est un silence qui fonde irrémédiablement la limite de l'objet, non son au-delà' (60).

Thus the 'rhetoric of the heart' is replaced by a 'rhetoric of the

surface' (61). The most serious implication of surface is the way in which it transfers the focus of attention from the profound level of human psychology to a superficial level where the narrative refuses to penetrate the external world. Whereas the 'traditional' histoire (whether an 'étude de passion', a 'conflit de passions', or an 'absence de passion') is dependent upon the description of a deeper, symbolic essence of things, the nouveau roman excludes the possibility of a coherent content, and especially the 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' (p 15), by reducing 'toute vision du monde à la mesure optique de ses surfaces' (62). Robbe-Grillet emphasises in 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau' that the domination of objects over human intrigue is less a result of their physical occupation of the text and more the consequence of the nature of their description: firstly, the 'traditional' narrative is itself occupied by characters' inanimate possessions - 'quant à ce qu'on appelle plus précisément des choses, il y<sup>en</sup> a toujours eu beaucoup dans le roman'; secondly, objects in Balzac's fiction are regarded by many readers as more "'humains"' than those in Robbe-Grillet's descriptions because of their psychological depth (p 117). That which is described in Robbe-Grillet's fiction bears no human profondeur: 'L'objet reste là, il a la même liberté d'étalement qu'un portrait balzacien, sans en avoir par autant la nécessité psychologique' (63). Again, Roussel's technique of 'opacité', whereby the narrator's vision of the world is purely external, is exploited by Pour un nouveau roman to illustrate the effect of surface on

content: '(...) au-delà de ce qu'il décrit, il n'y a rien, rien de ce qui peut traditionnellement s'appeler un message' (p 70). Robbe-Grillet's narrative, a 'littérature d'objets extérieurs' (64), creates a 'monde sans profondeur' (65) and, consequently, produces, like that of Roussel, an 'opacité sans mystère' (p 71). Since 'traditional' content is centred on human affairs, and since these are obviously portrayed through character, it is a priority of the device of surface to prohibit the creation of a personnage (66). 'Sur quelques notions périmées' reveals the extent to which contemporary fiction has marked the decline of conventional psychological portraits: the narrators of La Nausée and L'Etranger are deliberately unmemorable and incomplete as characters; Céline's Voyage au bout de la nuit offers not a single character portrait; Beckett changes names and physical appearance without regard for consistency; Faulkner applies the same name to two different characters; in Das Schloss Kafka's hero is represented by only an initial. Robbe-Grillet sees the contribution of the nouveau roman to the disintegration of personnage as one based on a description '(...) qui met entre parenthèses les préoccupations psychologiques, morales (...), qui donnaient au roman traditionnel sa profondeur' (67). The exclusive concentration of the text on the 'external comportment' of characters *implies no distinction* between the treatment of the human and the inanimate in Robbe-Grillet, since both appear to contain no 'vérité humaine profonde' (69). Roland Barthes explains how man and things receive the same superficial description and

how the distinction between these 'traditionally' separate entities is blurred: '(...) l'intériorité est mise entre parenthèses, les objets, les espaces, et la circulation de l'homme, des uns aux autres sont promus au rang de sujets' (69). This relegation of character to the status of superficial object is at once regarded as dull and tedious - '(...) nous nous enfonçons ainsi dans une littérature d'inventaire (...), qu'elle secrète un ennui pesant' (70) - and, as in Claude Mauriac's L'Alittérature contemporaine (1958), indicative of Robbe-Grillet's disdain for mankind (71). For this reason, surface has been held responsible for the interpretation of the descriptive technique expounded in Pour un nouveau roman as 'dehumanizing' (72). Not only does an externalised narrative degrade the 'natural criterion' (73) of character to the rank of inanimate - or, at least, sub-human (74) phenomena, but it does so with apparent cruelty, indulging in the 'pleasures of destruction' (75). In particular, 'Sur quelques notions périmées' and 'Eléments d'une anthologie moderne' seem to substantiate the claim that the descriptive 'thingishness' (76) and resulting 'faiblesse psychologique' and 'humiliation métaphysique' (77) of character reveal, in Robbe-Grillet's theory, 'un profond ressentiment contre l'homme' (78). The first of these essays makes explicit the author's acknowledgement that the 'culte exclusif de "l'humain" a fait place à une prise de conscience (...) moins anthropocentriste', and implies a belief in the decline of human supremacy and individualism: 'Peut-être n'est-ce pas un progrès, mais

il est certain que l'époque actuelle est plutôt celle du numéro matricule' (p 28) (79). Secondly, in 'Samuel Beckett ou la présence sur la scène', Robbe-Grillet selects those elements of the playwright's work which contribute specifically to man's 'pauvreté' (p 98) (80): Gogo and Didi in En attendant Godot 'refusent encore plus obstinément toute autre signification que la plus banale, la plus immédiate: ce sont des hommes' (p 98). Yet, instead of being granted the harmless condition of <sup>the</sup> être-là (81) of objects, Beckett's characters are forced into a state of excessive and demoralising insignificance, 'comme si nous assistions à une espèce de régression au-delà de rien' (p 99). The physical suffering endured by Lucky and Pozzo in their 'frontières de l'agonie' (p 100), by Hamm, 'tragiquement physique' (p 104) in Fin de Partie, culminating in 'cette attente de la mort' (p 106), is comparable to that experienced by characters in the fiction of Robbe-Grillet, which carries out 'une mutilation gratuite, un aveuglement de jeune, une sorte de désespoir stérile qui conduisait à la destruction (...)' (p 46) (82). Kléber Haedans's description of the presentation of man in the nouveau roman in general as 'l'extermination du personnage' (83) is, according to this analysis of surface, an appropriately destructive principle for the 'nouveau né balbutiant (...)' toujours considéré comme un monstre (...)' (p 17). Robbe-Grillet's device of superficial description and the other sub-techniques of regard are seen to imply, therefore, more serious consequences than the aesthetic virtuosity or 'technical sophistication' of an unmotivated 'objectivist' literature (84). The

majority of critics who subscribe to the theory that Pour un nouveau roman proposes an entirely 'non-anthropomorphic' narrative of objects and events (85), uphold the view that this leads to an obsession with inanimate phenomena (86) and presents, ultimately, an 'inhumane perspective' of the world (87). The 'traduction d'un monde morcelé, vulgarisé, vu en surface' (88) is, however, but a single *condemnation* of Robbe-Grillet's attitude towards the world; the primary principal of regard and one which is common to the above *analyses*, is the 'maigreur essentielle' of a narrative which repudiates significance (89).

CHAPTER TWO:

THE 'SUBJECTIVIST' INTERPRETATION OF POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN

## LOCATING AND IDENTIFYING THE 'SUBJECTIVIST' THEORY

In contrast to the 'objectivist' interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman is the 'subjectivist' analysis, based on the view that the compilation expounds the theory of a literature which, far from excluding or reducing human significance in the text, focusses the reader's attention on to the essentially 'subjective' nature of perception and narration. Within this category of 'subjectivist' interpretation lie two different theories: the first of these maintains that Pour un nouveau roman incorporates a change of Robbe-Grillet's principles, in which the author shifts from an 'objectivist' to a 'subjectivist' stance; the second reasons that no such conversion takes place and that the argument for a new, highly 'subjective' novel is consistently presented throughout the work.

Locating the exact point at which Pour un nouveau roman transfers its attention to those techniques necessary to create a more emphatically 'subjective' text, where the narrative exposes its lack of impartiality, proves difficult. Connerton argues that, while 'Une voie pour le roman futur' and 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' represent Robbe-Grillet's ambition to 'purge the descriptive language of anthropomorphism', the final two essays, 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' and 'Du réalisme à la réalité', call for a literature equipped to record the 'marginal states of mind' as exemplified in the 'emphatic subjectivity of his descriptions' (1). This can be easily substantiated by



the text of Pour un nouveau roman, which undergoes an obvious transformation from setting forth 'la destitution des vieux mythes de la "profondeur"' (p 22 and p 45) to acknowledging the need for 'un déroulement subjectif, mental, personnel' (p 132), clearly dependent upon the narration of *psychological or 'profound' phenomena*. Yet the fundamental similarities between these two areas of the compilation are ignored in the search for a location where the author's viewpoints diverge (2). Bruce Morrissette, reflecting on 'Theory and Practice in the works of Robbe-Grillet' (1962), illustrates how powerfully 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau' repudiates an 'objective' or non-human novel: 'Le Nouveau Roman ne s'intéresse qu'à l'homme et à sa situation dans le monde' (pp 116-117) and 'Le Nouveau Roman ne vise qu'à une subjectivité totale' (pp 117-118) are sub-sections which reject the 'objectivist' interpretations, 'Le Nouveau Roman veut chasser l'homme du monde' and 'Le Nouveau Roman vise à la parfaite objectivité' (p 114), respectively (3). Preventing Morrissette from pin-pointing a particular stage in Pour un nouveau roman in which Robbe-Grillet's 'humanism' can be detected, is the critic's realisation that it in fact underlies many of the essays prior to 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau'. Finally, a different problem is encountered by Stephen Heath who, having established 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' as ~~the text~~ the most prominent theoretical pronouncement of 'representational' art (whereby Robbe-Grillet seeks to transcribe reality devoid of emotion), is led outside Pour un nouveau roman to L'Année dernière à Marienbad (1961) as he discovers here the depth of passion beneath the 'geometrician' (4).

The tendency to support the contention that Robbe-Grillet's theoretical stance shifts from 'objectivist' to 'subjectivist' through reference to his fictional works is a common error. In his preface to Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (1963), Barthes considers the dispute as to whether Robbe-Grillet 'Number One' ('chosiste') or 'Number Two' ('humaniste') represents the more valid description but, instead of concentrating exclusively on the texts of Pour un nouveau roman, the analysis hinges on the author's 'success' or 'failure' of implementing his novelistic principles: Les Gommes is considered the realisation of 'chosiste' insignificance, for example, whilst Le Voyeur 'betrays' 'chosisme' by metaphorical description (5). Similarly, Morrissette, in seeking to establish how far Robbe-Grillet's theory is realised in his fictional works, concludes on a basic discrepancy between the two areas: the former is regarded as representing the 'objectivist' principles of the 'romancier des choses', whereas the latter practises a significant transformation in revealing 'un humaniste à la place d'un géomètre' (6). According to Morrissette's analysis, therefore, Robbe-Grillet puts forward one theory in Pour un nouveau roman - that of the 'destructeur de sens' - and implements another in his novels - that of the 'créateur de sens' (7). Gérard Genette blurs the distinction between theory and fiction altogether when he claims that Les Gommes incorporates the principles of 'l'écrivain réaliste et objectif, promenant sur toutes choses l'œil impassible d'une sorte de stylo-caméra', and that Le Voyeur, La Jalousie and Dans le Labyrinthe represent the theoretical and practical conversion from

the 'arpenteur pointilleux' to 'spéléologue de l'imaginaire' (8). Consequently, Robbe-Grillet as theorist and novelist are fused into a single persona, and the shift from 'objectivist' to 'subjectivist' is no longer located within Pour un nouveau roman but is misapplied to the fictional works:

'Robbe-Grillet a cessé d'être le symbole d'un néo-réalisme "chosiste", et le sens public de son œuvre a basculé irrésistiblement sur le versant de l'imaginaire et de la subjectivité' (9).

Genette misinterprets what he detects as a change in narrative style as indicative of a theoretical volte-face. To a certain extent, Robbe-Grillet's own pronouncements about his novels have, despite warnings (10), contributed towards both the perception of his fiction as the implementation of his principles of the nouveau roman, and the belief that these novels constitute the evolution from 'objective' to 'subjective' art-forms: Les Gommés is categorised by its author as 'un roman descriptif et scientifique (où) les événements se passent hors de la psychologie', while both Le Voyeur and La Jalousie are, according to the same source, representative of 'cette subjectivité (qui) est la caractéristique essentielle de ce qu'on a appelé le Nouveau Roman' and can be regarded as 'parfaitement subjectifs' (11). The confusion between Pour un nouveau roman and Robbe-Grillet's fiction is enhanced further when 'Du réalisme à la réalité' identifies Le Voyeur with an attack on the principle of 'l'illusion réaliste' (p 138) and

contrasts this work with the 'subjectivist' 'vérité psychologique *directe*' of La Jalousie and Dans le labyrinthe (p 139) (12). The first type of interpretation within the category of 'subjectivist' analysis contains, in conclusion, two fundamental flaws: for not only are critics unable to situate the point at which Pour un nouveau roman modifies its theoretical approach, but as a result of this difficulty, the move from 'objectivist' to 'subjectivist' is sought in the novels of Robbe-Grillet.

The second 'subjectivist' interpretation is one which argues that Pour un nouveau roman is consistent in its presentation of the principle that literature should dispel the myth of an 'objective' art-form. On the one level, Robbe-Grillet's 'humanism' is a feature of the texts, and can be seen as evidence of the author's concern for man both within and outside of the novel (13). 'A quoi servent les théories' rejects the categorisation of the nouveau roman as a 'roman objectif' on the grounds that the novelist, far from banishing man from his world ('(...) chasser l'homme du monde (...)'), is constantly in search of a form which expresses in more accurate and relevant terms man's relationship with the world (p 8). Robbe-Grillet describes his work as synonymous with 'de nouvelles formes romanesques, capables d'exprimer (ou de créer) de nouvelles relations entre l'homme et le monde (...)' the ultimate aim of which, '(...) de construire le monde et l'homme de demain', is an indication of the priority awarded to human affairs in the nouveau roman (p 9). New literary forms are required, not because of an

obsessive pre-occupation with style and structure over human intrigue, as suggested in the 'accusation de "formalisme"' (p 40), but rather because the material world has changed - 'le monde lui-même n'est plus cette propriété privée, héréditaire et monnayable, cette sorte de proie (...)' (p 28) - and, therefore, different means are required to express man's situation, since 'la littérature expose simplement la situation de l'homme et de l'univers avec lequel il est aux prises' (p 37) (14). It is the lack of awareness of this last principle which imprisons 'traditional' literature in a fixed form. Robbe-Grillet illustrates the reluctance of the conventional novel to modify internally and, consequently, to create an appropriate expression for the human condition, through his analysis of engagement literature; ironically (even) the most 'revolutionary' works re-employ well-established forms and so fail to constitute actual novelty:

'Ce qui explique, en fin de compte, que le réalisme socialiste n'a besoin d'aucune recherche dans la forme romanesque, qu'il se méfie au plus haut point de toute nouveauté dans la technique des arts, que ce qui lui convient le mieux, on le voit chaque jour, est l'expression la plus "bourgeoise"' (p 38).

The nouveau roman, on the other hand, is sensitive to the need to reflect human problems, and demonstrates 'la volonté de les résoudre de l'intérieur' - through language (p 39). In this way art participates intrinsically in the affairs of man, and becomes an act of engagement, of innovation, preparing the reader for true change,

'- peut-être même à la révolution' (p 39) (15). Robbe-Grillet's rejection of 'humanisme tragique' (p 53) and 'humanisme transcendant' (p 144) is based on the belief that they represent a false 'pont d'âme' between man and the world which does not exist, but also that this 'humanism' hinders progress by locking the individual in a vice of suffering which he experiences only indirectly through a literary form irrelevant to his present position. The 'purpose of meaninglessness' (16) is not to banish meaning from the novel, but rather to release man from the grip of 'humanist' signification which, in the case of 'tragic communion' (17), attempts to inflict both the rigid conditions of anthropocentrism and a contrived 'angoisse' (p 54):

'Et cette absence de signification,  
l'homme aujourd'hui (ou de demain ...)  
ne l'éprouve plus comme un manque, ni  
comme un déchirement. Devant un tel  
vide, il ne ressent désormais nul  
vertige. Son cœur n'a plus besoin  
d'un gouffre où se loger' (p 53).

Robbe-Grillet defends the 'relativist' (18) nature of meaning in his novels against the accusation that this constitutes a 'crime contre l'humanité' (p 47) (19) by explaining how the 'point de vue humaniste' misrepresents man's relationship with the world: for while 'l'humanisme décide de choisir l'homme comme justification de tout' (p 48), the truth is that the individual, far from dominating his environment, is powerless to impose his will on it: 'L'homme est seulement, de son propre point de vue, le seul témoin' (p 53). This argument

is expanded in 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau', whose very title implies the close relationship between a new perception of man's position in the universe and the search for an appropriate art-form to express it. This claim is reiterated by the sub-heading 'le Nouveau Roman ne s'intéresse qu'à l'homme et à sa situation dans le monde' (p 116). In order to view the human situation from a fresh perspective, the novelist must endeavour to envisage the world free of anthropocentric motives, and this he achieves 'dès qu'il accepte de se libérer des idées toutes faites, en littérature comme dans la vie' (p 118). The basic prerequisite for a literature intent on expressing human affairs with 'une subjectivité totale' (p 117) is that the signification toute faite, with which 'traditional' narrative attributes objects and events, be replaced by meanings dependent upon the individual's state of mind and of temporary status (p 119). It is, therefore, inappropriate to describe the nouveau roman as a 'Roman objectif' (20), since Robbe-Grillet's underlying principle is that his fiction should become so integrated with man's present situation that it resembles 'une façon de vivre dans le monde présent' (p 143).

On another level, Pour un nouveau roman can be interpreted as 'subjectivist' on account of those specific technical innovations it promotes in the novel. Fundamental to all the descriptive techniques of the nouveau roman is the attempt to expose the fallacy of a literature aspiring to the exact and impartial recording of reality.

According to 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau', the notion of objectivité is as inapplicable to human perception in general as it is to literary narrative: 'Pris dans son sens habituel - neutre, froid, impartial -, le mot devenait une absurdité' (p 117). The crucial distinction must, therefore, be drawn between observational lucidity - '(...) y voir plus clair' - and the misconception that the world can be regarded and represented 'objectively' (p 119). As though to emphasise the 'subjective' nature of what is recounted in the nouveau roman, Robbe-Grillet selects as his narrator 'le moins neutre, le moins impartial des hommes' (p 118). Far from 'rising above the weakness of human nature' (21), then, the narrator indulges openly in extremely irrational behaviour, 'engagé (...) toujours dans une aventure passionnelle des plus obsédantes, au point de déformer sa vision et de produire chez lui des imaginations proches du délire' (p 118). The creation of a narrator whose representation of events is not entirely reliable is in contrast to the omniscient, omnipresent narrator of Balzac's novels whose descriptions are accepted as 'objectively' accurate:

'Quel est ce narrateur omniscient, omniprésent, qui se place partout en même temps, qui voit en même temps l'endroit et l'envers des choses, qui suit en même temps les mouvements du visage et ceux de la conscience, qui connaît à la fois le présent, le passé et l'avenir de toute aventure? Ça ne peut être qu'un Dieu' (p 118).



The function of the 'traditional' author-narrator (22) 'se borne à rapporter, à transmettre, des événements dont il a été témoin' thereby creating a 'convention tacite' (p 29) between reader and writer of the text, according to which both embrace the verity of the narrative, itself comparable to 'un document, (...) une biographie, (...) une quelconque histoire vécue' (p 30). Since the world of Balzac's novels is 'un univers stable, cohérent, continu, univoque, entièrement déchiffrable' (p 31), the narrative, 'à l'image de la réalité' (p 30), must reflect the intelligibility of that world by interpreting and deducing 'truths', thus proving, by extension, that 'it is the function of the novelist to reveal the hidden life at its source' (23). For Robbe-Grillet, the concept of an absolute 'truth' is fallacious, since 'l'impersonnalité totale du regard (...) est trop évidemment un chimère' (p 18). Furthermore, the involvement of his narrators in an 'aventure passionnelle' contests Culler's notion that the 'narrator is (...) a more knowledgeable version of the reader' (24). This effects a shift in emphasis concerning the role and function of both novelist and narrator: 'Car la fonction de l'art n'est jamais d'illustrer une vérité (...)' (p 12). The reader who seeks in the nouveau roman definitive or 'correct' answers to metaphysical questions is, therefore, not appreciative of the implications of Robbe-Grillet's theory of subjectivité totale (p 117), for '(...) Dieu seul (...) peut prétendre être objectif' and the narrator, by contrast, is 'un homme situé dans l'espace et le temps, conditionné par ses passions, un homme comme vous et moi' (p 118). As his experience is 'limitée, incertaine'

(p 118), so the 'significations du monde', which his 'subjective' perspective communicates, remain 'partielles, provisoires, contradictoires même, et toujours contestées' (p 120). The solutions to such problems as '(...) notre vie a-t-elle un sens?', 'Quelle est la place de l'homme sur la terre?' (p 119) are no longer his responsibility: 'La réalité a-t-elle un sens? L'artiste contemporain ne peut répondre à cette question: il n'en sait rien' (p 120). It can be inferred from the more 'human' or 'limited' position of the narrator in the nouveau roman that, since his knowledge is not comprehensive, his is not the mediatory duty of transmitting the 'vérité humaine' which, in an omniscient narrative, attributes significance to what is perceived (p 29). The 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' implicates the narrators of Balzac and La Fayette in the search for and communication of such a 'truth': having descended to the depths of human psychology, the narrator is required to transmit messages once he has returned to the surface (p 10). Narrative analysis of this nature is repudiated in Pour un nouveau roman on two accounts: the first is that, in order to analyse, the narrator assumes an external position from which an 'objective assessment is possible, whereas Robbe-Grillet expounds an internalised récit: 'Le monde n'est plus observé du dehors, mais on le montre reflété par la conscience du héros' (25). The second reason *for omitting such analysis is* that an external, interpretative viewpoint actually diminishes psychological insight, since 'categories of conscious intelligence distort feelings' and 'analysis prevents the presence of consciousness' (26). 'Temps et description

dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' illustrates the significance of these two primary aspects of Robbe-Grillet's internalised narrative by relating his technique to that of cinematography. Firstly, it is the 'objective' quality of the 'narration cinématographique' (27) or the 'ciné-œil' (28) which is highlighted: 'Ce n'est pas l'objectivité de la caméra qui (...) passionne, mais ses possibilités dans le domaine du subjectif, de l'imaginaire' (p 128). Ironically, it is the fact that the camera does not analyse the object upon which it focusses that leads to the erroneous conclusion that it is a device for 'objective' recording: this view is represented by Genette when he claims that L'Année dernière à Marienbad, despite its quality of the 'fantastique', is in fact designed to be 'objectif-réaliste' (29). The question therefore arises: what means are employed in both cinematography and the nouveau roman to ensure 'un déroulement subjectif, mental, personnel' (p 132)? This can be answered by establishing the premise that behind every portrait is a mind at work. Just as in the 'traditional' novel the décor is seen as 'l'image de l'homme' (p 126), so the objects under scrutiny in a film or Robbe-Grillet's narrative reveal, through their relative positioning and overall composition, a mental condition: 'Tout l'intérêt (...) - c'est-à-dire la place de l'homme (...) n'est donc plus dans la chose décrite, mais plus dans le mouvement même de la description' (pp 127-128). This is not to attribute to things themselves a permanent significance, for '(...) if objects have meaning, it is not due to any inherent qualities in them, but to the way the author presents them (...)

and to the associations which these objects evoke in (the) mind's eye' (30). The narrative eye of Robbe-Grillet, 'typiquement cinématographique par la façon d'approcher les objets, de tourner autour d'eux et de les saisir' (31), avoids consciously analytical reflection '(...) pour laisser parler les choses elles-mêmes' (32). The camera picture is, like the literary word, essentially 'allusive' (33) and 'indirect': the film as an entity, like the text of the nouveau roman, devoid of explicit authorial or narrational interpretation, becomes 'a collection of signs of absent things (...)' (34). The apparent pre-occupation with inanimate phenomena is, therefore, but a technique to present the 'subjective point of view (...) objectively' (35), whereby objects reflect the emotional state of the narrator, 'et non pas du tout parce que notre description serait trop neutre, trop objective, puisque justement elle ne l'est pas' (p 117). Attempts to represent a scene impartially are themselves engineered by an ulterior motive: Robbe-Grillet's detailed descriptions of objects reveal an 'obsessional objectivity' (36) often 'where escape from psychological stress is needed' (37). This is clearly signalled in Pour un nouveau roman: 'Même si l'on y trouve beaucoup d'objets, et décrits avec minutie, il y a toujours d'abord le regard qui les voit, la pensée qui les revoit, la passion qui les déforme' (p 116). Alternatively, when the camera lens focusses on minutiae, the spectator is drawn into the mind of the perceiver, thus being prevented from distancing himself intellectually, since 'exact measurement is not verism but rather a device (...) to frustrate the stock response and

communicate experience directly' (38). In the absence of an overt psychological composition, the misinterpretation that 'les matériaux sont associés les uns aux autres par une sorte de hasard indifférent' (39) may be made, yet even here, as Barthes discovers, objects cannot remain 'silent': 'Les objets font partir: ce sont des médiateurs de culture infiniment plus rapides que les idées, des producteurs de fantasmes tout aussi actifs que les "situations" (...)' (40). The 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' is replaced by a 'psychologie objective' which is not, as the term might wrongly suggest, a form of omniscient analysis but rather a means of reflecting mood as achieved by silent film-free from narrative comment (41). If it is true of the objects occupying Robbe-Grillet's narrative that 'la répétition et la conjonction les dépouillent de leur être-là, pour les revêtir d'un être-pour-quelque chose' (42), it is equally important to bear in mind that the 'subjectivity-objectivity' technique is fundamentally distinct from literary symbolism, which attributes to man's environment a human essence, or 'cœur romantique' (43). It is stressed in Pour un nouveau roman that, while 'les objets dans nos romans n'ont jamais de présence en dehors des perceptions humaines, réelles ou imaginaires (...)' (p 116) they are, nevertheless, merely temporary 'supports' for human emotions and not true symbols (p 48) (44). Morrisette clarifies the distinction between metaphoric and symbolical literature, on the one hand, which denies things their separate 'chose-en-soi' existence, and Robbe-Grillet's 'objective correlatives' (45) ('corrélatifs objectifs' (46) as they are subsequently known) whose 'mediatory function'

aims to provide a tangible yet transient point of reference for human emotion (47). The term 'objective correlative' at no stage features in Pour un nouveau roman, yet it is an apt description of the way in which the narrator's feelings are conveyed through an internalised portrayal of objects, and one which the author believes avoids the 'affirmation humaniste' of symbolism - 'vous m'avez sauvé du symbolisme en inventant la "corrélation objective"!' (48) - in spite of apparent similarities between the two devices (49).

If Robbe-Grillet's narrative is likened to a 'film intérieur' (50) in which inanimate phenomena provide a 'psychologie extériorisée' (51), this entire process is dependent upon the technique of direct presentation (52). 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' describes the 'rôle fondamental' of narrative in simple terms: 'faire voir' (p 125). In other words, the reader, instead of being required to join the narrator in the interpretation of 'things seen', is exposed directly to 'him-seeing-things', or the process of perception itself (53). 'Traditional' description proves 'unnatural' (54) because, in its explication and categorisation of objects and events, it removes them, through intellectual distancing, from the reader; the récit of Robbe-Grillet resembles 'a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking' (55) and, in its design to 'dramatise the seeing eye', involves the receiver of the text in the emotional experience of the narrator (56). It is emphasised in Pour un nouveau roman, that the entire 'déroulement' occurs '(...) dans la tête du narrateur,

invisible, c'est-à-dire de l'écrivain, et du lecteur' (p 133). This identification of reader with narrator, or 'knowledge through feeling', (57) is achieved by the technique of 'style indirect libre', or 'free indirect discourse' (58) which presents the 'inner life, the mental and emotional activities' of a character without the intrusiveness of authorial or narrational analysis (59). L'Année dernière à Marienbad transposes the protagonists' feelings on to the spectator so that the latter experiences their full 'subjective' force: ultimately, the story of the film takes place 'dans sa tête (...), exactement imaginée par lui' (p 132). Nathalie Sarraute describes a similar operation in L'Ere du soupçon (1956) when, discussing the necessity of conveying the narrator's 'sensations souvent très intenses', she remarks that '(...) il n'était possible de les communiquer au lecteur que par des images qui en donnent des équivalents et lui fassent éprouver des sensations analogues' (60). Although Pour un nouveau roman does not promise the communication of 'la source secrète de notre existence' (61) through the technique of 'direct perception' (62), the process by which Sarraute realises textually '(...) des mouvements indéfinissables, qui glissent très rapidement aux limites de notre conscience (...), (qui) sont à l'origine de nos gestes, de nos paroles, des sentiments que nous manifestons (...)' resembles Robbe-Grillet's narration of the unconscious by way of detailed presentation of apparently insignificant events (63). The whole thrust of the narrative device of direct presentation is '(...) to deny the authenticity of that rationally ordered, chronolo-

gically recapitulated slice of experience' (64), according to which the 'traditional' novel distorts man's 'inner reality', and to replace this omniscient translation of thoughts and action by a 'présent perpétuel' (p 131). This lends a new definition to the présence in Robbe-Grillet's narrative for, in contrast to the 'objectivist' interpretation which argues that the présence of objects is intended to convey their meaningless être-là, the 'subjectivist' analysis regards the physical immediacy of things as a means to communicate emotion - and, consequently, their temporary 'human' significance - directly. In cinematographic terms, the 'qualité primordiale' (p 128) of the image is that it exposes the spectator to an object or scene without recourse to a temporal autrefois or a spatial ailleurs (p 131); the nouveau roman, employing the grammatical mode of L'Année dernière à Marienbad and L'Immortelle, secures objects of description in the 'présent de l'indicatif' (65), thus creating an 'histoire (...) en train de se dérouler sous nos yeux, ici et maintenant' (p 131). The linear chronology of 'traditional' narrative is subverted by the 'déroulement subjectif' while the conventions of distance and space, responsible for providing an intelligible, rational context in the novel, are shattered into a 'discontinuité spatiale' (p 133). The narrator catches an event 'au sein de son apparente immobilité' (p 127) and locks the reader in that particular moment and place, excluding 'tout recours à la mémoire' (p 131) as it prohibits retrospective and projective analysis, through forcing the 'inner reality' of the narrator 'to be made immediately present' (66). Cruickshank describes the operation



whereby

'(...) this immobility of a scene is a token of the powers of the human mind which, by transforming the continuity of experience into the discontinuity of memory and imagination is able to offer the illusion of having arrested the advance of time' (67).

Robbe-Grillet would argue, however, that 'discontinuity' on this level of narration is the most effective method, ironically, of presenting the 'continuity of experience'; for the narrative linearity and cohesiveness of the 'traditional' novel are misrepresentations of our mental processes, and any attempt to describe human psychology in such terms '(...) aboutissait tôt ou tard à une série de contradictions, donc à une impasse' (p 132) (68). The only form which can appropriately and directly convey this 'inner reality' is what Gerhart calls 'the time-space language of film-art' (69).

Finally, 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' illustrates how the narrative of the nouveau roman highlights its own 'subjective' perspective by rendering impossible a distinction between 'external' and 'internal' realities. Again, the cinematographic model is used to demonstrate this technique: L'Immortelle is narrated by 'un œil tourné aussi bien vers le dedans que vers le dehors' (70), thus establishing 'l'impossibilité de distinguer clairement ce qui est "réel" de ce qui est mental' (p 129). Cinematographic 'shifting' and 'travelling' (71),

whereby the camera records with a 'lumière égale' (72) the imaginary and actual perceptions of the narrator, is reflected in Robbe-Grillet's novel, such that 'the freedom with which the text passes from exteriority to interiority, without boundaries or textual demarcations' repudiates an absolute distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' description (73). As L'Immortelle at no point aspires to an impartial recording of events - '(...) la structure du film ne donne pas assez de confiance dans la vérité objective des choses' (p 129) - , so La Jalousie defies 'tout essai de reconstitution d'une chronologie extérieure' (p 132) since the narrative point of view 'corresponds to the perspective of a camera which records the internal and external vision of a single person' with equal validity (74). The device becomes more complex when what is related is subject to not only varying degrees of emotional investment or distortion but also fundamental changes in perspective. Since the 'style indirect libre' is selected for the immediacy and vividness of its impact on the reader, and there is, therefore, an absence of textual 'signalling' (75), that reader has available to him 'only the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the witness-narrator' who, from the unstable position of 'wandering periphery', can cover a multitude of characters' viewpoints (76). In order for the question "'qui parle?"' (77) to be answered, the receiver of the text must be able to deduce from the 'cohérence textuelle' and the 'tonalité narrative' whose is the mind narrating at a particular moment (78). It is considered by Robbe-Grillet a logical implication of the 'subjective' novel that the 'traditional' demarcations between omni-

scient and personalised description and those distinguishing the different characters' points of view be erased and replaced by 'narrative relativism', according to which the text displays internally a change in mood or even narrator (79). The sought-after 'triomphe de la subjectivité' (80), or the sensitivity to these new textual demands of the reader requires, in the words of Albérès, 'une rééducation de l'œil, de l'oreille, et de la perception du réel romanesque' (81).

## 'OVER-SUBJECTIVIZATION'

The 'subjectivist' interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman has led, as Brooks points out, to an 'over-subjectivization' of Robbe-Grillet's theory (82). Attempts to reconcile the author's theoretical pronouncements with his fictional works, often extravagantly interpreted, have resulted in the consideration of Pour un nouveau roman as the setting forth of certain philosophical views, without specific substantiation from that compilation. In 1962, for example, the Times Literary Supplement publishes an article entitled 'The Philosophy of the New Novel', in which Les Gommès, Le Voveur, La Jalousie, and Dans le Labyrinthe are analysed on an extra-literary level, An Approach which seeks its justification in Robbe-Grillet's conception of the world as expressed in his theory (83). The existentialist interpretation of Robbe-Grillet's early novels offered by Hazel Barnes, while extracting a more detailed philosophy from the fiction, does not, significantly, provide a source of the novelist's ideas (84). To a certain extent this gap is filled by Olga Bernal's Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, where both the practice and the principle of his descriptive techniques are analysed in terms of the phenomenological and existentialist movements: 'La littérature des phénomènes (...) c'est le constat que l'homme n'est pas une profondeur riche et insondable, mais un creux, un vide temporel' (85). Bernal's conceptions of absence and vide appear to relate as closely to Roussel's technique of opacité (86) as portrayed in Pour un

nouveau roman as they do to Les Gommès and Le Voyeur: the conclusion that 'le non-être au creux de la réalité est le fondement du roman de Robbe-Grillet', however, much as it reflects the theoretical 'destitution des vieux mythes de la "profondeur"', is reached through an analysis of the novels and not through a close examination of the essays (87).

Renato Barilli considers Barthes's contention that 'la vue ne produit de mouvements existentiels que dans la mesure où elle peut se réduire à des actes de palpation, de manducation ou d'enfouissement' (88), before opting for his own firmly phenomenological line, without making specific reference to Pour un nouveau roman (89). A similar approach is offered by Stoltzfus, who locates Robbe-Grillet firmly in the 'existential milieu' (90), and argues that underlying the novels is the search for 'the most efficient way of recording the separation between man and objects'; the identification of Robbe-Grillet's literary theory as 'existential', however, is inferred from an interpretation of Les Gommès through to Dans le Labyrinthe and not 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' which, ironically, explicitly sets out the principles of 'la distance entre l'objet et moi, et les distances propres de l'objet' (p 65) (91). Béla Köpeczi applies the phenomenological premise, that 'the world does not exist independently of human cognition' (92), to the nouveau roman in general without a consistent distinction between its theory and its practice, - an *unsound* stance adopted by Sturrock when considering Robbe-Grillet, not only in a context comprising both novels and essays but also in one grouped together with other nouveaux romanciers, as 'profoundly influenced

by phenomenological thinking' (93). Even where it is agreed that Robbe-Grillet's 'philosophy', in spite of belonging to a particular 'Western mainstream', is unique, the difficulty persists in deciding upon 'where Robbe-Grillet goes off on his own tributary', because Pour un nouveau roman, as Cohn discovers, does not commit its arguments to a particular school of thought (94). Neal Oxenhandler's essay 'Towards the New Aesthetic' (1970) (95) and Mary-Jane Gerhart's analysis in 'The Purpose of Meaninglessness' (1971) shift the focus of attention briefly back to Pour un nouveau roman in the hope of establishing the extent to which Robbe-Grillet's theory of regard is entangled with existential phenomenology, but neither concludes on a specific link on the basis of such an examination (96). George Szanto attributes the significance of Beckett and Kafka in Pour un nouveau roman (in 'Samuel Beckett ou la présence sur la scène' and 'Du réalisme à la réalité', respectively) to Robbe-Grillet's intention to associate his principles of perception with the phenomenological and existential 'vision', yet there is no textual support for this claim (97). On reviewing the most significant interpretations which endeavour to equate the theory expounded in Pour un nouveau roman with a philosophical movement, it can reasonably be concluded that, while in a general sense these analyses do not appear incongruous with the theoretical 'destitution des vieux mythes de la "profondeur"' and the principle of a necessarily 'subjective' perception of the world, the compilation does not permit any detailed substantiation of such a reading.

The essential vagueness of the philosophical interpretations of Pour un nouveau roman has paved the way for a second type of 'over-subjectivized' analysis: dissatisfied with the ultimate impossibility of categorising Robbe-Grillet's outlook in terms of phenomenology and existentialism, certain critics apply criteria through different 'grilles d'interprétation' in an effort to extract the significance of the novelist's statements and reconcile these with his fiction. Morrisette acknowledges the inherent danger of this approach as one which fails to draw the distinction between 'le vrai humanisme' of 'traditional' criticism (98), according to which art is regarded as merely a vehicle for ideas, and 'cet authentique humanisme' which is concerned with the human value of the text without allowing the interpretation to assume a greater importance than the literary quality itself (99). However, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, in spite of this initial word of caution against 'over-subjectivization', is one of the most influential 'humanist' readings of Pour un nouveau roman (100). Jean Alter expands on this interpretation of Robbe-Grillet's 'humanism', to which he attaches a profoundly pessimistic view of man, based on the preoccupation in Pour un nouveau roman with inanimate phenomena:

'(...) de ce pitoyable tableau une certaine valeur humaine émerge: une bonne volonté pathétique mais irréductible qui porte sur l'homme à projeter sa petitesse même sur le monde qui l'entoure: les choses et les êtres' (101).

This leads to the analysis, in La vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet (1966), of both the theory and the early novels as the portrayal of a tragic 'réduction de l'homme' (102); in turn, Morrissette recognises how far Alter has deviated from a structural or stylistic elucidation in his metaphysical extrapolation: 'Alter (...) proposes to go beyond psychology and structure to 'signification', and to find in Robbe-Grillet's "vision du monde" a possible explanation of the overall meaning of the novels' (103). In a similar approach to that of Alter, Roy Jay Nelson, in his essay 'Robbe-Grillet: vers un esthétique de l'absurde' (1964), extrapolates non-literary signification from Pour un nouveau roman and ~~proceeds to support~~ this interpretation by reference to Le Voyeur and La Jalousie, where he observes, in the novelist's refusal to signify, a manifestation of absurd self-denial (104). By the time Roseline Intrater examines 'The Attrition of the Self in some Contemporary Novels' in 1971, the contribution of Robbe-Grillet's novelistic theory towards the portrayal of an 'absurd' aesthetic is neglected (105). The same 'over-subjectivization' is present in the non-metaphysical readings of Pour un nouveau roman: Lucien Goldmann's Pour une sociologie du roman (1966) considers the more emotive statements of Robbe-Grillet (in particular his appeal for the 'homme nouveau') as a reflection of social disintegration, but lays less emphasis on how the 'angoisse' of present society is communicated through his theory of structural revolution (106). A similar approach is to be found in Didier Anzieu's article, 'Le discours de l'obsessionnel dans les romans



de Robbe-Grillet', where the analysis of the 'structure obsessionnelle, (...) cette organisation de la pensée qui s'empare de tous les éléments qui se présentent à elle (perceptions, souvenirs, idées, raisonnements (...))' is presented as an interpretation of Robbe-Grillet's theory of a 'système cohérent', in which the narrative is consistent with a character's emotional state; yet Anzieu deduces this principle not from Pour un nouveau roman but from the novels Le Voyeur, La Jalousie, and Dans le Labyrinthe (107). Finally, Robbe-Grillet's theory has been distorted in the attempt to tie together loose interpretative threads into a cohesive whole: this approach is represented by Greenberg in 'The Novel of Disintegration' where Pour un nouveau roman is seen to incorporate a fundamentally destructive message across the various disciplines of literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology (108). In this case of extreme 'over-subjectivization' the theoretical statements of Robbe-Grillet are regarded as the basic prescription for a novel whose inner collapse is symbolic of a universal disintegration.

'Over-subjectivization' is, in a sense, the natural ultimate outcome of the 'subjectivist' view that a 'non-referential' or meaningless literature is an impossibility (109). However, whilst it is reasonable to argue that all narrative must signify and, therefore, engage the reader in a human 'aventure passionnelle', the flaw of an 'over-subjectivized' analysis is that it renders the form of the novel, which it reduces to a medium of expression, redundant. This is

essentially different from the 'subjectivist' theory, the basis of which is that écriture and anecdote are interdependent and indivisible (p 39).

CHAPTER THREE:

CREATIVITY AND THE 'DOUBLE MOVEMENT' IN POUR UN NOUVEAU ROMAN

## THE INTENTION OF CREATIVITY

The respective arguments of the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' interpretations of Pour un nouveau roman have been presented, yet the 'querelle' persists (1). The obviously fallacious premise of the 'Roman objectif' theory (p 8), combined with the strong textual substantiation for Robbe-Grillet's subjectivité totale (p 117), do little to answer Valerie Minogue's question of whether it is possible to reconcile his desire for subjectivity with Barthes' ~~view~~ <sup>resolute</sup> that he is a "chosiste" (2). It is therefore necessary to review the theory in order to establish a means of reconciling the opposing interpretations of Pour un nouveau roman.

Absent in many 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' analyses is an examination of Robbe-Grillet's theoretical ~~statements on~~ creativity and, as a result of this point of critical negligence, the author's predominant intention of creating an emphatically inventive and innovative literature does not receive due consideration. The nouveau roman has, in this important respect, a dual responsibility, for it is intended both to invent a new form of novel and also to instil in its reader the spirit of creativity which he can apply beyond the work of art:

'Si j'emploie (...) le terme de Nouveau Roman, ce n'est pas pour désigner une école (...); il n'y a là qu'une appellation commode englobant tous ceux qui cherchent de nouvelles formes romanesques, capables d'exprimer (ou de créer) de nouvelles relations entre l'homme et le

monde, tous ceux qui sont décidés à inventer  
le roman, c'est-à-dire à inventer l'homme' (p 9).

'A quoi servent les théories' maintiens that 'la répétition systématique des formes du passé' not only institutionalises a prescribed form of literature, but prevents the individual from exploiting and implementing his creative urge in life and, by extension, 'nous empêche en fin de compte de construire le monde et l'homme de demain' (p 9). Robbe-Grillet re-iterates this principle at the end of his compilation in 'Du réalisme à la réalité' when he appeals for a literature whose dynamism and constant renovation reflect his theory of creativity in the universe; where 'tout change sans cesse et (...) il y a toujours du nouveau' (p 144). The connection between art and life - 'L'art est vie' (p 136) - requires, however, qualification: for while the value of the 'traditional' novelist is judged on his ability to transcribe external reality, the nouveau romancier seeks to construct a new world: 'Je ne transcris pas, je construis' (p 139). Fundamental to Robbe-Grillet's art-form is that it should invent and, if indeed it does invent a reality, it is not that 'objective', tangible, verifiable reality of our 'vie quotidienne' but rather one of the imagination (3). Pour un nouveau roman repudiates 'traditional' realism on two accounts: the first of these is that the novelist is not qualified to represent reality impartially, as Robbe-Grillet discovers when he mistakenly aspires to the 'illusion réaliste', since all perception is 'subjective' and his medium of communication, far from being the 'objective' recording device of 'un langage naturel, innocent, transparent', is a

language corrupted by the thoughts and emotions of an individual (4). Thus the writer and narrator are disqualified from deducing the 'truth', or the 'vérité humaine profonde', from the heart of that external reality: here Barthes echoes the 'limited' nature of the artist as described in 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau':

'Cette interrogation (de la littérature) ce n'est pas: quel est le sens du monde? ni même peut-être: le monde a-t-il un sens? mais seulement: voici le monde: y a-t-il du sens en lui?' (5).

The reason why Robbe-Grillet's narrative is characterised by 'cette impuissance même à répondre aux questions que le monde se pose sur ses malheurs' (6) forms the basis for the second argument against vérisme and vraisemblance (p 140) (7): Pour un nouveau roman accepts that 'tous les écrivains pensent être réalistes' and that '(...) chacun s'efforce bel et bien de créer du "réel"' (p 135) in the sense that what is 'real' is a reflection of the individual's perspective, but disputes the role of the artist 'à "explorer" et à "exprimer" la réalité de son époque' as though his duty were to represent an 'objective' truth (p 138). The compilation rejects 'traditional' narrating ('raconter') precisely because it <sup>author</sup> seeks to reproduce the 'schémas préfabriqués', 'l'idée toute faite (...) de la réalité (p 30), a signification toute faite (p 119), a 'réalité (...) déjà entièrement constituée' (pp 137-138), instead of exploiting what Barthes terms 'l'irréel du langage' (8), and inventing: 'Ce qui fait la force du

romancier, c'est justement qu'il invente, qu'il invente en toute liberté, sans modèle' (p 30). If there is any truth in the contention that art 'constitue sa propre réalité' it must be seen to create an 'expansion of reality' as opposed to 'solidifying' a pre-existent world (9). Similarly, the nouveau roman must not bear the constraints of a 'functional' literature with a purpose : '(...) le roman n'est pas un outil du tout. Il n'est pas conçu en vue d'un travail défini à l'avance. Il ne sert pas à exposer, à traduire des choses existant avant lui, en dehors de lui' (p 137). In contrast to engagement literature which, according to 'Sur quelques notions périmées', epitomises the dependence of 'traditional' art on an external issue or referent, Robbe-Grillet's novel is an 'anti-représentation' insofar as it provides its own raison d'être and produces its own meaning: 'Loin de véhiculer un sens déjà établi, il s'agit alors de produire du sens' (10). The fear of 'accusations de gratuité' and the consideration of 'l'art pour l'art' as 'le pire des maux' constitute the reasons for art's subservience to either a 'humanist' cause (whether political, as in 'le réalisme socialiste', metaphysical, or philosophical) or a less 'committed' but equally 'humanist' portrayal (such as 'la situation de l'homme et de l'univers avec lequel il est aux prises') (pp 36-37). Both the 'littérature moralisatrice' and the 'littérature morale' (11), however, reduce the function of writing to the expression of an external, extra-literary referent: '(...) dès qu'apparaît le souci de signifier quelque chose (quelque chose d'extérieur à l'art) la littérature commence à reculer, à disparaître' (p 39).

The nouveau roman does not aspire to be 'irréférentiel' (12), or, strictly speaking, a 'discours contre le référent' (13) for its form is essentially anthropomorphic, and, consequently, significant; it does, nevertheless, claim to produce what Leenhardt describes as 'une écriture non mimétique' (14), as it creates its own meaning, rather than represent 'objectively' an external phenomenon: 'ce sens devait être produit et non pas exprimé' (15). The battle against the reproduction of a 'sens institué' (16) in the narrative is successful only once the artist acknowledges '(...) qu'il ne peut créer que pour rien (...)'

(p 35) and that, irrespective of the real-life issues, art remains, within the context of his creation at least, 'la chose la plus importante au monde' (p 36). Since art refuses the position of subservience to all models and causes - '(...) l'art ne peut être réduit à l'état de moyen au service d'une cause qui le dépasserait (...)'

(p 35) -, it follows that the sole engagement of the artist must be a commitment to 'la pleine conscience des problèmes actuels de son propre langage, la conviction de leur extrême importance, la volonté de les résoudre de l'intérieur' (p 39). That the 'traditional' novel is subjugated to 'une signification qui lui est extérieure' (p 40) indicates that the internal mechanisms of écriture have been systematically relegated to a vehicle for the expression of ideas which constitute the histoire:

'De l'écriture il ne sera jamais question.  
(...) Ainsi l'écriture ne serait plus qu'un  
moyen, une manière; le fond du roman, sa



raison d'être, ce qu'il y a dedans, serait simplement l'histoire qu'il raconte' (p 29).

For Robbe-Grillet, this implies not only an 'intervention' (p 30), whereby issues external to literature have violated the independence of its territory but, moreover, a distinction between the form and content of a novel which reduces écriture to 'une enveloppe aux couleurs plus ou moins brillantes chargée d'ornementer le "message" de l'auteur (...)' (p 42). The 'subject matter' of the nouveau roman must illustrate the 'nécessité tout intérieure' (p 43) of the novel and, therefore, prove that 'l'art n'obéit à aucune servitude (...), ni d'ailleurs à aucune fonction préétablie' (p 42). This is achieved, according to Ricardou, by effecting a shift of emphasis within the narrative from an 'écriture d'une aventure' to the 'aventure d'une écriture' (17). Pour un nouveau roman presents the theory that the only means to create a new 'reality' is through experimenting with the structure of the novel, thus producing an art-form which is a self-contained, meaningful entity: 'Il (l'art) ne s'appuie sur aucune vérité qui existerait avant lui, et l'on peut dire qu'il n'exprime rien que lui-même. Il crée lui-même son propre équilibre et son propre sens' (p 42). The nouveau roman is an essentially autonomous phenomenon and, in this respect, relates to the world outside: 'L'œuvre d'art, comme le monde, est une forme vivante: elle est, elle n'a pas besoin de justification' (p 41). Fictional reality refuses to model itself on life, however: the consistent argument of Pour un nouveau roman is that freedom from all 'réalité pré-

existante' is the necessary condition for the realisation of the novel's 'fonction créatrice' and, indeed, for all imaginative activity (p 127):

'Robbe-Grillet is set on displaying the novel as a truly creative achievement, by proving to us that our minds are free within the two covers of a book or, by extension, whenever we close our eyes to the contingent world in order to reassemble it without the pressure of conformity to a pre-existing aesthetic pattern' (18).

## THE 'DOUBLE MOVEMENT' OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION

The question now arises: how is Robbe-Grillet's intention of creativity translated into the novel-form? Pour un nouveau roman dramatises the conflict between the 'traditional' realism and the techniques of the nouveau roman in order to demonstrate how fundamental are the changes necessary for literature to realise its 'fonction créatrice' (p 127). From this theoretical confrontation evolves a novel which is, in the words of Henry Bars, a tension between the fabricants and the true créateurs: 'Il y a une tension naturelle, normale, féconde, entre les créateurs et les fabricants: les premiers, plus ou moins vite, volontairement ou non, créent les modes; les seconds les utilisent (...)' (19). Robbe-Grillet's task is to contrive a device to expose the structural operations of vraisemblance, and this is achieved by creating a novel which lays bare the realist conventions. Essential to the nouveau roman is that it reveals the artificiality of art: in place of 'son caractère de certitude, sa tranquillité, son innocence' (p 32) is, therefore, a self-conscious, 'unnatural' (20) form, noisily constructed in the hope of jolting the reader out of his conception of the novel as a magically conceived product of artistic génie (p 10). Significantly, the authors under discussion in 'Eléments d'une anthologie moderne' are those whose fiction destroys the myth of a 'natural' or 'innocent' literature by dramatising the functions of the novelist as those of the 'artiste-en-

travail' (21). Raymond Roussel diverts the reader's attention from the histoire to the technical components through which it is conveyed, thus creating a 'recherche (...) purement formelle' (p 74); Robbe-Grillet applies this same terminology in 'Du réalisme à la réalité' to stress his own 'préoccupation de la forme romanesque' (22): 'Il (le roman) n'exprime pas, il recherche. Et ce qu'il recherche, c'est lui-même' (p 137) (23). 'La conscience malade de Zeno' (24) unveils 'le mensonge du naturel' (25) and supports Robbe-Grillet's theory that 'l'écriture romanesque (...) ne peut plus être innocente' (p 81); this re-iterates the contrast, articulated in 'Sur quelques notions périmées', between traditional 'écriture romanesque (qui) pouvait être innocente' and the emphatically artificial narrative of the nouveau roman in which 'raconter est devenu proprement impossible' (p 31). The analysis of Joë Bousquet illustrates how the narrator indicates the workings of 'le corps de la parole et de l'écriture, le langage', thereby changing the novel from a simple histoire to an 'expérience du langage' (p 92), so much so that the reader is forced to observe that '(...) au-delà du langage il n'y a probablement plus rien' (p 93). Michel Foucault describes this exalted status of the written word in Pour un nouveau roman as 'ce langage souverain' (26) and it is this very emphasis on literary form in Bousquet which, according to Robbe-Grillet, permits 'cette réflexion constante sur la création littéraire' (p 93). Finally from 'Eléments d'une anthologie moderne', Robert Pinget's 'roman qui s'invente lui-même' (27), by highlighting the devices through which its own story is related, becomes the story of how that story is written (écrire

l'histoire) (p 110); in 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' Robbe-Grillet presents, as the ideal method of exposing the fallacy of vraisemblance, a 'littérature en train de se faire' (p 124). Pour un nouveau roman exemplifies the theory of a self-conscious, self-reflexive novel in a selection of contemporary fiction which exhibits 'une histoire en train de se faire, une action qui s'enchaîne sous nos yeux' (28) and thereby reveals, through 'cette réflexion continuelle' that every novelist, including the vériste, who is guided by the compulsion to transcribe external reality, is ultimately faced with 'les problèmes de l'écriture' (p 11). The techniques of the 'traditional' novel, identified and analysed in 'Sur quelques notions périmées' as subservient to the expression of a particular content or 'subject matter' - 'Un vrai romancier, c'est celui qui sait "raconter une histoire"' (p 29) -, are denied their contrived 'naturalness' in order to award greater prominence to the form in which they are constructed, which itself becomes the focal point of the novel:

'Croire que le romancier a "quelque chose à dire" et qu'il cherche ensuite comment le dire, représente le plus grave des contresens. Car c'est précisément ce comment, cette manière de dire, qui constitue son projet d'écrivain (...)' (29).

While it is true that Pour un nouveau roman fails to provide a close analysis of self-reflexivity (30), or 'cette tendance de l'auto-représentation' (31), the exhibition of narrative structures in 'la littérature comme critique' is its own elucidation (32).

The subversive quality of the self-reflexive novel implies that those conventions under scrutiny are not fulfilled to the extent which they are in 'traditional' narrative. Consequently, the nouveau roman involves a constant struggle between vraisemblance and 'creativity', and this conflict is realised in the contradictory movements of the success' or 'failure' of realist techniques. 'A quoi servent les théories' introduces the notion of a 'double movement' in which a convention is both acknowledged and undermined: 'Le livre crée pour lui seul ses propres règles. Encore le mouvement de l'écriture doit-il souvent conduire à les mettre en péril, en échec peut-être, et à les faire éclater' (p 11). The disrespect of the nouveau romancier for the 'notions périmées' (such as character-portrayal, the construction of an intelligible, reconstructible human intrigue, psychological analysis by an omniscient narrator, the implicit distinction between form and content, the commitment to a cause or communication of a message) is manifested by their inclusion and destruction within a single narrative: 'Loin de respecter des formes immuables, chaque nouveau livre tend à constituer ses lois de fonctionnement en même temps qu'à produire leur destruction' (p 11). To categorise Robbe-Grillet's theory and practice as those of the 'école du refus' (33) or the 'refus de l'ancien réalisme', or even the 'refus du roman traditionnel' is, therefore, simplistic, since it fails to acknowledge the incorporation of the 'traditional' novel in the nouveau roman prior to its subversion (34). Nor is it sufficient to describe this process, as Barthes does, as 'l'exercice absolu de la

négation' (35), for, as Robbe-Grillet himself has accepted, no narrative can avoid the act of signifying or the means by which significance is constructed in the novel (36). Pour un nouveau roman does not expound the 'degré zéro de l'histoire' because the 'double mouvement' of creation-destruction requires the presentation of conventions to a detectable degree before the expectations of a 'traditional' narrative can be disappointed (37). As in Pinget's 'roman qui s'invente lui-même' where, at the crucial point, the plot disintegrates - 'l'histoire à ce compte ne peut que tourner en rond, à moins qu'elle ne vienne buter tout à coup au fond d'un cul-de-sac (...)' (p 109) -, so Robbe-Grillet's description performs the 'ultimate possible fictional violation' precisely because, after 'putting the reader on', the narrator betrays his anticipation of realist criteria (38). The 'double mouvement' technique is a 'description trahie' in which the narrative promises a certain signification, embarks upon its construction and ultimately, on the verge of its completion, destroys it through contradiction, deviation, repetition or a combination of these 'deceptive' techniques:

'(...) elle (la description) paraît naître d'un menu fragment sans importance (...) à partir duquel elle invente des lignes, des plans, une architecture; et on a d'autant plus l'impression qu'elle les invente que soudain elle se contredit, se répète, se reprend, bifurque, etc.' (p 127).

This process may repeat itself several times in an attempt to intensify

the 'disappointment', until finally the 'objet destructeur du langage' (39) has demolished the last narrative construction:

'Quelques paragraphes encore et, lorsque la description prend fin, on s'aperçoit qu'elle n'a rien laissé derrière elle: elle s'est accomplie dans un double mouvement de création et de gommage (...) d'où vient la déception inhérente aux œuvres d'aujourd'hui' (p 127).

Ironically, it is Barthes who offers the most accurate analysis of 'cette sorte de dé-ception, de dé-prise du sens':

'(...) l'œuvre n'est jamais tout à fait insignifiante (...) ni jamais tout à fait claire; elle est, si l'on veut, du sens suspendu: elle s'offre en effet au lecteur comme un système signifiant déclaré mais se dérobe à lui comme objet signifié' (40).

Pour un nouveau roman is a battleground for the 'querelle des Anciens et des Modernes': rather than setting out a new theory of the novel as though on a peaceful, prepared terrain, Robbe-Grillet is sensitive to the influence of novelistic conventions - 'la seule conception romanesque qui ait cours aujourd'hui est, en fait, celle de Balzac' (p 15) - and stages its confrontation with the nouveau roman, as he does at a fictional level, by initiating the construction of those conventions only then to effect 'cette opération de gommage de nos idées antérieures, en même temps qu'il (l'auteur) décrit le mouvement du roman' (41). The reason why the significance of Robbe-Grillet's



descriptive technique 'n'est donc plus dans la chose décrite, mais dans le mouvement même de la description' is precisely because through this 'mouvement paradoxal (construire en détruisant)' the narrative sets up a contest between an 'innocent' récit and a critical écriture (pp 127-128). Traditional signification is not, therefore, rejected absolutely as the 'objectivist' interpretation presumes, nor is it accepted without resistance, as implied in the 'subjectivist' analysis of Pour un nouveau roman: it is, rather, unleashed in the text until the destructive force of self-reflexivity '(...) empêche de croire en même temps qu'elle affirme (...)' (p 130):

'Le signifié n'est donc nullement refusé (...) mais soumis mot à mot, par le jeu de l'écriture, à une permanente critique qui l'empêche de coaguler et de cacher le travail que le forme. Ainsi, au centre de la littérature, l'écriture est la contestation même' (42).

The self-reflexive 'description créatrice-destructive' has been identified as the source of the inherent ambiguity of Robbe-Grillet's fiction, which appears to contain both the urge to signify on a 'subjectivist' level, yet simultaneously an 'objectivist' de-signification (43). Connerton explains how this accounts for the paradoxical reception and perception of the novels, for there exists '(...) an ambivalence both in the reader's action - the relation between his fascination and his boredom - and in the novelist himself - the relation between the psychologist-novelist and the draughtsman-novelist' (44).

For Henri Pevel the novels constitute an 'ambiguïté' (45) in that their narrative, 'par affirmations et négations simultanées' undermines its own creation, and indeed it is the 'situation ambiguë' of 'un langage qui n'affirme pas davantage la réalité qu'il ne la conteste' which Jean-Edern Hallier detects in Les Gommés (46). René Girard attributes the 'failure' of Le Voyeur to the 'tension and contradiction' between the 'technique of insignificance and psychological content' (47). Robbe-Grillet admits to contriving, at a later stage in his fictional development, what Ricardou calls 'l'oppositionnel', or 'la métaphore refusée', in which he constructs the interplay of metaphorical and anti-metaphorical forces within a single narrative: '(...) ce qui m'intéressait, c'était justement de mettre en action des métaphores, ce qu'on a vu à partir de Dans le labyrinthe et qui s'est développé, comme vous le savez, dans Projet pour une révolution à New York' (48). Recognition of the fact that the novels of Robbe-Grillet succeed in their fusion of both 'littérature' and 'silence' (49), or create, as Genette describes it, 'une littérature assiégée par un monde qu'elle ne peut ni refuser ni admettre', is easily traced (50). Little evidence exists, however, of support amongst critics for Karplus's theory of a 'mouvement paradoxal', in certain areas of Pour un nouveau roman, according to which the writing of a novel involves the clash of two 'realities' at play in the author's mind - the novel's propre réalité conventionnelle, plus ou moins équivalente à celle du lecteur, et la réalité qu'il choisit de présenter à l'intérieur de la fiction' (51).

Robbe-Grillet's theoretical statements do, nevertheless, promote, in specific terms, the 'double movement' of 'construction-destruction' (p. 143). Clearly, the nouveau romancier must first destroy the 'traditional' novel before creating his own, and Pour un nouveau roman discusses (without explicitly acknowledging) this violent characteristic: 'Une voie pour le roman futur' depicts the 'traditional' portrayal of the nouveau romancier as 'le nouveau-né balbutiant (...) toujours considéré comme un monstre' (p. 17), reflecting on how 'les conceptions essentialistes de l'homme voyaient leur ruine' (p. 22). 'Sur quelques notions périmées' implies that the aesthetic violation of 'le bon sens' and 'le cœur' (p. 25) in art could, in turn, lead to social change - 'peut-être même à la révolution' (p. 39). Whilst rejecting the thesis that the nouveau roman is an 'œuvre "inhumaine"' (p. 47), 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' emphasises that if, indeed, 'l'homme, un jour s'en libérera', it will be only through a veritable 'lutte' (p. 67). Finally, the author of Pour un nouveau roman suggests in 'Du réalisme...' that his literature is, like all modern phenomena, 'décadent': 'On est toujours décadent par rapport aux choses du passé (...) ' (p. 143). The stable world of Balzac where, according to Robbe-Grillet, '"dans le fond rien ne change"', is thus forsaken for a new life in which the artist's devotion to creativity leaves but a single principle standing: '"tout change sans cesse"' (p. 144). Reflecting on Pour un nouveau roman at the colloquium of Cerisy-la-Salle, Robbe-Grillet remarks on 'le côté déraisonnable' characterising the attitude of his 'fragments théoriques violents, et en effet terroristes' (52).

That Ricardou describes Robbe-Grillet's theory as an 'interdiction générale' (53) - Robbe-Grillet acknowledges his 'condamnation définitive' (54) of all metaphors - underlines the extensive destruction brought upon these conventions by the 'fonctionnement du terrorisme' (55). It would be misleading to suggest, however, that the 'terrorism' of Robbe-Grillet's theoretical model constitutes an unambiguous and total refusal of 'humanist' signification, for the reason why the nouveau roman is forced to annihilate with such violence the characteristics of the 'traditional' novel is that, although some are denied existence absolutely, others feature temporarily or partially prior to their extermination: 'Le Terrorisme, c'est la prohibition dans les Lettres. Et cette prohibition est double. D'une part, une prohibition directe: celle qui empêche. (...) D'autre part, une prohibition indirecte: celle qui efface' (56). That which is 'prohibited' by the nouveau romancier is the 'image d'un univers stable, cohérent, continu, univoque, entièrement déchiffrable' (p 31). The promise of 'une logique des choses juste et universelle' (p 31) is made with the sole intention of being broken by a sudden 'course contre le sens' to re-emphasise that 'il (le roman) est fictif; il échappe à toute vérification' (57). 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' illustrates how 'le vrai, le faux et le faire croire sont devenus plus ou moins le sujet de toute œuvre moderne' by examining the methods employed in L'Immortelle: here 'le manque de "naturel"' (created by the deliberately 'stilted' acting, the confusion between internal and external reality, the transformation of the 'real'

into representational form), represents a deception because certain of the film's ingredients correspond to real life ('Istamboul est une vraie ville (...); de même l'héroïne est incarnée à l'écran par une vraie femme') and, therefore, the spectator's 'confiance dans la vérité objective des choses' is abused by the exposing of imaginary elements as unreal ('(...) l'histoire (...) est fausse: ni l'acteur ni l'actrice ne sont morts au cours du tournage, ni même le chien') (p 129). Similarly, Robbe-Grillet's 'écriture cinématographique' reveals its 'caractère nécessairement mensonger' only once its reader is 'épris de "réalisme"' (p 129). It is insufficient to state that the 'réalisme nouveau' simply displaces vérisime, since 'le petit détail qui "fait vrai"' exists, if precariously, prior to 'le petit détail qui fait faux' (p 140): the illusion réaliste cannot be broken unless the text has, however fleetingly, conceived a credible world (p 138). Proof that Robbe-Grillet's art has implied verisimilitude and then defied realist interpretation is provided by the consideration, in 'Du réalisme à la réalité', of critics' objections to the 'unrealistic' quality of his fiction:

'(...) "Les choses ne se passent pas comme ça dans la vie", "Il n'existe pas d'hôtel comme celui de votre Marienbad", "Un mari jaloux ne se comporte pas comme celui de votre Jalousie", "Les aventures turques de votre Français, dans l'Immortelle, sont invraisemblables", "votre soldat perdu dans le Labyrinthe ne porte pas ses insignes militaires à la bonne place", etc. (...)' (p 139).

If 'le faux - c'est-à-dire à la fois le possible, l'impossible,

l'hypothèse, le mensonge, etc. - [est] devenu l'un des thèmes privilégiés de la fiction moderne (...)', it is because of the need to break through the frontiers imposed by the realist obligation to represent the 'truth' (p 140). Like Roussel's 'drawer', the nouveau roman includes the promise of discovering that 'truth' but, when investigated, offers no clues: 'On a l'impression d'avoir trouvé un tiroir fermé, puis une clef; et cette clef ouvre le tiroir de façon impeccable ... et le tiroir est vide' (p 73). When indeed solutions are presented, they are done so under a 'clarté égale' which allows no distinction between actual and imagined events, for 'aucun flou expressif, aucune résonance, aucune vibration ne les entoure et ne les distingue: "vrai" ou "faux"' (58). The absence of narrative 'signalling' renders all meanings in the text equally valid and equally endangered: 'Les significations (...) ne sont plus que partielles, provisoires, contradictoires même, et toujours contestées' (p 120). As a textual event aspires to the prominence of a verifiable 'truth', a second appears to contradict it, defending its own right to occupy the narrative until, in turn, another contends its place. Sontag's theory that such a novel is created 'against interpretation' (59) may be counterbalanced by Zants's observation that a literature in the state of 'perpetual becoming' is one whose 'plurality of relationships' justifies numerous interpretations, (60) or Barthes' 'interprétation ouverte' (61). Every act of signifying in the nouveau roman is subjected to 'des interférences multiples' (p 143) until such time as its progress is obstructed altogether by the suspension of realist criteria; thus immobilised in

a temporal and spatial vacuum, the object or event is held back from satisfying the conditions of full signification:

'(...) tout est donné comme en plein mouvement, mais figé au beau milieu de ce mouvement, immobilisé par la représentation qui laisse en suspens tous les gestes, chutes, déferlements, etc, les éternisant dans l'imminence de leur fin et les coupant de leur sens' (p 76).

The substitution of chronological progression by instantaneity and the abandoning of the laws of space freeze the action in the novel and limit it to a narrative phenomenon, devoid of vraisemblance and, by extension, any connection with external reality, 'si la temporalité comble l'attente, l'instantanéité la déçoit; de même que la discontinuité spatiale déprend du piège de l'anecdote' (p 133).

Robbe-Grillet is 'allergique au concept de vérité' (62) because, in accordance with the basis of realism, it assumes the existence of a single, correct mode of perception; since art is the manifestation of creativity, all that occurs within that context is 'non plus seulement nouveau, mais pluriel et mouvant' (63). To conceive of an absolute 'truth' and so distinguish between vérité and fausseté is to exclude the infinite play of possibilities:

'C'est le concept même d'erreur, en somme, qui m'agace. C'est le concept même de vrai et de faux. Pour moi, dans le domaine littéraire, une idée est intéressante dans

la mesure où elle est productrice, où elle  
a une descendance, où elle engendre, etc.,  
et non parce qu'elle est vraie ou fausse' (64).

The 'double mouvement de création et de gommage' restricts the influence of any individual significance in the narrative so as to preclude the supremacy of a particular vérité: as a result, the text becomes 'an invitation to create new models, to develop new combinations' (65). Whereas 'l'œuvre dogmatique' records a factually accurate representation of each situation, the nouveau roman offers many possibilities without providing a solution, for 'l'écriture n'est qu'une proposition dont on ne connaît jamais la réponse' (66). In contrast to the 'auteur réaliste' (67), whose descriptive techniques are employed under the general design of realism and whose every detail contributes towards an 'objectively' reliable portrayal of life outside the novel, the 'décrivain' or 'descripteur' displays his independence from the constraints of vraisemblance through a description whose movement signifies a departure from the conventions of chronology, linearity, intelligibility, and reconstructibility (68). As the function of description is no longer to reveal or represent a pre-existent reality, but to invent its own, that description must force the reader out of his accustomed relationship with representational art (69): this it achieves by obstructing the intelligible mimetic image presented in 'traditional' narrative:

'Enfin, elle (la description) faisait voir  
les choses et voilà qu'elle semble maintenant



les détruire, comme si son acharnement à en  
discourir ne visait qu'à en brouiller les  
lignes, à les rendre incompréhensibles, à  
les faire disparaître totalement' (p 127).

In conclusion, there is evidence to suggest that Pour un nouveau roman describes, in the technique of the 'mouvement paradoxal' (p. 130), a means to shatter the realist 'mythe du texte', while remaining, as all art must, inevitably part of the tradition of realism (70). The convention of realism which, Robbe-Grillet argues, is central to most 'traditional' narrative - '(...) c'est (...) un drapeau sous lequel se range l'immense majorité (...)', has sought to represent life in art which is thereby reduced to an expression for external phenomena (p 135). The ultimate aim of the nouveau roman is to establish the novel as an independent, creative form, 'nécessaire pour rien' (p 43). To achieve this status, the following is proposed: firstly, as if to acknowledge the influence of <sup>'traditional'</sup> realism, certain constructions of vrai-semblance are allowed to feature in the narrative; secondly, a systematic subversion of these constructions is put into operation whereby 'ici l'espace détruit le temps, et le temps sabote l'espace. La description piétine, se contredit, tourne en rond' (p 133). Within this second stage of 'gommage' (after the 'création'), the forces of destruction inflict on the 'traditional' narrative 'une violence contre laquelle elle ne peut se défendre autrement qu'en s'effaçant' (71). Whilst this counter-movement prohibits the emergence of a vérité, it encourages a plurality of 'truths', or 'inférences' (72) in the text, thus emphasising that the novel creates 'aucune autre réalité que celle de la lecture'; the inner dynamism of the narrative

is a result of the 'mouvement' of each of these 'possibilities' '(qui) semblent toujours en train de se contester, de se mettre en doute elles-mêmes à mesure qu'elles se construisent' (p 133). The theory of Pour un nouveau roman is, therefore, that of a literature comprising both 'une intention "réaliste", c'est-à-dire une volonté de décrire la réalité telle qu'elle est ou telle qu'elle apparaît' and 'un propos "fantastique", c'est-à-dire extérieur à cette réalité, et relevant d'une fiction arbitraire' (73). Insofar as it incorporates both the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' perspectives in the creation of a 'double sens' (74), the 'construction-destruction' principle reconciles the interpretative dilemma (p 143).

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE THEORY OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION IN PARODY

## THE INEVITABILITY OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION

Robbe-Grillet's theory of the 'double movement' at once admits the existence of canonic conventions in the nouveau roman and determines to destroy them, but their initial inclusion in the text is also an acknowledgement that no fiction can entirely escape tradition. Both the novel implied in Pour un nouveau roman and realised in Un Régicide are inevitably conceived within the 'Histoire de l'Écriture', for 'C'est sous la pression de l'Histoire et de la Tradition que s'établissent les écritures possibles d'un écrivain donné (...)' (1).

If it is true that 'at the deepest level there is a cyclical rhythm to literary history' (2), then this suggests that T S Eliot's 'historical sense' resides permanently, although with varying degrees of consciousness, within every writer (3). It is especially important to note, in the context of Robbe-Grillet's emphatic 'fonction créatrice' (p 127), the validity of Butor's remark that 'toute invention littéraire se produit à l'intérieur d'un milieu déjà saturé de littérature' (4).

Resistance to the idea of literary inheritance takes, significantly, the form of fatalism, as witnessed in Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, where Barthes blames artistic conservatism on 'cette fatalité du signe littéraire, qui fait qu'un écrivain ne peut tracer un mot sans prendre la pose particulière d'un langage démodé, anarchique ou imité (...)' (5). For W J Bate, the influence of tradition has become a 'burden' (6) for the contemporary poet, while for Bloom 'the anxiety of influence

is an anxiety in expectation of being flooded', and the flood is sure to come (7). Robert Coover looks upon convention as an inevitable disease which inflicts the modern creation with the 'contamination of the old process', thus preparing the way for the pervasive pessimism of E P Dutton, in Pricksongs and Descants (1969), resulting from an awareness of the end of aesthetic 'innocence':

'We seem to have moved from an open-minded, anthropocentric, humanistic, naturalistic even - to the extent that man may be thought of as making his own universe - optimistic starting point, to one that is closed, cosmic, eternal, supernatural (in its soberest sense) and pessimistic' (8).

Nonetheless, the majority acceptance is more matter-of-fact than despairing. Valéry, for instance, refuses to consider creativity as threatened by the historical context of literature, since even 'les plus grands, et même les plus saints, ont eu besoin de précurseurs' (9). Creation is 'une affaire d'estomac' (10): as Valéry's lion 'est fait de moutons assimilés', so the poet's genius feeds off the flock of earlier poets (11). Gide continues with this metaphor when he describes the creative process as dependent on 'la puissance de digestion de la cervelle' (12). The assertion, by Malraux, that 'tout artiste commence par le pastiche' is not designed to undermine the individual's inventive powers but rather to locate the starting point of creation, 'à travers quoi le génie se glisse, clandestin' (13). The conclusion drawn by Malraux ('L'art ne naît de la vie qu'à travers un art antérieur' (14)) pre-empts Barthes's analysis

of a guilt-ridden operation in which the memory recalls past events and attains only 'ce compromis entre une liberté et un souvenir': '(...) l'écriture reste encore pleine du souvenir de ses usages antérieurs, car le langage n'est jamais innocent' (15). The consequence of this interpretation of the artistic process is a recognition that the notion of 'originalité absolue' - 'une œuvre, pour ainsi dire, sortie du néant, sans précédent, sans ressemblance avec aucune autre œuvre' - springs from the misconception of art in a vacuum (16). Culler exposes the 'error of making the individual text an autonomous object that should be approached with a tabula rasa' (17), and Block denounces the 'personal myth' which mistakenly assumes the possibility of absolute freedom: common to both arguments is the principle that all works of art are necessarily set against a pre-established structural system and, consequently, originality is 'a matter of degree, the reflection of an emphasis rather than an absolute' (18). The priority given to 'le mouvement même de la description' (p 128) over 'la chose décrite' in 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' is a reflection of the theory of literature as a collection of signs and structures from which the artist is obliged to invent a new composition of pre-existent material: 'Every operator mentally refers to a vast set of signs endowed with meaning, and organizes them in whatever way his needs dictate' (19). Without 'conventions (...) which the author may work against, which he can transform' he is unable to communicate, for these very conventions 'are the conditions of possibility of his discourse' (20).

Just as in Saussure's linguistic model, according to which the speech act or parole (which 'comprises the actual manifestations of the system in speech and writing') is enabled by and incorporated in the system itself or langue, 'an institution, a set of impersonal rules and norms' (21), so every work of art presupposes the existence of traditions (whether or not it attempts to subvert them) which provide the context for innovation, 'as surely as the failure to keep a promise is made possible by the institution of promising' (22). Robbe-Grillet's nouveau roman could not exist without 'la répétition systématique des formes du passé' (p 9) as outlined in 'Sur quelques notions périmées', and is conceived and received only 'in connection with or against other texts, which provide a grid through which it is read and structured by establishing expectations (...)' (23). Stronger than any particular œuvre d'art are the 'virtualités du discours littéraire, qui l'ont rendue possible (...)' (24); the establishment of what Todorov calls 'la science de la littérature' forces each experimental creation into 'des rapports complexes avec les œuvres du passé' - all the more 'complex' in the 'double mouvement de création et de gommage' (p 127). The 'specialised speech act' (25) would never be uttered were it not for 'institutionalised' language, for it is the 'system of any (...) language (its social codes, rules, norms) which gives meaning to individual communications' (26). Prior to any literary conception is the 'unfolding of verbal material' (27) - 'words, verbal sounds, but also images and motifs' (28) - in the artist's mind; similarly, the reader is prepared to confront the work



by applying his knowledge of topoi, or narrative schemes, to the unravelling of the text (29). It is important at this stage to emphasise that the 'material' upon which both reader and writer draw is essentially generic in the sense that it belongs to the particular genre of literature and, therefore, although having derived originally from language on a general level, has established its separate identity 'by a new aura of meaning' (30) which even amounts to 'organized violence (...) on ordinary speech' (31). The fundamental difference between the language of literature and that of everyday communication is that the former 'activates the secondary and collateral meanings of a word simultaneously' (32), and the 'literary competence' of both producer and receiver of the text will depend upon their awareness of this generic distinction, essential in the categorising of expression media (33). To state the obvious: the relationship between one text and another is textual. The artist operates against the particular historical backdrop of his own art-form:

'il suffit à un peintre de se souvenir  
de ses premiers tableaux, à un poète  
de ses premiers poèmes, pour savoir  
qu'il trouvait en eux une participation,  
non au monde, mais au monde d'art (...)' (34).

One's involvement in the text is 'referential', therefore, in the restricted sense that the 'material' of that text takes on 'a unity of reference and creates a self-contained universe that is its own validity (and "truth")' (35). This is the repeated warning of Pour un nouveau

roman:

'(...) si l'art est quelque chose, il est tout, (...) il se suffit par conséquent à soi-même, (...) il n'y a rien au-delà' (p 40); 'L'existence d'une œuvre d'art, son poids, ne sont pas à la merci de grilles d'interprétation qui coïncideraient, ou non, avec ses contours' (p 41); '(...) ce qu'il (le roman) recherche, c'est lui-même' (p 137).

x

The poiesis (36) reveals art as its own justification, its own point of reference and, as such, issues a warning against Sartre's theory of Situations IX, that referents in fictional language are 'objective' or 'real' (37). The nouveau roman refers to the 'traditional' novel through its own textual medium, the communication between whose individual parts is known, in Kristeva's terms, as intertextualité, since '(...) tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte' (38). 'Intertextuality' is an essential characteristic of all literature, as 'each page is a field on which is inscribed the trace of every conceivable page recorded in the past or anticipated in the future' (39); the self-conscious, self-reflexive novel, however, in which 'on ne croit plus à l'innocence du "créateur" (...)' (40), exploits the unavoidable 'trafficking' between texts, and indulges in 'trans-contextuality' (41), 'inter-art traffic' (42), and other more ostentatious expressions of 'critical quotation' literature (43). Because Robbe-Grillet's novel establishes a constant, if violent, dialogue

with the past through 'cette réflexion constante sur la création littéraire' (p 93), the necessary occurrence of 'intertextual competence' (44) is dramatically brought to light, involving the reader in the continual process of 'inferences by intertextual frames' (45). The nouveau roman in general can be seen as a series of Eco's 'inferential walks' (46) between 'le discours racontant' and 'l'histoire racontée' (47): its 'mouvement paradoxal' (p 130) is the simultaneously progressive and regressive flow of 'différence et répétition' (48). The particular contribution of the theoretical novel of Pour un nouveau roman and also of Un Régicide is that they stress the positive implications of the 'affliction' (49) of creating within 'a vast but finite quarry' (50) of other fictions: for, if we accept Sturrock's view that '(...) writing is not free from precedent, nor is it free from explicit purpose; its direction is controlled (...) ' (51), and that the author is thus confined to this route, it should also be recognised that the reader is engaged in the creative journey, since it is 'dans sa tête que se déroule toute l'histoire (...) ' (p 132). This contrasts fundamentally with how the relationship between author and reader is 'traditionally' conceived:

'Une convention tacite s'établit entre le lecteur et l'auteur: celui-ci fera semblant de croire à ce qu'il raconte, celui-là oubliera que tout est inventé et feindra d'avoir affaire à un document, à une biographie, à une quelconque histoire vécue' (p 30).

The nouveau roman, however, rejects 'l'idee toute faite (...) de la réalité' (p 30): it is the reader who activates the textual reality by setting into operation 'la bibliothèque qui travaille insidieusement dans la tête du lecteur' and involving himself in a constant 'lecture rétrospective' (52). Robbe-Grillet's intention of creativity is realised only if both novelist and reader are willingly active in the 'interplay of sameness and difference' (53), whereby the text manifests the notions of 'repeatability' (in its re-employment of old 'material') and 'originality' (in its unique composition with that 'material' and subsequent relationship with past literature) (54). It would be justifiable to describe this interaction as 'adulterous' (55) only if it were possible for a text to exist in isolation; but no work of art is an 'autonomous or unified object', for every creation is 'an incomplete network of conscious and unconscious borrowed fragments' (56).

## PARODY AS A DISTINCT FORM OF TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION

Two features of literature have been established: firstly, 'l'écriture naît de l'écriture' (57) and, as such, writing involves the process of assimilation; secondly, every creation, in spite of this generic restriction, has the potential to dissimilate, at a compositional level, in search of the 'moment privilégié' of individualisation (58). How is parody distinct from other forms of assimilation? The answer lies in its attitude towards the fact that, in the words of Sartre, '(...) tout est à faire et tout est déjà fait' (59). Rather than deny the 'rich and intimidating legacy of the past' (60), as in 'synchronic' (61) literature, the 'diachronic' text of parody represents the 'general, post-modernist desire to establish a dialogue with the past' (62). Responding to the 'accepted world of discourse' (63), the parodist admits a responsibility, if not 'to harmonize within art the corresponding schisms within the culture', as Kiremidjian suggests, then at least to confront openly those texts assimilated in his own (64). The 'tension between assimilation and dissimilation' (65) is heightened in Robbe-Grillet's novel in the 'tension between the intelligible and the problematic' (66) on account of the author's realisation that there is a need to acknowledge dramatically - 'de mettre en jeu' (67) - the 'relations of correspondence, interaction, dependency or conditionality' which exist between texts (68). It is also true that the parodic novel, far from precluding originality as Rovit asserts (69), (although it does

undermine the 'Romantic aesthetic that values genius, (...) individuality and (...) singularity' (70)), reaches a new level of artistic creativity, for

'Intermixture is (...) the matrix of experiment, and hence the breeding ground of novelty, inasmuch as the invention of new forms is necessarily based on the recombination of old ones' (71).

This explicit 'recategorization' (72) or 'interweaving the pleasure of the familiar with the strangely novel' (73) creates a new tension between 'textual doubling' (which unifies and reconciles) and 'differentiation' (which foregrounds the irreconcilable opposition between texts) (74). Ironically, the conception of originality at an absolute level (indeed the 'hobgoblin of rigid egos' (75)!) coincides with 'la répétition systématique des formes du passé' (p 9) and produces 'l'expression la plus "bourgeoise"' (p 38), while the nouveau roman which, in accordance with the present theory of parody, stresses that creativity is 'necessarily relative to previous texts, offers 'a new mode of writing foregrounding itself against the background of the received mode when the latter becomes stale and exhausted' (76).

The difference between parody and other forms of textual assimilation is intentional. Whereas literary imitation occurs invariably in the 'confusion of the same throughout the radically different, or of the different throughout a base radically the same' (77), parody is more

than a parthenogenetic or automatic absorption of past literature (78). Culler's 'simple graft' (79) which 'binds two discourses side by side on the same page', may be 'complex in its ramifications' but is not intended to create an ironic tension, as exists in the parodic text, between the 'product of a pre-existing set of possibilities' and a 'transformation of those possibilities' (80). In this sense, both the terms 'enchâssement' (81) and 'narrative embedding' (82) fail on their own to describe adequately the 'mouvement paradoxal', since in these forms of assimilation 'there is no contrast between apparent and assumed meaning' and, consequently, 'no space of ironic play' (83). To say that 'parody is essentially mimicry' (84) is true only insofar as 'it must be possible to imagine some group of readers taking it quite literally' or, at least, perceiving the assimilated material non-ironically (85). The unconscious or unmotivated repetition of previous literary components is essentially distinct from the 'device for the simultaneous activation of two texts' (86), the intention of which is to create an inner dynamism based on the paradoxical relationship between the destructive and the productive aspects' of the 'double movement' (87). Like Lévi-Strauss's 'sorte de bricolage intellectuel', as defined in La Pensée sauvage (1962) (88), parody sets up an overt and self-conscious juxtaposition of different aesthetic modes in an 'activity of re-assembling, of constructing from, existing elements' (89). Yet the bricoleur does not create, through this interplay, 'le vertige même de la copie' (90) arising from the ludic nature of textual confrontation in the parodic work: '(...) le jeu parodique consiste

en une double opération: l'emprunt, la raillerie' (91). It is the question of intentionality which again arises in the distinction between intertextuality, or 'intertextual assemblage' (92), and parodic assimilation: for the reference in parody to another work is specifically 'encoded', and the reader is forced to respond according to the narrator's intention (93). In contrast to the 'intertexte inconnu' (94), prominent in the parodying narrative is what Hutcheon refers to as the 'encoded intent' by which the text signals the intervention of a 'foreign' (yet complementary) constituent (95). The nouveau roman exemplifies this process, whereby the existence of literary allusions is announced by 'marks or sounds produced by an intentional being', thus transforming the role of reader into that of a 'decoder' (96). This is not to imply the 'intentional fallacy' (97) argument which states that the author's meaning can be detected in the narrative; in parody, 'to situate the intentional acts inscribed in text' (98) constitutes only the initial task of the reader, who is then obliged to produce his own 'synthèse bitextuelle' between the object of allusion and its present context (99). The terms 'producer' and 'receiver' of a text are, therefore, potentially misleading, as they might suggest that the reader waits in receipt of certain 'schémas préfabriqués' (p 30), whereas both individuals assume 'subject positions' (100): the enunciating agent directs the reader's response, but cannot depend upon the forces of 'continuum mémoriel', or the reader's knowledge external to that particular discourse (101). Parody becomes, therefore, 'ce discours schizophrénique', but the author and narrator, having created



the allusion, hold little control over the identity of the intertextual synthesis (102). This is essentially different from the assimilating forms of satire, travesty, and burlesque, all of which constitute 'imitation with a vengeance' and, as such, permit a single, pre-determined response (103). In satire, the model is resembled with the sole intention of being 'held up to scorn by means of ridicule or irony' (104); in travesty an imitation is conceived 'which retains the subject matter but modifies the style' (105) so as to produce a grotesquely or farcically transformed replica; finally, the burlesque imitates through caricature, destroying its model before the reference is complete or even meaningful (106). Parody involves an element of irony in the discrepancy between the original and latter function of the alluded text, yet because of its textual ambivalence of 'conservative repetition and revolutionary difference', the parodic process is also partially non-ironic (107). Here is exhibited with particular clarity Bakhtin's concept of 'double-directed discourse': for the parodying text is both 'homogenizing', or centripetal, as far as it re-iterates literary modes or conventions 'innocently', and 'denormatizing', or centrifugal, in its ultimate deviation from and subversion of those referents (108). Linda Hutcheon has offered a definition of the term 'parody' which underlines this duality (109). In tracing the etymological root of the Greek noun parodia, it is discovered by Hutcheon that the term means 'counter-song'. Yet the prefix para- has two meanings, only one of which is normally taken into account - that of 'counter' or 'against': 'thus parody becomes an opposition or contrast between

texts' (110). However, para- in Greek can also mean 'beside' and, therefore, 'there is a suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of contrast' (111). On account of this, parodia and, by extension, our term 'parody', need not necessarily include ridicule or even transformation in the initial stage of its appearance. Genette's definition of parody as essentially and totally 'transformational' (112) ignores this 'reverential ethos' of repeating literary 'material' in undistorted form (113). Heather Dubrow describes as the period of 'familiarisation' that point in parody when the author manifests 'acknowledgement of similarities between his aesthetic experiences in writing the work and those of other writers who have adopted the same form' (114). Just as 'every creative imitation mingles filial rejection with respect', so 'every parody pays its own oblique homage' before the reproduced text deconstructs itself systematically (115). The success of parody - 'by no means unrelated to mimesis' (116) - depends upon its 'prefigurative' technique of producing a recognisable 'parallel' to an external discourse, before providing its own critical reflection (117). If the model is ever completely destroyed, the parasitic replica will then perish, therefore the sustaining of that 'parallel' is vital to the parodying text (118). This is not to belittle the subversive intention of the parodist: it is rather the case that the subversion of the 'material' to which he refers is all the greater when the work has reconstructed it faithfully prior to the gommage: 'Parody is at its most effective when it brings the reader as close as possible to the medium of its object (...)' (119). To a certain extent this involves caricature,

for the 'favourite subjects or techniques of a writer' are those selected for repetition; yet they are repeated, significantly, 'so as to be still recognizable' (120) and to 'ensure fidelity' to the victim-text (121).

The nature of the parodic intention causes the nouveau roman, in spite of the 'flattery in the attention it accords' (122) the model, to 'stop short of illusion' (123). For the parodist must beware that, important as 'insinuating himself into his model' (124) is, his ultimate ambition extends beyond 'imbedded plagiarism' (125). Unlike 'le plagiat' and 'le faussaire', the parodying nouveau romancier seeks neither a plagiaristic nor a fraudulent 'atteinte à la propriété littéraire' (126). Parody's 'mimetic effort' (127) is a déception, since it is based on 'un mensonge perpétuel, qui a tous les caractères de la vérité', and which discloses the truth - the allusion is intended to subvert - only once the reader has assimilated the parodied text in its non-ironic form (128). The inherent danger is, of course, that the 'lie' remains undetected: Robbe-Grillet's attempts 'to outstrip the institutionalised meaning of canonic conventions' risk degenerating into 'a practice of writing which cannot do otherwise than institutionalise stereotypes and legitimise them as canonic' (129). It is for this reason essential to recognise the basic difference between parodic assimilation and the simple reproduction of literary texts. For while 'all language is capable of authenticity and inauthenticity' inasmuch as 'it both discloses and covers up, often in the same movement', this 'double move-

ment' represents, for the parodist, the pre-requisite of his creation and the field of play of his creativity (130). The nouveau roman, sequestrated in the 'prison house of language' (131), acknowledges that, if 'any work is created as a parallel and a contradiction to some kind of model' (132), its own écriture survives the flood of influence only if it can dramatise that event internally and acknowledge that 'toute invention littéraire aujourd'hui se produit à l'intérieur d'un milieu déjà saturé de littérature' (133).

Finally, it must be re-iterated that, however much the 'ré-écritures intertextuelles' (134) distort and innovate beyond the parodied texts, the nouveau roman includes, if only with subversive motive, a temporary 'intention représentative' (135). In order to appreciate the co-existence of the 'vouloir-dire' and the 'vouloir-ne-pas-dire' within the one narrative, the initial stage of textual assimilation must be considered before the process of dissimilation intervenes (136).

## TEXTUAL ASSIMILATION IN 'UN REGICIDE'

The assimilation of other texts or literary genres within a single narrative, which constitutes the first stage in the parodic 'double movement', has already been discovered in relation to Un Régicide. Philippe Dulac observes that in Robbe-Grillet's first novel, as in his subsequent fiction, the author 'évidemment (...) a été amené à constituer son matériel de base à travers les lieux communs de la littérature psychologo-humaniste (...)', and weaves into his text 'la référence aux thématiques profondes' (137). This interpretation is representative of the view that Un Régicide incorporates vague but powerful references to literary genres through the re-employment of thematic material and institutionalised motifs. Emma Kafalenos's analysis of the novel as one whose 'investigation' of such broad issues as guilt, judgement, and religious suffering necessarily alludes to and thereby links together different categories of writing - in this case Kafka is reconciled with the nouveau roman - points to the co-existence of several models in the parodying text (138). M M Ball expands on this interpretation when she examines the methods by which the SCRIPTOR LUDENS creates an intermingling of various genres by reconstructing and juxtaposing literary references: Un Régicide is seen to contain elements of the adventure story (139) which is set against a backdrop of biblical allusions, - a reading substantiated by Robbe-Grillet's own admission at Cerisy-la-Salle that he regards the Bible as a 'réservoir à histoires, comme banque de matériel anecdotique'

(140). Butler detects in Un Régicide the interplay and indeed interdependence of the thriller and mythological genres (141); finally, Smyth invites the reader, through his exemplary analysis of the co-ordination between Romantic and Absurd references, to examine the prolific intertextual embedding of what appears, initially, to be unconnected 'material' but which is revealed, ultimately, as a significant synthesis of écritures (142). The contribution of this present study lies in its attempt to define the reconstruction and interaction of literary discourses in Un Régicide in terms of the parodic 'mouvement paradoxal' of the novel (p 130).

It is unconvincing, in the light of the above interpretations, to claim that the thematic content of Robbe-Grillet's fiction is of no significance. The novelist explains:

'Des critiques, comme Jean Ricardou, ont fait de la forme la seule valeur de mes livres. Je pense, au contraire, que le sens y est extrêmement important; on y voit, en effet, des possibilités de sens en lutte contre des sens qui essaient de s'installer' (143).

To a certain extent this answers Leslie Hill's question as to why 'meaning is rarely deferred in Robbe-Grillet's novels' but is, on the contrary, 'always massively present' (144). Two points should be noted here: firstly, the 'esthétique de non-signification' (145) represents a misconception, for 'writing is always and already immersed in signi-

fication, in representations and conventions which have received definition before the novels begin' (146); secondly, as implicit in Robbe-Grillet's criticism of Ricardou, the creative innovation of the novelist, or the point at which he dissimilates, is dependent upon the initial assimilation of pre-established textual meanings as part of the 'aspect de double-jeu' inherent in the nouveau roman (147). Un Régicide assimilates meaning and reproduces narrative constructions in a more direct or 'naïve' manner than the subsequent novels and its techniques of textual reconstruction operate clearly and systematically (148). This is partially due, as *Hutcheon* explains, to the fact that Robbe-Grillet's reader, exposed to *a greater cross-section of culture* than his precursor, lacks an in-depth knowledge of any particular literary mode and, as such, requires the narrator to signal unambiguously to allusions in the text, lest they should go unnoticed (149). *Rather than addressing* a 'volontiers savant' (150), therefore, the narrative is forced to elicit by 'discursive structures' (151) the texts to which it refers, rather than subtly 'evoke by borrowing' (152). The reader, instead of being relied upon to take his 'inferential walks' on 'mere whimsical initiatives' (153) is directed by an audible 'acte énonciatif' into forming the reference (154). Eco argues that the enunciating act 'frames' the reader through the reconstruction of 'topoi', or the individual constituents of narrative schemes, which represent the general sense of the model so as to establish its 'isotopies' (155). In addition to the assimilating devices under these main categories, 'topic markers' (such as titles, characters' names, temporal and spatial 'clues' to previous works)

turn the text into a 'manageable format' in which allusions announce their arrival (156). Riewald adds a further dimension to the technique of assimilation by dividing the overall operation into two different processes: every reference is based on the reproduction of the 'outer form', where 'the surface devices of words or "structure" or "texture" of the model are detectable at a formal level', and also on the reflection of the 'inner form' of that particular genre, or 'the attitude, tone and purpose of the work parodied, and even with the psychological and philosophical habit of the parodee's mind, his spirit' (157). Equal respect must, therefore, be shown to both the 'formal' and 'spiritual' components of the modelled text in order to ensure a recognisable basis of the replica (158). For the narrator of Un Régicide to parody the 'attitude' or 'spirit' of a genre, *that genre must hold a* 'measure of fascination' (159) for *him*, for 'true parody is always critical, but, being inspired by a certain amount of sympathy, it does not make the reader devalue the original' (160).

That the literary allusions in Un Régicide are 'respectful' (in the sense that they are accurate reproductions of the original) is implied in Robbe-Grillet's revelation of the intention behind the novel which is to re-create two genres, the juxtaposition of which later generates a tension in the narrative:

'Je me souviens que le projet était de travailler sur deux registres, de montrer quelqu'un qui vit deux réalités en même temps. Le héros d'Un Régicide



mène une vie schizoïde. Par moments, il travaille dans une usine, par moments il marche sur une côte, dans une île très sauvage au climat breton, où la civilisation n'a pas du tout pénétré' (161).

What is significant in the author's discussion of the dual narrative in Un Régicide is the absence of any reference to the subversive nature of the genre allusions. Rendering this process of assimilation less ironic still is the autobiographical significance of both anecdotal levels: these recall, 'd'une façon précise', firstly 'l'usine (...) où j'ai travaillé pendant deux ans à Nuremberg, en Allemagne' and, secondly, 'l'île (qui) est certainement un mélange des paysages de mon enfance, en Bretagne' (162). In a later interview, Robbe-Grillet identifies the basis of the political realism and fantasy genres in the novel as 'des souvenirs d'enfance précis': Un Régicide re-enacts

'(...) la présence de la Bretagne, par exemple, ou encore la dislocation politique des Troisième et Quatrième Républiques en France, et aussi des éléments repérables empruntés à ma propre histoire, c'est-à-dire mes rêves, mes sensations d'enfant ou d'adolescent, mes phantasmes, etc' (163).

Reflecting upon his first novel, the author remarks on the lack of ironic subversion, particularly with regard to the fantastic or 'poetic' narrative level, of reproduced textual material: '(...) tout ce que j'appellerais la partie "poétique" du roman m'a semblé très vite extraordinairement pleine de naïvetés' (164). This

strongly suggests that the textual assimilation of the co-existing 'registers' in Un Régicide - that of the regicide itself and the fantastic - feature in a pre-ironic or ante-parodic mould before being undermined.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE

## THE 'POLITICAL' BACKGROUND

Robbe-Grillet's avowed intention to operate on two separate narrative 'registers' implies a clear distinction, in Un Régicide, between the 'political' récit and histoire, on the one hand, and the 'fantasy', on the other (1). Yet the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives are inextricably interwoven in the text, and their separation in this study represents only a critical attempt to group together under two genre headings what, at a fictional level, is often confused. The construction of the 'political' narrative in Un Régicide is itself effected through the 'implicit critical imitation of two associated genres' - that is to say, it consists of the homogenous elements of potentially heterogeneous narrative strands which combine in a common cause (2). Hence the broad definition of 'political' to suit this agglomerate - genre: it includes the essential features of the novel of commitment, 'littérature engagée', the central theme of the individual's alienation from society. The 'political' in Un Régicide is contrived by a dual process of allusion: firstly, the text alludes to the general criteria of the genre, providing the context in which the Revolution takes place and the background against which personal experiences occur; secondly, this 'backgrounding' is strengthened by more specific references to particular texts under the category of 'political' literature, thus focussing the reader's attention on the detail, as opposed to the setting, of Boris's situation. These two allusive operations are fused

in 'simultaneous activation' to form a cohesive 'political' whole (3). In addition to this, an overall meaning, or sens, must be achieved on two levels if the text is to belong to 'un système supérieur (4)' (in this case, the 'political' novel): that of the histoire or fable, 'dans ce sens qu'elle évoque une certaine réalité', and the discours or sujet, where 'à ce niveau, ce ne sont pas les événements rapportés qui comptent mais la façon dont le narrateur nous les a fait connaître' (5). All components of content and structure are therefore subservient to 'la détermination des unités' from which the sens ('le critère de l'unité') is formed (6). The effect of drawing together in the 'political' narrative these separate if complementary entities is impressionistic or 'pointilliste', since each allusion, whether of stylistic or 'subject-matter' nature, general or specific, is a separate entity yet combines and contributes towards a single portrait (7).

Although Pour un nouveau roman consistently argues against 'le "réalisme socialiste"' in particular and vraisemblance in general for relegating art to the expression of real-life issues, Un Régicide appears to allude to extra-literary material in its construction of the 'political' background. Robbe-Grillet has admitted that the period in which the novel is written (1947 to 1949) is represented in the work, even if the novelist has no intention of being identified as 'le témoin de son temps' (8):

'Vous voyez, la situation d'Un Régicide  
c'est tout à fait la France des années

quarante - la fierté sociale de l'individu engagé dans la lutte contre l'Ennemi, la conscience politique très vive après sa période de vie souterraine ...' (9).

Surely, as Fletcher remarks, 'the ignominious military collapse of France in May 1940 deeply marked the people of Robbe-Grillet's generation' (10), and it is significant that Le Miroir qui revient describes how 'la défaite de 40 fut celle de la liberté, (...) de la légèreté, du laisser-aller, de l'incurie, de l'esprit jouisseur et veule, bref de la [troisième République]' (11). Regardless of the extent of the author's attachment to the esprit of the Third Republic, his reaction, as mirrored in Un Régicide, is one of outrage - '(...) mon régicide se révolte (...) - at the invasion of his privacy and the imposition of foreign rule' (12). It is, however, essential to make two points at this stage before any definitive connection is made between the actual 'objective' situation of post-War France and Un Régicide: firstly, the novel alludes to experiences at the end of World War II in such a way as to undermine their veracity and expose 'le mythe de la politique en France' (13); secondly, the efforts in Le Miroir qui revient to portray Un Régicide as, to some extent, a reflection of the author's 'real' reactions to the political situation, are made within the context of fiction and not of pure autobiography (14). Boris's indifference and cynicism about the '"Eclatante victoire du parti de l'Eglise' (15) may echo Robbe-Grillet's 'désillusions' and 'amertume' in the face of the political 'engagement' of the Resistance (16) according to Le Miroir qui revient, but it is safest to consider the avowed désengagement

as that of the narrator and not of the author himself, however much it is 'known' that Robbe-Grillet remained, unlike 'la gauche bienche bien pensante', politically indifferent at the time (17). It is, however, this very ambiguity which Un Régicide exploits in its reference to the apparently real-life experiences of the author to 'background' the 'political' narrative.

The purpose of the 'backgrounding' elements of Un Régicide is to increase the hero's awareness of the social struggle until his personal involvement in the Revolution becomes inevitable. At the same time, they provide the reader with what Sartre describes, in 'Question de méthode' (1960), as the 'significations universelles' (18) of particular events, so that the individual's 'singularité historique' is firmly contextualised in society's predicament (19). It is therefore important to begin <sup>discussing</sup> the 'political' narrative by depicting the social deprivation and misery at street-level, and this Un Régicide does by presenting, through the eyes of Boris, a world of fatigued, pathetic, barely-human characters in a community which ignores their basic needs:-

'On avait envie de les asseoir, mais il n'y avait pas de banc dans les rues étroites de ce quartier' (p 73).

The reluctance of the text to analyse such conditions politically - 'les gens avaient l'air fatigué, c'était tout ce qu'on pouvait en dire' - is a reflection of Boris's lack of social awareness at this

point (p 20). The detached description of his fellow-citizens - 'Indistincts, sans expression, ils passaient' (p 20) - recalls the attitude of Roquentin to the family walks in the rue Tournebride (20), and that of Meursault, observing casually the crowds coming out of the cinema as 'fatigués et songeurs', neither of which deduces the 'vérité humaine supérieure' intrinsic in the perception of any politically committed individual (21). The specific context in which Boris perceives people as 'tellement semblables, tellement inutiles, leurs jambes lasses et leurs bras ballants, sans but réel, sans raison' (p 24) is, in itself, a further allusion to La Nausée ; the café scene is a recurrent motif in Un Régicide and functions as an active reference to the 'Rendez-vous des Cheminots' and the 'Café Malby', where Roquentin, in a manner nevertheless more analytically conscious than that of Boris, develops and articulates his antagonism for the human race while following its behavioural patterns (22). The Boris-Roquentin/Meursault parallel is developed more boldly as the main protagonist illustrates in more overt terms his alienation from and feeling of repugnance towards society. This is particularly evident when, trapped involuntarily in 'la foule' in chapter II, Boris refuses any notion of identification or empathy with those about him, whom he describes as mere 'cadavres', a sub-human 'agitation flasque, sans orientation précise' (p 27). His rejection of 'la masse' is reminiscent of the refusal of La Nausée's 'narrateur-misanthrope' (23) to relate his own existence to that of 'les masses molles qui se meuvent spontanément' (24). Just as Boris's physical participation in



social affairs is accompanied by a feeling of disgust ('le flot vis-queux qui pénétrait rapidement dans tout son corps (...)') (p 2)), so Roquentin views the prospect of being caught up with the Bouville 'imbéciles' with revolt: 'Ça me répugne de penser que je vais revoir leurs faces épaisses et rassurées' (25). This reference, in turn, kindles another, central to the development of Boris's pre-engagement phrase: his uneasiness in the proximity starts off as 'cette sensation désagréable' (p 14) (as with Roquentin's early complaint - 'je me suis senti un peu bizarre, un peu gêné, voilà tout' (26)) and intensifies gradually until 'Boris y ressentait sa propre présence comme quelque chose d'anormal et de choquant' (p 73) (comparable to Roquentin's discovery, 'je l'ai, la saleté, la Nausée!') (27). Boris's malaise (p 19) is manifested in terms of physical sickness when he is forced into close contact with his colleagues at the Usine Générale - a scene which takes place, significantly, after Laura has tried to impress upon him the "exigences supérieures de l'action" (p 66): 'Au réfectoire, il ne put rien avaler, ayant plutôt envie de vomir (...)') (p 72). This shows a remarkable similarity to the culmination of Roquentin's nausée, itself an 'illness', resulting from the Autodidacte's plea for a sense of responsibility towards mankind: 'Les hommes. Il faut aimer les hommes. Les hommes sont admirables. J'ai envie de vomir - et tout d'un coup ça y est: la Nausée' (28). Finally, as with both La Nausée and L'Etranger, the hero of Un Régicide retreats from the moral obligations of engagement into the world of sleep, as

though to shut out the anguished phase of consciousness (29): the territorial occupation of the text - seventy-three lines, to be precise - by the time Boris takes to rise from his bed (which he eventually does 'à contrecœur' (p 16) and only once he has submitted to the impossibility 'de remplir ce grand vide jusqu'au lendemain par trente ou quarante heures de sommeil') reveals the same behavioural symptoms of escapism in the reaction of Roquentin and Meursault. The narrator of La Nausée, like Boris, attempts to refute the theoretical and practical obligations of 'humanism' (30) by literally closing his eyes to them:

'Quand il se met à faire ce soleil-là,  
le mieux serait d'aller se coucher.  
Seulement, j'ai dormi comme une brute  
la nuit dernière et je n'ai pas  
sommeil' (31).

Similarly, Meursault remains in bed - '(...) cela m'a ennuyé (...), je me suis retourné dans mon lit (...)' (32) - when suffering from ennui, in the same way that Boris hopes to escape from the tolling of the church bells on Sunday: 'Il se retourna dans son lit (...)' (p 13). This initial stage of 'backgrounding' to the 'political' narrative, therefore, is primarily intended to reveal, through specific textual allusions, Boris's perception of his position in society prior to his conversation as a politically committed character. At this point, however, it is important to underline an essential difference between the individual's désengagement (33) in Un Régicide and the narrative

which 'powerfully dramatises the relationships between consciousness and the world' (34) in La Nausée: for, in spite of Sartre's own theoretical ambition, there is no intention in his novel to convert the narrator from one whose 'ignorance historique' (35) estranges him from society, to one who identifies himself passionately as an 'être-dans-le-monde' (36). Nevertheless, Robbe-Grillet recognises that, in referring the reader of Un Régicide to La Nausée and L'Etranger, the allusions enhance the depiction of Boris as the central protagonist who 'avec ses deux célèbres parrains', Roquentin and Meursault, 'partage aussi l'impression diffuse d'une coupure entre lui et le monde - choses et gens - qui l'empêcherait d'adhérer vraiment à ce qui l'entoure (...)' (37). Boris is no straightforward reconstruction, then, of these 'personnages-philosophes' (38), for he is only temporarily 'à la fois dans la société et coupé de significations idéologiques'; the construction in Un Régicide of the 'political' background is specifically designed to close that gulf between him and the world (39).

If the injustice of the situation of Boris's ironically named 'concitoyens' has thus far failed to involve the narrator, this is due to the fact that their plight has been portrayed at an impersonalised narrative level (p 30). In order to implicate Boris in the political struggle, the text concentrates on the area where he necessarily participates in a social context - his place of employment. The Usine Générale becomes a microcosm of society as a whole, intensifying the 'political' narrative by bringing the Revolution to Boris in more

immediate and substantial form. Robbe-Grillet employs the technique, as used in Zola's description of the mines in Germinal, (*where the mines enslave the workers*) , and the 'Lison' train engine in La Bête humaine, of animating the machinery of political evil whose workings are a concrete manifestation of oppression (40). Just as Etienne Lantier learns through first-hand experience of his colleagues' suffering, so here Boris is exposed to the conditions endured by his co-workers through direct confrontation with the monstrous Usine Générale, which secretes 'l'odeur familière d'huile chaude et de poussière d'acier' in the manner<sup>in</sup> which Zola's mines emit the nauseous odours of human sweat, coal dust, and gas (p 43). The physical threat posed by the Usine Générale is further enhanced by the deafening impact of its machinery, whose force of destructiveness is symbolised onomatopoeically in its devastation of the concept of justice:

'La justice, pourtant ... La Justice!  
En sifflant, le mot passa dans les  
cylindres d'une machine poussive, comp-  
rimé vivement puis fusant en longs jets  
de vapeur - juss tisss juss tisss juss  
tiss - pour retomber à la fin sur la  
chaussée, blanchi, désarticulé, privé  
de signification (...)' (pp 37-38).

As though engulfed in the factory, Boris finds no escape within the walls of the Usine Générale: even the enclosure of his own office offers little respite, for here 'la cloison vitrée assourdissait à peine la trépidation des moteurs et le grincement des outils' while,

strewn on his desk, 'les feuilles couvertes de chiffres' remind Boris of his own involvement in the constant process and perpetuation of the workers' lot (p 43). The Magasin Huit, whose 'muraille grise' and 'crépi (...) ancien et d'assez vilaine apparence' extend the imagery of a monstrous political oppressor beyond the Usine Générale, thus emphasising the impossibility of Boris's escape (p 43). Indeed, the external décor, with its 'grands immeubles de pierre, cossus et réguliers' reflects the de-humanised interior of the factory for here, instead of a living planet is a scrapyard of discarded metal - 'un fouillis de vieux seaux et de fourneaux mangés de rouille' (p 47) at the heart of which the sinister 'pierre tombale' (p 50) (like the 'sinistre visage' of the Nazis) commemorates the death of social justice (41). It is, however, chiefly inside the factory that the narrative concentrates on Boris's political education, for it is at the refectory that he is first permitted to respond to society's problems: as the zealous Arnaud holds forth, Boris is unusually attentive - 'Quelques-uns d'abord avaient dit que cela ne les intéressait pas, mais lui (Arnaud) leur rétorquait avec raison qu'en tout <sup>cas</sup> cela les concernait' (p.50) - and is led to formulate his own conclusion: 'C'est alors que, dans le tumulte, on entendit distinctement cette phrase: "Ce qu'il faudrait, c'est tuer le roi!"' (p 52). As with La Peste, where the microcosmic community of Oran is so impregnated with instances of human suffering that the stoic rebellion of the 'Saint Sans Dieu' becomes a textual as well as moral necessity, so in Un Régicide the Usine Générale is, once saturated with evidence of political

oppression, the breeding ground for Boris's inner revolt (42).

The voice which incites the revolution, as witnessed in Zola's Germinal, comes from within the place of work, and constitutes in itself not only the conversion of the workers - they respond 'contrairement à leur habitude' (p 50) - but also the individual's earliest act of commitment (43).

The final 'backgrounding' device is one which is ultimately responsible for 'foregrounding' the 'political' narrative - the human converter (44). While Arnaud's 'zèle renouvelé' leads directly to the hero's promise of engagement - "'tuer le roi"' - , the role of deepening Boris's understanding of the political situation is Laura's (p 52) (45). Even at the point <sup>at</sup> which the 'speech-act' (46) of Régicide! is committed, Boris lacks a detailed appreciation of the implications of the "'Eclatante victoire"' announced in l'Action (p 30); for if, for 'l'écrivain "engagé"' it is true, as Sartre argues, that 'la parole est action', the 'personnage "engagé"' has articulated his desire well before the political instruction necessary to carry it out (47). Laura's encounters with Boris are instrumental in consummating his 'prise de conscience' (48) on two accounts: firstly, she exploits and consolidates his newly-acquired political fervour by describing the hero, formerly of 'les indécis', as one of the 'hommes de bonne foi' (p 65) urgently needed 'pour constituer un cercle de plus en plus vaste et actif' (p 67); secondly, Laura is required, on a purely informative level, to analyse and explain the background to and consequences

of the Church Party manifesto - not only for Boris's sake but also for the reader's, since the construction of the 'political' narrative has so far only etched out 'le plan de l'Eglise' (p 64). Like Sartre's 'individus de bonne volonté (...) (qui) transforment leurs exigences formelles en revendications matérielles et datées' (49), Boris is converted from idealist to activist on account of Laura's simplified version of l'Action's revolutionary rhetoric of 'une ère nouvelle' (p 42) and 'le "succès remporté"' (p 30):

'Le plan de l'Eglise était simple. Il s'agissait de faire prendre à la population conscience du péril qui la menaçait, et, sans créer de panique inutile, lui montrer qu'un malheur était imminent, mais non pas inévitable' (p 64).

Furthermore, her explanation avoids the ostentatious over-optimism of the media, as witnessed in her admission that '"Les élections nous ont donné du mal"' (p 64). Evidence of Laura's success in her dual role of inspirer-instructor is found in the narrative, tracing Boris's thoughts and revealing, simultaneously, his determination to act:

'Il fallait donc que ceux-là [les hommes de bonne foi] sortent de leurs songes et se décident à organiser l'Etat, au lieu de vivre dans le chaos' (p 67).

Boris has thus been transformed as a textual phenomenon from social outcast to idealist to political activist and is, now, a character

capable of implementing his regicide plan and ensuring the future of the 'political' narrative: 'C'était en effet sur ce petit noyau de bonnes volontés que tout le système futur allait s'échafauder (...)' (p 66). Laura's two functions have therefore been accomplished: on the one hand, she has provided a constant link between the wider context (of political reunions, the Fête Nationale, the ceremonial re-consecration of the Retz Cathedral, and other events of the Party programme) and Boris's own position; on the other hand, she has nurtured Boris from estranged individual to a "'soldat de l'Eglise au service de la communauté"' (p 65).



## THE PERSONAL CONFLICT

The construction of a 'political' narrative in Un Régicide involves more than the purely political intrigue. While 'the political aspects of this novel demand study (...)' (50), so does 'la situation dé-politisée de l'individu', for Un Régicide is a constant inner tension and interplay between the two narrative strands (51). This is substantiated by Robbe-Grillet's claim that the September Revolution is conceived as an occasion to manifest the individual's alienation from society: 'De toute façon, la politique n'a pour rôle que de faire percevoir la coupure du personnage par rapport au monde social' (52). For Boris, isolation - 'la liberté qui se manifeste par l'angoisse' - functions on two levels - in his relationship with individuals and in his political activism (53).

Ironically, it is during his time with Laura that Boris experiences his most intense and consistent form of alienation. As with Kyo and May in <sup>(1933)</sup> La Condition humaine, the two main protagonists of Un Régicide, the dynamics of their relationship is characterised by a continual strategic manoeuvring between attacking and defensive positions (54). While May regards Kyo with anguish - 'Avec quelle angoisse elle le regardait (...)' (55) - and sadness - 'Elle le regarda avec tristesse (...)' (56), Laura looks upon Boris 'comme s'il avait été une bête étrange, un monstre, ou le vide' (p 19). To overcome this 'gêne', or 'malaise'

(p 19), experienced when they are alone together, Laura transforms her feeling of vulnerability into aggression: 'elle (...) contempla Boris sans parler, cherchant de quel côté elle l'attaquerait' (p 62); and, later, transposes her aggressiveness on to Boris: '(...) elle devinait des pièges et des trappes de toutes parts, prêts à engloutir celui qui s'assoupirait (...) ' (p 63). Similarly, May inflicts on Kyo enormous 'souffrance', fearing that an exhibition of 'tendresse' would expose her feminine weakness (57). In both cases, sexuality, far from creating intimacy or affection, is a means to overcome and humiliate: Boris's erotic desires, surfacing as he conjures up 'le chant nocturne des sirènes' (p 64), manifest a final, desperate attempt to dominate Laura, whose refusal to participate in his fantasy is, conversely, her refusal to submit, just as for May the expressed belief that 'la sexualité n'engageait rien' disguises her awareness that her own sexual submission could lead to a total subservience: 'Qu'il (Kyo) couchât avec elle, soit, mais ne s'imaginât pas la posséder' (58). That Boris is able to predict, in an imaginary scenario, the narrative's 'actual' conversations held at a later stage in Un Régicide indicates that their separation, like the dreaded 'sentiment sans nom, aussi destructeur que le temps ou la mort' (59), is fundamental to their relationship, and extends to the most mundane snatches at communication:

'Laura lui demanderait ce qu'il faisait  
en ce moment; il répondrait qu'il ne

faisait rien, qu'il allait à l'usine,  
ou bien il inventerait n'importe quoi;  
mais elle ne serait pas dupe. La  
jeune femme essaierait alors de le  
"raisonner", et il ne comprendrait pas  
grand-chose à ses arguments' (p 19).

The September Revolution of Un Régicide, as with the Communist uprising against Chiang Kay Shek in La Condition humaine, estranges the individuals still further: as Kyo leaves behind May in the final assault, Boris, having decided upon the act of regicide, breaks off communication with Laura from chapter IV through to chapter XI. The final irony of engagement, as portrayed in the relationship of the two main protagonists in Un Régicide, is that individual solitude is the more exposed on account of it.

Implicit in the analysis of Boris as a character irredeemably detached from others (whether separately or collectively) is that his intention to kill the king is, while superficially inspired by a desire for social integration, basically a-political. A closer look at the context in which his regicide decision is taken reveals the depth of Boris's rift with society: for those present at the time of his declaration are hardly his 'concitoyens' but rather 'un groupe d'employés qu'il ne connaissait pas' (p 43), and their reaction is not interest but 'un silence étonné' (p 52). It is only after Boris has succeeded in withdrawing from the commotion surrounding Red's death, in chapter IV - 'Boris essaya de se reculer hors de la conversation des deux hommes' (p 56) - and has

found himself alone, that he can articulate Régicide! (p 58). Significantly, his efforts to convince Laura of the political justification for his concern about the king's role in her 'plan de l'Eglise' (p 64) are met with rejection and incredulity, as though his decision were to estrange the two further, rather than unite them under a common cause:

'Boris s'inquiéta tout de suite du rôle que jouerait le roi. La question semblait très accessoire à Laura (...)' (p 65).

Indeed, for Laura, the king is potentially beneficial to the revolutionaries, as she describes how '(...) le souverain, bien entendu, continuerait comme par le passé d'être discret et favorable au plus fort' (p 65). This is echoed by the official stance on 'Son Altesse le roi Jean' (p 178): l'Action's portrait - a sympathetic, respectful article on 'la famille royale en weekend à la campagne' - confirms that public opinion is behind the king, as does the less effervescent radio transmission (p 123). Finally, proof that Boris's plans contradict popular sentiment can be found in the nation's concern over 'la défaillance du roi', following Jean's withdrawal from the ceremony at Retz (p 195). It can, therefore, be conclusively stated that, since the regicide decision fails to represent a single social contingent, its origin is clearly a-political.

There is evidence to suggest that Boris's resolution to kill the king involves self-deception and that, as such, is symbolic of the tension

between the 'political' and 'personal' narrative strands in Un Régicide as a whole. On the one hand, the would-be assassin considers the prospective crime as a necessary evil to enable the freedom of his people: 'Il fallait faire quelque chose pour ce peuple en attente' (p 145). This momentarily puts an end to his anxiety (which itself arises from his solitude): '(...) la résolution qu'il venait de prendre avait achevé de lui reposer l'esprit' (p 81). Yet his mind does not find lasting peace, any more than Tchen's 'esprit religieux' (60) is satisfied by murder in La Condition humaine, for although 'la mort était une relation sûre et en un sens décisive', it represents the de-politicised behaviour of an individual (p 82). As illustrated throughout Boris's preparations for the regicide - the obsessive concern for the king's welfare, the meticulous research into his private life, his ardent worship of the effigy, his longing to be included in the affairs of the court, 'par amitié' - the pre-condition for his mission is solitude (p 102). An examination of the details of the plan strongly suggests that Boris's ulterior motive is to form an intimate relationship with his future victim rather than commit an impersonal crime:

'Il fallait faire quelque chose. Il fallait pénétrer dans l'intimité du roi, d'une façon ou d'une autre. Boris pensa d'abord à une place de valet de chambre ou de policier privé, ce n'était pas suffisant, ce n'était rien même auprès d'une amitié sincère (...)' (p 80; my underlining).

If the determination to assassinate the king is synonymous with a yearning for companionship, the execution is necessarily an act of solitude - for Boris as much as for Tchen: 'Solitude, d'abord: que le terroriste décidât seul, exécutât seul (...)' (61). This argument is borne out by investigating the moments leading up to the assassination which, in both Un Régicide and La Condition humaine, are related in a highly internalised narrative whose textual occupation is emphatically disproportionate to their 'actual' time. Narrated in the third person singular, partly in 'style indirect libre', the thoughts and behaviour of Boris are conveyed in a 'conscience nartrice unique et fortement personnalisée', the subjectivised nature of which is exploited to reveal the workings of his imagination and, by extension, his sense of isolation and anguish (62). Echoing Tchen's realisation that, after 'cette nuit écrasée d'angoisse', the deed remains unaccomplished - 'Mais non, il ne se passait rien: c'était toujours à lui d'agir' (63) - Boris acknowledges that the events he has 'experienced' are imaginary, and that 'aucun essai n'avait eu lieu "en réalité"' (p 155). The fear of failure is all the more intense because, if the killing is 'une méthode sûre pour se faire reconnaître comme individu', then the particular vested interest in the crime increases the nervous tension of the assassin (64). Hence the interruptions: Boris stops to ponder on the disastrous consequences of 'un événement imprévu (...) en cours d'exécution' (p 157), re-iterating Tchen's dread of being discovered before the murder as his movements

are arrested by distractions: 'Quatre ou cinq klaxons grincèrent à la fois. Découvert?' (65). As though to highlight the inadequacy of Boris as a revolutionary, the imaginary insect, buzzing around the 'moustiquaire' (66) and threatening the success of Tchen's mission, returns to humiliate Boris and ominously pre-figure his failure:

'Boris se leva, dans l'intention de la (la mouche) tuer. La baie était haute et large, la mouche passait de vitre en vitre, déjouant à chaque fois les gestes trop lents de son persécuteur' (p 93).

Instead of performing the act as swiftly as possible, as would a political assassin, Boris conceals a personal investment in the king's death which preoccupies him mentally when his mind should be cleared for action: ironically, as he recognises his lapse in concentration 'en tâchant de se concentrer sur l'action qu'il était en train d'accomplir', Boris delays the crime itself, so that his hope that 'cette fois-ci, il s'agissait véritablement du crime' (p 156) is actually responsible for his procrastination, in much the same way that Tchen's achievement is postponed as he repeats to himself 'que cet homme devait mourir' (67). This is extended in Un Régicide when the text defers the regicide through Boris's imaginary scenario of a successful attempt: '(...) c'est là que va passer la cabine. Il n'y a plus qu'à attendre: la première personne qui montera sera le roi' (p 126). Once, finally, the blow has been struck, the sense of shame and degradation is heightened by Boris's refusal to believe in himself as a genuine

political assassin. This is reflected as he imagines the reaction of the king who, having survived the flawed effort, dismisses its significance - "Ce n'est rien, ces fous ne sont jamais très dangereux" (p 168) - as though to mirror Tchen's concern that, despite the clean strike, his 'victim' is still alive ('Allait-il s'éveiller maintenant!') (68). Desperate to incriminate himself, Boris dispels the type of anxiety from which Tchen suffers in his worry that 'il n'y avait pas de sang sur le traversin, et l'homme n'avait pas du tout l'air mort' (69) by claiming that 'il n'y avait nettement du sang sur la lame' (p 168) and forecasting public response to his "'crime odieux"' (p 173). Like Tchen's 'seul geste' (70), by which he aspires to involvement in the Revolution, Boris's deed is, despite the disguise, as detached ~~from politics~~ as Meursault's socially inexplicable killing in L'Etranger (71). The dilemma facing the jury in Un Régicide, as in L'Etranger, has nothing to do with whether or not an individual is guilty of murder, but rather whether his offence is performed within or outside the political fabric: Meursault's sentence is, ultimately, a punishment for having ignored society's laws and not for having transgressed them; the verdict of 'not guilty' is, equally, an official recognition that, contrary to Boris's avowed engagement, his act of regicide is not a political crime:

'(...) Est-ce que j'inscris Coupable?'  
Les autres se récrièrent confusément:  
non, personne ne disait cela! Boris  
protesta, pour la forme. "Le sac  
pourtant est là comme preuve" (...)' (p 209).



The killing of King Jean is symbolic of the September Revolution and the 'political' narrative as a whole: it is formed of the tension between the political intrigue and the personal conflict, both reconstructed in Un Régicide through allusion to previous texts and a basic adherence to genre specifications.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE

## THE 'LOW FANTASY' NARRATIVE

Robbe-Grillet's description of Boris's existence as 'une vie schizoïde' points to the essential nature of fantasy - that it is produced by the need to escape from reality (1). On the one hand, Un Régicide can be interpreted as the dramatisation of that protagonist's flight from his daily routine (as characterised by his threadbare relationship with Laura and his working life at the Usine Générale) to the world of his imagination. When the 'fantasy' narrative of the novel is considered more closely, however, such an interpretation appears simplistic, for within Boris's 'imaginary' world are clearly two distinct planes. The first of these, the 'low fantasy' narrative, depicts a setting which, despite offering Boris a form of escape from his tedious routine, nevertheless relates, if only occasionally, to both his and the reader's conception of reality. The second level, or the 'high fantasy' narrative, constitutes a more extravagant evasion, and is essentially different from the 'low fantasy' inasmuch as its criteria are fundamentally 'unrealistic'. The life Boris leads is 'schizophrenic' (2), therefore, in the sense that his fantasies can be divided in two categories, one of which causes less of a 'fantastic shock' than the other (3). It is, consequently, especially important to remember, in the analysis of the 'low fantasy' narrative that, while the fantastic may appear 'as if conceived by an unrestrained imagination', it is 'dependent on reality for its existence', and contains a basic acknowledgement of the real

world's 'ground rules' in diverting from them (4). Within a single narrative, the co-existence of 'une hypothèse fantastique' and 'une hypothèse vériste' creates, in Ricardou's words, 'ce Troisième Monde où la riche dynamique de l'Imaginaire n'exclut pas l'irrécusable présence du Réel' (5). What Ball describes as the 'dialectal opposition between rêverie and action' in Un Régicide outlines the role of the 'low fantasy' narrative to establish the tangible, constant base from which the more fanciful dreams of the 'high fantasy' depart and to which they eventually return (6). The particular complexity of the 'low fantasy' lies in the fact that it represents not only a 'realistic' foundation for Boris's flights of imagination but, moreover, an escape from the world constructed by the 'political' narrative which is, itself, a fictional creation: the less overtly fantastic level of narration of Boris's period at the coast is, therefore, both 'l'écart vis-à-vis de la norme' and the 'norm' itself (7).

Before looking at the specific functions of the 'low fantasy' narrative, it is necessary to consider how Un Régicide conjures up the fantastic. Baronian points out the obvious but vital task of referring to a pre-conceived notion:

- 'Evoquer le nouveau fantastique n'est possible qu'en fonction d'une certaine idée du fantastique traditionnel, qu'en fonction de quelques archétypes, voire d'une définition du genre (...) (8).

Identifying the fantastic in literature is 'une tentative de réduction analytique, limitée à un ensemble de textes plus ou moins similaires', and the same can be applied to Robbe-Grillet's construction (or reconstruction) of the 'fantasy' narrative in that it requires the author to simplify and generalise the notion of the fantastic by recalling that which is common to texts of this genre (9). The first stage is, therefore, to draw and adhere to generic generalisations: fantasy must evoke 'le sens aigu de l'imaginaire' or 'l'autre côté du miroir de la vie' (10), its intention is that it 'speaks the truth of the human heart' (11), or seeks to 'réconcilier l'homme et son imagination' (12). The second stage in the construction of a 'fantasy' narrative is to identify 'its own interior set of ground rules' (13), its 'enjeu (...) parfaitement raisonnable', by which the fantastic values and criteria are implemented textually (14). This raises the final problem of choosing which particular 'subcreation' (15) is best suited to evoke the notion or atmosphere of fantasy in the novel, since the author is free to employ any of the recognised 'incommensurate categories' (16), such as mermaids and idyllic islands, whose existence in the text excites the reader's imagination according to a prescribed order (17). If, in fantasy, 'the fictiveness of (...) referents is axiomatic', and both the general and specific allusions through which Un Régicide becomes 'fantastic' are literary, this still allows Robbe-Grillet an enormous variety of texts belonging to this genre from which to borrow material (18).

The underlying principle of the 'low fantasy' narrative is that the

extent to which it appeals to the narrator's and reader's imagination is limited by the intrinsic requirement that it should remain compatible with their sense of reality (19). The recurrence, in Un Régicide, of narrative leitmotifs which the author extends to his fiction as a whole, creates a link between the 'low fantasy' elements of his novel and 'external' discourses (20). The setting is recognisable: the narrator's home in Un Régicide is, firstly, that of Robbe-Grillet himself - 'l'île très sauvage au climat breton, où la civilisation n'a pas du tout pénétré' is, according to the author, 'un mélange des paysages de mon enfance' (21). Secondly, this same 'Côte Sauvage' relates closely to 'le Haut-Jura' of the 'creux de rochers moussu ou garni de saxifrages en coussinets, pente aux courbes atténuées, vallonnement à l'herbe rase', portrayed by the narrator of the semi-autobiographical Le Miroir qui revient (22). Thirdly, the coastline of Un Régicide features the same physical characteristics - the jagged rocks, steep edifices, strong currents - as those in Le Voyeur, with its 'pentes rocheuses', 'pierre mouillée' and 'courants violents' (23). The effect created by this pattern of reference is one of familiarity: the fact that the reader is able to identify the ingredients of the 'low fantasy' scenery with Robbe-Grillet's oeuvre as a whole reduces their 'étrangeté' and so relates that scenery more to his concept of reality (as a reader) than to his notion of the fantastic. For this reason, the potentially nightmarish vision of Un Régicide becomes institutionalised and, therefore, less an object of fear than of comfort. The description, in Robbe-Grillet's 'Fragment autobiographique imaginaire', of the

stormy conditions of the author's childhood resort, contains the key images employed by Boris in depicting the intimidating force of the natural elements: the author in his youth witnesses:

' (...) les trous d'eau agités de remous qui communiquent par des failles souterraines avec la mer libre, où l'on se noie les jambes tirées vers le bas par l'enroulement de longues algues lianes, marée montante qui nous cerne au pied d'une paroi verticale et sans prise, vagues de fond que l'on ne voit pas venir en surface, mais dont l'aspiration irrésistible vient nous chercher, pour nous engloutir, jusqu'au sommet de la plus haute falaise' (24).

Thus the 'vagues soudaines venant en même temps de plusieurs côtés et se mêlant en dangereux remous' and the 'deux parois rocheuses, un passage où l'on risque à tout moment de perdre pied' (p 11) of the opening scene in Un Régicide are, like Robbe-Grillet's own 'souvenirs d'enfance précis', phenomena to which both have grown accustomed (25). The 'fantasmes' which preoccupy the author as a child attribute to Un Régicide its 'densité métaphorique considérable' (26): as Robbe-Grillet is haunted by 'la présence des monstres' (27), so Boris remains 'fasciné par l'intense lumière qui vient de cet autre monde' (p 35). Similarly, the potentially awesome image of the sea is dissipated through its recurrent use elsewhere in Robbe-Grillet's fictional discourse: in particular, the 'Roches Noires' in which is found the corpse of 'la petite Jacqueline' (28) in Le Voyeur, and the ensnaring currents of 'Le Chemin de Retour', creating 'un labyrinthe à demi-

souterrain de tunnels et de gorges' (29), echo, and thereby render less mysterious and intimidating, the 'côte rocheuse' and the 'ondulations de la mer (...) clapotant contre les pierres' of Un Régicide (p 40). Furthermore, the repetition of such imagery as 'l'eau plus haute et plus agitée', 'ce tumulte' (p 11), 'cette violence' (p 12), in addition to the recognition, within the text, of its constant recurrence - 'Un vent violent souffle toujours sur cette côte', and 'la mer y est constamment agitée' - combine to familiarise the reader with the theme of a fearsome natural environment (p 115; my underlinings). In this manner, 'le règne des périls sournois où les bêtes molles, visqueuses, se conjuguaient aux lames sourdes' becomes 'l'état normal' and the 'hurlements de terreur' (30) become merely the standardised communication of an 'écriture (...) toujours enracinée dans un au-delà du langage' (31).

The second device employed in the construction of the 'low fantasy' narrative involves the allusion to a literature, outside Robbe-Grillet's œuvre, which contains material of a 'fantastic' nature and yet whose restrained and reflective descriptive style distinguishes it from the more instinctive and spontaneous celebration of the imagination of 'high fantasy'. On this level, Un Régicide is seen to reconstruct an 'examen de conscience' based upon, if only partially and temporarily, the criteria of Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire (32). As Rousseau's narrator is sensitive to the oppositional play between life's 'extases' and the undercurrent of personal 'malheur' (33), so Boris's experiences lift him to the heights of 'la saison des glaïeuls' before plunging him



again into the depths of solitude (p 105). It is through 'les charmes de la nature' (34) that Les Réveries du promeneur solitaire conveys the pastoral idyll, experienced also by Boris, whose description of 'les fleurs aux couleurs éclatantes' 'les odeurs de varech mêlées au vent de crépuscule' (p 106) and 'le chant des oiseaux (qui) jaillissait dans les fontaines' (p 107) recalls the sensuous appreciation of 'les odeurs suaves, les vives couleurs' and 'des sensations si douces' of l'Ile Saint Pierre and l'Ile de la Motte (35). For it is only in his relationship with Nature that the narrator of Un Régicide discovers a sense of peace:

'Il fait beau, le vent nous apporte au visage un air déjà tiède et sucré; il ne reste plus, très haut dans le ciel, que quelques petits nuages blancs, qui dépassent l'île sans s'arrêter. Tout autour de nous la bruyère est en fleur et bourdonne de milliers d'abeilles (...)' (p 136).

Yet at the same time Boris is conscious that the beauty of Nature comes and goes, and that the countryside he observes with leisure is also the land of toil and hardship for some:

'Nous sommes au milieu de l'hiver, les bancs de poissons saisonniers se sont éloignés de nos côtes, notre maigre récolte est depuis longtemps rentrée dans les granges, les quelques réparations qu'exigeaient nos demeures sont terminées pour cette année' (p 47).

Rousseau's narrator, like Boris, feels 'le froid des premières glaces' and portrays the imminence of Winter with the same 'mélange d'impression douce et triste':

'Depuis quelques jours on avait achevé la vendange; les promeneurs de la ville s'était déjà retirés; les paysans aussi quittaient les champs jusqu'aux travaux d'hiver. La campagne, encore verte et riante, mais défeuillée en partie, et déjà presque déserte, offrait partout l'image de la solitude et des approches de l'hiver' (36).

Enchanting as the island is, it is also the haven of Boris's 'isolement' (p 21) in the way that the charms of Nature in Les Réveries du promeneur solitaire do not prevent the Earth from being 'une planète étrangère' (37). The natural world is, therefore, a symbol, in both works, for the rêverie in which the narrator can experience intense but short-lived delights: 'le recueil de mes longs rêves' (38) is as fleeting as 'la saison des glaieuls' of Un Régicide (p 184). It is as the dream of happiness ends that one of conscious introspection begins, and with it a reflection on 'le triste sort des hommes' (p 101), leading to the despairing conclusion for Boris that 'nous vivons ici dans un très grand isolement, ne pouvant même espérer, pour nous ni pour nos fils, un changement à ce sort misérable' (p 21). Similarly, Rousseau's narrator reflects upon his 'moi détaché' as though the state of his solitude were permanent and absolute: 'Me voici donc seul sur la

terre, n'ayant plus de frère, de prochain, d'ami, de société que moi-même' (39). Just as the promenades reveal themselves as an indulgence in 'ce goût vif pour la solitude' (40) - this is confessed in the rhetorical question, 'Faut-il s'étonner si j'aime la solitude?' (41) - so Boris's journey is not an escape from but a celebration of his loneliness: it is 'à coups de rames vigoureux' that he departs, from civilisation after his encounter with Malus le Solitaire (p 112). The voyage of Un Régicide is at once a glorification of the hero's isolation and his search for the innocent, instinctive joys of his childhood: the confession of the 'Huitième Promenade' in which the narrator reveals that 'Tout me ramène à la vie heureuse et douce pour laquelle j'étais né' (42) is recaptured in Boris's illusory 'return' to his former happiness: 'Oui, cette terre est une île, je la reconnais: c'est celle où j'ai passé toute ma vie (...)' (p 112). Ultimately, however, the naïve bliss of youth proves irretrievable, and Boris returns (like the 'promeneur solitaire' who is confirmed as 'seul et délaissé' (43)) to his melancholy suffering which, he insists, is 'l'état normal par excellence' (p 222). Finally, the air of resignation characteristic of the narrator's attitude to human misery in Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire - 'Le bonheur est un état permanent qui ne semble pas fait ici-bas pour l'homme' (44) - features, in Un Régicide, in a state of hopeless abandon, where Boris withdraws from the 'suprême lutte' to surrender 'sans ardeur comme sans éclat' (p 224).

Both the recurrence of Robbe-Grillet's own leitmotifs and the allusion to Rousseau's introspective 'sérénité olympienne' reconstruct the 'low fantasy' narrative, the object of which is to establish an idyllic setting, itself an escape from Boris's mundane world of the Usine Générale and yet, at the same time, an incitement to a more extreme flight of the imagination, as represented by the 'high fantasy' world of Un Régicide (45).

## THE 'HIGH FANTASY' NARRATIVE

If the 'high fantasy' narrative is intended to effect a more severe 'fantastic shock' and allow the text to develop its full potential within the fantasy genre, then it must contain allusions to a literary form which itself represents 'reality turned precisely 180 degrees around' (46). For this reason, Un Régicide creates a parallel between Boris and Odysseus, which refers the novel constantly, through its association with one particular myth (47), to the world of mythology in general, since 'mythic narrative (...) cannot tell one thing without telling a hundred others' (48). The reference in literature to myths, both individually and collectively, is unavoidable, as Robbe-Grillet implies in his admission to being 'surrounded' by 'des éléments mythologiques' (49). Gould extends this argument by asserting that it 'is impossible to create a fiction without approaching the condition of myth' and , therefore, that 'the meaning of fiction' is always essentially mythic' (50), thus re-iterating Northrop Frye's definition of the role of myth in literature as its 'unifying category' (51). Furthermore, the omnipresence of myths in Robbe-Grillet's narrative realises not only a 'synthesis' (52) between Ancient and Modern Worlds, but also the most productive 'générateur de fantastique' by removing the textual experiences as far as possible from external reality (53). Just as the act of writing is to join in a literary tradition, so the modern text unavoidably echoes the realm of mythology (54) and, consequently, the

reader, 'so thoroughly conditioned by the heritage of our Western culture', automatically interprets events by means of that 'cultural key' (55). Un Régicide is written in a 'cultural code' which relies entirely on the 'horizon of expectation in the reader', for although the narrative inevitably reconstructs - as an imitatio - mythological elements, these references are incomplete without a conscious 'prefiguration' in the decoding process (56). In other words, allusion to mythology and the generation of the fantastic in the novel are dependent on whether or not the reader is capable and willing to participate in the textual interplay. On the one hand, this can be seen as problematic: Rabinowitz points out, in his essay "'What's Hecuba to Us?'" that, as reader-response becomes less 'predictable' (57), the survival of mythological allusions (or 'mythic materials' (58)) grows more precarious (59). On the other hand, the initiation and completion of references in the text open a discourse between narrator and reader which is fundamental to parody: Michel Leiris, in analysing Butor's 'réalisme mythologique' argues that the narrative can virtually ensure the 'success' of allusion provided that, as a reader, 'vous vous sentiez en présence d'une invitation (...)' (60). Robbe-Grillet's fiction encourages the 'presence' and detection of parallels between text and 'sub-text' (61): Les Gommages contains references to the Oedipus myth (62), while Le Voyeur has been interpreted as a modern-day version of the myth of Andromeda (63); Dans le labyrinthe alludes to the myth of Daedalus (64); L'Immortelle appears as 'a retelling of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice' (65). These mythological associations are formed through

employing the same techniques found in Un Régicide: firstly, because the myth introduced by the novelist 'can prefigure and hence anticipate the plot of his work' (66), vague references through the content - action and events - are sufficient to establish a symbolic meaning behind the protagonists' behaviour; secondly, the objects of description generate, through their 'échos multipliés' (67), a mythological value and so 'participate (...) in a reality that transcends them' (68); lastly, the self-conscious nature of the narrative provides occasion for 'announcements' which indicate clearly the implication in the novel of its model-text (69). The consequence of these combined techniques of reference is twofold: one outcome is that the presence of mythology in Robbe-Grillet's fiction, whether it 'ennobles contemporary life' (70), seduces the reader 'in search of profundity and tragic significance' (71), or claims for the novel 'a depth of meaning it does not possess' (72), forces the reading process to be more - literally - adventurous and fantastic; the other upshot is that, if myth 'points to the collective nature of the problems facing each of us as individuals', it also relates the writing of the present and the parodied text to the single operation of écriture (73). Both the above devices and results can be detected in the Boris-Odyseus parallel which constitutes the 'high fantasy' narrative of Un Régicide.

The first and most efficient technique employed in Un Régicide in the creation of the Boris-Odyseus analogy is the narrating of events and

action common to both modern and mythological protagonist. Like the Odyssey (74), which is considered a voyage of self-knowledge and self-fulfilment (75), Un Régicide relates the trials of 'le voyageur perdu' in his search for material and spiritual accomplishment (p 92) (76). Boris's voyage is both politically and personally inspired: the repetition of the regicide scene multiplies his tasks as a "'soldat de l'Eglise au service de la communauté"' (p 65) and thus transforms a single event into a series of expeditions in the same manner that Odysseus is involved in a number of perilous adventures in the Trojan war; secondly, Boris's quest relates to the more ethereal needs of the individual, as witnessed in his desire to overcome 'le triste sort des hommes' (p 101) and defeat the sense of solitude - 'Je suis seul face à l'océan (...)' (p 116) - that plagues Homer's hero in his nineteen-year absence from Ithaca, in spite of his commitment to the wars (77). As in the Odyssey, the immenseness of such an undertaking is manifested in a series of obstacles, the most prevalent of which are the climatic conditions. From the outset, the sea signifies danger for Boris: chapter I exposes narrator and reader alike to the tumultuous and unpredictable waters, where 'la mer monte, par vagues soudaines' (p 11), leaving Boris, with 'les membres tremblants d'avoir échappé à cette violence' (p 12), to pray for 'la mer (...) calme et sans piège' (p 12). Book IX of the Odyssey relates how Odysseus incurs the wrath of Poseidon by blinding Polyphemus and is warned that henceforth the sea would be his enemy. Un Régicide realises the perils of the sea through the dreaded 'norois' (p 116), a wind from the North - 'un vent violent' -



which renders the water 'constamment agité' (p 115) and which blows with increasing force throughout the narrative: 'Le vent redouble de violence, la mer heurte à coups de boutoir le mur de la falaise' (p 116). Similarly, the wind holds potential for great destruction in the Odyssey, and the hero's survival depends upon its course: Book X sees Odysseus arrive at the floating island of Aeolus, god of the winds, who imprisons his winds in a leather bag, leaving only the west wind free to direct the sailors safely east; but they escape, and carry the ships away from Ithaca, just as the strong north wind had blown Odysseus off course, past the cape of Cythera, and subjected him to a further nine days at sea. Boris's difficulties in voyage are compounded, like those of Odysseus in his return to Ithaca in Book XIII (78), by a thick, impenetrable mist:

'Les côtes basses non plus ne sont pas sans danger, car l'humidité de l'air est si grande qu'il nous arrive d'y pénétrer dans l'eau sans nous en rendre compte; la brume opaque et dense nous rend la mer indiscernable au contact (...)' (p 199).

So saturated with the 'brume' (p 197) and 'brouillard' is the course which Boris steers that he spends his days 'au sein d'une substance opaque et continue, qui nous étouffe insensiblement' (p 217). These conditions combine in 'les tempêtes d'hiver' (p 115) and 'l'ouragan qui me jette au visage ses embruns brûlants' (p 116), thus recalling the tempest which smashes Odysseus's craft in Book V and throws him

ashore to the island of Scheria, and the storms, created by Zeus at Helios's request, which he has to endure in Book XII (79). Both the hero of Un Régicide and Odysseus survive these ordeals and thwart the forces of Nature which besiege their voyages by clambering to the relative safety of dry land: Boris eventually escapes the ravages of the storm (with which the novel begins) by reaching 'la terre ferme' (p 13), while Odysseus survives the shipwreck caused by the Laestrygonians in Book X, and lands safely on the island of Aeaea (80). Life on the islands, however, proves equally hazardous, for it is here that the conflict between the human and the monstrous is staged (81). The Odyssey describes how Odysseus and his twelve men (82) are captured by a Cyclops (in fact Polyphemus, Poseidon's son) and are imprisoned in a cave before they manage to blind the giant and escape from the island off the coast of Libya in Book IX (83); this is followed by Odysseus's escape from the savage man-eating giants, the Laestrygonians, to whose island the winds of Aeolus had sent his vessels; finally, Odysseus and his grieving shipmates arrive at the island of Aeaea where the witch goddess, Circe, daughter of Helios, turns his men into pigs, to join the farm of wild beasts in her palace (84). Un Régicide relates the dangerous encounters with monstrous creatures experienced by Boris on land: even in the apparent safety of his office he is haunted by the mysterious 'silhouette massive' (p 53) which prefigures a series of metempsychotic transfigurations in which Guérin-le-Septième assumes gigantic proportions - 'même assis, (il) nous dépasse tous d'une tête' (p 59); the narrator himself becomes 'un vieux vautour que

ses ailes ne peuvent plus porter' (p 109) and, in the place of Thomas, resides 'un être difforme, avec deux jambes grêles et une tête de cheval' forcing Boris to flee 'quand la bête ouvrit la bouche et se mit à hennir de façon atroce' (p 114) (85). The dangers of the semi-human, semi-monstrous are epitomised in the form of the Sirens (86), against whose irresistible charms Boris is warned by the prophetic Malus, (as is Odysseus, in Book XII, by Circe):

"Les sirènes! Les sirènes se sont abattues sur nôtre île malheureuse. (...) N'y va pas, pour l'amour du ciel! La marée d'hier a laissé sur le sable les démons de l'été, les terrifiants poissons humains descendus des mers chaudes, qui ne cherchent ici que notre mort" (p 142).

The seductiveness of the Sirens, conjured up by Malus le Solitaire in his description of "les jeunes femmes aux écailles dorées, à la nage rapide et souple, à la chevelure d'algues onduleuses" (p 117), and later, is evoked in his portrayal of 'jambes agiles, taille mince, seins menus, cou fragile et long cheveux d'argent' (87) (p 128), represents their powerful physical attraction whose perils Odysseus overcomes only by plugging the ears of his men with beeswax and ordering them to bind him to the mast (88). More alluring than the physical presence of Sirens is the beauty of their singing which entices Boris, as it does Odysseus, both of whom reveal, by the strength of their desire, the tempting quality of the song:

'Je les entends, j'entends leur chant,  
si doux qu'on le confond d'abord avec  
le murmure du vent dans les hautes  
herbes de la dune' (p 128).

The temptation-motif, reaching prominence in the narrative of the Sirens, recurs throughout Un Régicide, as in the Odyssey, to add to the obstructions and pitfalls designed to challenge and divert the hero from his mission. Book V tells of how Odysseus is kept a love-captive on the island of Ogygia by the beautiful nymph, Calypso, and how, after Poseidon has ~~struck him during~~ his departing journey, he is rescued by the sea-nymph, Lencothœa; in Book VI, Odysseus awakens on the island of Scheria to greet the lovely Princess Nausicaa (daughter of King Alcinous of the seafaring Phœacians) and her maidens in a scene all the more erotically charged on account of the traveller's nakedness on being discovered; finally, in Book X, Odysseus is seduced, despite the warnings of the young god Hermes, by Circe, in whose company he stays on the island of Aœaea for a whole year. Boris's resolve is similarly weakened by the erotic invitations he receives in Un Régicide: he chooses to ignore Malus's words of caution and indulge in 'la saison des glaïeuls' through the pleasures offered him by Aimone and Lélia, with whom he enters a world of sexual fantasy which appears to arrest the advance of time for at least a year (p 117) (89). These temptations entice both Boris and Odysseus because they provide at once a momentary satisfaction of - and, paradoxically, a distraction from - the true yearnings of the two protagonists, whose

inability to share their feelings with their beloved - Laura and Penelope, respectively - causes them to yield in the face of such alluring invitation (90). Odysseus's sadness at having left Ithaca is made manifest in Book VII when, generously treated at the court of King Alcinous and Queen Arete, he grieves at the woeful song of the bard Demodocus; this is repeated in the context of Robbe-Grillet's novel, where Marc's sorrowful 'chant marin' generates 'les rouges larmes amères' in the narrative (p 87).

The storms, the wrath of the gods and monsters, and the seductive divertissements all combine to make the journey of Un Régicide as tortuous as that in Homer's Odyssey as, like his mythological precursor, Boris has yet to restore his political kingdom to order. In order that his ends may be achieved, Boris is required to adopt various disguises: firstly, he appears as an employee at the Usine Générale, although in fact he finds himself 'au milieu d'un groupe d'employés qu'il ne connaissait pas' (p 43); secondly, he devises a plan to dress up as one of the king's personal staff - 'Boris pensa d'abord à une place de valet de chambre ou de policier privé' (p 80); finally, although 'son costume lui avait d'abord causé beaucoup de tracas', Boris decides upon a more simple masking of his identity by putting on 'un complet ordinaire' (p 156). Odysseus, too, is forced into frequent disguises: in Book XIII, he is dressed up by Athene as an old beggar to allow him to seek out Eumaeus; subsequently, he features as a Cretan soldier serving King Idomeneus ( Book XVI);

ultimately, Odysseus arrives at Penelope's palace, in Book XVII, disguised as an elderly beggar (and is recognised only by his son's devoted nurse, Eurycleia, who spots his boar scar when bathing him). Odysseus's true identity is not revealed publicly until, in Book XXII, he tears off his rags to his enemy-suitors, just as Boris confesses to being a true 'détraqué' only once the narrative has declared, 'Tout allait bien: le roi était mort' (p 173). A tranquil ending follows the killing in Un Régicide - 'Tout est calme' (p 225) - as the narrator's mission is now accomplished, and the text resumes to being, like that of the Odyssey once Athene arranges peace in the kingdom of Ithaca, 'un quartier tranquille' (p 226).

The main technique of allusion employed in Un Régicide, whereby the action and events of the narrative relate to and revive those central to the model-text, is enhanced by a number of more specific references which, in spite of their more tenuous function in the plot, can contribute to its mythological associations. It is important to stress that these references do not necessarily draw from the myth of Odysseus, nor to Homer's Odyssey, specifically, but from the world of mythology in general, and therefore possess a 'unifying' quality on account of their wide applicability (91). For instance, Malus le Solitaire, it has already been remarked, creates a link with the myth of Odysseus through his parallel with Circe. This allusion, in turn, produces others: for the theme of protectiveness in Un Régicide - Malus informs Boris: "'je suis l'étoile qui guide dans la nuit le voyageur perdu, je

suis celui qui te regarde" (p 92) - establishes a further connection with the epic poem, as it recalls how Tiresias, in Book XI, advises Odysseus how he should propitiate Poseidon (92), and cautions him also, in Book XI, against touching the cattle of Helios on the island of Thrinacia (93). Furthermore, the warning which Malus issues against the sun - Boris is to imagine 'La terre (...) plus belle [où] il y a (...) du soleil' (p 101) but not to visit it - echoes the final words of Circe, that Odysseus should steer clear of the island of the Sun and Scylla, whose plight attaches a new mythological significance to the cryptic tower of Un Régicide to which Boris travels, since it is from the tower of her father's fortress that Scylla, daughter of Nisus, falls in love with Minos and plans his triumph (94). The notion of prophecy turns the reader's attention to the 'anagramme accusatrice' of Régicide! (p 58) which can be regarded as not only a prediction of the king's murder but an expression of its predestination and, as such, attributes to Boris's actions a sense of tragic fatalism (95). This association is strengthened by the more obvious parallels between the protagonist and the tragic hero elsewhere in Robbe-Grillet's fiction, such as the Wallas-Edipus and the soldier-Daedalus similitude in Les Gommes and Dans le labyrinthe, respectively (96). Moreover, the foretelling of King Jean's death conceals a further connection with Odysseus in that Odysseus's 'other' son, Telegonus, is informed by an oracle that he will murder his father (97). Boris's own attempt to determine a future event is spurned by his colleagues - his plea for the king's head 'parassait stupide' (p 52) according to 'l'opinion générale'

(p 53) - as are Odysseus's endeavours to predict Achilles's victory in the Trojan wars in the Iliad (98). Once the reader of Un Régicide extends the Odysseus myth parallels beyond Homer's Odyssey, a new field of allusions springs up: firstly, Boris's alleged madness - the king dismisses him as a harmless 'fou' (p 168) - recalls how Odysseus feigns insanity to avoid leaving Penelope and Ithaca and being sent to war (99); secondly, the trial in Un Régicide can be seen as a reference to that of Odysseus in another version of the myth where he is brought to justice by the suitors' kinsmen (100); finally, the alternative names to Boris - Maurice and Moritz (p 13) - allude to the various interpretations of Odysseus's name and, also, to the doubts concerning his parentage (101). Such links between Un Régicide and versions of the Odysseus myth beyond the Odyssey have, in turn, the ironic effect of founding new connections with Homer's epic poem which, subsequently, are seen to relate back to Robbe-Grillet's novel: an example of this is the confusion over Odysseus's name which refers the reader once again to the Odyssey, Book X, where the captive informs the Cyclops that his name is 'Outis' (the Greek for 'Noman'); the giant is, shortly after this, blinded by the surviving members of Odysseus's original twelve shipmates in their bid to escape, and thus focusses the reader's attention back to Un Régicide, where 'l'aveugle Alban' is one of Boris's twelve associates (p 59). While the primary technique of mythological allusion employed in Un Régicide is the linking of the main intrigue to that of Odysseus, the secondary device is, therefore, one in which specific detail of superficially disparate quality and in-



tent increase the unifying associative powers of the parodying text by widening the horizons of the model to which it alludes, and generating thus a complex and productive network of references.

The third and last technique of mythological allusion in Un Régicide is employed at the most conscious narrative level: it involves the open efforts of the text to adhere to a literary genre relating myths and legends (102). Boris's voyage of self-discovery is symbolic of the novel as a whole, which seeks to escape 'le ciel (...) couvert, uniforme et bas' and 'la lande (...) toute grise' of its mundane existence by alluding to and eventually becoming part of its more significant heritage (p 12). The narrator dreams of and creates a storm which blows away the suffocating atmosphere of its own predictability:

'... Si une tournade, un jour, venait  
dissiper le brouillard qui nous étouffe,  
nous verrions se lever la lumière dans  
le ciel retrouvé, le sable serait chaud,  
la mer serait verte avec des reflets  
dorés dans le creux des vagues, la lande  
sentirait le miel ...' (p 25).

Aware of its place in the literary tradition and of the imprisonment inflicted by that tradition 'depuis les temps les plus anciens', Un Régicide resolves to overcome its 'très grand isolement' (p 21) by effecting an inner 'cyclone' and 'cataclysme' (p 26). The repetition of the storm scene and the numerous efforts to reach the island are complemented by acknowledgements within the narrative of its own

hesitant quest for legendary status: 'En jambant, le cœur un peu serré, les gouffres de légende, je m'écarte des passes coutumières vers ces postes avancés (...)' (p 33) (103). As the text progresses, it signals the revival of the dead language of ancient times (104), as Boris discovers the body of Red, buried beneath the 'tas d'ordures' of modern civilisation: 'Une légende en caractères gras indiquait que le cadavre avait été découvert dans ce terrain vague, en banlieue' (p 56). By chapter V, having selected one of the many mythological routes available (105) Un Régicide has succeeded in advancing from the 'outskirts' of the mythical world to its centre, where it discovers a monument - 'cette tour certainement très ancienne' - commemorating a past culture; in turn, what had begun as a symbol actively generates a legend in the narrative:

'Maintenant, je me souviens en avoir  
entendu parler: une vieille légende  
veut que, jadis, un homme solitaire  
l'ait habitée, vivant à l'écart, d'on  
ne sait quelles chimères' (p 83) (106).

By referring to this legend Un Régicide is obliged to invent it, since the reader has no knowledge of such a tale. This the narrator attempts to do by 'recalling' 'les vers d'une ancienne ballade' (p 88), which paves the way for the spectacular entry of the Solitaire (in chapter VI) whose 'voix sourde et vibrante' reverberates throughout the text (p 91) in its description-cum-invention of 'la saison des glaïeuls', where Boris and the novel itself are cast into the mould of

legendary phenomena (p 117). Finally, in chapter XII, the voyage ends as 'la saison de pêche est finie' (p 184) and the mundanity of Boris's 'real' life returns, to be interrupted, like the 'low fantasy' narrative of Un Régicide, only by the spasmodic relating of 'des histoires merveilleuses d'ondines et de sirènes' (p 222). The object of this final device of allusion is to signal from within the narrative the intention of the text to create a parallel between Un Régicide and 'les temps les plus anciens' (p 188), in such a way as to reinforce the aspirations to mythological significance of the *conté* and the 'objets générateurs' in the novel (107).

One means whereby the 'high fantasy' narrative is constructed in Un Régicide is by references to myths and legends which, as both literary and pre-literary phenomena, recreate the fantastic (108). The other source of allusion is the 'poetic', considered by Richards to be a sub-genre of the fantastic but also its essence, since the poetic incorporates the three stages of fantasy: yearning, the realisation of the dream, and the end of the dream (109). In addition to this and because it must acknowledge its own transience, the poetic may be said to manifest the 'fecund tension between (the) opposing poles' of dream and reality fundamental to all 'fantasy' narrative (110). Robbe-Grillet's novel becomes poetic in two ways: firstly, the narrative contains themes which the reader associates with poetry more than with prose fiction; secondly, this thematic material evokes, through its imagery

and language, specific poems, the reference to which enhances the vaguer associations between Un Régicide and this genre. In parallel with the other 'high fantasy', the poetic takes the particular form of a voyage whose beginning (the 'yearning' stage), middle (the realization of desires), and end (the return to the 'real' world) constitute the movement of 'les passages lyriques, la poésie mal dominée' of the work (111).

The point at which Boris's yearning is communicated most powerfully in Un Régicide is when, having sensed that 'une brume plus douce caresse plus tendrement les choses' (p 85), he hears the 'vieille chanson que tout le monde ici connaît' (p 86). In spite of its simplistic language, the 'vieille chanson' creates for its words a symbolic significance, or 'semantic range' (112), concentrating the reader's mind less on the signifier ('the sign in its physical [phonetic or graphic] shape') and the referent ('the object it [the signifier] represents') and more on the signified ('the concept evoked in our mind by the word [or sentence, or text]') (113). The narrator is struck by the words of the ballad 'qui semblent, quoique ne voulant rien dire, cacher quelque mystère, quelque promesse', which he interprets in the light of his longing and which, in turn, both reflect and generate that sense of longing (p 87). On one level, the words of the 'vieille chanson' are mundane: 'Les paroles n'ont pas grand sens (...)' (p 86); on another level, however, they constitute 'les écarts par rapport à la norme' (114), taking on a further poetic meaning by referring not only to

Boris's yearning but to Valéry's poem, 'Le Cimetière Marin' (115). This parallel is constructed in two ways: firstly, the ballad of Un Régicide alludes to the imagery of 'Le Cimetière Marin' by reconciling the voyager with death - 'Et il (le marin) chante gaiement pour endormir la mort' (p 88) - while, secondly, the 'vieille chanson' implements Valéry's aesthetic theory of voulu faire as opposed to voulu dire (116) by actually inducing the death-like state of the 'sommeil profond' through the slow, funereal rhythm of the refrain 'chante, marin ...' (p 86). The narrator's own analysis of the ballad's effect as 'l'air (...) monotone et lent' and his likening of it to 'une complainte' and 'une sorte de prière', are further evidence that the song has produced in its listener the despair and craving it mirrors (p 86). Furthermore, if the 'vieille chanson' creates Boris's desire to escape, it also contrives the means by which he seeks his ideal, for in place of his despair is born the hope of becoming one who can embark on his journey of discovery rather than yearn to no avail. This is achieved by identifying the narrator with the voyager through the allusion to Mallarmé's 'Brise Marine' (117), in which the poet's wish to set sail comes true on account of his recreating the seafarers' lament ('mais, ô mon cœur, entend le chant des matelots' (118)), just as Boris endeavours, through trial and error, to reconstruct the 'ancienne ballade':

'Le marin chante en forçant sur les rames, lourd est son cœur et rouges sont ses mains. Ce n'était pas cela,

ni le rythme, ni les paroles. Et il chante gaiement pour endormir la mort' (p 88).

Like Mallarmé's poem, whose refusal to stagnate in hopeless despair and whose strength of desire combine to activate the perils of the sea - the 'orages' (119) and 'naufages' (120) become textual realities -, the ballad of Un Régicide washes away 'les rouges larmes amères' by putting into effect 'la main qui rame', so that the text creates its own means of evasion (p 88). The image of the oarsman, which recurs throughout the 'vieille chanson' - 'Moins forte est la main qui rame' (p 86), 'Le marin chante en forçant sur les rames (...)' (p 88) -, echoes that of Valéry's poem, 'Le Rameur' (121) whose narrator survives the 'Voûtes pleines de vent, de murmure et de nuit' (122) by inventing an 'Ame aux pesantes mains, pleines des avirons' to row himself out of danger (123). Similarly, the oars supplied by the ballad are those which enable Boris finally, in chapter VII, to reach his ideal 'à coups de rames vigoureux' (p 112) (124), but before this he requires, in order for the voyage imagery to be complete, a vessel, and this is built of his dream, itself inspired by the soporific 'sommeil profond' of the 'vieille chanson': 'Je me prends à rêver d'un beau bateau, tout d'une pièce, d'une matière dure et lisse qui n'aurait jamais de fente ni d'égratignure ...' (p 87). The construction of the boat, like that in Rimbaud's poem, 'le Bateau ivre' (125), completes the dream sequence, for it allows 'une évvasion instantanée' (126), since 'au rêve, tout est possible' (127). Just as the 'bateau ivre' guides the poet safely through the 'clapotements

furieux des marées' (128) and beyond the horrific conception of the 'noyé pensif' (129), so the 'beau bateau' (p 87) helps Boris to overcome his early nightmarish vision of drowning - '(...) aurait-il fallu se laisser submerger par les vagues (...) (p 13) - by carrying him unhurt, if aware of 'cette violence', across the waters (p 12). Ultimately, the unpredictable flux (130) and 'immense illogic' (131) of the sea are rendered harmless by the ballad, in the same way that the poem itself of 'Le Bateau ivre' foils the evil forces of Nature by creating its own benevolent seas, where 'la tempête a béni mes éveils maritimes' (132). It is the power of the song throughout Un Régicide - recurrent in the 'vieille chanson' (p 86), the 'ancienne ballade' (p 88), Laura's 'chant nocturne' (p 64), and the sirens' singing, 'si doux qu'on le confond d'abord avec le murmure du vent' (p 128) - which seduces Boris and enchants Nature - 'Enchante jusqu'au matin/Le sommeil profond de la mer' (p 88) -, thus permitting the dream to become a reality (133). Through the magic of the melody - implied in the pun 'en-chante' - Nature is therefore appeased, and Boris is reconciled with the elements as the tempests and fierce winds die down and are replaced by a calmer, more serene climate reminiscent of Baudelaire's 'Endormeuses saisons' (134). As the narrator indulges further in fantasy, so the true season of his dreams emerges:

'L'été revient et les longues journées  
 et les nuits chaudes; c'est déjà la  
 saison des glaïeuls (...) (p 117) (135).

This recalls vividly Mallarmé's sensuously charged poem, 'A une petite laveuse blonde' (136), in which the young washer-woman, like Robbe-Grillet's 'lavandeuses' (p 117), introduces the narrator to the charms of 'l'été, sur ses glaieuls d'or fin' (137). The association of the heat of 'la saison des glaieuls' (p 117) with the sexual treasures Boris discovers on the island is a prominent motif in the 'poetic' narrative of Un Régicide: the sirens, stretched out on 'les plages torrides', possess the same physical attributes as all 'jeunes femmes' (p 117), and their bodies, 'prostrés (...) au sein d'une torpeur' (p 157), created by the 'poetic season', in turn emanate heat from their 'chair vivante et chaude' (p 128). The intense sun releases 'un éveil suraigu de notre vie imaginaire' (138) by unleashing Boris's erotic fantasy as it does in Baudelaire's poem 'Le Soleil' (139), where the narrator declares 'Je vais m'exercer seul à ma fantasque escrime' (140), and more obviously in Rimbaud's 'Soleil et Chair' (141) in which sensuality is heightened by the warmth of his love:

'Le Soleil, le foyer de tendresse et de vie,  
Verse l'amour brûlant à la terre ravie' (142)

In order to reunite the individual with Nature, he must first be brought together with woman, both physically and spiritually - a union which is initiated by the text itself through its highly erotic portrayal of Aimone-Lélia, whose 'chair tendre' (p 150), 'hanches arrondies' and 'jambes agiles, taille mince, seins menus, cou fragile' (p 128) are



all the more appealing because of her 'pose abandonnée' (p 162), rendering her 'lisse, amoureuse, complaisante, à peine un peu peureuse' and the more likely to be conquered by the narrator (p 140) (143). This recalls the image constructed in Baudelaire's 'Chanson d'après-midi' (144)

'Tes hanches sont amoureuses  
De ton dos et de tes seins,  
Et tu ravis les coussins  
Par tes poses langoureuses' (145).

If the woman of Boris's ideal is obliged to offer the bodily charms of an ordinary mortal to satisfy his lust, she must also, as a creation of his fantasy, transport the narrator to another world, and this she does by concealing, in the female form, priceless treasures. This is achieved in a 'de-naturalising' process, whereby the sirens, including the character of Aimone-Lélia, are described as an inanimate collection of jewellery: they are 'jeunes femmes aux écailles dorées' (p 118) possessing '[des] corps des colliers en pétale de nacre', covered in 'colliers et bracelets en coquillages' (p 143). This metaphor refers the reader to Baudelaire's 'très-chère (...) nue', where the female body is juxtaposed with 'bijoux sonores' (146). The narrator of Un Régicide is, therefore, satisfied on two accounts: his sensual desires become a reality in 'sa longue chevelure mouvante ondulant tout autour de son corps' (p 149), while Lélia's 'cheveux d'or' (p 150) and the sirens'

'longs cheveux d'argent' honour the promise of precious deserts in the sirens' song (p 128). This <sup>precious-stone</sup> imagery relates most obviously to the poets of the late-nineteenth century: the narrator of Baudelaire's poem, 'La Chevelure' (147), runs his hand through the woman's 'crinière lourde' to reap 'le rubis, la perle et le saphir' (148), while Mallarmé, in his work of the same title, describes his lover's hair as 'le front couronné', also strewn with jewels (149). It is this same fusion of natural beauty and material riches which the island itself possesses. Firstly, the pleasures of the senses are vividly evoked in Malus's 'promesse': visually, Nature's colours are brought alive through 'les nuages et l'azur' (p 106), 'les fleurs aux couleurs éclatantes', 'les papillons pourpres', and 'les oiseaux d'or' (p 126) (150); aurally, the island comes to life through the melodic 'chant des cigales' (p 101), 'le chant des oiseaux' (p 107), 'le chant soudain des criquets' (p 116), 'l'hymne strident des trompettes', 'les rivières (qui) coulaient', and 'les fontaines' (p 107); lastly, the odours of 'le sucre parfumé' (p 106) and the 'varech' further enhance the physical communion of the narrator with Nature (p 107). In evoking similar sensations in Boris, Malus's island becomes a reality in the narrative: 'Oui, je sens les fleurs, j'entends les rires, je vois les villes, je hume l'eau des fleuves' (p 107). Boris's own awareness of natural beauty generates a textual 'over-crowding' of wildlife: 'Tout autour de nous la bruyère est en fleur et bourdonne de milliers d'abeilles; des lézards furtifs glissent sur les pierres (...)' (p 136) (151). The island, however, like the ideal woman in Un Régicide, contains

riches beyond the sensual: the 'gemmes rouges' (p 86) of the 'vieille chanson' is an exact reproduction of Valéry's description of Nature's gems in 'Les Grenades' (152) (later developed into Malus's 'charbons rouges' (p 107)), while 'les petits cailloux oranges et roses' (p 116) and 'le foisonnement des diamants répandus' (p 107) portray the colourful brilliance of flowers in a manner evocative of Rimbaud's 'Fleurs' (153), with its transformation of the animate into the inanimate, as in the 'pièces d'or jaune semées sur l'agate' and 'pillers d'acajou supportant un dôme d'émeraudes' (154). The motif of 'les trésors amassés' (p 102) brings together the jewels of Nature with 'cette constellation de figures féminines' (155) (Laura, Aimone, Lélia, Mona, the Sirens), in which the narrator confuses his women into a single personage, as in Verlaine's poem, 'Mon rêve familial' (156), and transforms them into a single 'bijou' (p 100). Finally, the reconciliation not only between women and Nature but between Boris and the world - in the microcosmic form of the 'poetic' island - is effected in a love-confession which itself is as much a celebration of the aesthetic as it is an ethereal aspiration:

"Je t'aime Aimone, Mona, la seule.  
 Amie, amande, anémone à la chair  
 brillante; yeux d'argent, bouche  
 souriante. Mon âme, mon amante  
 Aimone" (p 140).

The individual finds peace - both physical and spiritual - with Nature as he does with women: Un Régicide appears to reconstruct the ulti-

mate desire of Rimbaud's narrator in 'Sensation':

'(...) l'amour infini me montera dans l'âme,  
Et j'irai loin, bien loin, comme un bohémien,  
Par la Nature - heureux comme avec une femme' (157).

Just as the 'poetic' narrative creates its own yearning and dream in which the object of its desire becomes manifest textually, so it also brings about its own end, as a fictional phenomenon. The ephemeral quality of Boris's dream is predicted before 'la saison des glaïeuls' (p 117) arrives for, behind the desire for 'une perpétuelle et infatigable fugue vers l'ailleurs' (158) is the realisation that, after the evasion from the narrator's 'sub-existence' , the text will return to 'ce régime immuable' (p 26). Malus le Solitaire highlights the temporary nature of the island's treasures which, ultimately, 'ne représentent aucune richesse' (p 101-102) since, as the fantasy draws to an end, the brilliance of its riches will fade:

"(...) même à toi (Boris) qu'il frappera,  
cet éclat paraîtra précaire: il se ternira  
vite, à mesure que sécheront les pierres,  
et les trésors amassés ne seront plus le  
soir qu'un amas de petits cailloux gris" (p 102)

The fading of the sun and light brings about a new season: the narrative has prepared the reader for the change in climate by stressing its necessity - 'Les vieux du village disaient qu'il faudrait bien que ce

temps-là finisse' (p 153) - and finally effects that change - 'La saison de pêche est finie (...)' - with the textual occupation of 'une petite pluie fine et persistante' (p 184) and the recurrence of 'brumes', 'brouillard', and 'boue', as in Baudelaire's 'Brumes et Pluies' (159). Similar to the 'Chant d'Automne' (160), where the narrator complains of the intrusion of the new season in his poem - 'tout l'hiver va rentrer dans mon être' (161) -, the narrative of Un Régicide is saturated with 'une brume cotonneuse' (p 188) as are those who feature in it: '(...) elle remplit nos chambres, puis nos poumons, notre tête, notre corps entier qui n'est plus à la fin que brumes' (p 189). This image of poetic suffocation within the text - Boris bemoans 'une substance opaque et continue, qui nous étouffe insensiblement' (p 127) - recalls Verlaine's 'Chanson d'Automne' (162), in which the languid narrator is 'tout suffocant' (163). Ultimately, the 'ennui mortel' (p 219) of the seasonal descriptions (like Verlaine's 'langueur monotone' (164) and Mallarmé's 'langueur infinie' (165)) brings about the death of the dream and, consequently, the 'poetic' narrative: replacing the 'vieille chanson' and the 'chant nocturne des sirènes' (p 64) are the 'bêlements lamentables' of the beasts, 'lointains et mourants' (p 218). The island of the 'poetic' narrative has become an impoverished 'masse obscurcissante' (p 122), an 'île pauvre et brumeuse' (p 223). The technique of ending the dream is consistent with Mallarmé's 'negating' process in 'Salut' (168), where the poet's creative crisis is manifested in verse by denying the existence of 'poetic' material, thus:

'Rien, cette écume, vierge vers  
A ne désigner que la coupe;  
Telle loin se noie une troupe  
De sirènes mainte à l'envers' (167).

In the same way, the narrative of Un Régicide degenerates into a 'matière inerte' (p 223), unable to innovate - as witnessed in the repetition of the novel's opening sentence '(...) c'est au bord de la mer, une fois de plus, à la tombée du jour ...' (p 226) - and able only to negate what it had created: '(...) on ne rencontre pas plus de sirène que d'arbre ou de fleuve' (p 223). Significantly, Un Régicide concludes with a meaningless denial of textual production, as if to illustrate that the death of the poetic occurs 'sans ardeur comme sans éclat' (p 224): 'Il n'y avait avec eux ni berger ni chien' (p 227). The self-destruction of the fantasy is an essential stage of the 'double movement' in the fulfilment of the poetic process, since, in Sartre's words, 'il faut que le moment de la plénitude poétique corresponde à celui de l'annulation' (168).

The tension between the 'low fantasy' and 'high fantasy' narratives is symbolic of that between the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives in Un Régicide, which dramatises the conflict of the énoncé ('the assertive sentence or objective statement') and the énonciation ('the subjectively marked utterance') (169). The duel of the Je and Il narrators through the allusion to and reconstruction of genre material can be seen as the battle between 'un romantique nouveau pré-

classicisme' (170) and a literature in which 'the age of rhetoric and lyricism has gone' (171). At another level, the 'loyal' representation of genres in Un Régicide constitutes only the first stage of the parodic 'mouvement paradoxal' of Robbe-Grillet's scriptural activity (172).

PART THREE



CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE THEORY OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION IN PARODY

## THE INEVITABILITY OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION

The reconstruction of literary genres in Un Régicide is an open acknowledgement that 'no poet, no artist of any kind, has his complete meaning alone' (1), and that all works of literature refer to external textual discourses, whether consciously (as in parody) or unconsciously (as in Barthes's notion of the individualistic moi) (2). Whatever the creative urge of the particular writer, then, his involvement 'accepts and follows a given set of presuppositions, determining and conditioning his writing' (3) which is thus entrenched in - indeed, enabled by - certain generic laws (4). As Foucault explains, the 'moment privilégié' (5) of individualisation is a fleeting state compared with the 'historical resonance' (6) of artistic creation: to invent in absolute solitude, free from all convention, is not possible (7).

If all textual production is reproduction - as Vidal has 'remarked, 'aucun mot n'est premier' (8) - it is also, however, a 'struggle against recognition, an act of aggression against canonic conventions' (9). Literature can be seen as the dramatisation of the conflict between the interdependent but 'mutually antagonistic' (10) langue and parole: each text is, according to Bakhtin, 'cette langue (...) qui va servir de réservoir à matériaux pour produire ma propre nouvelle' and 'une structure non réconciliée, ma propre parole' (11). Writing therefore constitutes a crisis in the enunciative act,

in which the authority of the established 'voix collective, anonyme' is challenged by a new, subversive voice which differs from and defers the language it represents, or signifies (12). While art cannot ignore the pre-existence of the signified, it is also bound, as a singular creative event 'dans le mouvement de jeu qui "produit"' (13), to inscribe its own différance from or deferral of that pre-established meaning (14). By claiming that 'representation never re-presents, but always defers the presence of the signified' (15), the individual parole points to the flaw in the 'referential fallacy' (16), for the argument that any narrative achieves no more and no less than 'la représentation du langage d'un autre' (17) clearly ignores the 'transformational' factor in the paradoxical movement of représentation-transformation (18). Even the most conservative of <sup>creative</sup> writing is engaged in a 'war between the petrifying power of words and the fluidity of experience' (19), since it necessarily involves 'une parole autre' within 'la langue du monde' (20), and the fight for survival of the je in and against the literary il (21). In this sense, textual (re)production both denies and upholds 'the validity of art practice as individuation' (22), since 'tout texte, comme tout fait de langue, repose sur un jeu de répétitions et de différences' (23).

The means by which the narrative effects its dissimilating 'counter-movement' is suggested in Derrida's description of the 'champ problématique' where 'le signifié central, originaire ou transcendantal' - manifested in the institutionalised language-system inherited by the

writer - is undermined by the introduction of another equally persistent signified and, as such, 'n'est jamais absolument présent hors d'un système de différences' (24). This new signified can be simply the result of 'recontextualising' or 'trans-contextualising', whereby the very process of transferring an existent literary construction or meaning into a new context alters its function (25). Alternatively, the present narrative, if more aggressively transformational, can operate a conscious 'refunctioning' (26) or 'ironic playing' (27) of the conventional compositional elements, in which the reader is 'forced to explore qualitative similarities and differences, to make a connection' between the two texts, 'so as to derive meaning from the disjunction' (28). This can result in the generation of numerous new meanings occupying the narrative formerly dominated by a single signified, as Derrida points out 'L'absence de signifié transcendantal étend à l'infini le champ et le jeu de la signification' (29). Whether the 'double movement' of repetition and difference concerns the struggle between a specific novel presentation of an established form or between many innovative strategies, the significant factor is their mutual destructiveness: the superficial function of expression is counteracted by the underlying refusal to fulfil that 'expressive' promise - 'd'inexprimer l'exprimable' (30). This 'dialectical relationship between identification and distance' (31) is a residual tension not only in the activity of writing itself, but is at the centre also of all reading operations, for here the referential value of what is read is subject to individual thought processes:

'As we read, we oscillate to a greater or lesser degree between the building and breaking of illusions. In a process of trial and error, we organise and reorganise the various data offered to us by the text ... We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their non-fulfilment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject ...' (32).

The 'literary competence' of the reader will focus his attention on the 'internal grammar' of the narrative and thus divert his role from that of drawing parallels between textual complements to one of identifying the centrifugal forces undermining the work's hermeneutic unity (33). This situation is unavoidable because, try as he might 'to unite the contradicting referents, to balance them neatly into oppositions - as if the dislocation of language brings out the meaning-maker in man' (34) - the reader is inextricably caught up in the négociation rather than the passive receipt of the 'equivalence between a word and a text and another text' and must, therefore, accept the incompleteness of any one signifying structure (35). In order for the ambiguity of the 'illusion et contestation du récit' (36) to exist, it is essential 'that the meanings provoked (through representation) run counter to each other' - a movement which, in turn, negates the possibility of absolute significance and mimetic reproduction (37). The inherent ambiguity of this 'double-directed discourse' (38) renders pointless the debate as to whether literature is more a process of assimilation than of dissi-

milation: but it does point to the flaw in the argument that a text is merely 'a practice of writing which cannot do otherwise than institutionalise stereotypes and legitimise them as canonic' (39).

## PARODY AS A DISTINCT FORM OF TEXTUAL DISSIMILATION

If all literature alludes to external textual discourse and yet ultimately diverts from exact representation, what distinguishes parody from other forms of this assimilation-dissimilation process? (40) The distinction lies in the specific intention (41) of parody, which is to realise 'repetition with critical distance' (42) and thereby bring into effect the 'unmasking of the system or of the creative process whose function has given way to mechanical convention' (43). As an 'overtly narcissistic text' (44), the parodic dramatises explicitly the workings of fiction in order that the reader's attention be drawn to 'those formal elements of which, through over-familiarization, he has become aware' (45). The 'laying bare' (46) of literary devices represents the stage in the 'double movement' which, having initiated textual reconstruction through 'familiarization' (47), proceeds to 'defamiliarize' the reader with that reconstructed model (48). As Jameson explains, Shklovsky's theory of ostranenie, or defamiliarisation, is 'a way of restoring conscious experience, of breaking through deadening and mechanical habits of conduct' which forces the perceiver 'to be reborn to the world in its existential freshness and horror' (49). On reading the parodic text, the individual is directly confronted with 'l'effort créateur à l'état naissant' (50) (as the narrative constructs and dismantles itself before him) and is stunned into 'the bewilderment of being almost unable to recognise the object (of his perception)' (51). The purpose of this defamiliarising effect in parody

is to substitute the textual fait accompli of the 'texte lisible' for the 'présent perpétuel' of the 'texte scriptible' (52), in which the reader's participation in the construction creates a heightened awareness of structural conventions:

'The end of art is to give a sensation of the object as seen, not as recognised. The technique of art is to make things "unfamiliar", to make forms obscure, so as to increase the difficulty and the duration of perception. The act of perception in art is an end in itself and must be prolonged. In art, it is our experience of the process of construction that counts, not the finished product' (53).

The defamiliarising text shocks the reader out of 'the indifferent recognition of automatization' (54) through a series of subversions in which habitual reactions to technical conventions are undermined by a systematic denial of their fulfilment - 'la langue fonctionne comme une négativité, la limite initiale du possible (...)' (55) - and at the end of which the 'representation' of known forms turns out to be 'imitation characterised by ironic inversion' (56). The subversive process requires the inner revolution from écriture ('le style de celui qui refuse de poser le problème de l'énonciation et qui croit qu'écrire, c'est simplement enchaîner des énoncés' (57)) to écriture, whose 'conscience réflexive' (58) exposes aesthetic devices 'grown banal through false familiarity' (59). A pre-requisite for the parodic genre (60), therefore, is that it should reflect upon itself as a self-



conscious aesthetic (61) which 'denudes and lays bare' (62) those techniques *only partially constructed*, thereby *heightening* the tension, experienced by the reader (63), 'between the recognition of fictions as fictions and the acceptance of them as reality' (64). However, it would appear that all literature is, to a degree, self-reflexive: Todorov argues that 'toute œuvre, tout roman raconte, à travers la même trame événementielle, l'histoire de sa propre création, sa propre histoire' (65); Foucault describes literary activity as essentially 'un perpétuel retour sur soi' (66). Genette *examines the description of reflexivity* as a natural progression in the evolution of an art-form whose resources seem to have been exhausted: 'Tout se passe ici comme si la littérature avait épuisé ou débordé les ressources de son mode représentatif, et voulait se replier sur le murmure indéfini de son propre discours' (67). 'Narcissistic thematization', both in 'overt' and 'covert' form, is identified, by Linda Hutcheon, as the common characteristic of all écriture (68). Furthermore, according to Todorov, 'poétique' ('literary') is synonymous with 'critique' (69) - an opinion shared by Butor in his contention that 'toute invention est une critique' (70). How, then, does parody distinguish itself from other self-reflexive, self-critical modes of literature? The answer lies in the fact that parody performs its textual analysis through the technique of overt allusion, itself made up of various 'recapturing' devices: the narrative creates an 'illusion référentielle' (71) by detecting and referring to the essence of a prior text whose 'densité exceptionnelle' (72) acquires for the alluding text an illusory richness of meaning:

'L'allusion suffit à introduire dans le texte centreur un sens, une représentation, une histoire, un ensemble idéologique, sans qu'on ait besoin de les parler. Le texte-origine est là, virtuellement présent, porteur de tout son sens sans qu'on ait besoin de l'énoncer' (73).

A credible 'generic conception' (74) (to which the model-text adheres) is formed by the systematic 'foregrounding' (75) of the dominant characteristics of that genre, until an overall 'meaning' (76) - 'the unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying' - is represented (77). Parody exploits this allusive method (78) of reconstructing a 'structurally satisfying plot' in which 'the final model consists of an autonomous entity of interdependent parts' (79), and then proceeds to dismantle the reference-text. Ricardou describes the operation as one of 'retrospective analysis':

'Et cette analyse rétrospective est triple: d'une part, elle procède à une détection du fonctionnement; d'autre part, elle opère une explication du fonctionnement; enfin, elle accomplit une spécification de ce fonctionnement' (80).

Parody is self-critical in a deconstructionist sense, since its analytical approach 'is not to search for its "meaning"' - which its allusion has provided - 'but to follow the paths by which writing both sets up and transgresses its own terms (...)' (81). While it is true that, in order to construct a literary allusion, a text must implement

the structuralist procedure of seeking out the model's recurrent elements and their patterns (82), parody must avoid the fulfilment of those compositional parts for two reasons: firstly, a total and undistorted re-employment of the structural constituents would reduce the parodic to the 'original' text - 'Si les signes parodiques (...) ne sont pas reconnus, le texte est lu au premier degré' (83); secondly, the uncritical reconstruction of that 'original' narrative would defy 'le statut paradoxal' (84) of parody by allowing the domination of 'un sens singulier théologique' (85). As in the deconstruction process, where the 'untying of the text' (86) precludes 'the degree of determination necessary to inscribe the utterance into dominant conventions' and where, consequently, 'reigning signifying practice must be subverted' (87), so parody rejects the 'tyranny of fictional conventions' (88) and forces attention on to their construction by refusing absolute complicity with the 'determinate meaning' (89) of 'oppressive signifieds' (90). The critical moment in parody, when the 'innocent' flow of the récit is arrested to reveal its textual mechanics, causes the unifying 'truth' to be deferred and produces in its place a 'semantic drift' (dérive) of différance (91). Derrida's concept of différance is that which 'makes all totalisation of a self or the meaning of a text impossible' (92): as the signifying act is interrupted through a critical inquiry in the narrative, the unity of the signifier or 'le facteur de la vérité' (93), is disseminated and the ultimate signified is deferred, thus exorcising 'cette fatalité du signe littéraire, qui fait qu'un écrivain ne peut tracer un mot sans prendre la pose

particulière d'un langage démodé, anarchique ou imité' (94). The death of the literary 'truth' - 'la disruption de la présence' (95) - requires not arbitrary subversion but 'the careful teasing out of waning forces of signification' (96). Firstly, parody proceeds to 'desacralize the origin of the text' by undermining the hitherto 'sacrosanct name of the author' (97): this implies the replacement of the auteur, 'propriétaire du sens institué' by the scripteur who, far from being the mediator of 'objective' truth, 'n'est aucunement une neutralité idéale' and who possesses 'rien de ce qui le situe dans la réalité (...) (98). Secondly, this alters the 'traditional' genre relationship (99) between author and reader - 'a speaker sending a message about a referent to a receiver' (100) - to one in which the reader, rather than following the 'meaningful action of an undisputed signifying act' (101), is confronted with an incomplete textual vérité (102) and so faces the same doubts beleaguering the author:

'Il [le lecteur] doit prendre conscience  
 qu'il participe lui-même au travail  
 d'élucidation, de décortication que je  
 m'impose page après page, prendre conscience  
 que le livre se fait sous ses yeux avec tous  
 les doutes de l'auteur, ses hésitations, ses  
 passions, ses reculs, ses élans' (103).

The act of reading, which has become, in Kristeva's terms, 'une participation agressive, une active appropriation de l'autre' (104), is a creative activity with the 'capacity to "read" other texts, to liberate energies contained elsewhere' (105). Yet the reader's recognition

of the 'sens (...) précaire, révocable, réversible' renders the potential discourse within the narrative unfulfilled (106): he is invited to complete the text - an 'en-soi-pour-nous' (107), as Dufrenne describes it - but its 'refus du finalisme' makes that task impossible (108). The 'misreading' (109) of the text is the only possible reaction to 'that deficiency of an authentic representation of "absolute meaning"' but it also actively perpetuates the 'endless deferral of sense' (110). Both the reading and the writing operate against the formation of the single significant  récit of a 'texte-limite' (111). The parodic work is an exercise, therefore, in counter-communication, in which incomplete signifying structures suspend an overall meaning:

'L'écriture n'est nullement un instrument de communication, elle n'est pas une voie ouverte où passerait seulement une intention de langage. C'est tout un désordre qui s'écoule à travers la parole, et lui donne ce mouvement dévoré qui le maintient en état d'éternel sursis' (112).

As suggested by the description of such an écriture as 'une contre-communication (113)' and 'une course contre le sens' (114), and the analysis of the 'rôle destructeur' of the narrative, the purpose of the 'designifying' movement in the text is to break the realist illusion of literature as an innocent, passive reflection of the external world (115). In destroying itself - 'cet art a la structure même du suicide' (116) - the narrative reduces meanings in the text to ficti-

tious constructions whose existence depends not on 'real' criteria (which cannot be so swiftly denied) but on present creative whims: '(...) bien loin d'être une copie analogique du réel, la littérature est au contraire la conscience même de l'irréel du langage' (117). It is, therefore, inappropriate to regard parody as 'parasitic' (118), since this would suggest an assault on another, a pre-existent phenomenon imported from a 'reality' (literary or otherwise); rather, it is a 'suicidal' dramatisation of a fiction obliged to prove its autonomous fictiveness through its own deconstruction (119). Paradoxically, the very existence of parody depends upon this 'jeu dangereux avec sa propre mort, c'est-à-dire une façon de vivre' (120): the fulfilment of the parodic movement coincides with the silence of the signified, or 'ce moment fragile de l'Histoire où le langage littéraire ne se soutient que pour mieux chanter sa nécessité de mourir' (121).

There are two main categories of parodic texts: the one sets off two narratives against each other, while the other is an interplay of multiple narrative strands. The first of these comprises the conflict between two 'dimensions' within a single text - 'la dimension référentielle', on which the allusion or 'representation' is made, and 'la dimension littérale' (122) where 'transmutation' occurs as the model-text is counteracted by the self-conscious, self-reflexive voice of critical inquiry (123). The paradoxical movement of conno-

tation-déconnotation (124) results in a stylistic tension ('la guerre des rhétoriques') and a tension of 'subject-matter' ('la guerre des récits), which can either come to a peaceful arrangement (as in the 'récits parallèles qui tendront à s'ignorer réciproquement') or develop a mutual antagonism (as with the 'récits intersectés qui entrent dans une guerre sans merci') (125). Todorov considers that parody, when concerned with the co-existence of two codes (126), can employ either of two techniques: the first of these involves narrative 'embedding', (127) or enchâssement, which is defined as 'l'inclusion d'une histoire à l'intérieur d'une autre'; the second consists of a process of alternating narratives, or alternance, and recounts 'les deux histoires simultanément, en interrompant tantôt l'une tantôt l'autre, pour la reprendre à l'interruption suivante' (128). The device of enchâssement is designed to subvert the 'sens centreur' of the text through a double operation of 'récit conforme' (129) and 'récit contraire' (130) which combine to create 'la contestation du récit', or 'la mise en abyme' (131). As Derrida explains: '(...) quand on peut lire un livre dans le livre, une origine dans l'origine, un centre dans le centre, c'est l'abîme, le sans-fond du redoublement' (132). In any co-existence of phenomena, the one necessarily has a 'subtractive' (133) effect on the other, as Ricardou points out in his analysis of the apparently mutually reinforcing parallels of the detective story and the Oedipus myth in Les Gammes: 'Dans le roman de Robbe-Grillet, l'action du texte consiste en une métamorphose. Il s'agit de transformer, aussi foncièrement que possible (...) le sens donné au départ (...) ' (134).

For while the mirroring of the text by another within it seems, initially, to reflect and thus to strengthen the communication of the overall work - 'd'en accroître l'intelligibilité par redondance' (135) -, and while 'for an item to qualify as mise en abyme in a text, it must have points of analogy with the text as a whole' (136), it is nevertheless the case that such embedding is 'antithétique' as well as 'révélateur' and that, ultimately, 'toute mise en abyme contredit le fonctionnement global du texte qui la contient' (137). After the phase of répétition ('souligner en redisant'), two main stages of dissimilation occur in mise en abyme - condensation and anticipation (138). The first of these introduces the concept of difference through a playful exposure of narrative constructions and an over-brief reference to the text in which it is contained: '(...) elle (la mise en abyme) le redit autrement; le plus souvent, elle met en jeu des événements plus simples, plus brefs (...) ' (139). Furthermore, the discrepancy between reflecting agent and reflected can be increased by 'under-determination', according to Brooke-Rose, in which 'the whole art is to give all the clues (of analogy) but in such a way that the important ones pass unnoticed', thus achieving the subversion of the prominent meaning (140). This undermining by omission is what Suleiman describes as the technique of "'not saying enough": '(...) if the novel makes no explicit affirmations but is content to let its truths speak for themselves, it leaves the door open to every kind of misunderstanding' (141). Exactly the opposite effect produces the same result in the phase of anticipation where 'la révélation risque d'être si active que tout



le récit peut être court-circuité' (142). A conscious exaggeration of 'parallel' revelations allows 'the narrative to tell so much and so well that it ends up producing contradictory meanings that blur the limpidity of its own demonstration' (143). The particularly parodic nature of 'overcoding' (144) or 'over-determination' (145) is in the ridiculous (146) or farcical 'dégradation' achieved through trans-contextualising elements of the original text on to an inappropriately comic register (147). The ironic 'référence moqueuse' (148) produces a 'rupture' (149) between the object and style of reflection which, in turn, generates a further 'distanciation' (150) from serious, mimetic representation (151). Parodic enchâssement, therefore, like the device of mise en abyme, incorporates the embedded narrative within its own textual frame by creating a reflection whose ambiguousness dissimilates the one narrative strand to the other as powerfully as it effects its assimilation: 'Le reflet, on le sait, est forme affaiblie du double, qui est un compromis de même et d'autre: un même reproduit, donc aliéné' (152). 'Reflective' embedding, in conclusion, is not a supportive microcosm to the text which operates the mirroring process, and does not, consequently, reinforce a single, determinate meaning, but rather hinders the construction of that meaning through systematic deviance (153).

The technique of alternance which, unlike enchâssement and mise en abyme, consists of the alternating textual domination of two narratives, is a further parodic device of dramatising the tension between

co-existent codes. On the one hand, the very existence of two narratives within the same text 'contests Romantic singularity and thereby forces a reassessment of the process of textual production' (154). This differs from the 'traditional' quest for originality by seeking new forms for old (155) inasmuch as the continual mutual obstruction of genre representations points to the 'inadequacy of the definable forms' of conventional literature (156) and the fallacious conception of any text as an 'autonomous object' (157). The image of writing is thus changed 'from original inscription to parallel script' (158). Secondly, however, and more significantly in the context of dissimulation, the sharing of the text by two narratives implies the absence of a central signifier and signified (159): here, disruption of meaning occurs '(...) when the literal or figural status of the text's central event (its understanding) has to be, and cannot be, decided' (160). The point of an authoritative crisis manifests itself, according to de Man, in 'a genuine moment of blindness, an "aporia", or figure of doubt, when it is impossible to know which of the two mutually self-destructive meanings should be understood' (161). The text becomes a mixture and the individual narratives which constitute the ingredients of that chemistry, far from 'conserving (their) unalterable property' must lead to 'the production of a new chemical body with unique properties' (162). It therefore follows that, as a 'reflexive operation by which the output of the matrix is disappropriated, incomplete, unaccomplished', the parodic alternance refuses either of its two narrative strands a meaningful status in the text (163). Shlonsky's

argument that parody both 'disrealises and dethrones literary norms' (164) is borne out by this process, for not only is each récit a mere incomplete literary equivalence to its neighbour, and the text itself 'an intentional dialogised hybrid', but the differences in style 'actively and mutually illuminate one another' (165).

The second type of parody is that which effects dissimilation in the text through the interaction of a plurality of narratives. Unlike Todorov's theoretical process of enchaînement, where 'l'unité est assurée (...) par une ressemblance dans la construction de chacune' (166), here the eclectic juxtaposition (167) of superficially unifying structures (168) conceals a vast déception (169). Ironically, the interplay of meanings in the text as 'fétiche' (170) destroys 'l'unité du sens' for each is denied its ultimate fulfilment, as is the whole: '(...) tout signifie sans cesse et plusieurs fois, mais sans délégation à un grand ensemble final, à une structure dernière' (171). No individual construction is attributed sufficient dominance over the others to attain even relative superiority; what is achieved is a state of textual democracy, with 'an equilibrium, a plurality of interacting elements, all the purpose of which is in the "tension" of their relations, lacking any final sense' (172). The greater the number of signifying structures, the more powerful the deferral of a single, determinate sense and the higher the insecurity of the reader, whose effort to establish the 'truth' of the text causes him to rise to the bait of each aspiring signifier: 'Le non au sens, qui est le contraire

même du non-sens, ne peut avoir qu'un effet de violence, tant les signes, quels qu'ils soient, sont en définitive rassurants pour l'homme' (173).

This condition of hypertextualité (174) is formed of the evocative, self-generative power of words, whose 'caractère excitant' and 'mobilisateur' creates a perpetual activation of narratives (175).

Claude Simon illustrates the link between these 'exciting' descriptive units and the proliferation of associated ideas: 'L'étroitesse du rapport scriptural entraîne cette conséquence que parler d'un objet c'est déjà, en quelque manière, en évoquer un autre, ou encore décrire l'un c'est mener l'autre à la pensée' (176).

Just as all representation diverts from its model-object, so the literary expression of an idea is both a 'failure' in the sense that it cannot accurately and totally reproduce that idea, and an act of creation insofar as its description simultaneously produces a different meaning and, aware of its own role as multiplier, relates it to another pre-established notion. It is by this collage-method that the 'inter-parodied' (177) narratives are propagated:

'L'introduction de la pensée d'un autre, d'une pensée déjà formulée, dans ce que j'écris, prend ici, non plus une valeur de reflet, mais d'acte conscient, de démarche décidée, pour aller au-delà de ce point d'où je pars, qui était le point d'arrivée d'un autre' (178).

As the sub-texts multiply, the focus of the reader is transferred from their 'content' communication to the complex network of their inter-

relationships - 'à ce niveau ce sont les textes traités qui sont les personnages de la narration' - as the individual narratives are reduced to the status of characters engaged in a constant battle of personalities (179). Ultimately, 'la signification (...) excessivement nommée' (180) of the intersecting sub-texts results in a 'discours (...) incomplet' (181) devoid of any transcendental significance:

'Thus the criss-cross play of circumstances and abductive presuppositions, along with the interplay of various codes and sub-codes, makes the message (or the text) appear as an empty form to which can be attributed various possible senses' (182).

While the imposition of a single determinate meaning, as performed in representational art (183), would be to inflict 'le geste castreur' (184) on the text, the state of jouissance ('la cohabitation des langues qui travaillent côte à côte' (185)) is essentially an unstable texte-œuf 'plein de sens multiples, discontinus, entassés' (186) in which the foundation of the signifying act is shaken and the relationship between language and meaning is seen to exacerbate rather than cure the precarious vacillity of the sign:

'Texte de jouissance: celui qui met en état de perte, celui qui déconforte (...), fait vaciller les assises historiques, culturelles, psychologiques, du lecteur, la circonstance de ses goûts, de ses valeurs, et de ses souvenirs, met en crise son rapport au langage' (187).

By exploiting the 'rôle positif et multiplicateur' and the 'fonction restrictive et contraignante' of language, the texte de jouissance dramatises simultaneously the inevitable acts of assimilation and dissimilation inherent in all écriture (188). The specific function of the parodic jouissance is the manner in which it exhibits 'l'ambiguïté constitutive du message poétique' (189): each narrative expression, or sub-text, is designed to complement and enhance another, yet obstruct and thereby subvert it in the same movement, ironically and comically parading the fictiveness of its compositional elements and continually 'preventing the reader from suspending disbelief in the reality of the narrative world that is merely the subject of the reading experience' (190). The technique of 'inter-parody' transforms with all the greater intensity the image of the text as a linear, 'innocent' representational mode, into 'un complexe de mots' which constitutes its life-blood but also, as 'l'impasse de sa propre écriture', its self-annihilation (191). The purpose of parody is, however, not destructive, but to reveal the 'symbolic' duality of every literary text which, in expressing one thing, necessarily alludes to another:

'(...) la langue symbolique à laquelle appartiennent les œuvres littéraires est par structure une langue plurielle, dont le code est fait de telle sorte que toute parole (toute œuvre) par lui engendrée, a des sens multiples' (192).

The distinctive nature of parody lies in its expansion of this defini-

tion of 'symbolic' writing: for it demonstrates how its allusiveness is as much a celebration of difference as of sameness.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

THE SUBVERSION OF THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE



## 'ENCHASSEMENT' IN THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE

Michel Foucault has described the operation in literature of perpetual self-representation as 'la configuration du miroir à l'infini' (1). An examination of Un Régicide reveals that the 'political' narrative is constantly subverted by the embedding of mirror structures within it which both reflect and undermine its construction process. The regicide act itself and the political situation (as represented by the September Revolution) are 'reflected' in these structures in such a way as to produce an inversion, or 'counter-expectation' (2), of the generic norms through 'refunctionalizing' the essential compositional elements (3). This mise en abyme process is thematised in the opening chapter of Un Régicide: the reflection of the painting in the bathroom mirror creates a blood-coloured image, thereby implanting in Boris's mind the notion which develops into the concept of regicide: 'C'était rouge et brun violet, avec des traces mauves, grisées, bleu sombre, ça et là' (p 18) (5). Inasmuch as this early mirror device germinates the idea which gives the novel its title, it is, as the narrative informs, 'une importante masse rouge' (p 18; my underlining). However, the supportive declaration is immediately contradicted by a tediously long description of the minutiae of the painting, which not only diverts the reader's - and Boris's - attention from its symbolic (6) significance, but causes the narrative to 'degenerate' into an unintelligible account of the '(masse) oblongue et teintée de nuances diverses allant du corail au

brunâtre, avec une sorte d'incision longitudinale au milieu et des végétations presque noires, aux contours déchiquetés, tout autour (...) (p 18). As a coup de grâce to the reader's expectation of a significant, symbolic structure, the narrator decides that this image is, in fact, not a representation of his political ambition at all, but an attack on the regicide - a movement 'dans l'autre sens': 'ça ne représentait rien' (p 18). The introduction of misrepresentation through mirror structures by this early scene is a narrative warning which Boris, determined to achieve the literary status of political assassin, chooses to ignore. Ironically, his desire to become an officially recognised convention leads him to seek support from 'la version officielle', whose account of events actually contradicts the norms on which that convention depends. This is highlighted in the role of 'mass media' communication in Un Régicide, which is first represented by the inauspicious radio transmission which, far from informing the listener of the details of the political situation, ensures a loss in his interest level, 'comme si le speaker lisait un livre sans intérêt' (p 14). Even when the radio coverage offers commentary on material related to Boris's engagement, it negates the information conveyed in the non-ironic 'political' narrative: following the first regicide attempt, therefore, Boris is told plainly that 'le roi se portait toujours bien' and, as if to prove the failure of the 'assassination', the programme transmits 'la petite voix bienveillante et malicieuse' of the king (p 178). Significantly, it is the radio report of the Retz reunion which dampens the political

atmosphere and the background to the novel's central event in its depiction of 'un ciel bouché qui ne laissait guère d'espoir' (p 195). The clichéd expression of the broadcasting - the torrential rainfall at Retz becomes 'une surprise désagréable (qui) vient doucher l'optimisme des plus convaincus' (p 196) - produces an effect of dégonflage, or bathos (7), repeated in Laura's discussion of 'le plan de l'Eglise, and responsible for 'ce changement d'atmosphère' of 'political' depression in the narrative (p 196). The extent to which the voice of radio is subversive can be appreciated by considering Laura's loss of motivation and that, indeed, of all those who feature in the novel:

'(...) elle (Laura) semblait ne tenir en grande estime ni la monarchie ni l'automne, et, puisque les masses montraient si peu de foi, on allait devoir les faire marcher par d'autres moyens' (p 197).

The particular medium through which is launched the greatest opposition to the construction of the 'political' narrative is, however, the newspaper, ironically entitled l'Action. As the ideal context for the elucidation and simplification of the progress of the September Revolution, the confusion which l'Action engenders in Boris is especially 'disrespectful' to the generic laws (8). The clarity of the promise in the headlines - "'Eclatante victoire du parti de l'Eglise"' - increases the expectation and, therefore, ultimate disappointment in the reader when he discovers that the voting statistics celebrated in the article constitute only the 'chiffres provisoires' (p 30); having dashed the hopes of a significant position for the Royalist sympathisers - the 'parti régiste' manages a mere five percent of the total electorate -

the newspaper ridicules that disappointment and causes perplexity in announcing with nonchalance that 'tout cela réuni ne représentait pas plus d'un dixième du nombre théorique des électeurs' (p 31). The explanation of the political situation is further deferred by l'Action's random selection of stories which are both distracting, in that they divert the reader's attention from the election campaign, and inherently dissatisfying, since they deliberately rouse interest only then to abandon coverage, leaving the message incomplete and cryptic. In de-routing the narrator, Red's death weakens the 'demonstrative force' (9) of the election récit, while offering no alternative 'fulfilment': 'Mort mystérieuse - crime ou suicide - d'un étudiant d'origine étrangère dont le corps venait d'être retrouvé, par hasard, après plusieurs jours de vaines recherches' (p 42; my underlinings). On returning their attention to political affairs, the newspapers abuse their conventional reputation for vérifiable, unmotivated representation of facts by shifting their perspective so often as to render the 'sens multiples' equally invalid: 'Les journaux du lundi matin ne faisaient guère que reproduire, sous diverses formes, les articles de la veille (...)' (p 42). On the few occasions, therefore, on which l'Action is seen to consolidate unambiguously on the narrative foundations of political fervour ('en laissant clairement entendre qu'une ère nouvelle commençait'), its effect is instantly counteracted by the 'opposition' press, arguing that 'son propre insuccès n'était qu'une apparence (...)' (p 42). Having exposed its subjective fallibility, the newspaper's declaration of the

Party's weekend celebrations as a 'success' is *left open to doubt* by the narrative (10). Finally, the most poignant act of subversion operated by the embedded narrative of the newspaper is its repeated denial of the assassination attempts and, by implication, of the central construction of the text itself. When, finally, the textual 'non-lieu' (p 146) of the murder is 'corrected', the dismissal of the regicide effort as 'l'œuvre d'un détraqué' presents an ironic contrast to Boris's conjecture of 'assassin'-glorification in his imaginary headlines, "Crime odieux, acte de folie, deuil national" (p 173). Moreover, the portrait of the king as 'ce souverain si bon qui dirigeait son peuple avec sagesse, intelligence, etc' (p 173-174), as 'jovial sans grossièreté' (p 76), and even 'passionné disait-on de poésie' not only defies Boris's attempts to create in the sovereign the character of political oppressor and enemy of the people, but also produces, despite claims to the contrary - 'Boris (...) ignorait tous ces détails (...)' -, the hero's nonsensical image which destroys the previously serious depiction of the king:

'(...) le visage indécis continue de s'estomper, avec encore par moment un éclair de vie dans le regard; ses traits changent sans cesse, pour se figer de temps à autre en une série de grimaces tantôt grotesques et tantôt effrayantes ...' (p 77).

As a catalyst to Boris's imagination, the newspaper 'representation' proves a fatal blow to the narrative construction of a credible victim

of political regicide: this last unintelligible description of the king initiates the existence of the photograph, itself generated by 'l'image (qui) ne présentait aucun intérêt, artistique ou autre (...)' (p 96) but which, after some effort by the narrator, graduates to 'du papier peint glacé très ordinaire, orné de couleurs désastreuses dans les mauves et les rouges vineux (...)' (p 97). The colours of the photograph 'reflect' those of the earlier mirror image and thus revive textually 'la figure (...) plus vivante (...) et familière' (p 102). If the 'propriété essentielle' of the literary mise en abyme 'consiste à faire saillir l'intelligibilité et la structure formelle de l'œuvre' (11), then this particular réflexion is an ironic inversion of those terms, for not only does it distort the impression conveyed by the narrative up until this point but it totally converts Boris's conception of the king as an impersonal dictator to a grotesque, emphatically fantastic creation, 'irréductible à tout schéma réaliste' (12). The photograph, therefore, instead of offering a passive reflection, operates actively against the conventionally 'realistic' portrait: 'L'homme regardait Boris en souriant comme s'il devinait ses pensées. Il semblait que son expression ironique se fût accentuée: dans la boutique, le visage était plus fermé, plus conventionnel' (p 103). This confirms the unreal nature of the king, which the newspaper article had first implanted in Boris's imagination - 'Boris en venait tout naturellement, à force d'y réfléchir, à douter de sa réalité' -, and prepares the reader for the king's escape from his role of victim to one in which his defiance of vraisemblance allows him to arrange

the failure of the regicide attempt (p 76). Attempts to destroy the photograph - 'Boris enleva soigneusement les punaises, déchira l'image avec méthode, en mit les morceaux dans le cendrier, puis il se recoucha' (p 172) - result in defeat - it remains 'pendue au mur' - just as the abortive endeavours to assassinate the king are celebrated with derision (like the failure to kill the fly in chapter X) by the wry smile of the portrait-king (p 173). It is significant that the scene in which the 'regicide' - both as an event and as a conventional narrative - is pronounced null and void - 'Le roi se portait toujours bien' - is one in which this 'representational' form produces an equally strong denial of the killing amongst the other communication devices of the 'mass media': the photograph forces Boris to accept defeat ('"J'ai perdu mon temps"'), while the radio transmits the 'petite voix bienveillante et malicieuse' as evidence of the king's survival, supported finally in the newspaper article which catches Boris's eye with the indestructible 'barbiche' (p 178).

The mise en abyme mirror structures in Un Régicide, as distinct from Gide's conception 'qu'en une œuvre d'art, on retrouve ainsi transposé (...) le sujet même de cette œuvre', combine to thwart Boris's search for a clear representation of the king (13). The 'echoes' of the political situation and the figure supposedly of prime significance in the September Revolution are, ultimately, 'la poursuite d'une représentation impossible' (14) and, as such, undermine the raison d'être of the novel, subverted by the non-figurative characteristic of the 'ref-

lections' (15). In another sense, however, these mirror structures fulfil the intentions of the mise en abyme technique in that their counter-movement to the construction of the narrative focusses the reader's attention on the fictiveness of the compositional elements. As Dällenbach points out, it is important to consider above all 'le phénomène que la mise en abyme a pour fonction de mettre en évidence: la construction mutuelle de l'écrivain et de l'écriture' (15). The various reflective forms in Un Régicide create a tension within the narrative through their 'double action qui traverse le drame' which creates, in 'l'unité coupée en deux', a crisis of authority in the signifier and signified (16).



## 'ALTERNANCE' IN THE 'POLITICAL' NARRATIVE

The device of alternance, whereby the narrative alternates between the construction of two mutually destructive récits, is created in Un Régicide by the textual conflict of the political situation as seen on an impersonal, social level, and the regicide itself, as a personal, isolated operation. This tension is produced in two ways: firstly, the creation of the narrator, Boris, destroys on its own the possibility of reconciling his character with that of a 'personnage engagé'; secondly, the encounters of Boris and Laura are seen as a confrontation between Party politics and the egotistical, a-political pursuit of the assassination.

Before the political situation can be presented as a viable, alternative narrative, the text is already occupied by the ridiculous and comic subversion of the narrator as a political activist (17). Quite apart from Boris's narration of politics on a conscious level, his character precludes any serious association with the 'personnage engagé' (18). This is particularly striking in the description of the narrator's mental state, where the imagery of his 'tête inoccupée' (p 20), 'tête d'une bouillie grise, lourde comme du plomb' (p 28), 'tête lourde et douloureuse' (p 70) and, finally, the 'migraine (...) bourdonnante, confuse, semblable à un paquet d'ouate', builds a portrait of an individual not only most unlikely to commit himself

politically but, moreover, whose version of events is extraordinarily unreliable (p 73). The veracity of Boris's accounts and his suitability to the status of 'political hero' are further undermined by the development of this mental condition into an all-embracing psychosomatic illness (19): contradicting the earlier assertion that he suffers only from 'de légers ennuis, comme tout le monde' (p 20), the narrative describes his nauseous sensation of 'flot visqueux' (p 28), exacerbated in his 'envie de vomir' (p 72), which eventually leads to his long absence from the Usine Générale when, significantly, his thoughts on the regicide take place, as though his own malady actually creates the character of King Jean, himself 'en bonne santé, souriant, hors d'atteinte' (p 75). The mental and physical impairments endured by the narrator and eventually causing his death - '(...) je mourrai sans ardeur comme sans éclat' - can be seen as symbolic of the 'illness' and eventual decease of the 'political' narrative in Un Régicide.

Boris's portrayal of his society's indifference to politics reveals the narrator's reluctance to involve himself actively in the role of 'personnage engagé': 'obéissant passivement aux lois', the citizens manage no more a commitment to social activism than does Boris to literary character conventions and, consequently, remain, like him, 'dans l'ignorance quasi complète des dissensions gouvernementales' (p 31). Lest their abstention be misinterpreted as politically motivated, the narrator adds superfluously that 'la plus grosse partie de la population laissait entendre ainsi qu'elle se désintéressait totale-

ment des affaires de l'Etat' (p 31). Those who do express a genuine interest in the political situation are ridiculed as distant and incomplete characters belonging to another literary mode altogether - they are merely the disembodied 'voix de quelques fanatiques du genre de Laura, perdues au milieu des bulletins achetés par les différents partis au sein des classes les plus pauvres' (p 34). The political interest, in spite of the fact that 'la situation du pays était alarmante' is, therefore, but a textual lie, a delusion of the engagement tradition 'que la vieille Constitution persistait à prétendre universel' but which, as the present narrative demonstrates, is unbelievable (p 34). The irreconcilable difference between a conventional 'political' narrative (20) and Un Régicide is dramatised in the recounting of Boris's thoughts, still torn between his ambition to become an assassin and his present state of unfulfilled literary construction: 'Boris essaya de se souvenir d'une époque moins morte qu'il avait connue jadis, une époque où la vie publique passionnait encore les masses (...)' (p 32). This 'memory' inspires the narrator to recreate a bygone genre tradition through an overt process of 'trans-contextualising' (21): '(...) il y avait dix ou douze ans, l'Assemblée avait été dissoute à la suite d'une série d'émeutes, il y avait eu des bagarres entre les manifestants et la police, des blessés, des tués probablement' (p 32). Yet the narrative, in breaking off and emphasising that such excitement constitutes 'ces temps lointains', admits defeat in its efforts to re-enact a literature of political passion; it then resolves to employ new means to overcome

the inadequacy of its portrayal by the introduction of detail (p 32). The immersion of the text in political sub-texts (such as newspapers, bulletins, broadcasts, rallies), however, never convinces Boris of the relevance of the September Revolution and, therefore, fails to transform Un Régicide into a 'complete' 'political' narrative. This is represented within the narrative itself, as the end of attempts to follow generic laws is signalled: 'La réunion du conseil des ministres, le compte rendu de la séance à la Chambre, les buts de l'Eglise en dix points; Boris en avait assez de cette histoire, il tourna la page' (p 123). As is logical, the textual realisation of the disintegration of the political intrigue comes after the event: the first deadly blow is struck when, after renewed optimism concerning the future of the novel's situation - 'Dès le début septembre, la situation se précisa' (22) -, a disappointment all the more intense is experienced by the narrator, as 'cette tentative à son tour échoua (...)' (p 119). Secondly, the desperate effort to salvage the 'political' narrative by the active commitment is envisaged with resigned pessimism: 'Il était en effet sans espoir qu'un simple régicide amenât un bouleversement véritable, tel qu'une révolution, ne fût-ce que de palais' (p 124). The recognition by the narrator that the regicide act is insufficient to achieve for the novel the status of 'littérature engagée' and for himself that of 'personnage engagé' significantly coincides with Boris's awareness that the narrative fundamentally lacks vraisemblance - 'plus il y réfléchissait, plus il trouvait ce contrôle invraisemblable (...)' - and, finally, that Un Régicide is a mere parody of a 'political' text,

whose artificial and superficial efforts to attain the form of a past literary convention have fallen short of the mark: 'Cette parodie devait avoir pour but unique de sauver les apparences: toute précaution paraissant superflue, on prenait pour la forme des mesures factices' (p 160). As a result, the novel finishes off what it had begun - a 'political' narrative - with enfeebled enthusiasm, lacking in verisimilitude all the more through its constant reflection on the artificiality of that outdated scheme: 'Que signifiait cette comédie? Un essai, ou bien une démonstration? L'heure devait être dépassée depuis longtemps. Il resta quand même, mais il ne croyait plus du tout à cette histoire' (p 164) (23). The self-conscious désœuvrement (p 212) at the end of the novel is an admission that Boris himself 'ne parvint qu'à un travail improductif' (p 161) and that, where the individual act of regicide had been "'l'instant fatal'" (p 164), so 'la révolution de septembre n'avait été qu'une apparence' (p 212). This constitutes the first stage in the novel's alternance, in which the narrative alternates between the narrator's desire to recreate the engagement genre and the destructive forces of Boris's 'involvement'.

The second stage of alternance involves the conflict between Boris, as an agent for the non-political (represented in his regicide) and Laura, as an instrument for the political intrigue (as personified in Party politics and the September Revolution). The 'malaise' which Boris experiences at the prospect of his first encounter with Laura

**foretells** the unbridgeable gulf which is formed between her narrative and his (p 19). Throughout Un Régicide, the inactivity of Boris is contrasted with Laura's unflagging, energetic commitment to the political situation. The prophecy of this state of affairs - 'Laura lui demanderait ce qu'il faisait en ce moment; il répondrait qu'il ne faisait rien (...)' (p 19) - is translated into a textual reality when, during their encounter after Laura's full day of meetings, Boris decides to fend off her reproaches by producing 'la narration de ce qui lui était arrivé depuis la veille' only then to discover the difficulty of this plan 'puisque'en somme il ne lui était rien arrivé (...)' (p 62). Boris's unproductiveness is related through two actions, whose 'failure' to establish themselves as fulfilled, verifiable events ironically ensures their textual triumph over the many but briefly-described political incidents in which Laura is involved. This is due to the technique of repetition (24), employed firstly in the description of Boris's purchase of the king's photograph, where the number of attempts taken by the narrator to complete the action exposes the fictiveness of the scene and, consequently, the inability of Boris to perform any event - however trivial - other than the narrational: '... C'était au moins la dixième fois que la scène se déroulait, tout à fait impropre, eût-il semblé cependant, à retenir son attention ne fût-ce qu'une seconde' (p 99). As the moment of commitment draws nearer - '(...) la scène se fixa sur le petit signe qui suivait le mot "Exécution"' (25) - the narrator withdraws, using the excuse 'Peut-être valait-il mieux cesser ce travail inepte, pour essayer autre chose?' (p 99). The second such

'event' is the thrice-repeated attempt at regicide which, despite Boris's self-incrimination, remains unachieved (26), as borne out in the verdict of 'not guilty'. The narrator's protest at this judgement is, significantly, 'pour la forme' - so as to justify the title of the novel - but as the text draws to its close, the narrative admits, in mock-official terms, that nothing has been accomplished in Un Régicide: 'Donc, "il n'y avait rien de changé"' (p 213). The reason the novel as a whole may be interpreted as a 'trou' is precisely because it represents Boris's story, his narration and not Laura's, whose interjections concerning the political situation do not survive the war against the narrator's 'subversive' consciousness (27). Arriving on the scene of Boris's récit, Laura makes a determined onslaught on a narrative already corrupted by the hero's lethargy: 'Laura fit un effort pour sortir de sa torpeur' (p 63) (28). The introduction of the 'political' narrative is, therefore, launched in the knowledge - shared by the reader, for this is in chapter IV already - that the text is 'défavorable' and that Laura's construction will face 'des pièges et des trappes tendus de toutes parts, prêts à engloutir celui qui s'assoupirait' (p 63). The depiction of the narrative as a battleground is an appropriate imagery, since the task of establishing its textual presence represents for the 'political' intrigue a belated and unpopular combat - a state of affairs which Laura's narrative chooses to make explicit at the outset in its admission that "'les élections nous ont donné du mal"' and "'il n'y avait pas beaucoup de monde"' - yet it reminds Boris and reader that

more will follow, for "ce n'est qu'un début" (p 64). At this stage the 'regicide' narrative adopts the superior position - Boris inquires from his advantageous standpoint, "Que comptez-vous faire à présent?" - but Laura's account of the Church's plan of action is both simple ('Le plan de l'Eglise était simple') and ambitious (in its search of 'le réveil de la vigilance publique') (p 64). As the election campaign becomes a metaphor for the alternance between Party politics and individual pursuit, so Laura constructs 'une propagande massive en faveur de l'Eglise' (p 64). This is borne out by the language of idées reçues (29) in which her canvassing is communicated: the Church Party is "seule capable de venir à bout des innombrables difficultés de l'heure" (p 64); the reader who follows her course, once "placé sur le pied de guerre", can become easily - 'visiblement' - a "soldat de l'Eglise au service de la communauté" (p 65); instead of political passivity are presented the "exigences supérieures de l'action" (p 66). A temporary victory is signalled in the influence of this clichéd style, as Boris's own narrative is invaded by such terms as the 'hommes de bonne foi (comme Boris)' and the full articulation of the non-ironic political propaganda for action: 'Il fallait donc que ceux-là sortent de leurs songes et se décident à organiser l'Etat, au lieu de vivre dans le chaos' (p 67). The Opposition (Boris's party) presents the solution of regicide, which causes an immediate and irrevocable rift between the two narratives: 'Boris s'inquiéta tout de suite du rôle que jouerait le roi' but 'la question semblait très accessoire à Laura (...)' (p 65). Once



the 'Régicide!' decision has been taken, however, the text has made a commitment to the non-political narrative - Laura is henceforth excluded until chapter IX - and when Laura does reappear, her resolve is weakened by the textual exile and the 'failure' of the Retz 'reconsecration' activities both in themselves (in that they represent 'la restauration (...) commencée depuis des années et menée avec la lenteur coutumière' (p 31)) and as narrative phenomena (since they are related only retrospectively and through the censoring filter of Boris's consciousness (as witnessed in the derisive alteration of Laura's "'faire appel aux gens sincères"' to the "'appel aux gens crédules"'') (p 132). The victory of the 'regicide' over 'political' narrative is highlighted further by the sterility of the latter, particularly in its incapacity to recount anything new: in her final encounter with Boris, Laura is still re-iterating that 'le principal était de réveiller les consciences', whilst Boris's exasperation at the politician's vague, repetitive rhetoric echoes the reader's loss of interest: 'Cette confiance agaçait Boris, quand il avait demandé à Laura ce que signifiait cette "politique", elle s'était contentée de répondre qu'une fois échauffés les gens pourraient accomplir de grandes choses' (p 176). Once Boris has discovered the inherent textual instability of the 'political' narrative behind the propaganda - (...) 'ce travail ne visait aucune production (...)', he concludes - the notion of regicide becomes the weapon with which Laura's ideals can be destroyed: '(...) que son petit crime vint mettre fin à toutes ces sucreries' (p 176). If, finally, 'on voyait donc mal

comment le régicide pourrait servir à l'Eglise' (p 177), it is because its intention is the very opposite: the degeneration of the 'discours électoral' into uncommunicative gibberish (30) - 'loi, foi, roi, joie, toi, moi, pas d'abstention (...)' - is textual evidence of its annihilation by the rival narrative as represented by the 'assassin's' récit (p 179).

CHAPTER NINE:

THE SUBVERSION OF THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE IN UN REGICIDE

## 'ENCHASSEMENT' IN THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE

Just as the 'political' narrative of Un Régicide is subverted by its various mirror structures, so the fantastic récit is not fulfilled or supported by the inner 'reflective' discourses which it contains but is, rather, undermined by their presence. This mise en abyme subversion operates on two levels: firstly, the 'poetic' sub-text of Malus's fantasy world destroys Boris's attempts to construct a 'fantasy' narrative while, secondly, this sub-text incorporates another discourse in the form of the ballad verse, which further de-stabilises those narrative foundations.

Malus's sub-text falls into two parts: on the one hand, it can be regarded with particular attention to language; on the other, that which is constructed by Malus's imagination performs a different kind of subversion. The first of these two techniques is the creation of a 'poetic nonsense' whereby the composition of words - individually evocative and generative of the fantastic - has no recognisable denotative sense (1). When 'a collection of words, in their composition of letters and syllables, or in their selection and sequence does not conform to the conventional pattern', the implication carried by the independent units is also forfeited (2). The language of <sup>the</sup> Solitaire is, ironically, at its least intelligible when he is required to identify himself in meaningful terms: here, the over-crowding of mutually anta-

gonistic or 'subtractive' imagery precludes a general sense, thus undermining both his expected role and function as the 'poetic voice':

'Je suis celui que le lever du jour annonce, celui que l'on entend le soir avant de s'endormir, je suis l'étoile qui guide dans la nuit le voyageur perdu; je suis le mouvement des vagues. Je suis dans le sang des brebis qu'on égorge, je suis la chair de la pomme et le tronc du pommier"' (pp 91-92).

The narrative reveals its own semantic confusion through Boris's admission that he has understood little of Malus's empty rhetoric: 'Il a parlé encore, longtemps me semble-t-il, mais je ne comprenais pas tout ce qu'il disait, si bien que je n'ai rien retenu' (p 92). This lack of comprehension in the narrator becomes a recurrent motif in Un Régicide, and is particularly prominent in his dialogues - which create the tension between his 'fantasy' narrative and Malus's sub-text - with the Solitaire. Boris's attempts and failure to appreciate the sense of Malus's words literally are an indication that they represent no figurative significance: "'Entends-tu le cri des oiseaux? Entends-tu les rires de leurs jeux et le fracas de leur délire?" Mais je n'entendais que les craquements et les sifflements du bois trop vert' (p 106). The textual signalling of the ludic quality of Malus's language - his words are the 'games' of birds' play (3) - is particularly appropriate since it highlights the non-representational value of his 'poetic nonsense'; especially

deceptive in its use of *recurrent* 'treasure' imagery which tempts Boris to seek out fruitful meaning when there is none: "Vois-tu le foisonnement des diamants répandus? Vois-tu l'ambre qui brûle et les fruits mûrs dans les corbeilles?" Mais je ne voyais toujours que la cendre et le bois noirci du foyer' (p 107). The suddenness and stubbornness of the invasion by the Solitaire's language eventually overcome the resistance of the 'fantasy' narrative: Malus's 'poetry' wages war on Boris's referential récit - 'Sous ta parole une flotte de guerre s'avance (...)' - and demonstrates its victory by soon occupying and transforming the entire text which the reader had expected it would reflect (p 107). (Ironically, it is Boris who becomes Malus's 'miroir des jours' and not Malus's sub-text which has acted as the mirror structure (p 108).) The extent of the subversive influence of the Solitaire in Un Régicide is witnessed in Boris's eventual but total acceptance of his 'poetic promise': 'Oui, je sens les fleurs, j'entends les rires, je vois les villes, je hume l'eau des fleuves' (p 107). Especially destructive of the 'fantasy' narrative, with its clear generic sense (4), is the total abandon, in Boris's newly-acquired linguistic register, of extra-literary or figurative meaning. This is strikingly dramatised in the 'portrait' of Aimone who, far from epitomising the conception of the fantastic, proves to be nothing more than a textual construct of word-association and purely 'poetic' resonance: 'Liane d'or aux mouvements d'algue indolente ondulant à la lame, Aimone aimée, navire sans armure, fille de sable et d'écume née de mon corps au plus profond de mon sommeil' (p 140). Ironically, it is

Boris's love-confession, the conventional marriage of poetic beauty and 'real' passion, which is the most extreme form of semantic annihilation - so extreme, in fact, that not even Aimone, who inspires these words, can understand them herself (5): '"Je t'aime, Aimone, Mona, la seule. Amie, amande, anémone à la chair brillante; yeux d'argent, bouche souriante. Mon âme, mon amante Aimone"' (p 140). Aimone, like the character of Malus, adds another voice of 'poetic nonsense' in a new non-communicative 'dialogue' with Boris, in which the recurrent use of negatives and interrogatives re-inforces the semantic crisis to which, at this stage, there is no solution: '"Qui es-tu, homme triste, homme aux yeux gris, visage solitaire et qui fais peur? De quelle longue date ne faut-il pas que je t'espère pour ne pas m'enfuir devant la glace que tu apportes?"' (p 144). The function of the 'reflection' imagery is perverse, because Aimone and Lélia, as agents of a nonsensical counter-communication - 'petite ophiure disloquée' and 'rose thé', respectively -, and as constructions of an anti-'fantasy' language, actively battle against rather than passively reflect the discourse in which they are contained (p 150).

The second means by which the Solitaire's sub-text subverts Boris's 'fantasy' recit is through the description of certain stereotypical symbols of the fantastic which are presented in such a way as to deny them their conventional and pre-scribed role, thus creating a parodic 'spoof' from the 'tension between the approach of the writer and his subject-matter' (6). The most powerful 'opposite force' is the

depiction of the sirens, who feature in the never-ending chain of discourse-within-a-discourse - as a figment of Boris's imagination created by Malus's own fantasy, itself a sub-text of the 'high fantasy' narrative, a textual ramification of the 'low fantasy', which is an escape from and therefore engendered within the 'political' intrigue, incorporated in the novel of Un Régicide, etc (7). Firstly, the sirens of this narrative are not those of the 'fable' in the reader's mind; Aimone, Lélia, Mona are 'de-fantasised' and are all reduced to *creatures of flesh and blood*: 'On croit souvent que les sirènes sont des êtres monstrueux, ni filles ni poissons, qui possèdent une queue en guise de jambes. Ceux qui répètent cette fable ne les ont certes pas vues (...)' (p 128). Furthermore, as their mortal female form implies, they respond to and engage in the more mundane, human pleasures of the 'langage des hommes' (p 129). The sirens of legend are past phenomena - 'elles y vivaient jadis', Malus explains - which are not designed to survive the present narrative, where they would soon - and do, here - perish from the 'ennui mortel' of the anti-'fantasy' récit of Malus's sub-text (p 137). In the Solitaire's brief moment of retrospection, when he rebuilds the legendary siren figures - 'les démons de l'été, les terrifiants poissons humains des mers chaudes, qui ne cherchent ici que notre mort' - Boris's incredulous inquiry of 'Quels contes me fais-tu là?' quickly deflates the mythical imagery, to which he delivers the fatal stroke with the 'official' pronouncement of their literary death: 'Nous savons bien que les sirènes n'existent pas' (p 142). This is emphatically re-inforced by the detached manner in



which it is recorded by Boris that Guilhem and Peire are relating 'des histoires merveilleuses d'ondines et de sirènes', before adding the superfluous conclusion that 'nous savons tous que les sirènes sont des contes' (pp 222-223) (8). What feeble vestiges of the legendary sirens that do appear in the narrative are, on account of unsuitability in the present récit, self-defeating: "'Les sirènes se sont abattues sur notre île malheureuse"' (p 142). The descriptive 'counter-movement' (or 'gommage' (9)) of the siren figures effects their disappearance before Boris is transported to the fantastic "'ailleurs"' which the symbolic (10) charge of the siren had initially promised (p 163).

The second subversive symbol which 'fails' to represent the 'fantasy' narrative is the tower which, despite the 'aspect rassurant' (p 82) of its conventional legendary status, is but a relic of that former construction, now 'certainement très ancienne' and appearing 'en mauvais état' (p 83). In contrast to that of the 'vieille légende', this tower is a semantic void, free from the meaningful contents of its ancient counterpart; as the narrative appropriates the tower, the remains of any symbolic value take flight: 'Elle est vide à présent; seul, quelques corbeaux en peuplent les antiques salles, leur vol effarouché par mon approche s'élève vers le ciel à travers les voûtes écroulées' (p 83). Superficially, it retains the promise of reminiscence of any solid monument to a past age - Boris remarks on 'l'épaisseur même de la muraille extérieure' - but this is insufficient to conceal the inner decay of 'l'escalier délabré', 'les marches (...)

brisées' and 'un pan de mur (...) abattu' (p 83). Climbing up the tower, like reconstructing it textually, is a tedious, precarious, and ultimately unrewarding exercise: the narrator's ascent is not only too long - 'cette montée dure beaucoup plus longtemps que je ne l'avais prévu' - but beset with difficulties - his path is obstructed by crumbling stones, 'rendant plus difficile encore l'ascension', while 'des paliers l'interrompent' (p 83) - and, finally, once Boris has reached the top, he asks himself despairingly, 'Que suis-je donc venu faire ici?' (p 84). Dissatisfied with its adventure to the ancient tower, the narrative dismantles its own erection which amounts to no more than 'un faible vestige de l'immense construction placée là par la légende' (p 84). As it deconstructs itself, the description exposes the individual units of that legendary construction, stripped of their cohesive sense and perceived as simply 'un amas de pierres que l'on distingue mal des autres amas de pierres parsemant la lande' (p 84). In the context of the present narrative, the 'vestige' is defamiliarised for, in spite of its recognisability - 'souvent déjà j'y suis monté (...) ' - the tower is a disappointment, as Boris discovers when, after his habitual journey, he is 'déçu toujours par le paysage morne qu'on en découvre' and, consequently, the image created by the description is one of perceptual uncertainty, of failing to recognise: 'Les ronces l'ont envahi, et l'on reconnaît avec peine, en se penchant, un fragment de pilier ou quelque détail d'architecture encore plus incertain' (p 84). The result of all this is that the tower is textually unproductive: the narrator returns, uninspired, to the village, now more aware

of the urgency of his artistic labour on account of this long period in the narrative in which he has succeeded only in partially rebuilding a literary symbol. Boris's resolve to abandon this arid 'chemin de ronde exigü, à demi détruit' marks the diversion of the text from what has proven to be a deferral of the 'fantasy' narrative: 'Il est temps de rentrer au village: je dois ce matin commencer le labour de mon champ, la terre en est à point car il n'a pas plu depuis plusieurs jours. Il ne faut pas me mettre en retard' (p 84).

Finally, Malus le Solitaire himself, whose sub-text contains the above mirror structures which pose a threat to the 'fantasy' narrative, is a construct which continually undermines the creation of the fantastic in Un Régicide, despite its initial inspiration of Boris (11). The figure of the Solitaire is first fabricated in the sombre village shelter by the incoherent, non-sensical utterances of Guirant, whose 'story' of Malus is considered a narrative of former times, irrelevant to Boris's - and the novel's - needs. The reader is, therefore, denied a clear or even interesting impression, since the present text does not include Guirant's tale: 'Il (Guirant) a dû raconter l'histoire avant mon arrivée; je suis trop jeune, il ne recommencerait pas le récit qui devait être long, du train dont il va' (p 60). Not only does Malus prove textually evasive but, in his absence, he is judged an incredible 'poisson fabuleux', 'capturé jadis' by the fanciful 'réflexions' of Guirant (p 60). Boris's own endeavours to represent the Solitaire - 'Il me semble que ce soit à mon tour de conter quelque chose' (12) - are

unfruitful, managing only a single vague line in the narrative - "Il y avait quelqu'un dehors, aujourd'hui, du côté des dunes" - to which no one listens and which does nothing to clarify the nebulous impression of the Solitaire figure (p 60). Before it is properly established, therefore, the character of Malus is, firstly, denied by the narrator - Boris confesses "Je n'avais jamais vu cet homme" (p 61) - and, next, prematurely ended - 'l'histoire est finie' - thus signifying the undesirability of his presence in the fantasy world of Un Régicide (p 60). Moreover, the eventual appearance of the Solitaire is ironically incongruous with our expectations (13): Malus systematically demystifies and 'de-fantasises' the island by claiming that its treasures, contrary to the legend, "ne représentent aucune richesse" (p 102), and that the bejewelled land which his own  récit  had recreated is but "les débris arrachés à un monde que nous ne verrons jamais" (p 100). Malus's depiction of the island, oscillating between the deflatingly dull and wildly exaggerated, suggests to Boris that he has never even been there, that he is a false relic of an age he has never known - 'D'où tient-il ces choses? Sans doute n'y est-il pas allé lui-même (...)?' - and, in turn, the Solitaire fails to transport the narrator to 'his' ancient dream-world (p 105). Furthermore, the narration of that world by Malus is communicated both tediously, in 'sa voix sourde et monotone' (p 106), and with ridiculously banal interjections, such as his opening "Grande marée, ce soir" (p 100). Finally, the Solitaire's words degenerate into total non-communication as they become inextricably intermingled with the chaotic, meaning-

less sounds of the tempestuous 'norris' ('si fort qu'il engourdit (...) les sens'): 'Mais mon compagnon se met à prononcer des mots, dans les sautes de la tempête; et c'est comme si le désordre autour de nous s'apaisait, tant ses paroles se glissent à l'aise dans les mouvements du vent et des vagues' (p 116). It is significant that Boris actualises his fantasy only once he abandons Malus and ignores his advice - "'N'y va pas!'" are the Solitaire's last words before the narrator departs - and when the narrative rejects the 'representation' of that fantasy in Malus's counteractive sub-text (p 142). The so-called mirror images of the Solitaire's récit have been seen not to reflect the message of the 'fantasy' narrative in which they feature, but rather to invert it altogether: in Lacan's terms: 'L'émetteur reçoit du récepteur son propre message sous une forme inversée' (14).

Outside the subversive mirror structures of Malus's sub-text is the other discourse-within-a-discourse of the ballad . The 'vieille chanson' is a more intense and concentrated creation of 'poetic nonsense', as the text itself forewarns, when it announces it in an understatement, that 'les paroles n'ont pas grand sens' (p 86). This nonsense is particularly striking in the use of incongruous imagery which precludes the possibility of an identifiable impression: the lines 'Moins rouge est le chant du marin' (p 86) and 'Moins forts sont tes chants et ta main' communicate only individually intelli-

gibible units (such as the concepts of the colour red, the sailor's song, his hands) which, when interwoven in their present composition, take on no semantic value (p 87). Boris's first reaction to the 'vieille chanson', like that of the reader, is a recognition of its unintelligibility but, at this stage, a sense of relief and escape from the textual impasse of the tower description: 'J'aime entendre ces mots qui semblent, quoique ne voulant rien dire, cacher quelque mystère, quelque promesse ...' (p 87). The 'promise' contained in the ballad, it transpires, is actually a déception. This is signalled internally, as the great efforts to extract some significance from the verse - reflected in the fishermen at work, and the recurrence of the terms 'ouvrage' and 'labours' (p 86) surrounding the ballad - ultimately fail, causing Eric to become increasingly frustrated at this unco-operative art form: 'Eric frappe à coups de marteau en s'encourageant de quelques jurons, puis il se redresse pour juger de son ouvrage. ... Moins forts sont tes chants et ta main. Que les rouges larmes amères ...' (p 87). The refusal of the verse to signify, 'malgré l'attention que (Boris) apporte à (son) travail', forces the narrator to juggle with and alter its initial composition, but the revised version removes the possibility of fantastic meaning still further, until Boris is forced to admit to the hopelessness of the hermeneutic task: 'Le marin chante en forçant sur les rames, lourd est son cœur et rouges sont ses mains. Ce n'était pas cela, ni le rythme, ni les paroles. Et il chante gaie-ment pour endormir la mort' (p 88). The constant process of self-

reflexion is, then, both the result of the ballad's 'failure' as 'une modalité de la réflexion' (15) and, in its repeated attempts to modify its form, the cause and generation of more insignificant verse which, in the end, brings about its own destruction, as the sole image produced from the 'vieille chanson' disappears as suddenly as it had appeared: 'Brusquement, une image apparaît (...) Puis plus rien' (p 88).

On another level, the ballad is seen to produce images which oppose those required to effect Boris's transportation to the 'fantasy' island. Instead of constituting a poetic inspiration, the verse is 'monotone et lent' (16) and less an example of escapist poetry than 'une complainte' whose melody 'se dissout dans une sorte de prière' (p 86). The recurrent motif of 'larmes' re-inforces the effect of depression which is a consequence of its continual complaint. As though to consolidate Malus's theory that 'les trésors amassés ne seront plus le soir qu'un amas de petits cailloux gris'' (p 102), the 'gemmes rouges' (p 87) of the 'vieille chanson' become 'les rouges larmes amères' - a symbol of grief rather than joy (p 87). The image of artistic unproductiveness is reflected within the 'sommeil profond' of the sailor-narrator and the weakness of his strokes, manifested in 'Moins forte est la main qui rame' (p 86) - especially counter-productive in view of Boris's need to row to his 'fantasy' island 'à coups de rame vigoureux' (p 114). Finally, the death-imagery of the ballad serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it

creates a mood of mourning where the fantastic would require the celebration of the birth of an ideal; on the other hand, it brings about the death of the verse itself, since the words 'Et il chante gaiement pour endormir la mort' constitute the end of the 'vieille chanson' in textual terms (p 88). It can be justifiably argued, therefore, that the mise en abyme structure of the poem-song - sung by a sailor (Marc) about a sailor (the 'marin' of the ballad) for a would-be sailor (Boris) - is not a 'supportive', representational form of the 'fantasy' narrative, but is, like the other mirror structures, an attack on that narrative.



## 'ALTERNANCE' IN THE 'FANTASY' NARRATIVE

In the same way that the 'political' narrative alternates between the 'regicide' and the more socially political récits, the 'fantasy' narrative contains an inner conflict between the dream-world of Boris and his 'real', mundane existence. The tension between the two 'fantasy' récits is created by the climatic metaphor, in which the turbulent, variable weather conditions in Un Régicide produce two opposing narrative styles from which is born an aesthetic battle between innovation and representation in art (17). Un Régicide follows this stylistic struggle in three clear movements: the opening stage marks the unrivalled domination of the unadventurous, conservative récit of the season of 'brumes'; this is followed by the advent of 'la saison des glaïeuls' which, in the torrid heat and summer storms, causes a *crisis of authority* by challenging the narrative's status quo: finally, the third movement sees the return of the wintry weather and with it the re-establishment of a conventional récit after its triumph over the innovative and subversive structures of the textual revolution.

The connection between the Winter season and the uninventive narrative in which it is expressed is established at the outset of the first movement when the weather report - 'Nous sommes au milieu de l'hiver' (pp 47-49) - is repeated in the same terms on three separate occasions,

until the narrator realises how unproductive and unpromising his artistic practice has become: 'Nous sommes au milieu de l'hiver, l'époque où nul travail ne presse, et rien ne m'attend nulle part' (p 49). In the 'demi-jour ouaté' of 'brumes' and 'brouillard' (pp 47-48), the narrative 'paysage' remains unchanged, allowing the description to become truly 'representational' in that it reproduces constantly a single, prescribed image: 'Nous sommes au milieu de l'hiver et pourtant l'aspect du pays n'en est pas vraiment changé (...)' (p 48). Thus, the depiction of the poor harvest 'où nous récoltons nos maigres rations de pommes de terre et de seigle' (p 22), causes a textual désœuvrement (p 48) in which Boris strolls about aimlessly in his aesthetic 'zone désertique' (p 49). The foggy conditions confine the narrator's inventive spirit - 'j'erre à l'aventure' is an ironic reflection on his activity - so that he both experiences and creates in the text 'l'impression qu'il y a des heures que je tourne en rond dans le sable et la brume ...' (p 49). As a consequence of Boris's circular movement, the season which he describes is not one which will change rapidly: Un Régicide's opening description portrays the weather 'comme à l'ordinaire' (p 12), the 'ciel bas' is 'rarement découvert', the islanders are subjected to '[de] fréquentes périodes de brumes' (p 22) - indeed, 'nous ne connaissons depuis toujours que la brume et la pluie' (p 25). Where the narrator breaks from his direct representation of the climate to an analysis of it, that analysis is, ironically, but the repetition of what the text had already illustrated: 'Ici, c'est le climat surtout dont on se lasse

vite' (p 24). The monotonous repetition of the season of 'brumes' creates a textual fatigue, which depicts a darkness - 'Le ciel est noir, la terre est noire (...)' (p 68) - and a silence - 'Personne ne dit rien' (p 59) - sufficient to cause the narrator to fall into unconsciousness: 'L'éclairage est froid, triste (...) Je suis fatigué, mes pieds que je n'ai plus la force de soulever battent à chaque instant sur des cailloux, au risque de me faire perdre l'équilibre' (p 78). In this state of semi-somnolence induced by the oppressive atmosphere of 'une petite pluie fine qui tombe pendant des semaines' (p 25), all hopes of a climatic 'cataclysme' or 'cyclone' to alter 'ce régime immuable' appear forlorn, since it would involve nothing short of a new context, a removal of the narrative scene: 'On voit mal comment cesserait un tel étouffement: il ne faudrait rien moins que changer la situation géographique de l'île' (p 26). By the end of this opening movement the transferral of the narrative to another situation and, therefore, the launching of the artistic expedition, seem highly improbable, for not only does the narrator experience 'le sentiment que nous pourrions tout autant nous trouver nulle part' but this becomes a textual reality when the narrative closes with 'Une fois de plus c'est, au bord de la mer, à la tombée du jour ...', thus repeating the opening lines of the novel in a defiant stroke of narrative conservatism (p 79).

The second movement focusses on the conflict of an actual narrative alternance arising from the descriptions of two opposing seasons. Although, still, 'le paysage est sans surprise' and the narrator is immersed in 'un sommeil sans rêve' (p 109), soon the 'vent violent' (p 115) approaches the island and the turbulent 'norois' blows away the 'sens', 'mots' and 'paroles' of the first récit (p 116). In place of the season of 'brumes' rages a period of stormy weather, and with it the narrative voices of Malus (whose words are 'les sautes de la tempête') and the sirens (whose 'chant soudain' has the force of 'l'ouragan qui me [Boris] jette au visage') replace the sterile narration of Boris (p 116). This is not to reassure the 'saison des glaïeuls', which follows the tempest, of a textual victory: the adventurousness of the new récit is cautiously tempered by its relation in the future tense, where the recurrent "'bientôt"' of Malus defers the actual transformation of the narrative while Boris hesitates to effect the change (p 117). However, so great is the seasonal temptation of Malus's poetic promise, that the projection of the sirens - '(...) bientôt renaîtront les sirènes' (p 117) - creates their presence - '(...) ton bras s'arrondit autour d'une taille, ta bouche s'adoucit (...)' (p 118) - and Boris announces factually that the inner revolt - a literary coup d'état - has been successfully operated: 'la situation se précisa' (p 119). Yet the indecisiveness of the text proves a significant obstacle to the total dominance of Boris's dream-récit over that of his more mundane island life, for, as the 'derniers nuages' suggest, the 'Summer' is

still a variable climate and the reverting of the narrative tense back to the future - (...) 'nous entrerons dans la vallée heureuse (...) ' - is an indication that any pronouncement of textual revolution is premature (p 133). The return of the narrator to his former 'paysage', which has quickly lost its 'gaieté' and has become again 'une plaine grise, presque inculte', demonstrates that the inner conflict is unresolved (p 134). In the absence of stable government, anarchy (18) rules the narrative: in 'le murmure du vent' the récit is caught in between the season of 'brumes' and 'la saison des glaïeuls', for here Boris confirms the presence of the sirens - 'Je les entends, j'entends leur chant (...) ' - only then to deny it - 'Elles ne sont pas encore là (...) ' - and thus lay the text open once more to the battle of the two strands of the 'fantasy' narrative (p 128). The result is a hybrid between the inventive SCRIPTOR LUDENS and the 'traditional' artist, between 'le jeu des figures rituelles' and 'le langage des hommes' (p 129). In the end, it is the excessive heat of the Summer, initially responsible for the narrator's production of a highly fantastic récit, which puts an end to its own operation and, therefore, becomes counter-productive; the 'chaleur suffocante' excludes the possibility of artistic progress: 'Il faisait trop chaud pour travailler certes, trop chaud aussi pour accomplir de grandes marches (...) ' (p 157). Boris does recognise the achievements of the 'saison des glaïeuls' narrative in terms of what the text has reaped from it: 'La récolte de seigle et d'orge avait été plus abondante qu'on ne l'avait jamais vue (...) ' (p 152). However, the torrid heat 'avait

commencé ses ravages', for the 'new season' récit, too hastily constructed - 'on avait construit à la hâte' - , has proven too extreme a defiance of the laws of vraisemblance, just as the excessive 'torpeur' has ruined the land (p 152). The return of the cooler climate of the 'fantasy' narrative marks the triumph of tradition over innovation and the re-instatement of a narrator whose individualism is compromised by the influence of his literary ancestors: 'Les vieux du village disaient qu'il faudrait bien que ce temps-là finisse' (p 153).

The culminating movement of alternance consists of the completion of the narrative's circular 'progression' in which the récit originates as a representational form, experiments with an emphatically unrealistic discourse, and rejoins, ultimately, with the original style of narrating events. The third stage of the 'fantasy' development in Un Régicide, like the first two, produces a textual climate, and this it does by declaring that 'la saison de pêche est finie' (p 184), - an immediate result of the 'moi'-narrator having abandoned the text, 'renonçant à poursuivre la lutte' (p 183). A sense of literary fatalism is engendered in the narrative by the return of 'une petite pluie fine et persistante' and 'la tenace, la fidèle, la petite pluie sur qui l'on peut toujours compter' which prove the theory that, in literature, 'le travail sera fait dans les règles' (p 184). Implicit in the narrator's 'homecoming' is a sense of relief at

an art-form with which he is familiar, accompanied by an ironic instruction that he, like the sheep of the island, should not stray from known pastures: 'Je n'oserai plus, désormais, m'écarter des voies reconnues; souvent des moutons se sont perdus dans les marais, et jamais on n'a retrouvé leurs traces (...)' (p 185) (19). While acknowledging that he will not produce 'de gros ouvrages' of literary significance, Boris is content to resume 'les milles petits travaux qu'il faut finir avant l'hiver'; in the coolness of the new season, the narrator is lucidly aware that his work will amount to 'une distraction plutôt qu'un travail' (p 185).

However, there is, in this third and final movement, an equally strong recognition of the attendant risks of Boris's decision. The rain-fall acts as a metaphor for the 'traditional' aesthetic process, for both represent the habitual situation - 'nous y sommes tellement habitués (...)' - to such an extent that the individual becomes totally oblivious to its activity: the narrative to which Un Régicide returns from chapter XII onwards is, like 'une petite pluie fine' an unremarkable atmospheric condition, 'qui n'a ni forme ni consistance et qui ne fait aucun bruit' (p 186) (20). The defeatist attitude of the narrator to the '"crachin"' (p 186) - 'Il est plus probable que nous n'y pouvons rien' - is a reflection of the writer's lack of resistance to the infertile 'terre perdue' of literary conventions (p 187). The entire text becomes saturated with the opaque, humid substance - '(...) tout est noyé dans une brume cotonneuse (...)' - which marks the

submersion of the artist in a conventional narrative and the transition of writing from the struggle for individual survival to the disappearance of the self in the mass of the literary establishment (21) .

In the same manner that the climate is 'ce temps qui cause à la longue notre mort' (p 186), the 'traditional' narrative of Boris's mundane existence is that which causes the narrator's death, since his submission to the conventional récit is a constant self-denial, as the echoes of "'Ce n'est pas moi'" remind the reader (p 224). The re-appearance at the end of the novel of the words which marked the beginning and end of its first movement - 'Puis c'est au bord de la mer, une fois de plus, à la tombée du jour ...' - signifies the creative self-destruction of the artist, as he opens the window by his death-bed, and here, barely identifiable in the thick mist, appears 'un troupeau de moutons, immense, léger, floconneux' which seeps into the narrator's empty frame (p 226) (22). The game of alternance ends, therefore, with the suggestion of the triumph of the literary il over the je, whose 'mort' at the end is not only that of the novel but also the exhaustion of the individual's creative urge.



CHAPTER TEN:

INTERACTION AND OBSTRUCTION OF THE 'POLITICAL' AND 'FANTASY'  
NARRATIVES IN UN REGICIDE

## THE ADVENTURES OF A SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATIVE

The subversion of the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives have so far been seen to operate in two ways: enchâssement is the technique of embedding one narrative within another in order to undermine the discourse which contains it; alternance consists of the conflict between two récits, each of which struggles for textual supremacy while restricting and being restricted by the other. A third subversive device remains to be analysed, however, for Un Régicide is also the dramatisation of how both the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives interact with and are obstructed by each other and a multitude of sub-texts whose status in the novel 'fails' to reach anything greater than a momentary and incomplete significance. The interplay between these sub-texts and the two main récits represents the plurality of meaning constructed and deconstructed in the creative process. Un Régicide celebrates this 'polysémie' (1) by revealing the 'symbolic' nature of the novel: 'C'est en ce sens là qu'elle (l'œuvre) est symbolique: le symbole, ce n'est pas l'image, c'est la pluralité même des sens' (2). Like Barthes's 'Babel heureuse' (3), Robbe-Grillet's narrative is one where 'la signification est excessivement nommée' since it is not towards a single end and, therefore, it defers the dominance of a unified, determinate meaning in the text (4). In exposing the narrator at work, Un Régicide reveals 'l'ensemble des relations de ce qu'il nous décrit' in their full flight of interaction

(5). This is presented on two levels: firstly, the narrative realises and rejects signifying structures in a self-conscious, overtly critical manner, which permits the reader to observe the reasons behind these textual manœuvres; secondly, the generative power of word - and image - association gives a direct presentation of how the récits interrelate (6).

As a metaphor for the process of novel-writing, Un Régicide exhibits what Dällenbach describes as 'cette implication mutuelle du récit d'une aventure et de l'aventure d'un récit' (7). The narrator's difficulty in establishing a central 'adventure' is exacerbated by his need to experiment with sub-texts in his efforts to weigh up the respective cases for the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives. On account of this, the novel is engaged not only in a power-struggle between the two main récits but also in the constant pursuit of and interruption by less significant textual constructs. At the beginning of Un Régicide, the narrator launches into the 'low fantasy' situation with hesitation: it is both night and day - 'c'est (...) à la tombée du jour' (p 11), yet 'Il fait jour maintenant (...)' (p 12) - , wet and dry - the narrator is 'un noyé' (p 13) one minute, but the next he announces 'mon corps est sec' (p 12); he is both caught in a nightmare 'en dangereux remous' (p 11) and in a state of 'demi-sommeil' (p 12). The changing, uncertain route which Boris pursues constitutes the instability of the 'low fantasy' narrative, in search of a convincing situation: 'Par endroits, une surface plus égale, recouverte seulement

d'une mince nappe liquide, permet un instant de course; mais c'est ensuite, entre deux parois rocheuses, un passage où l'on risque à tout moment de perdre pied (...)' (p 11). Reflecting on his movements, the narrator remarks that this is the common practice of his activity, for 'souvent même il faut rebrousser chemin pour chercher une autre issue', thereby predicting the consequence of its inability to reach 'la terre ferme' definitively: the '... peut-être ...' signals the time has arrived to set the narrative off in another direction (p 13). Thus begins, if equally hesitantly - 'Maurice ... Moritz ... Boris ...' - the 'political' récit, which attempts to attribute consistency to the narrative by allowing the hero to sleep for a full forty hours but, despite the fact that 'il aurait été commode', it is admitted nevertheless that it would be artistically problematic and, as such 'ça n'aurait pas été tout à fait une solution' (p 13) (8). The narrator's awareness that the text has to involve itself in a more productive exercise - 'il était difficile de rester dans cette situation' - brings about the technique of minutial description, but this, ironically, bores Boris sufficiently to force him to resort to a day-dream - a sort of 'fantasy' within the 'political' narrative - in an effort to produce a more stimulating adventure (p 16). Success, however, is only momentary, for the description is exciting in a manner incongruous with the modern situation of Boris's world; the narrative reluctantly but inevitably breaks off the potentially stimulating image of 'le 18 août': '(...) les piétinements énervés des chevaux, l'odeur du crottin, l'éclat des sabres dégainés ... c'était il y avait longtemps'

(p 24). However, having dismissed the alternative route, the narrator is obliged to resume the perspective he had abandoned and the problem it had originally raised: 'Et Boris, qu'attendait-il assis devant sa tasse?' (p 25). In the absence of a solution, the 'low fantasy' narrative replaces the textual position held unsuccessfully by Boris, and, in investigating the ingredients needed to construct a more enticing portrayal - 'si le soleil pouvait se montrer pendant quelques jours (...) bien des fleurs s'épanouiraient alors (...)' - it develops into the 'high fantasy' je narrative in which the narrator temporarily realises his dream (pp 24-25). The progress of this new 'lead' is restricted by the inability of its hypothesis to become direct statement, and of the fantastic to translate into a textual reality; the recurrence of the interrogative form increases the insecurity by questioning the common sense of this récit: 'Partirions-nous alors? Quitterions-nous pour toujours ces horizons où la vie, quoique monotone, est quand même possible, pour risquer de nous retrouver sous d'autres cieux (...)' (p 26). In his urgency to continue with his creation, and cautioned by the lesson voiced in the dream, the narrator presses on - 'Boris regarda de nouveau sa montre: il était inutile d'attendre plus longtemps' (p 26) (9) - with the intention of developing the 'political' récit into a detailed, informative account, but produces one which seeks escape from its own dull existence by recalling 'une époque moins morte' (p 33). The failure of the 'attentat manqué', however, prematurely closes off this 'voie incommunicable', forcing the narrator to re-

build waveringly and unproductively his 'fantasy' text 'en ces temps lointains, déjà ... en ces temps lointains ... déjà ...' (p 32). At this point, the narrative resolves to 'écarte des passes coutumières' (of the 'political' and 'low fantasy' récits) and re-direct itself 'vers ces postes avancés' (or 'les gouffres de légende', which is to become the 'high fantasy') (p 33). Boris is still characteristically uncertain as to how to consolidate on this material, however, in spite of his fascination: 'Et je reste fasciné par l'intense lumière qui vient de cet autre monde, où, très doucement, comme attendu, je m'enfonce ...' (p 33). As the tentativeness of the narrator's approach indicates, his commitment to the 'high fantasy' récit is provisional upon its 'success' - '(...) tel était, provisoirement, son choix' -, yet this is under the new threat of a progressive, more coherent 'political' intrigue (p 34). Moreover, as the 'high fantasy' narrative hesitatingly generates the sub-text of the Solitaire ('cet homme qui marche aussi le long de la mer et que je ne connais pas' (p 50)), so the 'political' situation thickens with the development of the mysterious figure of Thomas ('la silhouette massive') (p 53). This parallel progression of the two narrative levels leads, eventually, to their débordement in which Malus and Thomas are fused into a single persona, defying the narrator's attempts to distinguish clearly between the political and the fantastic and prolonging the contest, through this ironic unification, of these récits (10). In addition to the narrative confusion created by the two cryptic characters is a further subversive element: for Malus and Thomas

represent only superficial agents of their respective fields - politics and fantasy in Un Régicide - since their relationship with the 'parent' narrative is essentially tangential. Efforts to contrive for the two figures a greater depth and thereby establish the relevance of their appearance in the text backfires as these innovative constructs, in turn, divert the reader's attention from the declared roles of Malus and Thomas - to represent the narrator's duality - and, therefore, from the political and the fantastic. This is particularly evident in the intermingling of the sub-texts which, far from strengthening the alternating narratives, create disorder through blending them: Malus's dream produces the horrifying image of 'son cerveau (...) grossi considérablement (qui) occupe maintenant presque toute la pièce' (p 109), upon which the narrator reflects and decides that the 'cauchemar' (p 112) is better suited to his other creation, which is, consequently, transformed into a figure of more relevance to the 'high fantasy' world than the political: 'Boris regarda Thomas: à sa place, un être difforme, avec deux jambes grêles et une tête de cheval, souriait de toutes ses dents, en dilatant les narines' (p 114). Significantly, the appearance of Red, essential to the development of the regicide inasmuch as his murder is designed as a catalyst for the Revolution, marks the replacement of Thomas in the text - 'L'étudiant alla directement s'asseoir (...) à la place de Thomas' - and his nightmarish companion of the 'chien noir' dethrones Thomas's monstrous creation, so that what begins as a support-structure ultimately distracts the narrative focus from its 'parallel' récit (p 208).

Simultaneously, Malus's own invention of Aimone - in order to revive the siren figure necessary to expand on the 'high fantasy' narrative - grows uncontrollably, disobeying the laws upon which it had been created. In ignoring the narrator's "'Reviens, reviens, tu ne sais pas ...'" (p 143), the siren, an unfulfilled promise, tempts Boris away from Malus - 'Ils s'étaient séparés, mécontents l'un de l'autre - and, in turn, away from the fantastic récit, which the narrative dismisses as 'ces contes d'enfants' (p 122). Therefore, Aimone can be considered a 'double agent' of the text, since her ostensible function (to establish the 'high fantasy' narrative) conceals her actual task of returning the narrator to his 'political' intrigue. In the absence of reliable agents, or sub-texts, and the clear domination of one récit, the narrative decides to abandon rationalisation and resort to leaving the future progress of the two main narratives in the hands of fortune: 'Comment se décider? En tirant au sort à pile ou face?' (p 148). This submission to chance signifies an intensification of the confusion generated by the sub-texts, or 'narrative adventures', of Malus le Solitaire, Thomas, Red, and Aimone, which reaches its climax, ironically, in the event of the regicide itself. The narrative impasse is underlined by the admission that, until a definite, unchallengeable story-line can be found, 'toutes les interprétations demeuraient possibles'; the 'dernier espoir' is, for Boris, the newspaper accounts, but these prove unsatisfactory (p. 169). It is, therefore, all the more disastrous to the narrative stability when, during the self-declared "'instant fatal'" (p 164) of Boris's operation, the intervention of



the 'fantasy' récit (through the distracting 'chevelure blonde' and the bared 'jambes' (p 165) of the siren figure) inflicts a crisis of authority: '(...) il ne croyait plus du tout à cette histoire' (p 164). Furthermore, the essential ingredient to the king's assassination - ~~the victim-~~ ridicules and defies the act central to the novel itself : 'Il (le roi) avait pris, lorsque Boris l'avait frappé, cet air incrédule qui marquait d'une moue légèrement ironique l'in vraisemblance de l'attentat (...) ' (p 166). The King's refusal to feature in person and thereby establish his presence in Un Régicide represents the constant derision of work by Boris (11). Instead of rectifying the confusion, the regicide therefore aggravates it - 'Subitement, tout s'était embrouillé' (p 166) - and the narrator is forced to abandon the 'political' récit altogether, as though its own 'failure' ironically resolves the dilemma by proving that particular pursuit ultimately worthless: '(...) puisque ce bon roi était mort, qu'on n'en parle plus!' (p 174). This commitment, however, represents, like the others, a déception, for Boris perseveres with his efforts to conclude 'cette euphorie assez déraisonnable' (p 175) through the 'political' narrative rather than the 'fantasy', claiming that 'les progrès de l'Eglise avaient été si considérables que toute opposition sérieuse semblait désormais anéantie', in spite of the now-overwhelming evidence to the contrary (p 175). The dramatic irony (12) evolving from the discrepancy between the reader's perception of the 'regicide' récit and the narrative pretence of a 'healthy' political situation, creates a tension within the novel which renders 'l'immense tâche de redressement' an insurmountable task (p 174). Finally, after the third 'failure' to execute the regicide plans in the text, on account of the

repeated interruptions from the sub-texts, the narrator is obliged to admit that the assassination 'act' and the 'political' narrative which it epitomises produce nothing in their chaotic state: 'Boris, d'ailleurs, ne pouvait s'empêcher de penser qu'il n'y avait rien derrière cette agitation, que ce bruit constituait une fin en soi, de même que ce travail ne visait aucune production (...)' (p 176). This sees the abandonment of one main narrative line and implies the triumph and survival of the other - the 'fantasy' récit. It is at this point, however, that the resurgence of the sub-texts obstructs the fulfilment of the 'high fantasy' elements in Un Régicide. Boris's trial for the crime which he, both as chief protagonist and narrator, did not commit, is repeatedly dismissed as "'des mômeries'", yet manages to create a 'trou' in the text which postpones his crossing to the island (p 204). Within the courtroom itself, the reappearance of Thomas (a symbol of the Usine Générale) and Arnaud (the political zealot) in the company of Vincent, Maur, and Guilhem (agents of the Solitaire intrigue) renders Boris's escape futile, since he has, in meeting all these characters again, only completed a full circle. Finally, the return of Laura to the narrative marks the unjust invasion - the jury has just pronounced Boris innocent and has thereby admitted the end of the 'political' intrigue - of 'ses discours embrouillés', which transfers the unconvinced narrator from the dream-island back to the September Revolution (p 211). The consequence of these sub-textual interventions is that the novel reverts to its original predicament - 'Donc, "il n'y avait rien de changé"' (p 213) - in which the narrative is stationed 'au

croisement de deux grand-routes' (p 214), continually intersected and obstructed by narrative constructions (marked '"Grands Travaux"') which prohibit both the possibility of a peaceful, 'parallel' 'cohabitation des langues' and the successful linear development of one outstanding récit (13). Barthes' image of the nouveau romancier, or 'écrivain conscient', embattled against 'les signes ancestraux et tout-puissants' is thus chaotically dramatised in the self-conscious experimentation of these 'narrative adventures' (14).

## SUBVERSION THROUGH WORD - AND IMAGE - ASSOCIATION

There are two main devices through which the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives of Un Régicide are engaged in interaction and mutual obstruction: the first of these, as we have seen, involves the conscious reflection of the narrative on its own process of creation; the second, dealt with here, consists of the non-analytical, unimpeded proliferation of the 'sens multiples' in the interplay of words and images. This uncontrollable generation of meaning undermines the convention of the 'transcendental signified', for the multitude of signifying structures are seen to refuse to come together in an 'unité organique' (15). Barthes describes this subversive operation as one of creating a literary impasse from the collision of sub-texts:

'C'est alors que les écritures commencent à se multiplier (...) chaque fois que l'écrivain trace ou complexe de mots, c'est l'existence même de la littérature qui est mise en question; ce que la modernité donne à lire dans la pluralité de ses écritures, c'est l'impasse de sa propre écriture' (16).

In his outline of 'la théorie des "thèmes générateurs"', Robbe-Grillet explains how the nouveau roman is constructed from the unlimited reproduction of 'les éléments de base engendrant toute l'architecture du récit et jusqu'aux aventures qui s'y déroulent (...)' (17). This situation inevitably produces the chaotic interaction of words and images

in Robbe-Grillet's fiction, whose generative power is restricted, in the 'traditional' novel, to the construction and symbolic representation of a single anecdote: Un Régicide, like Projet pour une révolution à New York, is an unpredictable game in which 'l'anecdote se met à foisonner: discontinue, plurielle, mobile, aléatoire, désignant elle-même sa propre fictivité, elle devient un "jeu" au sens le plus fort du terme' (18). The two main narratives of Un Régicide are created and destroyed by this ludic multiplication of elements: the 'political' and 'fantasy' récits are to a large extent dependent on the specific areas of the word - and image - association of colour and sound.

The notion of regicide is first engendered in the narrator's mind by a colour-image whose mixture creates a violent clash of hues: having soaped his face and caught his reflection, Boris sees a war of colours in the mirror: 'C'était rouge et brun violet, avec des traces mauves, grises, bleu sombre, ça et là' (p 18). The prominence of the colour red - 'une importante masse rouge attirait d'abord l'œil (...)' - arising from this mixture, denotes the emergence of the idea of bloodshed and violence which, as yet, remains unarticulated in the text: 'ça ne représentait rien' (p 18). This early colour-combination is, however, replaced by another, quite different one in the 'paysage fantastique', produced by Boris's rêverie at the café, when his dream creates a new range of tints in depicting 'le pays des brumes', where the island falls under 'une lumière grise', and the calm sea -

'une surface polie, nacrée, d'où émergent de grosses pierres (...) noirâtres' - that together negate the violent picture of the mirror scene (p 20). Thus the tranquility of the 'low fantasy' narrative, with its shades of white, grey and black - epitomised in the flock's 'laine blanche, grise ou noire' (p 25) - is a foil to the distinctive blood-stained narrative of the 'regicide' récit, whose deep red colour is diluted by the 'eau profonde au milieu des rochers', and whose significance is distracted by the written word: '[le mot] ... comprimé vivement, puis fusant' is produced by vaporous jets of 'juss tisss' at the factory (p 38). The narrator's thoughts are returned to the political situation, however, by the 'boîtes à conserves rouillées' (p 39), whose red tint reappears in the same form in the 'fourneaux mangés de rouille' (p 57), and produces the revolutionary character Red, whose 'romanesque' quality encourages Boris to opt for 'le crime passionnel' (p 56) (19). The colour of red is instrumental in the creation of the central event that gives the novel its name, for the 'inscription laconique' of 'Ci-qît Red', following the student's mysterious death, is transformed into the 'anagramme accusatrice' of 'Régicide!' (p 58). The potential seriousness of this image and of its implications is immediately undermined, however, as the text reveals that the red image is not a serious symbol of the political bloodshed but a nonsensical reflection of Boris in the tram window, 'sa tête vivement éclairée qui défilait sur un étalage de carottes (...)' (p 58). Indeed, the colour red proves a textual 'double agent' (20): transferred to the 'high fantasy' narrative of the 'vieille chanson', the brilliant colour of the 'gemmes

rouges' (p 86), 'les rouges larmes amères' (p 87), and the sailor's 'mains rouges' (p 88) generates the textual 'mystère' and 'promesse' by bringing to life the black-and-white portrayal of 'le pays des brumes', thus diverting the reader's interest from Boris's 'political' role to his 'fantastic' persona (p 87). The 'gemmes rouges' revive the 'sol stérile, où la pierre partout affleure' (p 78) and the 'amas de cailloux gris' of the island's dull terrain and produce, therefore, from an unpromising 'low fantasy' narrative, a colourful, vivid high fantasy récit (p 102). Whilst the promise of the red 'anagramme accusatrice' remains unfulfilled - neither the student nor the king dies in the course of Un Régicide - the red image conjured up in the narrator's dream proves productive for the 'high fantasy' narrative, since the 'taches de rouille' and the 'chose rouge' activate the tornado required to 'dissiper le brouillard' (p 25) and alter 'ce régime immuable' (p 26). The character Red transfers his allegiance from 'political' to 'fantasy' narratives, as Malus becomes 'le sang des brebis qu'on égorge', and so appears to trade in his earlier function of creating the regicide act for the development of a new récit (p 92) (21). At this point the narrator replaces red as the generator of the political murder and experiments with blue in the form of 'la grosse mouche bleue' yet this, significantly, defies such a role in escaping Boris's ineffectual attempts at swatting it to death (p 95). In an intensified effort to re-establish the character of the original colour, the metaphor is built up from the 'unsuccessful' 'chose rouge' to the 'couleurs désastreuses dans les mauves et les rouges vineux' of the photograph,

yet the only scene this leads to is this burning of the portrait itself rather than the killing of the king (p 97). Again, the 'failure' of colour red to generate the desired effect in the 'political' narrative is balanced by its 'success' in creating new 'poetic' material from the 'rougeurs du couchant' which announce 'un lendemain plus pur encore' (p 137). The appearance of the sun (22) in the 'high fantasy' narrative (through the introduction of the brilliant red sunset) provides the necessary light which literally illuminates the island: the 'pénombre' and 'obscurité' (p 126) of Boris's factory surroundings are contrasted vividly with the 'intense lumière' (p 20) and 'éclairage' of Malus's domain, where the 'joyaux gris' become 'les cailloux oranges ou roses', the sea transforms from 'l'eau sombre et profonde' (p 38) to 'l'eau claire, lumineuse et verte' with 'des reflets violets' and, lastly, 'le ciel couvert' (p 40) clears and changes into 'l'azur' under the Solitaire's powerful 'regard' (p 106). As the island becomes increasingly colourful - 'notre île est un jardin de tulipes et de roses, un jardin de fleurs éternelles' (p 140) -, so the décor of the 'political' récit grows more sombre and lacklustre, as though petrified in an eternal midnight: '(...) pour comble d'ennui, la montre-bracelet accrochée à son clou s'était arrêtée sur minuit, car elle n'avait pas été remontée' (p 123). However, if the bright colour-images of the narrative are responsible for the dramatic progression of the dream-island, the replacement of 'la luxuriance du premier soleil' (p 152) by a 'voile grisâtre' (p 217) creates an atmospheric condition which dims Nature's hues and tints and, ultimately, causes



the 'high fantasy' environment to return to its former state of darkness: 'Alors le pays reprendra vite ses vraies couleurs, celles que nous avons de toute éternité connues (...)' (p 184). Malus's fear of the dark (23) - he speaks 'd'une voix changée, celle d'un enfant qui a peur du noir' (p 142) - actually produces the image of a blackened countryside (as seen in the recurrent flights of the crows (24) and their reflection in the 'eau noire') which, consequently, encourages the narrator to abandon the island récit for the regicide scene (p 185). The re-emergence of the 'red' imagery - the repetition of 'cœur' and 'écœurant', the reappearance of the 'lame fatale' and its 'bordure de rouille', which causes, when moistened, 'une liquide rouge' - rekindles Boris's enthusiasm for the crime so powerfully that it is directly responsible for producing, if only in his mind, 'le récit de l'attentat: "Crime odieux, acte de folie, deuil national"' (p 173). The extent to which the regicide is dependent upon the word - and image - association of colour, however, is dramatised by the fact that, from this stage onwards, the central event is forced into external suspension by the absence of the 'red' generator. The 'brume cotonneuse' (p 188) forms a colourless film not only over the 'fantasy' narrative but also over the 'political', thus prohibiting the penetration of any pure red: significantly, the character Red is henceforth accompanied, and blackened out by, his mysterious 'chien noir' (p 207). This narrative 'blackout' is re-inforced by the disappearance of the sun from both récits - 'Le soleil a disparu à l'horizon' (p 216) - while the sole relief of light, offered at the close of the novel in

the snowy 'blancheur' of mid-Winter, covers up the colour-potential of the décor (p 225). It is in this state of colourlessness that the narrative dies (25).

If the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives and their various sub-texts are created and destroyed by the colour-imagery of Un Régicide, the sounds which are produced in the text are responsible for the 'double movement' of communication and counter-communication. The sound-imagery of the novel operates in two ways: firstly, non-human sounds determine the progression of or diversion from the narrative strands, while human speech represents the limitations of the récits to articulate significant utterances. In the 'political' narrative, the absence of any sounds emanating from the 'outside' world permits the 'hero' to sleep through much of the opening chapter: the softness of the neighbour's radio 'égale et terne', and the distant church bells fail to stir Boris and the intrigue for which he is responsible into action (p 14). Significantly, the routined practice of his Sunday morning toilette is produced in 'un mouvement uniforme, assez lent, continu, dont nul accident ne venait troubler la monotonie' (p 15). The only noises of an exciting character - les refrains militaires' and 'des fanfares' create the short sub-adventure of 'le 18 août' - refer the reader to an event of the distant past and their effect is, therefore, dulled by the passage of time (p 23). It is in this absence of sounds that the early récit of the political background in Un Régicide

struggles into existence and is abandoned for the 'fantasy' narrative, which is effortlessly created by the sounds of the sea: the agitated waters - 'les vagues soudaines (...) se mêlant en dangereux remous', 'l'eau (...) agitée' (p 11), 'la puissance des courants' - evokes the presence of the island through their constant coming and going, in the rhythm of the waves (p 12). However, the state of the dream-world is threatened when, the sea having quietened down, the description of the 'mer immobile' (p 21) and 'l'eau (...) d'un calme absolu' (p 20) renders the narrative silent again and in need of the turbulent 'tornade' (p 25), 'cataclysme' and 'cyclone' to generate more resonance in the text (p 26). As the crowds approach Boris, he becomes engaged in a 'barrière humaine' (p. 29) with his 'concitoyens' (p. 30), and is thus implicated in a social activity for the first time - an event brought about by the 'bourdonnement assourdi' and the hubbub of men and women preparing for the day's work *into which the reluctant participant stumbles* (p. 27). At this stage, the analysis of the key concepts as mere constructions of sound is, however, sufficient to destroy the central issue of justice which is exposed as but a noise produced by the air jets of a machine - 'juss tisss juss tisss juss tisss' - and is thus 'désarticulé, privé de signification' (p 38); secondly, the voice of the electorate, which has assumed such importance in the narrative, 'ne représentait plus, en fin de compte, que les voix de quelques fanatiques' (p 34). The resulting confusion encourages the narrator's mind to seek refuge - 'Boris rêva, confusément (...)' (p 39) - from the 'political' narrative; his reverie is induced by

the soporific 'ondulations de la mer' , but the sound of a pebble being thrown into the water awakens him rudely and returns the novel to the latest update on the 'political' front, thus: 'Tout à coup, quelque chose tombe, avec un "ploc" et une gerbe d'éclaboussures (...)' Boris regarda le journal qu'il avait gardé dans la main sans s'en rendre compte. "Eclatante victoire ..."' (p 40). In exercising the maximum and most unpleasant noise (26) - 'la trépidation des moteurs et le grincement des outils' (p 43) at the Usine Générale - the narrative prevents Boris's escape into unconsciousness, thereby detaining him in the 'political' setting until he shuts out the din by retreating to his office (27), where 'le bruit n'était plus qu'un bourdonnement ininterrompu' which appears to promise a return to the tranquillity of the island (p 44). The 'political' narrative, however, sustains its high level of volume through a sequence of noisy scenes: the canteen discussions are followed by the 'commotion (...) très forte' of Red's death, with the 'signal d'une petite trompette, and 'les trois voitures pleines à craquer (qui) s'ébranlèrent', and Boris is forced by this noise to become involved in the sub-text of the student demonstrations (p 55). Ironically, the situation which arises from this, where the 'regicide' decision is first articulated, is produced by the non-human, ultimately meaningless sound of the tram-car's screeching brakes: the 'anagramme accusatrice' is no more than 'un coup de sifflet long et perçant' whose 'ss'-whistle of Ci-gît Red - Régicide creates the notion of the political assassination in Boris's mind (p 58). Aware of its generative power and of the implications of its sound - that

Boris kills the king - the narrator's response to this same 'grince-ment du tramway' (p 70). forces him into the shelter of his office where 'du monde extérieur ne venait plus aucun son' and from which refuge-point the narrative repeatedly immerses itself in the 'fantasy' récit (p 71). Yet the persistent increase in volume of the 'political' setting forbids Boris to ignore his regicide task: this is manifested in the repeated alarm bells and sirens (28) which eventually disturb the narrator's sleep - '(...) le sommeil ne revint pas' - and oblige him to carry out his plans (p 123). The ascent of the factory lift brutally snaps the narrative out of its semi-consciousness - 'Boris sursauta: la cabine montait!' -, but the recurrent failure of the assassination attempt is produced by the malfunctioning of the elevator and the consequent silence of its motor-mechanisms: 'De nouveau, la cabine était au sol, le bruit du moteur s'était arrêté' (p 164). The refusal of the récit to generate the crucial sound of the gunshot and the confusion over 'quand avait commencé la fusillade' is responsible for the failure of the narrator to execute his intentions and of the 'political' narrative in general (pp 167-168). This return silence is 'echoed' in the 'fantasy' narrative which, subsequent to the violent winds of the norris and the 'saison des glaïeuls' created from this, relates the barely audible 'mer tranquille, régulière, successive' (p 142) until such point as 'les sons (...) s'affaiblissent' (p 217) and the narrator's eventual death is ensured by his own inability to break the silence: '(...) je me trouverai bientôt muré dans la masse, sans avoir poussé un cri' (p 223).

Just as the existence of the narratives is dependent upon the ~~associations~~ generated by the sound-imagery, so the human utterances in the novel form a counter-communication to the main narratives and the sub-texts in Un Régicide. The postponement of Boris's dialogue with Laura delays the communication of vital 'political' detail, yet the eventual appearance of their conversation in the text is proof that the narrator's doubts as to the validity of such an encounter - '(...) il (Boris) ne comprendrait pas grand-chose à ses arguments' (p 19) - are well-founded, since her commentary on the 'Plan de l'Eglise' amounts to no more than non-sensical 'sucereries' and creates the situation whereby, in spite of all Laura's words 'les desseins de l'Eglise' are mere *political* secrets (p 176). The central discussion of the 'political' narrative at the canteen is emphatically counter-productive of any pre-established significance: 'Pour augmenter la confusion, des plaisantins apportaient volontairement dans la dispute des arguments insensés dont beaucoup étaient pris en considération, tandis que des propositions sérieuses passaient tout de suite pour des boutades' (p 52). The creation from such confusion of Boris's regicide declaration - "'Ce qu'il faudrait, c'est tuer le roi!'" - is an assurance of its meaninglessness, as its immediate effect is to reduce the text to a state of silence and bewilderment: 'Immédiatement, un silence étonné s'établit' (p 52). The confirmation of the 'opinion générale' of the pronouncement as senseless - "'C'est idiot de dire des choses comme ça'" - causes Boris to deny the

words immediately and, in so doing, delay the narrative's acknowledgement of its central event (p 53). Boris's 'rire immense et silencieux' (p 68) demonstrates both his ridiculing of the regicide decision and of his refusal to answer the question 'Qui avait bien pu prononcer cette phrase et pourquoi?' (p 54) - a situation which leads to his frustration and directly to the articulation of the 'fantasy' narrative voice of the 'vieille chanson' (p 86). Here, however, the non-sensical poetry of Marc is prevented from signifying by the constant interruption of Eric's 'jurons' (p 87), whilst the barely audible 'voix basse' and 'voix sourde et monotone' of Malus becomes inextricably confused with 'les craquements et les sifflements du bois trop vert' (p 106), and his words produce, not the 'saison des glaiveuls' which they promise, but the cacophony of 'les sautes de la tempête' (p 116). The désœurement is further enhanced by the 'compagnons de route' who, 'sans bruit' (p 110), resemble the inarticulate 'masse confuse, parfois silencieuse' in their pointless obstruction of Boris's progress by intermittent and senseless 'protestations confuses' (p 122). The echo of laughter throughout the 'high fantasy' narrative - a reverberation of Boris's reaction to his regicide proclamation - acts as a determined deflation of the 'poetic' appeal to which the narrator is expected to respond: the continuous 'rire' of the 'filles de l'écume' (p 117) is repeated in the form of Aimone, 'riante et menue' (p 138) and, finally, in the giggling of Mona's 'bouche souriante' at the moment of Boris's 'transportation' to his dream-world (p 140). The voices of both the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives, and of the various sub-texts of

Un Régicide, combine in the penultimate chapter during the 'trial' scene, in which the inter-dialogues of Thomas, Arnaud, Vincent, Maur, Guilhem, Red and the 'aboiments' of the 'chien noir' (29) intensify the non-communicative value of human speech as they degenerate into 'discours embrouillés' (p 211). The confusion of the verdict, in its futile attempt to pull together a consensus, marks the uncertainty of the regicide (itself created from an unintelligible pronouncement) and of the whole 'message' of Un Régicide: "'Est-ce que j' inscris Coupable?" Les autres se récrièrent confusément: non, personne ne disait cela' (p 209). The juxtaposition of the 'assassin's' judgement with the banal "'Il a fait très chaud cet été"' is a final demonstration that, in the absence of a semantic hierarchy or process of selection whereby irrelevant and incongruous material is rejected), the communication of a single message through the cross-fire of intersecting exclamations is an impossibility (p 210). The conclusion of the novel is both a reflection upon its 'failure' to implement meaningful dialogue and a reminder that the reason for this 'failure' is the focus of the narrative on the sounds of its own mechanics: 'Ils n'ont pas échangé une parole; on n'entend que le bruit du moteur qui continue à tourner ' (p 215). The free interplay of the 'thèmes générateurs', whether in the experimentation of sub-textual 'adventures' or in the word - and image - association of Un Régicide, is a demonstration of the *internal battle* of literature, in which the uncontrollable powers of language are necessarily engaged in 'le double mouvement de création et de gommage' (30).



CONCLUSION

The aim of this Conclusion is to draw together briefly the results of the re-assessment of Pour un nouveau roman and of the analysis of Un Régicide, and to examine the relationship between them.

The confusion over Pour un nouveau roman and the critical impasse as regards reaching a consensus about the author's intentions have been the result of the rigidity of the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' interpretations, both of which are analytically unsound (1). On the one hand, the theory that Robbe-Grillet expounds a literature which strives towards 'objectivity' reveals basic weaknesses: firstly, as pointed out in 'Une voie pour le roman futur', 'l'objectivité au sens courant du terme - impersonnalité totale du regard - est trop évidemment une chimère' (2). Secondly, the liberté (3) proposed in 'Une voie pour le roman futur' and, according to the 'objectivist' argument, further outlined in the plea for an acknowledgement of the distance (4) between man and Nature in 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie', is obviously undermined by the subsequent essays: 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau' repudiates systematically the 'myth' of 'objectivity' - 'Le Nouveau Roman ne s'intéresse qu'à l'homme et à sa situation dans le monde' (5), and 'Le Nouveau Roman ne vise qu'à une subjectivité totale' (6) -, while 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' and 'Du réalisme à la réalité' dismiss the quest in the 'traditional' narrative for the accurate transcription of 'l'existence objective' (7) and vraisemblance (8), respectively, thus demonstrating that the condemnation of an impartial, non-human literature is prominent in at

least the latter half of Pour un nouveau roman (9).

And as for the 'subjectivist' theory? The awareness among critics of the obvious fallacy of the 'objectivist' interpretation caused a shift of emphasis too swift and too extreme to be sound: not only does it ignore the principles of 'Une voie pour le roman futur' and 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie', but it misinterprets the point behind Robbe-Grillet's 'subjectivité totale'. The idea that it is possible to create a literature which, as in cinematography, presents directly the psychological state of the perceiver - 'Ce n'est pas l'objectivité de la caméra qui (...) passionne, mais ses possibilités dans le domaine du subjectif, de l'imaginaire' - is in itself valid, but as a reading of Pour un nouveau roman it proves inadequate (10). Literature becomes, for the 'subjectivist' critic, a means to express the workings of the imagination. The 'over-subjectivization' of certain 'subjectivist' interpretations is highlighted for its unsubstantiated attribution of meaning to Pour un nouveau roman and, elsewhere, its consideration of the fiction of Robbe-Grillet as manifesting the author's 'theory', yet the 'over-subjectivized' theories are merely the extreme form of the basic 'subjectivist' negligence of the formal creativity and autonomy of the nouveau roman. Both the conventional viewpoints - that Pour un nouveau roman sets forth the principles of an 'objective' or highly 'subjective' literature - are misreadings of the situation.

A re-examination of the compilation reveals a consistent argument

throughout the essays for a new practice of writing. Robbe-Grillet's theory of creativity is especially explicit in 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui', where the 'traditional' function of art to reproduce 'une réalité préexistante' is contrasted with the 'fonction créatrice' of the nouveau roman (11). Whereas the 'objectivists' had claimed that the author's intention was to propose a non-anthropomorphic representation of reality, and the 'subjectivists' had concluded that the attack on vérisme and vraisemblance was the substitution of an external 'realist' portrait by an internal, psychological depiction, the analysis <sup>undertaken</sup> by this thesis has demonstrated that neither is correct: for Robbe-Grillet, the artist can fulfil his creative potential only if he writes pour rien (12). For the nouveau romancier, 'l'art (...) restera la chose la plus importante au monde' (13). While the 'bon romancier reste celui qui invente de belles histoires' (14) and reduces the form of the novel to a vehicle for the "'signification profonde"' (15) of that content, Robbe-Grillet seeks to create a literature with 'une nécessité tout intérieure', exposing the compositional elements concealed in the practice of 'innocent' narrative (16). What is proposed in Pour un nouveau roman is a novel which can dramatise this revolution - from the conception of art as an immaculately conceived revelation of vérité to the recognition of its structure and independence from external criteria. To this end is expounded a new 'architecture' in which 'traditional' material is initially reconstructed only to be destroyed as the narrative confirms its fictive authority;

description defies the fulfilment of a single, complete, verifiable récit with 'un double mouvement de création et de gommage' (17). The perplexity caused in readers by the unintelligible constructions in Robbe-Grillet's fiction is a result of their inappropriate expectations. In raising the hopes of the reader by the (albeit partial and temporary) representation of signifying structures, the nouveau roman operates a veritable déception (18). The artist's creativity is thus permitted to flourish, since the 'mouvement paradoxal (construire en détruisant)', in its refusal to allow the dominance of a central signified, generates a multitude of meanings in the text (19). The error of the 'subjectivists' was to attribute an ultimate significance to what is now revealed as a purely aesthetic or 'poetic' form, with no responsibility to an 'éternelle Verité' (20). As for the 'objectivist' theory, it had failed to observe that the determination to establish the 'présent perpétuel' was indicative, not of a desire to reproduce the actual, true distance separating perceiver from perceived in the real world, but rather of Robbe-Grillet's intention to highlight the fictiveness, the artistic here-and-now, of the nouveau roman (21). Finally, the identification of the 'double movement' at the centre of the author's principles set out in Pour un nouveau roman implied not only a solution to the hermeneutic deadlock of the 'objectivist'-'subjectivist' war but, moreover, a possibility of reconciling the fact that meaning in Robbe-Grillet's fiction is always massively present, yet eternally deferred.

Efforts to ascertain whether in fact this analysis of Pour un nouveau roman could explain the practice of Robbe-Grillet's writing took a necessarily complicated route. In the first place, it was essential to determine how the theoretical 'mouvement paradoxal' of 'construction-destruction' related, if at all, to literature as a whole (22). It was discovered that there existed overwhelming support for the theory that all texts were engaged in the dual operation of assimilation and dissimilation of other works and, therefore, implemented both the reconstruction and destruction of literary meanings. Indeed, if Barthes's description of 'l'ambiguïté constitutive du message poétique' is valid, then the inherent duality of the language of literature is an inevitability (23). Certainly the metaphor of the langue-parole opposition helped to clarify the 'double movement': for in order for the individual artist to communicate his literary parole he requires the institution of a conventional langue, without which no single text could divert from the norm. (This is not to suggest that it would have been appropriate to apply Saussure's linguistic model in any strict sense; the reference to langue and parole was intended only as an analogy of textual assimilation-dissimilation.) Having established, in Paul Bové's terms, that 'all language is capable of authenticity' in that 'it both discloses and covers up, often in the same movement', how does the nouveau roman in practice distinguish itself from the 'traditional' novel? (24) Un Régicide is discovered not merely to operate the 'double movement' of textual assimilation-dissimilation but to do so overtly, ostentatiously. It is here that

the application of a parodic model reveals the exact process of this activity: Un Régicide, according to the theory of parody - this had to be defined in the context of modern literary criticism - effects a 'respectful' reconstruction of certain generic material, through allusion to specific textual areas and complementary references of a vaguer yet 'supportive' nature. At this point, when the reader's expectations are raised, the novel performs a dramatic internal volte face in which the compositional elements (both formal and thematic) are laid bare in a parodic deconstruction of that genre, 'si bien que l'image est mise en doute à mesure qu'elle se construit' (25). In order to appreciate the detail of that second stage of the 'double mouvement de création et de gommage', it was imperative to consider the different devices employed in parody. Following an investigation of parodic techniques, three main approaches to the incorporated text(s) proved particularly relevant to Un Régicide: the first of these, enchâssement, involved the embedding of one narrative in another, as was seen to be implemented as a means of subversion in the novel, where the 'mirror structures' of both 'registers' ('political' and 'fantasy'  récits) were shown to undermine rather than reflect and support the main narratives. Secondly, the parodic device of alternance, whereby the text alternates between the relating of two narratives, is found to be in operation, as both the 'political' and 'régicide' levels, on the one hand, and the 'high fantasy' and 'low fantasy' levels, on the other, are engaged in a constant mutual destruction.

Last of all, it was remarked how the proliferation of sub-texts, initially promising to enhance the 'political' and 'fantasy' texts, combined to subvert the authority of these main narratives through interaction and obstruction. From this point it was possible to draw the following conclusions about Un Régicide: as with all literature, it manifests both similarity to and difference from previous texts; however, in the manner in which the novel constitutes both 'la consolidation de la loi' (26) and, in the same movement, subversively and dramatically performs a 'critical ridicule' of that convention, it marks itself as a distinctly parodic process (27). The conception of parody as essentially 'parasitic' and derivative' proves as inappropriate as would be a reading of Un Régicide as a representation of the 'political' or 'fantasy' genres (28). If, as Brooke-Rose upholds, 'parodic representation is one long stylisation of realism', it establishes a vital critical distance between itself and the incorporated text (29). Finally, in illuminating in this way its 'qualité transformationnelle', the parodic 'double movement' of Un Régicide implements satisfactorily the theory of creativity deduced from Pour un nouveau roman (30).

How can these discoveries contribute to an appreciation of Robbe-Grillet's other fiction? In seeking to identify the 'truly unreconciled nature of Robbe-Grillet's writing', Leslie Hill explains that the novelist is torn between 'an awareness that language is diffe-



rence', on the one hand, and 'the ever-repeated need to deny and repudiate that difference by enclosing it within a voyeuristic space', on the other (31). In view of the urgency to create new forms expressed on both a theoretical and practical level, it would seem that the converse were true: forced into the network of pre-established structures, Robbe-Grillet's only means of fulfilling his creative potential is in a recombination of those conventions. Significantly, it is in the 'ré-écriture' of recognised genres that the novels of Robbe-Grillet are invariably engaged: Les Gommages 'rewrites' the detective story and the Œdipus myth; Le Voyeur and La Maison de rendez-vous represent the clichéd images of sado-erotic fantasies; La Jalousie is a replaying of the eternal love-triangle; Dans le labyrinthe portrays the familiar psychological crisis in the struggle for self-awareness, etc (32). Yet in all of these the promise of the conventional, stereotyped image is deferred through 'cette réflexion continuelle': as the narrator reflects on his narrative, so he experiments with other constructions, proliferating sub-texts which produce 'une plénitude serrée de sens' but obstruct the accomplishment of the central signified (33). If the plurality of meaning in Robbe-Grillet's novels constitutes the 'création', their non-fulfilment represents the 'gommage'; between them these two stages of the narrative are responsible for the heightened déception of the nouveau roman. The parodic 'mouvement paradoxal' marks the fiction of Robbe-Grillet as a distinctive literary form, in which the dual process of all literature becomes its raison d'être. For, as Barthes points

out, in his preface to Morrissette's study, 'Toute la littérature est peut-être dans cet anaphorique léger qui tout à la fois désigne et se tait' (34).

NOTES

## NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

### OUTLINE OF THESIS

- (1) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman (Paris, 1963).
- (2) The term 'objectivist' is used to describe the interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman discussed in Chapter One, and represents the argument that this compilation expounds a literature partially or totally devoid of human significance.
- (3) The term 'subjectivist' is used to describe the interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman discussed in Chapter Two, and represents the argument that Robbe-Grillet strives to create an emphatically 'subjective' literature, corresponding more to an inner reality than external reality.
- (4) Chapter Three presents a new interpretative approach to Pour un nouveau roman by drawing together 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' arguments. However, it does constitute an exact synthesis of these two interpretations.
- (5) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Un Régicide (Paris, 1978). The details of the novel's publication are given in the Conclusion.
- (6) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 143.
- (7) The term 'material' is employed throughout the thesis to refer to both thematic content (including plot, intrigue, and narrative issues) and stylistic presentation (compositional and structural elements).
- (8) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (9) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 130.

### PART ONE

- (10) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 9.
- (11) The terms 'philosophy' and 'philosophical' are used here to refer to a system of beliefs and values which relate to a particular viewpoint; they bear no relation to philosophical schools of thought.

- (12) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 48. Robbe-Grillet's term 'humanisme' is defined in Chapter One, sub-section one. It relates closely to anthropocentrism as a deliberate investment of inanimate phenomena and Nature with human meaning.
- (13) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 48.
- (14) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 54.
- (15) 'Contamination' of the universe by anthropocentric perception is Robbe-Grillet's own description, as witnessed in his contention that 'Tout est contaminé' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 56).
- (16) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 22
- (17) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 17.
- (18) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 22.
- (19) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 48.
- (20) The novel of Balzac is synonymous with the 'traditional' novel in Pour un nouveau roman. As explained in Chapter One, sub-section one, Robbe-Grillet makes no explicit distinction between the 'roman bourgeois' and those authors (including Balzac) connected with its establishment: 'La seule conception romanesque qui ait cours aujourd'hui est, en fait, celle de Balzac' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 15).
- (21) The term 'objectivist' refers to the actual interpretation, while 'objective' describes the literature considered by that interpretation.
- (22) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 18.
- (23) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 18. Liberté is one of the conditions necessary for a non-anthropocentric perception of the world; it and the other conditions for such an outlook which are identified in the Introduction are discussed in greater detail in Chapter One, sub-section two.
- (24) Throughout Pour un nouveau roman Robbe-Grillet employs terminology in a vague and potentially misleading manner, and it seems appropriate at this point to issue a warning against interpreting the notions of humanism tragedy, the absurd, etc., according to their strict sense.
- (25) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 20.
- (26) As illustrated in Chapter One, sub-section two, 'anti-humanist' and 'objectivist' are synonymous.

- (27) Robbe-Grillet informs the reader that his narrator is 'le moins neutre, le moins impartial des hommes' Pour un nouveau roman, p 118).
- (28) Roland Barthes, 'Le point sur Robbe-Grillet', in Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, (Paris, 1963), pp 7-16 (p 16).
- (29) Robbe-Grillet's comments on his fiction are discussed briefly in Chapter Two, sub-section one.
- (30) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 29.
- (31) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 9.
- (32) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 29.
- (33) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 58.
- (34) The reference to fatalism is not implicit of the actual philosophical doctrine, but rather represents the intention to draw a parallel between Robbe-Grillet's vague notion of 'humanisme' and the process by which man's relationship with the universe is pre-determined.
- (35) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 129.
- (36) The term direct presentation is mine. It describes the operation whereby the reader is permitted to experience the narrative situation immediately, without censorship of authorial or narrational reflection or analysis. This is further discussed in Chapter Two, sub-section one of the thesis.
- (37) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 130.
- (38) No phenomenological or existentialist interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman will draw explicit substantiation from the text. See Chapter Two, sub-section two.
- (39) The distinction between 'traditional' and 'new' 'humanism' reflects the difference between 'humanist' and 'human': the 'subjectivist' (or 'over-subjectivist'!) theory argues that while anthropocentric 'humanism' deliberately leads to a falsification (whereby the world is formed in man's image), Robbe-Grillet's 'new' or 'authentic' 'humanism' - Morrissette refers to it as 'cet authentique humanisme' - is designed to liberate man as much as objects from the systematic investment of significance in the world (Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, pp 17-36).
- (40) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 139.

- (41) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 143.
- (42) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 130.
- (43) Details of these two essays are found in Notes to Chapter One, sub-section one, no.(12) and no.(39).
- (44) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (45) The 'double movement' is seen to work against the establishment of a single determinate meaning in two main ways: firstly, each signified is terminated prematurely; secondly, the multiplication of meanings renders the emergence of any one in particular impossible. This process is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, sub-section two and again in Chapter Ten, sub-section one.
- (46) In chronological order of publication: Alain Robbe-Grillet, Les Gommages (Paris, 1953), Le Voyeur (Paris, 1955), La Jalousie (Paris, 1957), Dans le Labyrinthe (1959), La Maison de rendez-vous (1965), Projet pour une révolution à New York (Paris, 1970), Topologie d'une cité fantôme (Paris, 1976), Souvenirs du triangle d'or (Paris, 1978), Djinn: un trou rouge entre les pavés disjoints (Paris, 1981).
- (47) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127. The 'creation' represents the phase of reconstruction, since it involves the introduction of pre-established literary 'material'; the 'gommage' is the point at which the development of that 'material' stops, or is distorted.

## PART TWO

- (48) As emphasised in Chapter Four, sub-section one, the langue - parole distinction is used metaphorically in this thesis, and not in the strict sense of Saussure's linguistic model. Nevertheless, the basic role and function attributed to both langue and parole in Cours de linguistique générale (Paris, 1916) are respected here.
- (49) 'Victim-text' is a translation of Barthes's 'texte victime', the re-worked or misrepresented work (Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte (Paris, 1973)).
- (50) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, pp 139-140.
- (51) The two operations within the 'double movement' are assimilation and dissimilation, discussed in Chapter Four, sub-sections one and two, and Chapter Seven, sub-sections one and two.

- (52) As explained later (Chapter Four, sub-section three, Chapter Five, sub-section one, and Chapter Six, sub-section one) the terms 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives are intended to incorporate a wide range of genres and sub-genres; they are not, therefore, intended to denote specific, fixed literary genres.
- (53) The term 'political' refers to both the 'political' and 'regicide' narratives at this stage. See Chapter Ten, sub-section one for a distinction between the two.
- (54) Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient (Paris, 1984). The categorisation of this work is significantly indeterminate: 'Mais, est-ce vraiment une autobiographie?', asks the editor. As pointed out in Chapter Five, sub-section one, it would be dangerous to consider even the most 'impartially' recorded events as those of Robbe-Grillet's actual experience since the semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional text continually casts doubts on the veracity of its accounts. The opening words, 'Si j'ai bonne mémoire (...)' pose an unresolved problem: who is narrating (Le Miroir qui revient, p 7)?
- (55) J.P. Sartre, La Nausée (Paris, 1938).
- (56) A. Camus, L'Etranger (Paris, 1942).
- (57) E. Zola, Les Rougon-Macquart (Paris, 1871-93), the collective title to the cycle of twenty novels: La Fortune des Rougon (Paris, 1871), La Curée (Paris, 1872), Le Ventre de Paris (Paris, 1873), La Conquête de Plassans (Paris, 1874), La Faute de l'abbé Mouret (Paris, 1875), Son Excellence Eugène Rougon (Paris, 1876), L'Assommoir (Paris, 1877), Une Page d'amour (Paris, 1878), Nana (Paris, 1880), Pot-Bouille (Paris, 1882), Au bonheur des dames (Paris, 1883), La Joie de vivre (Paris, 1884), Germinal (Paris, 1885), L'Oeuvre (Paris, 1886), La Terre (Paris, 1887), Le Rêve (Paris, 1888), La Bête humaine (Paris, 1890), L'Argent (Paris, 1891), La Débâcle (Paris, 1892), Le Docteur Pascal (Paris, 1893).
- (58) 'Cela dépend du niveau du récit - la référence très marquée à Meursault et Roquentin, vous la verrez distinctement. Mais Un Régicide est plein de "sons" textuels, aussi qui ne sont pas signalés de cette manière: les passages "lyriques" par exemple, les "poésies" du roman, tout cela débouche du récit. Enfin, l'architecture du roman permet au lecteur d'y trouver quoi que ce soit - mais qu'il y trouve quelque chose!'. (Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986)).
- (59) André Malraux, La Condition humaine (Paris, 1933).



- (60) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Un Régicide, p.21.
- (61) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Réveries du promeneur solitaire (Geneva, 1782).
- (62) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Un Régicide, p.86.
- (63) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Un Régicide, p.87.
- (64) This will be discussed at a later stage in the thesis (Chapter Ten, sub-section one ). The 'je/il' opposition in Un Régicide is first analysed in detail in M.-M. Ball, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Scriptor Ludens": a Study in the Ludic Element in his Novels (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queen Mary College, London, 1981), pp 67-90. Dr Ball sees the narrator as embodying the conflict between individual expression and creativity (je) and conventional representation (il).

### PART THREE

- (65) The terms 'representation' and 'representational' refer to the realist tradition of mimesis, whereby the description constitutes an effort to transcribe 'objectively' an external and pre-existent phenomenon. It is used throughout this thesis as the opposite of creative writing, as expounded in Pour un nouveau roman and analysed in Chapter Three, sub-section one.
- (66) 'Deconstruction' describes the process of analysing, or 'untying', the text by focussing on the fictiveness of its composition elements. The best definitions are found in Jonathan Culler On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism (London, 1983) and Robert Young, Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader (London, 1981). The relevance of deconstruction to this thesis is explained in Chapter Seven, sub-section two.
- (67) The term enchâssement is used to describe the process of embedding one narrative within another. Its function in relation to the device of mise en abyme and the details of its operation are discussed in Chapter Seven, sub-section two and Chapters Eight and Nine, sub-section one.
- (68) Alternance is the technique of alternating between two narratives. For a full discussion of its operation, see Chapter Seven, sub-section two and Chapters Eight and Nine, sub-sections two.
- (69) 'Inter-parody' refers to the conflict between a multitude of parodied texts within a single work. For a full discussion of its operation,

see Chapter Seven, sub-section one, Chapters Eight and Nine, sub-section two, and Chapter Ten, sub-section one.

- (70) 'Multiplicity' is the term used to describe the effects of 'inter-parody', and in particular the multiplication of signifying structures in the text. See Chapter Seven, sub-section two and Chapter Ten, sub-section one.
- (71) When two or more narratives co-exist, they have a mutually subversive or 'subtractive' effect, - that is they literally 'take away' from the development of the other récit(s). See Chapter Seven, sub-section two, Chapter Ten, sub-section one; see Notes to Chapter Seven, note no.(133).
- (72) The thesis 'proper' consists of Chapters One to Ten. This is followed by a brief Conclusion, in which the main arguments of the thesis are drawn together.
- (73) The term 'lead' is mine. It refers to a 'sub-text' (see Note no. 74) which appears to offer a way in which the narrative can develop to the narrator's satisfaction. See Chapter Ten, sub-section one for an analysis of its operation.
- (74) The term 'sub-text' is mine. It describes an offshoot of one of the two main narratives, (the 'political' and 'fantasy' narratives) which develops into a self-contained mini-narrative. Its operation is described in Chapter Ten, sub-section one.
- (75) Strictly speaking, the 'sub-texts' are involved in a never-ending self-generating process. For purposes of this study, the most obvious of these only are examined. See Chapter Ten, sub-section one.
- (76) The term 'sens multiples' is first used by Roland Barthes, in Critique et vérité (Paris, 1966), p 49.
- (77) Derrida describes the process of interaction between narratives as one whereby débordement, or the 'overlapping' of 'frontiers' occurs (Jacques Derrida, La Dissemination (Paris, 1972), p 31).

## NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

### Sub-section one

- (1) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' (1958), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 45-67. From now on all references to Pour un nouveau roman in Part One will be given in the main text in brackets.
- (2) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Une voie pour le roman futur' (1956), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 15-23.
- (3) Robbe-Grillet offers no distinction between the 'sacro-sainte analyse psychologique' of Balzac and that of La Fayette. His conception of this narrative convention is applicable to all 'traditional' novelists.
- (4) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Sur quelques notions périmées' (1957), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 25-44.
- (5) 'Le personnage' is a sub-section of 'Sur quelques notions périmées', pp 26-28.
- (6) Round brackets (...) are mine; square brackets [...] are in the original quotation.
- (7) 'Individu' in this sense is used pejoratively, to describe the 'traditional' protagonist in Balzac's novel in which 'le culte exclusif de "l'humain"' determines the anthropocentric quality of the narrative (Pour un nouveau roman), p 28).
- (8) 'L'histoire' is a sub-section of 'Sur quelques notions périmées', pp 29-32.
- (9) Robbe-Grillet offers no analysis of Balzac's work: the ready-made opposition between La Comédie humaine (Paris, 1842-8) and the Nouveau roman presents the identification of the former with Robbe-Grillet's conception of the 'traditional' novel.
- (10) 'L'engagement' is a sub-section of 'Sur quelques notions périmées', pp 33-39.
- (11) Despite the initially specific relation of this 'univers (...) entièrement déchiffrable' to the 'classe bourgeoise' of Balzac's era, the construction of an intelligible, orderly world in the text becomes associated with the 'traditional' novelist of all periods.
- (12) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' (1963), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 123-134.

- (13) 'La forme et le contenu' is a sub-section of 'Sur quelques notions périmées', pp 39-44.
- (14) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', Critique, 86-87 (July-August, 1954), pp 581-591, (p 588).  
This article is later published in R. Barthes, Essais Critiques (Paris, 1964), pp 29-40.
- (15) Robbe-Grillet's reference to 'tout un système métaphysique' **does not** allude to an actual philosophical doctrine. *But*, probably, it refers to the viewpoint of anthropomorphism, according to which human form or behaviour is attributed to the non-human.
- (16) Robbe-Grillet's term 'langage (...) lavé' describes a language cleansed of human significance or, at least, one which attempts to depict objects and events in their true étrangeté (Pour un nouveau roman, p 57).
- (17) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Explication de L'Etranger, Situations I (Paris, 1947), pp 99-121 (p 119): Sartre in fact remarks, 'Monsieur Camus se refuse à cet anthropomorphisme'.
- (18) The extent to which Robbe-Grillet admires La Nausée and L'Etranger is not revealed in Pour un nouveau roman. See, however, his comments in Le Miroir qui revient (Paris, 1984), pp 163-165, pp 181-182 and also my comments in Chapter Five, sub-sections one and two.

#### Sub-section two

- (19) Robbe-Grillet concentrates on the common factors of the nouveau romanciers in Pour un nouveau roman and makes no distinction between the nouveau roman as practised by himself and that of Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, Claude Simon, Robert Pinget, etc.
- (20) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'A quoi servent les théories' (1955 and 1963), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 7-13.
- (21) Nathan A. Scott, Jnr., Negative Capability: Studies in the New Literature and the Religious Situation (New Haven, 1969). Scott concludes on Robbe-Grillet's desire to 'convert the world and the reality of man into a kind of frozen still life about which no judgement is to be made, which is simply to be looked at, with entirely unprejudiced eyes' (Negative Capability), p 35. This represents the 'objectivist' argument that Pour un nouveau roman is the search for a pure, 'de-contaminated' perception of the world.
- (22) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Avant garde de quoi et de qui?', Le Nouvel

Observateur, 49 (20-26 October, 1965), p 29.

- (23) Stephen Heath, The 'Nouveau Roman': A Study in the Practice of Writing (London, 1972), p 72.
- (24) Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman (Paris, 1964), p 24.
- (25) P. M. Wetherill, The Literary Text: an Examination of Critical Methods (Oxford, 1974), p 94. Wetherill draws the logical connection between the essentially 'subjective' nature of human observation - 'our perception is selective' - and the practice of writing (The Literary Text (Oxford, 1974), p 94).
- (26) The term 'École du regard' is discussed in the 1963 prefatory to 'A quoi servent les théories'.
- (27) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée (Paris, 1938), pp 15-16.
- (28) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', p 588. Barthes' description of Robbe-Grillet's 'objet optique' in Les Gammes becomes directly associated with Robbe-Grillet's theory of objectivity' ('Littérature objective', p 588).
- (29) See Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence (Paris, 1964).
- (30) The notion of vue is taken from Robbe-Grillet's analysis of the device employed by Raymond Roussel, in 'Enigmes et Transparence chez Raymond Roussel, (1963), in Pour un nouveau roman pp 70-76. According to the 'objectivist' interpretation, Roussel's vue represents for Robbe-Grillet the technique whereby objects of description are portrayed superficially, devoid of symbolic meaning.
- (31) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 165.
- (32) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 165.
- (33) My underlining.
- (34) ~~Sartre's~~ description of the 'parallélépipède' has become a hallmark of Robbe-Grillet's pre-occupation with geometric shapes. See Chapter One, sub-section two in its discussion of Robbe-Grillet's 'mathematical' or 'geometrical' descriptions. See also Notes to Chapter One, no (47), below.
- (35) The term thereness is mine. It denotes the non-symbolic presence of objects which refuse to refer to an ailleurs (Pour un nouveau roman, p 131).

- (36) Présence is Robbe-Grillet's term for the quality of objects in the narrative which is essentially restrictive in the sense that it prohibits interpretation of a metaphorical or symbolic nature.
- (37) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Dans le labyrinthe, preface. For an illuminating discussion on the discouragement of allegorical interpretation in Robbe-Grillet, see Vivian Mercier, The New Novel from Queneau to Pinget (New York, 1971), pp 165-214; pp.194-195.
- (38) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Joë Bousquet le rêveur' (1953), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 82-94.
- (39) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Du réalisme à la réalité' (1955 and 1963) Pour un nouveau roman, pp 135-144.
- (40) Maurice-Jean Lefebvre, 'L'ambiguïté des symboles de Baudelaire à nous', Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme, 5 (1964), pp 57-74 (p.58). Lefebvre's definition of dépassement is the same as Robbe-Grillet's ailleurs.
- (41) See, for example, Jean-Pierre Faye, 'Nouvelle analogie?', Tel Quel, 17 (Spring) 1964), pp 3-11. Faye regards Robbe-Grillet's theoretical attack on analogy and metaphor as successfully realised in Les Gommages, Le Voyeur, and Dans le labyrinthe, all of which are said to 'implement' PNR.
- (42) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Samuel Beckett on la présence sur la scène', (1953 and 1957), in Pour un nouveau roman, pp 95-107.
- (43) Jean Bloch-Michel, Le présent de l'indicatif: essai sur le nouveau roman (Paris, 1963), p 17. Bloch-Michel's 'objectivist' stance rigidly declares Robbe-Grillet's description to be absolutely devoid of significance.
- (44) The noun is mine. Robbe-Grillet never actually refers to the opposite of 'traditional' au-delà as être-là, although he does describe the thereness of objects in a way which justifies my term: in 'Une voie pour le roman futur' the author says of perceived phenomena in the nouveau roman that '(...) les choses sont là' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 18), and later in 'Samuel Beckett ou la présence sur la scène' he applauds the playwright's 'représentation théâtrale' for its ability 'de montrer en quoi consiste le fait d'être là' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 103).
- (45) The term distance is Robbe-Grillet's: it is opposed to the symbolic 'pont d'âme' of 'traditional' profondeur. See Pour un nouveau

roman, p 65.

- (46) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 30.
- (47) Osten Södergard, 'Remarques sur le vocabulaire de Robbe-Grillet', Le Français Moderne, 32 (2) (April, 1964), pp 111-115 (p 112). Södergard analyses the 'description géométrique in La Jalousie and Dans le labyrinthe and from this extracts Robbe-Grillet's principle of registering the distance between perceiver and perceived.
- (48) Dominique Aubier, 'Le roman', Esprit, 24 (238) (May, 1956), pp 883-885 (p 884).
- (49) A. S. Labarthe, 'Histoire d'un échec' La Revue des Lettres Modernes, 36-38 (Summer 1958), pp 304-306 (p 305).
- (50) André Rousseaux, 'Un Disciple de Monsieur Robbe-Grillet', Figaro Littéraire (8th November, 1958), p 2.  
It is interesting to note that, while Pour un nouveau roman itself does not support Rousseaux's contention that Robbe-Grillet's descriptive technique is 'scientifically' 'objective', Robbe-Grillet has remarked elsewhere to have experienced 'un processus de contamination: avec des périodes où je reprenais mon activité scientifique' when writing his early novels (Alain Robbe-Grillet, in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: colloque 2: cinéma/roman, edited by Jean Ricardou and compiled at the Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-la-Salle (Paris, 1976), p 418. It is of further relevance that Un Régicide was written during the period in which Robbe-Grillet worked for the Institut des Fruits et Agrumes Coloniaux in the French West Indies, and that Les Gommés was also conceived during his employment as research scientist for the French government. A connection between Robbe-Grillet's scientific and artistic activities is made tentatively by Stephen Heath in The 'Nouveau Roman': a Study in the Practice of Writing, pp 67-152 (pp 70-71).
- (51) The term surface is Robbe-Grillet's: it refers to a mode of perception which rests on the surface of objects rather than 'penetrate' to the symbolic centre of them (Pour un nouveau roman, p.23).
- (52) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective' p 586.
- (53) Maurice-Jean Lefebvre, 'L'ambiguïté des symboles de Baudelaire à nous', p 58.

- (54) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', p 585. It is of interest to note that Bernard Bergonzi supports Barthes' analysis by referring to 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' (Pour un nouveau roman, pp 45-67) and 'Une voie pour le roman futur' which, according to Bergonzi's study, expound the total absence of anthropomorphic and metaphorical language (Bernard Bergonzi, 'Character and Liberalism', New Blackfriars, 50 (594) (November, 1969), pp 745-753. This article is subsequently published in Bernard Bergonzi, The Situation of the Novel (London, 1979), pp 35-56).
- (55) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence (Paris, 1964), p 106.
- (56) André Bourin, 'Techniciens du roman', Nouvelles Littéraires, 1638 (January 22, 1959), pp 1-4 (p 1).
- (57) Robbe-Grillet's term 'connaissance' is never explained in Pour un nouveau roman, but an understanding of it is crucial to the distinction between pure 'objectivity' and human perception. Only science, according to 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie', can aspire to a true knowledge of the interior of things: 'Le minéralogie, la botanique ou la zoologie (...) poursuivent la connaissance des textures (internes comme externes) de leur organisation, de leur fonctionnement et de leur genèse' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 64).
- (58) Gaëtan Picon, 'Le Roman et son avenir', Mercure de France, 328 November, 1956), pp 498-503 (p 500).
- (59) The image of liberté as the effect of withdrawing profondeur from the language of description is discussed in relation to Robbe-Grillet's theoretical principles, by Pierre Caminade, Image et métaphore: un problème de poétique contemporaine (Paris, 1970), p 88) and at greater length by David Grossvogel, Limits of the Novel: Evolutions of a Form from Chaucer to Robbe-Grillet (New York, 1968), pp 256-299 (pp 278-280). Caminade relates Robbe-Grillet's refusal to attribute profondeur to the world to the liberation of both man and things; Grossvogel extends the influence of such a 'liberation' to an extra-literary context in which such description frees the individual outside the novel as well as within. Stephen Heath draws these arguments together in The 'Nouveau Roman': a Study in the Practice of Writing, pp 67-152 (p.72).
- (60) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', pp 587-588
- (61) Armand Hoog, 'Today's Woman - has she a Heart?' Yale French Studies, 27 (1961), pp 66-77.



- (62) André Rousseaux, "Les Surfaces d'Alain Robbe-Grillet", Figaro Littéraire (April 13, 1957), p 2. Rousseaux sees Dans le labyrinthe as the implementation of Robbe-Grillet's theory of 'restrictive' description.
- (63) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', p 587.
- (64) Henri Dumazeau, 'La Trahison des clercs', Français dans le Monde, 17 (July, 1963), pp 2-5 (p 3).
- (65) Marcel Lecomte, 'D'un monde sans profondeur', Synthèses, 224 (January, 1965), pp 396-400 (p 396).
- (66) As expressed in Pour un nouveau roman, the literary character is seen as the central force of the 'traditional' novel and, as such, is the hardest of the 'vieux mythes la "profondeur" ' to dispel. This theory of Robbe-Grillet's is supported by numerous critics: Ann Jefferson, for instance, declares: (The convention of (...) character-based interpretation has become so deeply ingrained in our reading habits, that it often continues to operate whether or not it is appropriate to the text in question (Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction (Cambridge, 1980) p 62). Jefferson regards the character-portrait as the criterion upon which most readers still judge a novel. Jonathan Culler believes that it is through the convention of character that novelists have perpetuated their 'ideological prejudice' that literature is primarily concerned with the depiction of human affairs (Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (London, 1975), p 230).
- (67) Bernard Pingaud, 'L'Ecole du refus', Esprit, 26 (July-August, 1958), pp 263-264 (p 263).
- (68) John Fletcher, 'European Confrontations: David Hume, Gilbert Ryle, and Robbe-Grillet', Caliban, 4 (March, 1967) pp 156-159 (p 158).
- (69) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', p 590.
- (70) Roland Gaucher, 'L'Impasse du "nouveau roman" ', Ecrits de Paris, 199 (December, 1961), pp 101-106 (p 103).
- (71) Claude Mauriac, L'Alittérature contemporaine (Paris, 1958), pp 274-291. See also Mauriac's article, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet et le roman futur', Preuves, 68 (October, 1956), pp 92-96: here it is claimed that Robbe-Grillet's intention is to reduce man in his novels to a robot, such is the novelist's desire to degrade the human being.
- (72) The term 'dehumanizing' comes from Ortega y Gasset's description of the 'aesthetic pleasure' derived from 'a triumph over human matter' and the desire to effect 'a progressive elimination of the human,

all too human, elements predominant in romantic and naturalistic production' (José Ortega y Gasset, The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel, translated by H. Weyl (Princeton, New Jersey, 1948), p 60.

- (73) See 'Sur quelques notions périmées' in which the author refers to 'des critères "naturels"', which include 'le bon sens', 'le coeur', etc.: character is instrumental in seeing that these 'criteria' be respected and that, consequently, the ' "nature" du roman' be in accordance with the convention (Pour un nouveau roman, p 25).
- (74) Robert Champigny sees the demotion of man to the status of objects as Robbe-Grillet's intention to humiliate; furthermore, man takes this route to 'objectification' via a metamorphosis into animal form: "Les hommes sont des animaux, les animaux sont des choses; donc, les hommes sont des choses" (Robert Champigny, Pour une esthétique de l'essai: analyses critiques (Breton, Sartre, Robbe-Grillet) (Paris, 1967), p 65.
- (75) J. M. Cocking, "The "Nouveau Roman" in France', Essays in French Literature, 2 (1), (November, 1965), pp 1-14, (p 11).
- (76) Richard Gilman, "Total Revolution in the Novel', Horizon, 4 (3) (January, 1962), pp 96-101. Gilman applies what he considers to be Robbe-Grillet's transformation of the human into the 'thingish' to the 'objective' presentation of passion in La Jalousie.
- (77) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p.111.
- (78) Philippe Sénart, 'Un "Planisme"', Table Ronde, 167 (December, 1961), pp 104-110 (p 108).
- (79) The 'numéro matricule' is also indirectly a reference to that worn by the soldier in Dans le labyrinthe, who is 'reduced' to a narrative phenomenon with no name, no family and no regiment. See p 139 of Pour un nouveau roman for Robbe-Grillet's own comments on the 'numéro matricule' and 'insignes militaires'.
- (80) André Bourin, 'Techniciens du roman', p 1. Bourin describes the pauvreté of Robbe-Grillet's universe due to the novelist's refusal to commit himself to the 'humanist' stance.
- (81) Etre-là is, however, not regarded as 'harmless' by those who, like Bourin, cannot dissociate the desire to describe non-anthropomorphically from an attack on humanity. See Robbe-Grillet's comments on his 'crime contre l'humanité' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 47).
- (82) This echoes Robbe-Grillet's interpretation of the analysis by André Rousseaux in his article 'Les Surfaces d'Alain Robbe-Grillet'. Rousseaux's charge of destroying man through superficial description

is, however, less outraged at Robbe-Grillet's treatment of his characters than many other critics in their analysis of the novels. Le Voyeur is, in particular, held responsible for degrading man's status: Ernst Fischer writes that this work is 'the quintessence of the view that people are merely objects' and that Robbe-Grillet's indifference to human affairs is manifested in a novel where 'a murder means no more than the sale of a watch, crime is no more than a confusing dream' (Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art: a Marxist Approach, translated by Anna Bostock (Harmondsworth, 1963), p 199). Philippe Sénart considers the presentation of the narrator in Le Voyeur deliberately sadistic in its 'mutilation' of Mathias" '(...) non seulement il (Robbe-Grillet) le (Mathias) punit, le dépouille de tous privilèges, le relègue aux confins de son univers, parmi les objets les plus inutiles, mais il s'acharne sur un corps qu'il déteste, il le mutile' (Philippe Sénart, 'Un "Planisme" ', p 108). Dans le labyrinthe is also considered to be a cruelly dispassionate depiction of 'un homme (qui) marche - mais le but de sa marche semble lui avoir été dérobé' (Henri Rouse, 'Littérature et silence', Synthèses, 236-237 (January - February, 1966), pp 41-48 (p 44).

- (83) Kléber Haedans, 'Le "Nouveau Roman" ', A La Page, 34 (April, 1967), pp 518-530 (p 520).
- (84) Jean Carduner, 'The New Novel in France', American Society Legion of Honor Magazine, 39 (1), (1968), pp 27-34 (p 34).
- (85) John Weightman, The Novelist as Philosopher: Studies in French Fiction, 1935-1960 (New York, 1962), pp 230-252 (pp 232-234).
- (86) Olivier de Magny sums up this sentiment in his analysis of how the nouveau romancier has shifted his attention to the inanimate from the 'apogée de l'individu' (Olivier de Magny, 'Panorama d'une nouvelle littérature romanesque', Esprit, 26 (July - August, 1958), pp 3-17.
- (87) Bernard Bergonzi accuses Robbe-Grillet of striving towards the 'abolition of humanism' and thence to an 'inhumane' literature. However, Bergonzi uses 'humanism' in a manner quite different from its usage in Pour un nouveau roman: Robbe-Grillet distinguishes between 'human' ('subjective') and 'humanist' (anthropocentric, but for Bergonzi, any undermining of the anthropocentric empire is 'inhumane' (Bernard Bergonzi, 'Character and Liberalism', pp 745-750).
- (88) R.-M. Albérès, 'Les Littératures européennes en 1963', Table Ronde, 188 (September, 1963), pp 76-99 (p 83).
- (89) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective', p 582.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

### Sub-section one

- (1) Paul Connerton, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet: A Question of Self-Deception?', Forum for Modern Language Studies, 4 (October, 1968), pp 347-359 (p 347).
- (2) 'Une voie pour le roman futur' and 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' share some fundamental principles with the final two essays in Pour un nouveau roman: the banishment of an 'ailleurs immatériel et instable' (p 21) is reflected later in the assertion that '(...) il n'y a pas plus d'ailleurs possible que d'autrefois' (p 131); the disintegration of anthropocentric 'signification' (p 47) is expounded again in the attack on realism where objects are 'coupés de leur signification' (p 140); the condemnation of the 'humanist' 'réalité profonde' (p 51) and its replacement by the immediate 'réalité brute' (p 19) is re-iterated, finally, in the plea for an end to 'des significations profondes métaphysiques' by 'les rapports (...) directs et immédiats' (p 142). It can, therefore, be argued that, contrary to Connerton's interpretation (see note no. (1), above), the similarities among these four essays (representing two distinct phases of Pour un nouveau roman) are basic.
- (3) Bruce Morrisette, 'Theory and Practice in the Works of Robbe-Grillet', Modern Language Notes, 77 (3) May, 1962), pp 257-267.
- (4) Stephen Heath, 'Towards Reading Robbe-Grillet', Granta, 75 (13) (February, 1970), pp 15-16 (p 16).
- (5) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Le Point sur Robbe-Grillet' in Bruce Morrisette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1963), pp 7-16. This article re-appears in Roland Barthes, Essais critiques (Paris, 1964), pp 198-205. Barthes' theory of 'chosisme' describes Robbe-Grillet's technique of depicting objects as superficial, meaningless phenomena, but it also refers to the refusal to attribute any determinate significance to human behaviour. Morrisette proceeds to offer an alternative interpretation in his 'subjectivist' analysis of the novels. Yet, significantly, he too agrees that Pour un nouveau roman is essentially 'chosiste'.
- (6) Jean Alter, 'Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, par Bruce Morrisette', French Review, 37 (February, 1964), pp 501-503 (p 501).
- (7) Jean Alter, 'Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, par Bruce Morrisette' p 501.

- (8) Gérard Genette, Figures, essais, (Paris, 1966), pp 69-70.
- (9) Gérard Genette, Figures, essais, p 71.
- (10) Robbe-Grillet has recently confirmed his reluctance to comment on his own works for fear of his opinion being taken as the 'correct' interpretation: '(...) j'aurai plaisir moi-même à reparler avec vous de tous ces problèmes que vous avez signalés, étant entendu - je l'ai trop souvent répété - que je ne suis pas censé détenir la vérité de mes propres œuvres ...' (Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Correspondence, (July, 1985)).
- (11) Alain Robbe-Grillet in interview with Claude Sarraute, "Interview avec Robbe-Grillet, Le Monde (May 13, 1961), p 9.
- (12) Obviously Robbe-Grillet is implying that Le Voyeur represents a moment of realisation when he pinpoints this stage in his novel-writing with his awareness of the fallacy of realist representation: 'A l'époque où j'écrivais Le Voyeur, par exemple, tandis que je m'acharnais à décrire avec précision le vol des mouettes et le mouvement des vagues, j'eus l'occasion de faire un bref voyage d'hiver sur la côte bretonne. En route, je me disais: voici une bonne occasion d'observer les choses "sur le vif" et de me "rafraîchir la mémoire" ... Mais, dès le premier oiseau de mer aperçu, je compris mon erreur: d'une part les mouettes que je voyais à présent n'avaient que des rapports confus avec celles que j'étais en train de décrire dans mon livre, et d'autre part cela m'était bien égal. Les seules mouettes qui m'importaient, à ce moment-là étaient celles qui se trouvaient dans ma tête'. Pour un nouveau roman, pp 138-139).
- (13) This 'humanism' differs from that condemned in the 'objectivist' reading of Pour un nouveau roman. Here, it denotes a concern for human affairs and not, as in Chapter One, 'le point de vue humaniste, whereby 'il faut (...) proclamer que l'homme est partout' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 48).
- (14) Susan Sontag admires '(...) the unremitting clarity with which he (Robbe-Grillet) demolishes the old shibboleth of form versus content' by transferring the entire focus of his work on the process of writing itself (Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation, and Other Essays New York, 1966), p 111.
- (15) At the time when 'Sur quelques notions périmées' was written (1957), the reference to a 'revolution' was intended to allude to an extra-literary universe, in a demonstration of the author's concern for the non-literary issues. It is interesting to note that in his preface ('Sur les thèmes générateurs') to Pour une révolution à New York in 1970, Robbe-Grillet inverts the image, so that it is the 'revolution' itself, society, the outside world, which

is rendered more imaginary rather than more imminently real by the artist's activity: 'L'amour est un jeu, la poésie est un jeu, la vie doit devenir un jeu (c'est le seul espoir de nos luttes politiques) et "la révolution elle-même est un jeu '(...)' " (Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Sur les thèmes générateurs', preface to Pour une révolution à New York (non-paginated)). Certainly the September Revolution of Un Régicide bears a greater resemblance to that of Projet pour une révolution à New York in terms of its overtly fictional quality, than to a real event. See Chapters Eight and Nine for a full analysis of how the revolution of Un Régicide leads to a realist deception.

- (16) Mary-Jane Gerhart, (The Purpose of Meaninglessness in Robbe-Grillet', Renascence, 23 (2) (Winter, 1971), pp 79-97 (p 79).
- (17) 'Car, s'il (l'homme) refuse la communion, il refuse aussi la tragédie' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 53).
- (18) The term 'relativist' is used in a loose sense here to distinguish Robbe-Grillet's proliferation of meaning (according to the 'subjectivist' interpretation of Pour un nouveau roman) from anthropocentric 'absolute' significance (i.e. ultimately justifiable in terms of rational argument).
- (19) Robbe-Grillet imagines the scenario whereby he commits the 'crime': '(...) si je dis: "Le monde c'est l'homme", j'obtiendrai toujours l'absolution; tandis que si je dis: "Les choses sont les choses, et l'homme n'est que l'homme", je suis aussitôt reconnu coupable (...)' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 47). Moreover, his condemnation is also a form of censorship: 'Le crime, c'est d'affirmer qu'il existe quelque chose, dans le monde, qui n'est pas l'homme (...)' (p 47).
- (20) Robbe-Grillet's response to such labelling is sarcastic: in regarding the other 'mots magiques', such as in the description of his literature as ' "laboratoire" ', ' "anti-roman" ', ' "avant-garde" ', he imitates the sense of outrage of the Académie Française: ' (...) "fermons les yeux et revenons aux saines valeurs de la tradition française" ' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 26).
- (21) Roger Poole, 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Nouveau Roman', Twentieth Century Studies, 6 (1971), pp 69-77 (p 73). Poole argues that Robbe-Grillet 'despises humanism' and strives to dissociate his practice from all that is human (p 73).
- (22) Robbe-Grillet does not consider the distinction between author and narrator in 'traditional' literature: in 'Nouveau roman, homme nouveau' Pour un nouveau roman, (pp 113-121) 'ce narrateur omniscient' (p 114) produces 'les formes balzaciennes' and 'les objets balzaciens' (p 119; my underlinings).

- (23) E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (1927) (London, 1965), p 45.
- (24) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 196.
- (25) Elly Jaffé-Freem, Alain Robbe-Grillet et la Peinture Cubiste (Amsterdam, 1966), p 5.
- (26) Paul Connerton, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet: A Question of Self-Deception?', p 349.
- (27) R.-M. Albérès, Le Roman d'aujourd'hui, 1960-1970 (Paris, 1970), p 216.
- (28) Michel Decaudin, ('Roman et cinéma', Revue des Sciences Humaines, 104 (October - December, 1961), pp 623-628 (p 627).
- (29) Gérard Genette, 'Sur Robbe-Grillet', Tel Quel, 8 (1962), pp 34-44 (pp 38-40).
- (30) Ben Stoltzfus discusses this descriptive process of Le Voyeur and La Jalousie which he refers back to 'Temps et description dans le récit d'aujourd'hui' and 'Du réalisme à la réalité' (Ben Stoltzfus, Alain Robbe-Grillet and the New French Novel (Carbondale, South Illinois, 1964), p 123).
- (31) Colette Audry, 'La Caméra d'Alain Robbe-Grillet', Revue des Lettres Modernes, 36-38 (Summer, 1958), pp 259-269 (p 263).
- (32) Bruce Morrissette, 'Roman et cinéma: le cas de Robbe-Grillet', Symposium, 15 (2) (Summer, 1961), pp 85-103 (p 94).
- (33) Henri Rouse, 'Littérature et silence', pp 43-44.
- (34) Gore Vidal, 'French Letters: The Theory of the New Novel', Encounter, 29 (6), (December, 1967), pp 13-23 (p 21).
- (35) R. Z. Temple, Le Réel dans la littérature et dans la langue (Paris, 1967), p 223.
- (36) John Fletcher describes the 'objective object' in Robbe-Grillet's fiction as a manifestation of the author's 'obsessional objectivity' (John Fletcher, 'Obsessional Objectivity', Kolokon, 2 (1) (Spring, 1967), pp 34-40; this article re-appears in John Fletcher, New Directions in Literature: Critical Approaches to a Contemporary Phenomenon (London, 1968), pp 101-115).
- (37) Patricia Jaeger writes about 'the contemplation of minute detail' which is employed 'in exactly the same manner' as 'where escape from psychological stress is needed' (Patricia Jaeger, 'Three Authors in Search of an Elusive Reality', Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction,

6 (Winter, 1963-1964), pp 66-85 (p 70).

- (38) R. Z. Temple, Le Réel dans la littérature et dans la langue, p 223.
- (39) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale', Essais critiques (Paris, 1964), p 65.
- (40) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale', Essais critiques, p 65.
- (41) Bruce Morrissette, 'Roman et cinéma: le cas de Robbe-Grillet', p 94.
- (42) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale', Essais critiques, p 66.
- (43) Ben Stoltzfus defines the 'subjectivity-objectivity' descriptive technique as one whereby the objects automatically denote a psychological significance, since they reflect (and 'generate') the state of mind of the perceiver (Ben Stoltzfus, 'Robbe-Grillet and Surrealism', Modern Language Notes, 78 (3) (May, 1963), pp 271-277 (p 275).
- (44) Robbe-Grillet stresses the fact that, while objects act as 'supports' for emotions, they remain uncontaminated: 'Il (le narrateur) peut, d'aventure, en faire le support de ses passions, comme de son regard' Pour un nouveau roman, p 48).
- (45) Bruce Morrissette, 'Theory and Practice in the Works of Robbe-Grillet', p 260.
- (46) Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, p 67.
- (47) Bruce Morrissette, 'Theory and Practice in the Works of Robbe-Grillet', p.258.
- (48) Alain Robbe-Grillet, quoted in Bruce Morrissette, 'Theory and Practice in the Works of Robbe-Grillet', p 257.
- (49) J. M. Cocking shows concern that Morrissette's term of 'corrélatifs objectifs' is a disguised form of symbolism. In reviewing Barthes' 'objets générateurs' (which are supposed to generate rather than reflect meaning) and, finally, 'subjectivité - objectivité' (see note no.(43), above), Cocking becomes more and more convinced that, beneath the difference of terminology, the similarities between Robbe-Grillet's description device and symbolism are easily established. (J. M. Cocking, 'A Review of Bruce Morrissette's Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet', French Studies, 18 (1964), pp 192-193 (p 193).
- (50) Bruce Morrissette, 'Roman et cinéma: le cas de Robbe-Grillet', p 85.
- (51) Bruce Morrissette, 'Roman et cinéma: le cas de Robbe-Grillet', p 88.



- (52) The term here refers to what is described in Pour un nouveau roman as the spontaneous, non-analytical recording of events.
- (53) John Sturrock, The French New Novel: Claude Simon, Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet (London, 1969), p 26.
- (54) Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction (Cambridge, 1980), p 9-46.
- (55) N. Friedman, 'Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept', Publications of Modern Language Association of America, 70 (4) (1955), pp 1160-1184 (p 1181). Friedman is careful to distinguish between the 'passive' camera-eye and 'objectivity': '(...) he (the narrator) need not retire behind his work, so long as his point of view is adequately established and coherently maintained. It is more a matter of consistency than this or that degree of 'impersonality' ' (p 1181).
- (56) Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction, p 108.
- (57) In fact, this phrase is used to describe Nathalie Sarraute's technique, but is equally applicable to the narrative effect produced by Robbe-Grillet (M. Cranaki and Y. Belaval, Nathalie Sarraute (Paris, 1965), p 93).
- (58) Particularly illuminating on the effects of 'free indirect discourse' is McHale's review of narrative 'voices' (B. McHale, 'Free Indirect Discourse: a Survey of Recent Accounts', P.T.L. Journal for Descriptive Poetics and the Theory of Literature, 3 (1978), pp 249-287). See also Ann Jefferson's chapter, 'Free indirect speech as language on the loose: Vous les entendez?', in Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction, pp 143-153.
- (59) R. Pascal, The Dual Voice (Manchester, 1977), p 79.
- (60) Nathalie Sarraute, L'Ere du soupçon (Paris, 1956), pp 8-9.
- (61) Nathalie Sarraute, L'Ere du soupçon, p 8.
- (62) Valerie Minogue, 'Nathalie Sarraute's Le Planétarium: the Narrator Narrated', Forum for Modern Language Studies, 9 (3) (1973), pp 217-234 (p 223). Minogue draws together Sarraute's and Robbe-Grillet's narrative techniques in a later article, in which is highlighted the dependence upon a distorting viewpoint for the fulfilment of creativity - in contrast to the realist efforts to represent 'objectively', as in the device of omniscience in the narrative. Furthermore, the omniscient narrator, in analysing the objects and events of his perception, obstructs the reader's immediate experience of them (Valerie Minogue, 'Distortion and Creativity in The Subjective Viewpoint', Forum for Modern Language Studies, 12 (1) (1976),

pp 37-49.

- (63) Nathalie Sarraute, L'Ere du soupçon, p 8.
- (64) Dennis Porter, 'Sartre, Robbe-Grillet, and the Psychotic Hero', Modern Fiction Studies, 16 (1) (Spring, 1970), pp 13-25 (p 23).
- (65) Robbe-Grillet's description of this cinematographic device - '(...) le cinéma ne connaît qu'un seul mode grammatical: le présent de l'indicatif' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 130) - is an echo of that explained by Jean Bloch-Michel: 'Le cinéma a donc créé une nouvelle sorte de récit qui a notamment ceci de particulier, que sa syntaxe, pour la force des choses, ne comporte qu'un mode et qu'un temps: l'indicatif présent' (Jean Bloch-Michel, Le Présent de l'indicatif: essai sur le 'nouveau roman' (Paris, 1963), p 97).
- (66) John Cruickshank, The Novelist as Philosopher: Studies in French Fiction (London, 1962), p 251.
- (67) John Cruickshank, The Novelist as Philosopher, p 203.
- (68) It should be noted that Robbe-Grillet's comment quoted here relates to La Jalousie, and not a theoretical model.
- (69) Mary-Jane Gerhart, 'The Purpose of Meaninglessness in Robbe-Grillet', p 95.
- (70) Jacqueline Piatier, 'Le "Nouveau Roman" ', Tendances, 48 (August, 1967), pp 385-408 (p 395). Piatier goes on to describe 'l'oeil (...) privilégié in the nouveau roman, stressing its pre-occupation with the imagination rather than with external reality: '(...) il (l'oeil) s'absorbe dans la contemplation du monde, dans sa récréation par l'imagination et le souvenir' (p 395).
- (71) Pierre-Henri Simon, Diagnostic des lettres contemporaries (Bruxelles, 1966), pp 302-308.
- (72) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale'. Barthes describes the technique of attributing equal weight or narrative 'light' to all events and objects; as a result, no dominant significance arises from the text.
- (73) Bruce Morrissette, Alain Robbe-Grillet (Columbia, New Jersey, 1965), p 21.
- (74) Jean Alter, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet and the "Cinematographic Style" ', Modern Languages Journal, 48 (6) (October, 1964), pp 363-366 (p 366). Alter applies the 'cinematographic style' to the film L'Année dernière à Marienbad (1961) and the novels Les Gommès, Le Voyeur, and Dans le labyrinthe. He concludes by equating Robbe-Grillet's

principle of description with that of the cinematographer, since both shift the narrative 'eye' from an internal to an external position instantaneously, without warning.

- (75) Textual 'signalling' is my own term. It refers to the operation whereby the narrator interrupts the flow of his narrative to inform the reader of a particular position in the text.
- (76) N. Friedman, 'Point of View in Fiction: the Development of a Critical Concept', p 1174.
- (77) Roland Barthes, S/Z (Paris, 1970), p 14
- (78) Gérard Genette: 'Le critère décisif n'est pas tant de possibilité matérielle ou même de vraisemblance psychologique, que de cohérence textuelle et de tonalité narrative' (Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris, 1972), p 222).
- (79) See Frederick Crews, 'Anaesthetic Criticism', Psychoanalysis and Literary Process (Cambridge), Mass., 1970), p 20.
- (80) Maurice Nadeau, 'Nouvelles formes pour le roman', Critique, 123-124 (August - September, 1957), p 710.
- (81) R.-M. Albèrès, Le Roman d'aujourd'hui, 1960-1970, p 227.

#### Sub-section two

- (82) Peter Brooks, 'A la carte', Partisan Review, 34 (1) (Winter, 1967), pp 128-131 (p 128).
- (83) (No author given) 'The Philosophy of the New Novel', Times Literary Supplement, 3140 (May 4, 1962), pp 296-297.
- (84) Hazel Barnes, 'The Ins and Outs of Alain Robbe-Grillet', Chicago Review, 15 (3) (1962), pp 21-43.
- (85) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 19.
- (86) Robbe-Grillet explains Roussel's device in terms close to his own déception: 'L'opacité ne cache plus rien. On a l'impression d'avoir trouvé un tiroir fermé, puis une clef; et cette clef ouvre le tiroir de façon impeccable ... et le tiroir est vide' (Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 73).
- (87) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 248.
- (88) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature objective' p 583; Essais Critiques, p. 32

- (89) Renato Barilli, 'De Sartre à Robbe-Grillet', Revue des Lettres Modernes, 94-95 (1964), pp 105-128.
- (90) Ben Stoltzfus, Alain Robbe-Grillet and the New French Novel, p 33.
- (91) This is not to suggest that 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' expounds an existentialist doctrine in any strict sense of the term. However, it presents undoubtedly the most serious and consistently argued principles of Robbe-Grillet on human existence in an active sense (rather than the abstract nature of existence or of the universe). Here is set out a theory of how the individual's consciousness of his freedom can generate and fulfil his creativity. Yet it is not a freedom without anguish, either, for 'L'homme regarde le monde, et le monde ne lui rend pas son regard' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 53). However loose is the connection between Robbe-Grillet's 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie' and the philosophical issue of existential, it has to be said that this essay represents a much more sober and thoughtful reflection on human existence and the relationship between the individual and the world than the novels Stoltzfus uses to support his theory (see note no.(90)).
- (92) Béla Kopeczi, 'Can the Sick Animal be Cured?', New Hungarian Quarterly, 22 (1966), pp 91-95 (p 93).
- (93) John Sturrock, The French New Novel: Claude Simon, Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet, pp 28-29.
- (94) Ruby Cohn, 'A Review of Ben Stoltzfus' Alain Robbe-Grillet and The New French Novel, in French Review, 38 (1964-1965), pp 712-714 (p 712).
- (95) Neil Oxenhandler, 'Towards a New Aesthetic', Contemporary Literature, 11 (2) (Spring, 1970), pp 169-191.
- (96) Mary-Jane Gerhart, 'The Purpose of Meaninglessness in Robbe-Grillet', pp 79-97.
- (97) George Szanto, Narrative Consciousness: Structures and Perception in the Fiction of Kafka, Beckett, and Robbe-Grillet (Austin, Texas, 1972); p.132.
- (98) The term ' "traditional" criticism' is mine. It refers to the 'jugements systématiques' of literature (as set out in 'Sur quelques notions périmées'), which apply the 'critères "naturels" 'of 'le bon sens', 'le coeur' to a text in order to value it (Pour un nouveau roman, p 25). The ' "vrai" romancier' must create an intelligible, linear narrative reflecting the order of the real world in which man reigns: this is achieved through character-portrayal, the fulfilment of an histoire, and the exploitation of the form as a vehicle for the content (p 26).

- (99) Bruce Morrissette discusses Robbe-Grillet's genuine 'humanism' (his concern for human affairs) in 'Un nouvel art du roman: les écrits théoriques', but fails to reconcile the consistent condemnation of 'humanist' perception in Pour un nouveau roman with Robbe-Grillet's pre-occupation with the 'subjective' viewpoint (Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, pp 19-36 (p 30)).
- 100) Jean Alter points out the confusion over the two forms of 'humanism' in his article on Morrissette's study, and substantiates the point made above (note no.(99)) (Jean Alter, 'A Review of Bruce Morrissette's Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet', French Review, 37 (February, 1964), pp 501-503). This is also exposed in a later review of Morrissette's work, when Michael Spencer claims that Morrissette 'has done his best to humanize the writer's world', but ultimately 'fails to convince that it is more worthwhile than Balzac's' (Michael Spencer, 'A Review of Bruce Morrissette's Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet', Modern Language Review, 60 (1965), pp 286-287 (p 287)).
- 101) Jean Alter proceeds to define Robbe-Grillet's real 'humanism' as a form of pessimism (Jean Alter, 'L'Humanisme d'Alain Robbe-Grillet', Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly, 12 (4) (October, 1965), pp 209-217 (p 216)).
- 102) Jean Alter, La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1966), p 1.
- 103) Bruce Morrissette, 'A Review of Jean Alter's La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet', French Review, 40 (4) (February, 1967), pp 579-580 (p 579).
- 104) Roy Jay Nelson, 'Vers une esthétique de l'absurde', French Review, 37 (4) (February, 1964), pp 406-407.
- 105) Roseline Intrater, 'The Attrition of the Self in some Contemporary Novels', Dissertation Abstracts, 31 (January, 1971), 3550-3551A.
- 106) Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, p 208.
- 107) Didier Anzieu, 'Le Discours de l'obsessionnel dans les romans de Robbe-Grillet', Temps Modernes, 21 (223) (October, 1965), pp 608-637 (p 625).
- 108) Greenberg relates the theory of Pour un nouveau roman vaguely to the 'disintegration' of 'humanist' concepts in Beckett and Céline, but chooses to use Robbe-Grillet's theoretical pronouncements as a spring-board for a study of the novels, rather than concentrate on how, exactly, the references to Beckett and Céline in Pour un nouveau roman are 'anti-humanist' and 'absurd', etc. (Alvin D Greenberg, 'The Novel of Disintegration: a Study of a World View in Contemporary Fiction', Dissertation Abstracts, 25 (9) (March, 1965), 5278.

Disintegration: a Study of a World View in Contemporary Fiction',  
Dissertation Abstracts, 25 (9) (March, 1965), 5278.

- 109) Dickstein argues that Robbe-Grillet is torn between the 'objective' presentation of phenomena and the highly 'subjective' proliferation of meaning in the novel (Morris Dickstein, 'Fiction Hot and Kool: Dilemma of an Experimental Writer', Tri-Quarterly, (1975), 33-4, pp 257-258.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

### Sub-section one

- (1) The 'querelle' comes to a head in the opposition between Barthes' 'chosiste' (or 'objectivist') interpretation and Morrisette's 'humaniste' (or 'subjectivist') perspective, as argued in Bruce Morrisette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1963).
- (2) Valerie Minogue, 'The Workings of Fiction in Les Gommés', Modern Language Review, 62 (3) (July, 1967), pp 430-441 (p 430).
- (3) Bernard Pingaud, 'L'Oeuvre et l'analyste', Temps Modernes, 21 (233) (October, 1965), pp 638-646 (p 639).
- (4) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman (Paris, 1971), p 23.
- (5) Roland Barthes, 'La Littérature, aujourd'hui', Essais critiques, p 160.
- (6) Roland Barthes, 'La Littérature, aujourd'hui', Essais critiques, p 160.
- (7) 'Du réalisme à la réalité' makes no explicit distinction between vérisme ('ce petit détail qui "fait vrai" (...)') and vraisemblance, the realist 'signification' or 'truth' continued by relating the description to the reader's preconception of reality (Pour un nouveau roman, p 140).
- (8) According to Barthes, 'La littérature c'est (...) la conscience même de l'irréel du langage' and, therefore, creative writing should learn to exploit its 'irréalité' (Roland Barthes, Essais critiques, p 164).
- (9) Emily Zants describes 'representational' art as 'solidifying' or 'objectifying' because of its prohibition of creative invention; the realist 'reproduction' precludes productivity itself (Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France (Colorado, 1968), pp 3-6).
- (10) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, pp 452-453.
- (11) The 'littérature moralisatrice' is regarded, by Robbe-Grillet, as a consciously didactic literature with a moral 'message', while 'littérature morale' defers such a 'message', although it still deals with issues of a moral nature. Both are considered equally guilty, by Robbe-Grillet in 'Sur quelques notions périmées', of rendering

art subservient to the expression of an external phenomenon: '(...) dès qu'apparaît le souci de signifier quelque chose (quelque chose d'extérieur à l'art) la littérature commence à reculer, à disparaître' (Pour un nouveau roman, pp 38-39).

- (12) Jacques Leenhardt, 'Robbe-Grillet: une écriture non mimétique', Obliques, 16-17 (1978), pp 147-149, p 147.
- (13) Jacques Leenhardt, 'Robbe-Grillet: une écriture non mimétique', p 147.
- (14) Jacques Leenhardt, 'Robbe-Grillet: une écriture non mimétique', p 147. Leenhardt sees the nouveau roman as the refusal to reproduce 'la figuration du monde' (p 147).
- (15) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse théorie: 1 : roman/cinéma at the Centre Culturel International de Cérisy-la-Salle, edited by Jean Ricardou (Paris, 1976), p 36.
- (16) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse théorie: 1 : roman/cinéma, p 35.
- (17) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, p 32.
- (18) John Sturrock, The French New Novel, p 171. Sturrock's discussion of the differences between 'expressive' (i.e. 'creative') art and 'representational' art refers the reader to E.H. Gombrich's Art and Illusion: a Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation (London), 1960), pp 304-329, in which Gombrich analyses the evolution of the two art-forms 'From Representation to Expression'.

#### Sub-section two

- (19) Henry Bars, 'Des Modes littéraires et de la modernité', Revue Générale Belge 8 (August, 1966), pp 1-7 (p 5).
- (20) Creative art must be 'unnatural' in the sense that 'natural' denotes an imitation of the real. See Ann Jefferson's discussion of the narrative in the nouveau roman as 'unnatural' (Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction, pp 9-58. Roland Barthes also highlights the need explicitly to dramatise the 'unrealistic' nature of the narrative (Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de la littérature (Paris, 1953), p 9. Finally, Nathalie Sarraute reflects on the ironic fact that, in representing reality, the 'traditional' récit attributes to human lives and behaviour an order and



coherence which is itself 'unnatural' (Nathalie Sarraute, L'Ere du soupçon, p 55). It is essential that we restrict the meaning of 'unnatural' here in Chapter Three to meaning 'fictional'.

- (21) Norma Goodrich underlines the obligation of the contemporary 'poet' (writer) to reveal himself at work, lest the myth of 'natural' literature be perpetuated (Norma Goodrich, Giono, Master of Fictional Modes (London, 1973), p 189.
- (22) M. St-Edouard, L'Esthétique d'Alain Robbe-Grillet', Revue de l'Université de Laval, 20 (9) (May, 1966), pp 845-852 (p.845).
- (23) This echoes Butor's 'roman comme recherche' insofar as it expounds an experimental, self-conscious novel and not an 'expressive' (representational) form (Michel Butor, Répertoire III (Paris, 1968), pp 7-11).
- (24) Alain Robbe-Grillet, "La Conscience Malade de Zeno' (1954), Pour un nouveau roman, pp 77-81.
- (25) '(...) plus rien n'est naturel. (...) Chacune de nos actions se réfléchit sur elle-même et se charge de questions. Sous notre regard, le simple geste que nous faisons pour étendre la main devient bizarre (...)' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 81).
- (26) Michel Foucault, La Théorie de l'ensemble (Paris, 1968), p 11.
- (27) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Un Roman qui s'invente lui-même' (1954), Pour un nouveau roman, pp 108-112.
- (28) Pierre de Boisdeffre, La Cafetière est sur la table: contre le nouveau roman (Paris, 1967), p 51.
- (29) Pierre de Boisdeffre, Où va le roman? (Paris, 1972), p 251.
- (30) Strauss points out how no explicit, detailed phenomenon of reflection is to be found in Pour un nouveau roman (Walter A. Strauss, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet: Pour un nouveau roman, Modern Language Journal, 50 (8) (December, 1966), pp 575-576.
- (31) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, pp 450-451.
- (32) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, pp 9-32.
- (33) Bernard Pingaud, 'L'Ecole du refus', Esprit, 26 (263-264) (July-August, 1958), pp 55-59 (p56).
- (34) This view is clearly upheld in Pierre Astier, La Crise du roman français et le nouveau réalisme: essai de synthèse sur les nouveaux romans, where Astier describes the nouveau roman as one of a

total rejection of traditional subject-matter and techniques ('Le Refus du roman traditionnel: matière et techniques', pp 93-114) and of 'traditional' realism ('Le Refus de l'ancien réalisme: principes et concepts', pp 115-134). Astier regards Robbe-Grillet's theory as proposing a complete refusal of all that constitutes the 'traditional' novel and so ignores the implications of the 'double movement' whereby 'traditional' material is incorporated in the text before being destroyed.

- (35) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale', Essais critiques (Paris, 1964), p 69.
- (36) Robbe-Grillet admits to the inevitability of meaning and thus dismisses the 'chimère' of the 'impersonalité totale du regard' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 18), when he points out the simultaneously creative and representational quality of his 'generated' significance in the text: '(...) le sens produit, dès qu'on l'exprime, c'est de nouveau du sens' (Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman et cinéma, p 76).
- (37) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature littérale', Essais critiques, p 69.
- (38) George P. Elliott, 'The Person of the Maker', in Experience in the Novel, edited by Roy Harvey Pearce, Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York, 1968), pp 1-19 (p 17).
- (39) Olga Bernal, Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, p 76.
- (40) Roland Barthes, 'Qu'est-ce que la critique?', Essais critiques, pp 252-257 (p 256).
- (41) Jean Miesch points out this 'gommage' operation in Les Gommages (Jean Miesch, Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1965), p 14).
- (42) Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, p 32.
- (43) Michel Mansuy, Etudes sur l'imagination de la vie: J. Supervielle, H. Bosco, A. Robbe-Grillet, H. Michaux, J. Rostand, P. Teilhard de Chardin (Paris, 1970), p 98. Mansuy relates the 'double movement' of creation-destruction to the conflict within the individual between his imaginative powers and his mundane existence. This clearly relates to Robbe-Grillet's 'mouvement paradoxal' (Pour un nouveau roman, p 130).
- (44) Paul Connerton, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet: A Question of Self-Deception?', p 347. Forum for Modern Languages Studies, 4 (4) (October, 1968), pp. 347-358.
- (45) Henri Pevel, 'Résonances mallarméennes du "nouveau roman"', Médiations 7 (Spring, 1964), pp 95-113 (p 111).

- (46) Jean-Edern Hallier, 'D'un art sans passé' Tel Quel, 6 (Summer, 1961), pp 43-47 (pp 43-44).
- (47) René Girard, 'Pride and Passion in the Contemporary Novel', Yale French Studies 24 (1959) pp 3-10 (p 10).
- (48) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui I, edited by Jean Ricardou and Françoise van Rossum-Guydon (Paris, 1972), p 249.
- (49) See Henri Rouse, 'Littérature et silence', pp 41-48.
- (50) Gérard Genette, in discussing Dans le labyrinthe, in 'Vertige fixé', Figures, essais, pp 69-90 (p 90).
- (51) Anne Fabre-Luce-Karplus, 'L'Imaginaire dans le "nouveau roman", ou l'Abolition des privilèges', Revue des Sciences Humaines 119 (July-September, 1965), pp 441-446 (p 442). Karplus identifies the contradiction in Pour un nouveau roman as being the discrepancy between 'Une voie pour le roman futur' and 'Nature, humanisme, tragédie'.
- (52) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/ cinéma, pp 34-35.
- (53) Jean Ricardou in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/ cinéma, p 20.
- (54) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/ cinéma, p 35.
- (55) Jean Ricardou in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/ cinéma, pp 16-17.
- (56) Jean Ricardou in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman et cinéma, p 17.
- (57) Jean Ricardou, Problèmes du nouveau roman (Paris, 1967), p 91.
- (58) Genette draws a parallel between the narrative of Robbe-Grillet and the Bayeux Tapestry where, in both, there is no hierarchy at work: all events and details are narrated in exactly the same manner, devoid of particular relative significance (Gérard Genette, Figures, essais, pp 76-77).
- (59) Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation, and Other Essays, pp 3-15.
- (60) Emily Zants, The Aesthetic of the New Novel in France, p 60.
- (61) Roland Barthes describes how the 'openness' of the text prohibits the dominance of a single, determinate, meaning ('Littérature littérale', Essais critiques, p 69).

- (62) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman et cinéma, p 47.
- (63) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman et cinéma, p 36.
- (64) Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/cinéma, p 48.
- (65) Bruce Morrisette, 'Games and Game Structures in Robbe-Grillet', Yale French Studies, 41 (1968), pp 159-167 (p 167).
- (66) Roland Barthes, 'Littérature et signification', Tel Quel, 14 (1963), pp 269-276 (pp 270-271).
- (67) See Jacques Leenhardt, Obliques 16-17, pp 147-149.
- (68) The terms 'décrivain' and 'descripteur' imply that the writer is engaged in a counter-activity similar to Ricardou's 'course contre le sens' (see note no.(57), above) (Georges Conchon, 'Lettres aux radicaux de la littérature non-figurative', Figaro Littéraire, 1248 (20-26 April, 1970), pp 14-15.
- (69) Emily Zants attributes this intention to Robbe-Grillet, following the novelist's lecture at Columbia University in December, 1964 (See Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, pp 13-14).
- (70) Michael Spencer 'Avatars du mythe chez Robbe-Grillet et Butor', Colloque Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/cinéma, pp 62-88 (p 73).
- (71) Jean Miesch, Robbe-Grillet, p 14.
- (72) Roland Barthes, 'La Littérature, aujourd'hui', Essais critiques, p 164.
- (73) Genette poses the questions in 'Vertige fixé': '(...) tout d'abord, faut-il chercher dans son œuvre une intention "réaliste", c'est-à-dire une volonté de décrire la réalité telle qu'elle est ou telle qu'elle apparaît, ou un propos "fantastique", c'est-à-dire extérieur à cette réalité, et relevant d'une fiction arbitraire?' (Figures, essais, pp. 69-90; p. 72),
- (74) Bernard Pingaud, 'L'Oeuvre analyste', Temps Modernes, 21 (233) (October, 1965), pp 638-646 (p 639).

## NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

### Sub-section one

- (1) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 27.
- (2) David Lodge, Three Modes of Writing - Metaphor, Metonymy and the Topology of Modern Literature (London, 1977), p 220.
- (3) T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in Selected Essays (London, 1966), p 14.
- (4) Michel Butor, Répertoire III, p 7.
- (5) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 122.
- (6) W.J. Bate, The Burden of the Past and the English Poet (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).
- (7) Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence; a Theory of Poetry (New York, 1973), p 57.
- (8) E.P. Dutton, Pricksongs and Descants (London, 1969), pp 76-79.
- (9) Paul Valéry in Oeuvres I, Edited by Jean Hytier (Paris: Pléiade, 1960), p 493.
- (10) Paul Valéry in Oeuvres II (Paris, 1960), p 677.
- (11) Paul Valéry in Jean Pommier's, Paul Valéry et la création littéraire, Editions de l'Encyclopédie Française (Paris, 1946), p 37.
- (12) André Gide in Charles du Bos, Dialogue avec André Gide (Paris, 1929), p 69.
- (13) André Malraux, Les Voix du silence (Paris, 1951), p 310.
- (14) André Malraux, Les Voix du silence, p 309.
- (15) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, pp 27-28.
- (16) Odette de Mourgues in Actes du IVE Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, edited by François Jost (The Hague, 1966), p 1259.
- (17) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 255.
- (18) Haskell M. Block, 'The Myth of the Artist', in Literary Criticism and Myth, edited by J.P. Strelka (London, 1980), p 21.

- (19) D'Arco Silvio Avalle, in Panorama Sémiotique: Actes du Premier Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique, edited by Seymour Chatman et al (The Hague, 1979), p 84.
- (20) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 30.
- (21) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp 29-30.
- (22) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 116.
- (23) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 139.
- (24) Tzvetan Todorov, quoted in Christopher Norris, Deconstruction: Theory and Practice (London, 1982), p 132.
- (25) Alistair Fowler, 'The Life and Death of Literary Forms', New Literary History, 2 (2) (Winter, 1972), pp 149-215 (p 199).
- (26) Robert Young, Untying the Text, p 2.
- (27) Victor Erlich, Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine (New Haven, Conn., 1965), p 190.
- (28) Krystyna Pomorska, Russian Formalist Theory and its Poetic Ambiance (The Hague, 1968), p 36.
- (29) Victor Erlich, Russian Formalism, p 190.
- (30) Boris Eikhenbaum, 'The Theory of the Formal Method', in Russian Formalist Criticism, edited by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reiss (Nebraska, 1965), pp 127-143 (p 129). Also in 'La Théorie de la "méthode formelle"', in Tzvetan Todorov, Théorie de la littérature, edited and translated by Tzvetan Todorov (Paris, 1965), pp 31-75.
- (31) Roman Jakobson in Victor Erlich, Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine (New Haven, 1955), p 19.
- (32) Ann Jefferson in Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction edited by Ann Jefferson and David Robey (London, 1982), p 30.
- (33) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp 113-30. Culler discusses in detail the relationship between 'literary competence' and the participation of the reader in 'fulfilling' the reconstructions initiated by the narrator.
- (34) André Malraux, Les Voix du silence, p 310.
- (35) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: the Metafictional Paradox (Ontario, 1980), p 88.

- (36) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 88: Hutcheon defines poiesis as fiction which is 'autonomous and intransitive' as opposed to 'referential'.
- (37) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'L'Écrivain et sa langue', in Situations IX (Paris, 1972), pp 40-82.
- (38) Julia Kristeva, Sémiotikè Recherches pour une sémanalyse (Paris, 1969), p 146.
- (39) Campbell Tatham, 'Mythotherapy and Postmodern Fictions: Magic is Afoot', in Performance in Postmodern Culture, edited by Michael Benamon and Charles Carmello (Wisconsin, 1977), pp 137-157 (p 146).
- (40) Claudio Abastado, 'Situation de la parodie', Cahiers du XXe Siècle, 6 (1976), pp 9-37 (p 33).
- (41) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 101: Hutcheon refers to the term as her own neologism, which, she says, is equivalent to 'ironic recoding'.
- (42) Leo Steinberg, 'The Glorious Company', in Art about Art, edited by Jean Lipman and Richard Marshall (New York, 1978), p 21.
- (43) Margaret Rose, Parody/Metafiction (London, 1979), p 59.
- (44) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader: Explanations in the Semiotics of Texts (Bloomington, 1979), p 19.
- (45) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p 21.
- (46) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p33.
- (47) Claude Bremond, 'L'Étude structurale du récit depuis V. Propp', in Panorama Sémiotique: Actes du Premier Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique, edited by Seymour Chatman, Umberto Eco, Jean-Marie Klinkenberg (The Hague, 1979), pp 57-94 (p 92).
- (48) Gilles Deleuze, Différence et répétition (Paris, 1968).
- (49) John Sturrock, 'The Deconstruction Industry', Romance Studies, 5 (Winter, 1984-1985), pp 4-29 (p 28).
- (50) José Ortega y Gasset, The Dehumanization of Art: p 58.
- (51) John Sturrock, 'The Deconstruction Industry', p 28.
- (52) Jean Ricardou, 'Pour une lecture rétrospective', Revue des Sciences Humaines, 177 (January-March, 1980), p 57.
- (53) Haskell M. Block, 'The Conception of Imitation in Modern Criticism' /

- 'Terms et notions littéraires' in Actes du IVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, edited by François Jost, p 718.
- (54) D'Arco Silvio Avalle in Panorama Sémiotique, edited by Seymour Chatman, et al, p 86.
- (55) A. Tanner, Adultery in the Novel (New York, 1979).
- (56) Vincent B. Leitch, Deconstructive Criticism: an Advanced Introduction (London, 1983), p 59.
- (57) Geneviève Idt, 'L'Autoparodie dans Les Mots de Sartre', in Cahiers du XXe Siècle, edited and compiled by Claude Leroy, published by the Société d'Etude du Vingtième Siècle (Paris, 1976), pp 53-108 (p 68).
- (58) Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Smith (New York, 1977), p 115.
- (59) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Qu'est-ce que la littérature?', Situations II (Paris, 1947), pp 55-330 (p 58).
- (60) W.J. Bate, The Burden of the Past, p 4.
- (61) Frederic Jameson, The Prison-House of Language: a Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (Princeton, 1977), p 107.
- (62) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 111. Other particularly revealing studies in the function of parody of establishing 'a dialogue with the past' are Julia Kristeva's article, 'Postmodernism?', in Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism, edited by Harry R. Garvin (Lewisburg, Pa., 1980), pp 136-141, and Matei Calinescu's article, 'Ways of Looking at Fiction', pp 155-170.
- (63) Veronica Forrest-Thomson, Poetic Artifice: a Theory of Twentieth-Century Poetry (New York, 1978), p 81.
- (64) G.D. Kiremidjian, 'The Aesthetics of Parody', Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 28 (1969), pp 231-242 (p 242).
- (65) Herman Meyer, The Poetics of Quotation in the European Novel, translated by Theodore and Yelta Ziolkowski (Princeton, New Jersey, 1968), p 6.
- (66) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 191.
- (67) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in Robbe-Grillet: Analyse, théorie: 1 : roman/cinéma, p 26.



- (68) Boris M. Ejxenbaum (or Eichenbaum), 'Literary Environment', in Readings in Russian Poetics, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pömorska (Michigan, 1978), pp 56-65 (p 61).
- (69) Earl Rovit, 'The Novel as Parody: John Barth', Critique, 6 (2) (1963), pp 77-85.
- (70) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 5.
- (71) Harry Levin, 'A Review of Alistair Fowler's "Kinds of Literature: an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes" ', Comparative Literature Studies, 5 (3) (September, 1978), pp 258-259 (p 258).
- (72) Harry Levin, 'A Review of Alistair Fowler's "Kinds of Literature: an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes" ', p 258.
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- (77) Samuel Coleridge, 'On Poesy or Art' in Biographica Literaria, vol II, edited by J.S. Lowcross (Oxford, 1907), p 56.
- (78) See Laurent Jenny, 'La Stratégie de la forme', Poétique, 27 (1976), pp 257-281 (p 262).
- (79) Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism (London, 1983), p 136.
- (80) Robert Scholes, Structuralism in Literature (New Haven, Conn., 1974), p 128.
- (81) See Lucien Dällenbach, 'De la reproduction à la production', in Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit Spéculaire: essai sur la mise-en-abyme, pp 101-174.
- (82) M. Bal, 'Notes on Narrative Embedding', Poetics Today, 2 (Winter, 1981), pp 41-59.
- (83) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 154.
- (84) Arthur Pollard, Satire (London, 1970), p 55.

- (85) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 206.
- (86) Ziva Ben-Porat, 'The Poetics of Literary Allusion', PTL, 1 (1976), pp 105-128 (p 107).
- (87) Anthony Pugh, 'Teaching Nouveaux Romans, Paragraph, 1 (I) (March, 1983), pp 29-43 (p 38).
- (88) Claude Lévi-Strauss, La Pensée sauvage (Paris, 1962), p 26. Moreover, 'bricolage, in Lévi-Strauss's terms, is critical - another similarity with parodic embedding: 'Il y a donc une critique du langage dans la forme du bricolage et on a même pu dire que le bricolage était le langage critique lui-même' (Jacques Derrida, on Lévi-Strauss, in L'Écriture et la différence (Paris, 1967), p 418.
- (89) Stephen Heath, The Nouveau Roman: a Study in the Practice of Writing, p 134.
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- (91) Claude Abtado, 'Situation de la parodie', p 20.
- (92) Bruce Morrissette, Intertextual Assemblage in Robbe-Grillet, from 'Topology' to 'The Golden Triangle' (Fredericton, 1979).
- (93) For a full discussion of narrative 'encoding', see Michael Riffaterre, 'Sémiotique intertextuelle: l'interprétant', Rhétoriques, sémiotiques, Revue d'esthétique (Paris, 1979), pp 122-138; Michael Riffaterre, 'Syllepsis', Critical Inquiry, 6 (1980), pp 625-638; Michael Riffaterre, 'La Trace de l'intertexte', Pensee, 215 (1980), pp 4-18.
- (94) Michael Riffaterre, 'L'Intertexte inconnu', Littérature, 41 (1981), pp 4-7 (p 4). Also of interest here is Riffaterre's paper on the particular 'signalling' techniques employed by the parodist to high-light intertextual material (Michael Riffaterre, 'La Parodie à la lumière de la théorie de l'intertextualité', paper to Colloquium on the History and Theory of Parody, Queen's University (10th October, 1981).
- (95) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 84.
- (96) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, pp 84-99. Hutcheon's discussion of 'Encoding and decoding' analyses the 'signalling' devices in literature.
- (97) E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven, Conn., 1967) examines the course towards 'intentional fallacy' and the confusion of the author and narrator personas.

- (98) W.K. Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon (Lexington, Kentucky, 1967), p 88.
- (99) Sandra Golopentia-Eretescu, 'Grammaire de la parodie', Cahiers de Linguistique Théorique et Appliquée, 6 (1969), pp 167-181 (p 171).
- 100) Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford, 1983).
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- 102) Tzvetan Todorov, 'La Lecture comme construction', Poétique 25 (1975) pp 419-426 (p 425).
- 103) Ulrich Weisstein, 'Parody, Travesty, and Burlesque: Imitations with a Vengeance', in Actes du IVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, vol 2, edited by François Jost, pp 802-811 (p 811).
- 104) Collins English Dictionary (London, 1980).
- 105) Ulrich Weisstein, 'Parody, Travesty, and Burlesque: Imitations with a Vengeance', p 84.
- 106) George Kitchin, A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English (London, 1931), p xi.
- 107) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 77.
- 108) Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, translated R.W. Rotsel (Michigan, 1973), p 153. Bakhtin relates Dostoevsky's theory of 'inter-textual dialogism' to 'inter-parody', since it offsets two parodied (or ironically (mis-)represented) narratives against each other in order to illuminate the structural composition of each (p 153). See Chapters Eight and Nine, sub-section two, on alternance.
- 109) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 32.
- 110) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 32.
- 111) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 32.
- 112) Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes (Paris, 1982), p 34.
- 113) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 60.
- 114) Heather Dubrow, Theory of Literature, 3rd edition (New York, 1962), p 34.

- 115) Thomas M Greene, The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry (New Haven, Conn., 1982), p 42.
- 116) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 28.
- 117) Peter Hutchinson, Games Authors Play (London, 1983). Hutchinson describes 'prefiguration', thus: 'The main feature of the prefigurative device (...) is twofold: first, to arouse the reader's expectation of a "parallel"; this will excite speculation on which aspects of the model will be adopted and what new form they will take. And second, to provide (...) a commentary. The success of the prefiguration depends partly on the reader's recognising the parallel, partly on his acquaintance with the model in question, and partly on its suitability to the present material' (pp 101-102).
- 118) J.G. Riewald, 'Parody as Criticism', Neophilologus, 50 (1966), pp 125-148.
- 119) Tuvia Shlonsky, 'Literary Parody: Remarks on its Method and Function', in Actes du IVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, edited by François Jost, vol 2, pp 797-801 (p 800).
- 120) Marlies K. Danziger and Wendall Stacey Johnson, The Critical Reader: Analyzing and Judging Literature (New York, 1978), p 82.
- 121) Robert Young, Untying the Text, p 5.
- 122) Herman Meyer, The Poetics of Quotation in the European Novel, p 106.
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- 124) D.H. Stevenson, 'The Critical Principles and Devices of Max Beerbohm' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1955), p 101.
- 125) Alasdair Gray, Index of Plagiarism (New York, 1982), p 485.
- 126) Claude Abastado, 'Situation de la parodie', pp 17-18.
- 127) Dwight MacDonald, Parodies: an Anthology from Chaucer to Beerbohm and After (London, 1961), pp xiii-xiv.
- 128) Charles Batteux, Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe (Paris, 1947), p 15.
- 129) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous' Paragraph 3 (1983) pp 9-21 (p 13).
- 130) Paul Bové, 'A "New Literary History" of Modern Poetry: History and Deconstruction in the Works of Walt Whitman, Stevens, and Olson' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, 1975),

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- 131) Frederic Jameson, The Prison-House of Language, pp 3-9, especially.
- 132) Victor Sklovskij, 'The Connection between Devices of Synzhnet Construction and General Stylistic Devices', in Russian Formalism: 20th Century Studies, edited by Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlit (Edinburgh, 1973), pp 48-72.
- 133) Michel Butor, Répertoire III (Paris, 1968), p 7.
- 134) Louis Althusser, Jacques Rancière and Pierre Macherey, Lire le Capital 1 (Paris, 1967), pp 143-144.
- 135) Tzvetan Todorov, 'Bakhtine et l'altérité', Poétique, 40 (1979), pp 502-513 (p 512).
- 136) Charles Grivel, Idée du texte (Paris, 1971), p 163.

#### Sub-section three

- 137) Philippe Dulac, 'Un Régicide et Souvenirs d'un triangle d'or', Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française (July, 1979) pp 2-3.
- 138) Emma Kafalenos, 'Robbe-Grillet's Un Régicide: an Extraordinary First Novel', International Fiction Review, 6 (1) (Winter, 1979), pp 49-54. Kafalenos states that 'Un Régicide may prove to be the necessary intermediate step for tracing Kafka's writing as a source of contradictory plots of later novels of Robbe-Grillet and others' (p 53). See also Pierre Mazars, 'Robbe-Grillet: le nouveau roman remonte à Kafka', Figaro Littéraire, 856 (September 15, 1962), p 21. The Paris literary monthly Critique announced in its April 1960 issue that a future number would contain an article by Robbe-Grillet, entitled 'Kafka réaliste'. Unfortunately, however, the essay never appeared!
- 139) Jean Ricardou, 'Par delà le réel et l'irréel' (Simple note sur un fragment d'Un Régicide, Médiations, 5 (Summer, 1962), pp 17-25. Ricardou relates the narrative adventures of Un Régicide to the picaresque tradition of J.L. Borges. See also Jean Ricardou, 'Réalités variables, variantes réelles', in Jean Ricardou in Problèmes du nouveau roman (Paris, 1967), pp 23-43.
- 140) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 2 : cinéma/roman, p 432.
- 141) Christopher Butler, 'After the Wake', Figaro Littéraire (September 15, 1962), p 9.

- 142) Edmund J. Smyth, 'Narrative Embedding', Romance Studies 4 (1981), pp 8-14. Smyth relates Boris's function in Un Régicide to that of Lorenzaccio, Meursault, Kafka's K.
- 143) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', Le Monde (September 22, 1978), pp 1-7 (p 5).
- 144) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous', Paragraph, 3 (1983), pp 9-21 (p 9).
- 145) A.J. Greimas, 'La Question de sens dans l'oeuvre d'Alain Robbe-Grillet', in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie; 2 : cinéma/roman, p 8.
- 146) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous', p 9.
- 147) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986).
- 148) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Correspondence (September, 1985). Robbe-Grillet writes of Un Régicide, 'c'est un texte très jeune, qui manque un peu de fermeté'. See note no.(164), below.
- 149) *Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody (New York and London, 1985), p.88*
- 150) Laurent Jenny, 'Le Stratégie de la forme', p 281.
- 151) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p 32.
- 152) R.H. Brower and E. Miner, Japanese Court Poetry (Stanford, 1961), pp 14-15.
- 153) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p 32.
- 154) Tzvetan Todorov, Les Genres du discours (Paris, 1978), p 226.
- 155) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p 21.
- 156) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader, p 22.
- 157) J.G. Riewald, 'Parody as Criticism', pp 126-127.
- 158) Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), pp 7-17, especially.
- 159) Valerie Minogue, 'The Uses of Parody: Parody in Proust and Robbe-Grillet', Southern Review (1976), pp 53-65 (p 53).
- 160) J.G. Riewald, 'Parody as Criticism', p 132.
- (161) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', p 1.

- 162) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', p 1.
- 163) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Un entretien avec Alain Robbe-Grillet: Du bon usage de l'humour', with Alain Poirson, France Nouvelle, 1752 (June 9-15, 1979), pp 44-50 (p 46).
- 164) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Un entretien avec Alain Robbe-Grillet: Du bon usage de l'humour', with Alain Poirson, p 45.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

### Sub-section one

- (1) Récit is being used in the loose sense of Genette's definition as 'le signifiant, énoncé, discours ou texte narratif lui-même', histoire is, according to Genette, 'le signifié ou contenu narratif', that is, the actual events resulting from the subject of the récit (Gérard Genette, Figures III (Paris, 1972) pp 34 - 36, especially).
- (2) Valerie Minogue, 'The Uses of Parody: Parody in Proust and Robbe-Grillet'. Minogue is quick to point out, in this analysis of embedded narrative in Les Gommés, that they represent 'no parody in the strict sense of the word' (p 59).
- (3) Ziva Ben-Porat, 'The Poetics of Literary Allusion', PTL, (1976), pp 105-128 (p 107).
- (4) Tzvetan Todorov, 'Les Catégories du récit littéraire', in Tzvetan Todorov, L'Analyse structurale du récit (Paris, 1966), pp 131-155 (p 132).
- (5) Tzvetan Todorov, L'Analyse structurale du récit, p 131.
- (6) Roland Barthes, 'Introduction à l'analyse structurale du récit, in Tzvetan Todorov, L'Analyse structurale du récit, pp 10-34 (p 12).
- (7) Ziva Ben-Porat, 'The Poetics of Literary Allusion', p 107.
- (8) A. Bordas, La Littérature en France depuis 1945 (Paris, 1964) p 7.
- (9) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986).
- (10) John Fletcher, Alain Robbe-Grillet (London, 1983), p 13.
- (11) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient (Paris, 1984), p 46.
- (12) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 46.
- (13) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986).
- (14) It would be dangerous to consider Le Miroir qui revient as an autobiography in the strict sense. See Notes to the Introduction, note no.(54), above.
- (15) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Un Régicide (Paris, 1978), p 10. From now on until the end of Chapter Ten, the details of all extracts from Un Régicide will be given in brackets in the main text. (Please



note that up until this point only quotations from Pour un nouveau roman have been given thus.)

- (16) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 104.
- (17) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 133.
- (18) Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique de la raison dialectique (précédé de Question de methode), vol I, Théorie des ensembles pratiques (Paris, 1960), p 88.
- (19) Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique de la raison dialectique, p 89.
- (20) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), p 68.  
Roquentin's description of others echoes the same mixture of disgust and indifference as experienced by Boris: 'Dans la rue Tournebride, il ne faut pas être pressé: les familles marchent lentement' (p 68).
- (21) Albert Camus, L'Etranger (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p 40.
- (22) Robbe-Grillet points out that the similarity between Boris and Meursault and Roquentin is that they all experience a sense of distance and alienation from society: 'Comme Meursault, Roquentin et d'autres personnages des années 30 ou 40, il se trouve à la fois dans la société et coupé de ses significations idéologiques' (Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', p 2). See also Le Miroir qui revient, pp 163-167 for this connection with the 'célèbres parrains' (p 165).
- (23) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 167.
- (24) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 42.
- (25) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 221.
- (26) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 15.
- (27) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 34.
- (28) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 172.
- (29) Jean-Paul Sartre describes the relationship between seeing and acting: '(...) si la perception même est action, si, pour nous, montrer le monde c'est toujours le dévoiler dans les perspectives d'un changement possible; alors, dans cette époque de fatalisme nous avons à révéler au lecteur, en chaque cas correct, sa puissance de faire et de défaire, bref, d'agir' (Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Qu'est-ce que la littérature?')

Situations II (Paris, 1948), pp 55-330 (p 311).

- (30) The 'Autodidacte' represents 'humanism' in La Nausée. See pp 160-170 for a comparison between the 'Autodidacte's theory and Roquentin's description of the 'salauds'.
- (31) Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, p 29.
- (32) See L'Etranger, p 33.
- (33) Sartre did not, however, consider La Nausée a 'littérature déagée': See his interview with Jacques-Alain Miller in L'Express (March 3, 1960), p 14, where Sartre describes his novel's hero as 'profondément dans le monde' and not 'dégagé'. See also Rhiannon Goldthorpe, Sartre: Literature and Theory (Cambridge, 1984). Goldthorpe, in discussing 'Commitment and Writing', points out that a certain engagement is inevitable, since the writer himself is 'in Society (even if the reaction to that involvement takes the form of a superficial detachment', pp 159-197 (p 159).
- (34) Rhiannon Goldthorpe, Sartre: Literature and Theory describes how La Nausée 'powerfully dramatises the relationships between consciousness and the world' (p 5).
- (35) Jean-Paul Sartre, Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels. Situations VIII (Paris, 1972), pp 375-455 (p 428).
- (36) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'La Grande Morale, extraits d'un Cahier de notes (1947), Obliques, 18-19, edited by Michel Sicard (May, 1979), pp 249-262 (p 255): Sartre outlines his definition of 'l'être-dans-le-monde de l'homme'.
- (37) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 165.
- (38) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 164.
- (39) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 166.
- (40) See Notes to the Introduction, note no.(57), above.
- (41) Robbe-Grillet has drawn similarities between the Usine Générale and his own experiences in Nuremberg during the War: 'Boris y travaille dans une vaste usine où je reconnais sans aucune peine, à de nombreux détails, la Maschinenfabrik-Augsburg Nürnberg (M.A.N.) dans laquelle j'ai moi-même appris et pratiqué, pendant la guerre, le métier d'ouvrier tourneur' (Le Miroir qui revient, p 45). Even the details of Robbe-Grillet's own sensuous appreciation of the factory in Nuremberg are strikingly similar to those experienced by Boris: 'L'immense atelier avec ses rangées comme infinies detours automatiques et de

fraiseuses, alignés à perte de vue dans une brume bleuâtre d'émulsion huileuse à l'odeur de graisse cuite (...) (p45). Finally, the pre-occupation with numbers as a means of identification in Un Régicide is an echo of Robbe-Grillet's strongest memory of the M.A.N., where a bill-board read: "Du bist ein (sic) Nummer und dieses (sic) Nummer ist nul" (p 45).

- (42) Albert Camus, La Peste (Paris: Gallimard, 1947). This has been widely interpreted as a metaphor for the 'disease' of National Socialism in Germany during World War II.
- (43) See Jean-Paul Sartre's confirmation that speech is action in 'Le Style dramatique', in Un Théâtre de Situations, edited by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka (Paris, 1973), pp 2-43 (p 33): 'Un mot est un acte, c'est une manière d'agir parmi d'autres manières d'agir (...)'.
- (44) See W.J. Bate on the different processes of 'foregrounding' and 'backgrounding' in literature (W.J. Bate, The Burden of the Past and the English Poet (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), especially pp 131-138.
- (45) When talking of Laura's 'role' of 'human converter', it should be remembered that this is only temporary (See Chapter Eight, sub-section two).
- (46) See Note (43), above.
- (47) According to Sartre, any literary construct constitutes a basic engagement, so the character, as a creation of the language of literature is necessarily 'engagé'. This arises from the fact that the writer himself is 'in-the-world': 'le but de l'écrivain (...) est de faire de son être-dans-le-langage l'expression de son être-dans-le-monde' (Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique de la raison dialectique, p 448). It is not unreasonable to propose that Boris is the result (and creation!) of such a tension between art (struggling for autonomy) and reality (into which context it necessarily falls).
- (48) See Jean-Paul Sartre on how the individual attains 'purification' through responding to his 'prise de conscience', Un Théâtre de situations, p 84.
- (49) See Sartre's use of the verb 's'historialiser' (= the process by which the individual integrates himself actively in history-in-the-making) (Jean-Paul Sartre, Qu'est-ce que la littérature?, Situations II, p 293.

#### Sub-section two

- (50) Emma Kafalenos, 'Robbe-Grillet's Un Régicide: An Extraordinary

First Novel', International Fiction Review, 6 (1) (Winter, 1979), pp 49-54 (p 53). It is interesting to note that Robbe-Grillet himself has suggested that this would be 'une lecture profitable d'Un Régicide' (Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986)).

- (51) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste, joueur', pp 1-4 (p 2).
- (52) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', p 2.
- (53) Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Être et le Néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique (Paris, 1943), p 72. It should be pointed out, however, that Sartre is using the notion of 'freedom' in a particular sense: 'L'angoisse (...) se constitue lorsque la conscience se voit coupée de son essence par le néant ou séparée du futur par sa liberté même' (p 73).
- (54) André Malraux, La Condition humaine (Paris: Gallimard, 1933).
- (55) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 63.
- (56) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 65.
- (57) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, pp 60-61.
- (58) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 62. Furthermore, Tchen perceives of sexual relations as a means to establish his own identity as a negative: he confesses to Gisors that he desires, in the sexual act, not so much 'd'être un homme' as 'de ne pas être une femme' (p 77). Likewise, Boris considers, in his erotic fantasies, 'une séparation convaincante' between Laura and himself (Un Régicide, p 75).
- (59) See La Condition humaine, p 62: L'essentiel, ce qui le (Kyo) troublait jusqu'à l'angoisse, c'est qu'il était tout à coup séparé d'elle, non par la haine - bien qu'il y eût de la haine en lui - non par la jalousie (ou bien la jalousie était-elle précisément cela?): par un sentiment sans nom, aussi destructeur que le temps ou la mort (...)'.
- (60) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 131.
- (61) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 276.
- (62) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir que revient, p 169.
- (63) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 10.
- (64) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 46.

- (65) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 9.
- (66) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 9.
- (67) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 10.
- (68) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 12.
- (69) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 16.
- (70) André Malraux, La Condition humaine, p 11.
- (71) Meursault's act of killing is related in terms - 'J'ai compris que j'avais détruit l'équilibre du jour' - that defy political or social importance just as Boris's 'regicide' is described in an emphatically a-political context (Albert Camus, L'Etranger, p 95).

## NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

### Sub-section one

- (1) Alain Robbe-Grillet in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', Le Monde (September 22, 1978), pp 1-7 (p 1).
- (2) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Robbe-Grillet, artiste, joueur': 'Le héros d'Un Régicide mène une vie schizoïde. Par moments, il travaille dans une usine, par moments il marche sur une côte, dans une île très sauvage au climat breton, où la civilisation n'a pas du tout pénétré' (p 1). Clearly the term 'schizoïde' is not being used in its psychiatric sense.
- (3) Eric Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature (Princeton, New Jersey, 1977), p 7.
- (4) Random House Dictionary of the English Language (New York, 1966), p 155.
- (5) Jean Ricardou, 'Par delà le Réel et l'Irréel' (Simple note sur le fragment d'Un Régicide), Médiations, 23-24 (Summer, 1962), pp 17-25 (p 22). In fact, this is where (and only partially) Un Régicide first appeared (pages 5-16). Written between 1948 and 1950, Un Régicide was refused by the publishers ('un grand éditeur parisien') in 1951 (Un Régicide, p 7).
- (6) M.-M. Ball, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Scriptor Ludens": a Study of the Ludic Element in his Novels' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queen Mary College, London, 1981), p 64.
- (7) Marianne Adler, in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 2 : cinéma/roman, edited by Jean Ricardou at the Centre Culturel de Cerisy-la-Salle (Paris, 1976), p 428.
- (8) Jean-Baptiste Baronian, 'Nouveau fantastique: tradition et mutation', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, edited by Jeanine Monsieur and Jean-Baptiste Baronian, Rencontres internationales de l'abbaye de Forest (Abbaye de Forest, 1982), pp 13-19 (pp 13-14).
- (9) Jean-Baptiste Baronian, 'Nouveau fantastique: tradition et mutation', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, p 14.
- (10) Jean-Baptiste Baronian, 'Nouveau fantastique: tradition et mutation', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, p 15.
- (11) Random House Dictionary of the English Language, p 155.

- (12) Jean-Baptiste Baronian, 'Nouveau fantastique: tradition et mutation', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, p 19.
- (13) Eric Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature, p 4. See also I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (London, 1924) on the 'ground rules' of literature: Richards argues that these determine generic categorisation.
- (14) Jean-Baptiste Baronian, 'Nouveau fantastique: tradition et mutation', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, p 19.
- (15) J.R.R. Tolkien, The Tolkien Reader (New York, 1966) p 47.
- (16) J.L. Borges, Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952, translated by Ruth L.C. Simms (New York, 1966), p 108.
- (17) There is a possible cause-effect confusion here: in fact, the reader helps to produce that 'prescribed order' in the forming of his own expectations.
- (18) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: the Metafictional Paradox (Ontario, 1980), p 76.
- (19) The sense of 'reality' here is restricted to the tangible and the mundane existence from which fantasy is an escape.
- (20) The actual chronology of Robbe-Grillet's novels is, of course, irrelevant to this operation.
- (21) Alain Robbe-Grillet in interview with Michel Rybalka, 'Robbe-Grillet: artiste, joueur', p 1.
- (22) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, pp 13-14.
- (23) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Voyeur, p 12.
- (24) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Fragment autobiographique imaginaire', Minuit, 31 (November, 1978), pp 2-8 (p 5).
- (25) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Entretien avec Alain Poirson: Du bon usage de l'humour', France Nouvelle, 1752 (June, 1979), pp 44-51 (p 46).
- (26) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Entretien avec Alain Poirson: Du bon usage de l'humour', p 45.
- (27) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Entretien avec Alain Poirson: Du bon usage de l'humour', p 44.
- (28) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Voyeur, p 174.

- (29) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Le Chemin de Retour' (1954), Instantanés (Paris, 1962), pp 33-47 (p 33).
- (30) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Le Miroir qui revient, p 14.
- (31) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 32.
- (32) Jacques Voisine, preface to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire (Paris, 1964), pp 17-29 (p 18).
- (33) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 105.
- (34) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 95.
- (35) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 95.
- (36) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 47.
- (37) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 39.
- (38) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 123.
- (39) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 35.
- (40) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 61.
- (41) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 165.
- (42) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 149.
- (43) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 47.
- (44) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 155.
- (45) Jacques Voisine, preface to Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, p 19. Voisine interprets Rousseau's promenades as being related in a style which is a mixture of 'la sérénité olympienne' and 'le témoignage de l'échec si humain d'un solitaire qui ne peut se passer de ses semblables et de leur affection' (p 19). Boris experiences this same inner conflict.
- (46) Random House Dictionary of the English Language, p 155.
- (47) The distinction must be drawn between these terms: 'myth' refers to a single story, while 'mythology' refers to a body of myths.
- (48) William Blake, Works vol I (London, 1893), p 382.
- (49) Alain Robbe-Grillet, preface to Projet d'une révolution à New York



(non-paginated).

- (50) Eric Gould, Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature (Princeton, New Jersey, 1981), p 113.
- (51) Northrop Frye, Fables of Identity (New York, 1963) p 25. *The mythical is a common ingredient to fantasy literature, and thus 'unites'.*
- (52) Charles Jencks, Post-Modern Classicism: the New Synthesis (London, 1977).
- (53) Jacques van Harp, 'Mythologies Modernes', in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, pp 60-63 (p 60). Van Harp describes the modern world as a fragile situation, reverbrating with the echoes of the Ancient World: 'L'univers moderne, avec sa complexité, sa fragilité, ses echoes multipliés de la moindre action (...) se tient debout' (p 60).
- (54) See J.O. Delepierre, La Parodie chez les Grecs, chez les Romains, et chez les Modernes (London, 1870). Delepierre relates the modern parody of the Ancient world as a variation of the inevitable assimilation of mythological material in all fiction. This is discussed more recently in Robert William Chambers' (Jnr.) 'Parodic Perspectives: a Theory of Parody' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1974), pp 37-87.
- (55) Leon Roudiez, 'The Embattled Myths', in Hereditas: Seven Essays on the Modern Experience of the Classical, edited by Frederick Will (Austin, Texas, 1961), (p 81). Roudiez analyses the 'recognisability' of the Oedipus parallel in Les Gattes.
- (56) John J White, Mythology in the Modern Novel: a Study of Prefigurative Techniques (Princeton, New Jersey, 1971), p 77.
- (57) Peter J. Rabinowitz, ' "What's Hecuba to Us?": the Audience's Experience of Literary Borrowing', in The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience Interpretation edited by Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), pp 241-263. Rabinowitz points out with great clarity the difficulty of fulfilling mythological allusion in today's reader, who often recognises the intention of such an allusion, but lacks the knowledge to complete it.
- (58) J.D. Bellamy, The New Fiction, Interviews with Innovative American Writers (London, 1974), p 12.
- (59) Ben Stoltzfus is concerned at the improbability of the modern reader's awareness of cultural 'clues' in the text. Referring to Les Gattes, he remarks that 'neither Wallas nor the reader can understand the Oedipal clues' (Ben Stoltzfus, Alain Robbe-Grillet, pp 67-81 (p 68)). John Fletcher reminds us that it was in fact Beckett who first detected the Oedipus parallel in Les Gattes (John Fletcher, Alain Robbe-

Grillet, p 28).

- (60) Michel Leiris, 'Le Réalisme mythologique de Michel Butor', in Michel Butor, La Modification (Paris: 10/18 Union Générale d'Éditions, 1957), pp 287-310 (p 287). Michael Spencer argues that the textual 'signalling' is the key to the reader's recognition of mythological 'clues': in his analysis of Michel Butor's L'Emploi du Temps (Paris, 1956), Spencer reasons: 'The parallels are on the whole obvious to anyone with a reasonable knowledge of mythology (...), especially since both Butor and Revel take pains to make them so' (Michael Spencer, Michel Butor (New York, 1974), p 56).
- (61) John J. White, Mythology in the Modern Novel, p 79.
- (62) For the most succinct and comprehensive run-down of the Oedipus references in Les Gommès, see Bruce Morrisette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, pp 52-65 (especially p 53).
- (63) Le Voyeur is said to contain the myth of Andromeda: 'la petite Jacqueline' is chained to a rock on the sea coast, as is Andromeda as a young woman. The physical beauty of the girl in Mathias' mind reinforces this link, as does the reference to sea monsters in the novel. See Jean Alter, La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet, pp.20-21.
- (64) Dans le labyrinthe is a more obvious and consistent mythological allusion, - this time to the figure of Daedalus, who constructs a labyrinth, at Minos' request, in which the minotaur could survive without inciting the Queen's lust. Daedalus finds himself imprisoned in his own construction, just as the soldier of Robbe-Grillet's novel is locked into the narrative he has built. See Bruce Morrisette, 'Le Dédale de la création romanesque', in his Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, pp 149-180.
- (65) L'Immortelle creates a parallel partnership to the Orpheus-Eurydice couple. The eye of the narrator in L'Immortelle immobilises the woman, and destroys her, as Orpheus destroys Eurydice by looking back in spite of Hades' warning. On the other hand, the immortality of Robbe-Grillet's female character echoes that of Eurydice who, once 'killed' by the snake-bite, is revived again in the Underworld. See John Fletcher, Alain Robbe-Grillet, pp 47-48.
- (66) John J. White, in Literary Criticism and Myth, edited by J.P. Strelka (London, 1980), pp 77-85 (p 80).
- (67) Jacques van Harp in Le Fantastique d'aujourd'hui, p 60.
- (68) Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, translated by W.R. Trask (New York, 1966), p 60.
- (69) See Chapter Six, section two (later) for a discussion of these textual 'announcements' of the presence of the mythological.

- (70) Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature (Oxford, 1949), p 512.
- (71) Valerie Minogue, 'The Uses of Parody: Parody in Proust and Robbe-Grillet', (p 60). Minogue considers that the mythological profundity is, in the case of Les Gommès, 'artfully worked into the text in such a way as to demonstrate its seductions' (p 60). It is interesting to note that the Boris - Odysseus parallel is actually generated by the physical seduction of both protagonists. See discussion later in Chapter Six, sub-section two.
- (72) Margaret Dalziel, 'Myth in Modern English Literature', in Myth and the Imagination, edited by Margaret Dalziel (Dunedin, 1967), pp 39-58 (p 45).
- (73) John Sturrock, The French New Novel, p 156.
- (74) The text used for this present study is The Odyssey, translated by E.V. Rieu (London: Penguin Books, 1946). References will be given, for the sake of convenience, in the main text and will allude to the Book number and not the page number of the translated work.
- (75) See Wallace Stevens, The Cantos (1-95) (New York, 1956), especially his comments on Canto 74. Also see George Seferis, Collected Poems, 1924-1955, translated by Edmund Keeley (Princeton, New Jersey, 1967), which describes (in the poem 'Upon a foreign verse') the reference to Odysseus as synonymous with the depiction of a 'voyage towards truth', p 117. Lilian Feder believes the concern for self-fulfilment to be the main reason for the relevance and popularity of the myth (See Lilian Feder, 'Myth, Poetry, and Critical Theory', in Literary Criticism and Myth, pp 64-71). Finally, this is re-iterated in Denys Page, The Homeric Odysseus (London, 1955), pp 17-19 and in W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, 2nd edition (New York, 1968), pp 8-11.
- (76) This is echoed in Les Gommès, where Wallas is constantly losing his way in the Boulevard Circulaire in 'l'enchevêtrement des rues' (p 47); in Le Voyageur, the narrator is a lost traveller, as denoted in the missing letters of voy(ag)eur (See Pamela Johnson, 'Structures narratives du Voyeur' in her Camus et Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1972), pp 35-112, especially pp 47-49); Philippe Sollers remarks that, for the soldier, 'trouver son chemin, se trouver lui-même est pour lui une question de vie ou de mort' (Philippe Sollers, 'Sept Propositions sur Robbe-Grillet', Tel Quel, 2 (Summer, 1960), pp 49-53 (p 51). The 'voyageur perdu' motif is a recurrent presence throughout the early novels of Robbe-Grillet, perhaps denoting the aesthetic 'uncertainty' of the novelist.
- (77) In the Odyssey, Book II, it is revealed that the seer Halisërthes

had warned Odysseus when he sets out for Troy, that it would be nineteen years before he returned. (It should be noted that the poem covers no more than six weeks, though ten years' adventures are related in the course of it.)

- (78) The mist has the effect in the Odyssey, as it has in Un Régicide, of fusing land and water, thereby intensifying the dangers of the protagonist's route. In Book XIII, Odysseus awakens in a cave which the Phaeacians find in Ithaca for him to sleep in. Odysseus loses his men in the mist created by Athene and searches in vain for them, unconvinced of Athene's claim that they are also in Ithaca, safe and sound.
- (79) Le Voveur and Dans le labyrinthe, the two novels which bear the closest similarity to Un Régicide, are, significantly, conceived in a variably thick mist, which even develops, in the case of the latter novel, to snow, as indeed it ultimately does in Un Régicide.
- (80) See Chapter Nine, sub-section two for the significance of 'la terre ferme' in the subversion of the 'high fantasy' narrative.
- (81) Claude Lévi Strauss discusses the dramatisation of man's victory over the monstrous, with particular reference to the myths of Oedipus and Odysseus, and concludes on the necessity of the trial with monsters as a metaphor for the 'incorporating' text (or myth) itself (Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'La Structure des mythes', in Claude Lévi-Strauss, Anthropologie structurale (Paris, 1958), pp 230-240 (pp 239-240)).
- (82) Both Boris and Odysseus have twelve men to help them on their mission; also, there are twelve men at Laertes' banquet in Book XXIV, as there are twelve who receive Boris in the 'cabine sombre' (these include: Alban, Malter, le rebouteux, Guilhem, Guiraut, Peire, his dog - later 'humanised' - Venant the Elder, Venant the Younger, Maur and Marc, Eric le blond and Guérin-le-Septième).
- (83) See later in Chapter Six, sub-section two, for the parallel between the Cyclops and 'l'aveugle Alban'.
- (84) This transformation of men into animals is reflected in Un Régicide, where Red is changed into the form of his 'chien noir', Thomas grows into a horse, and the narrator becomes a vulture. See Chapter Six, sub-section two, below, for actual references to these physical transmutations.
- (85) The 'transfiguration' theme operates throughout Robbe-Grillet's fiction. Its particular association with the narrator in his novels implies that it is a metaphor, as M.-M. Ball suggests, of the Je/Il tension inherent in the practice of writing, whereby the individual expression is constantly engaged in a struggle within and against the institution of language (See M.-M. Ball, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet "Scriptor Ludens":

a Study of the Ludic Element in his Novels' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queen Mary College, London, 1981, pp 60-66 especially).

- (86) The sirens constitute another recurrent leitmotif in Robbe-Grillet's novels: Roudiez remarks of the décor in Les Gommès that it 'has beacons which, like the songs of the sirens, are intended to charm the reader and shipwreck him (the reader and Oedipus) on a dangerous island of myth' (Leon Roudiez, 'The Embattled Myths' Hereditas: Seven Essays on the Modern Experience of the Classical, (P 83)); Le Voyeur opens the fantasy narrative with a blast of the ship's siren and the distant echo of the legendary creatures. In addition to these references, there are strong similarities between the sirens of Robbe-Grillet's Un Régicide and those of the Loreley legend. The poem of Heinrich Heine, 'Die Loreley' (written in 1823 and included in the 'Heimkehr' section of Heine's Buch der Lieder (1827) depicts an image of the siren which reappears in similar form in Un Régicide: firstly, 'le chant nocturne, si doux' (Un Régicide, p 128) which entrances Boris, echoes the melodious attraction of Heine's 'Wunderbare Gewaltige Melodei' (lines 15-16); secondly, just as in 'Die Loreley' the siren is occupied by combing her golden locks - 'Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar' (line 12) - so in Un Régicide the sirens are 'occupées à sécher et peigner dans le grand soleil leur cheveux blonds (...)' (Un Régicide, p 128); thirdly, the striking beauty of Heine's 'Schönste Jungfrau' (line 9) is found in the erotic attraction of the sirens, lusted after by Boris, and 'toutes de chair vivante et chaude' (Un Régicide, p 128). Finally, the parallel between the Loreley legend and Un Régicide is strengthened by the fatal nature of the siren's charms, as she entices the sailors to their death: just as in die Loreley the 'schönste Jungfrau' is responsible for the shipwreck - 'Und das hat mit ihrem Singen/Die Lorelei gethan' (lines 23-24) - the sirens in Un Régicide lead to the death of the narrator and Malus. (See Heinrich Heine: Poems, edited by Kathleen Webber (Oxford, 1952.)
- (87) The image of the young seductress appears with regularity throughout the fiction of Robbe-Grillet. In Les Gommès, Wallas is attracted by the 'jeune fille' at the shop where he purchases the 'gomme très douce' (Les Gommès, p 66). In Le Voyeur, Mathias observes 'la petite fille à l'air abandonné (Le Voyeur, p 22), whose 'formes un peu frêles ajoutaient encore à son air vulnérable' (Le Voyeur, p 56). The soldier-narrator of Dans le labyrinthe follows the 'jeune femme (...) enfantine' to her home (Dans le labyrinthe, p 70). (This image changes in the later novels, where 'la prisonnière of Projet pour une révolution à New York (Projet pour une révolution à New York, p 117) and 'petite fille Marie' of Djinn (Djinn, p 12) lose the flesh-and-blood eroticism of the female characters of Robbe-Grillet's earlier works.) The portrayal of the sirens in Un Régicide, with their 'seins menus, cou fragile' corresponds to the other objects of the narrator's lust in the early novels.

- (88) For a full account of the sirens, see Book XII of the Odyssey.
- (89) Aimone-Lélia remarks to Boris, ' "Tu avais l'autre été, (...) le teint plus clair et les muscles moins forts" ', referring to their encounter of the summer before (Un Régicide, p 150).
- (90) The 'temptation-motif' in Un Régicide is enhanced by the long absence of Laura from the text (from Chapter V to Chapter XI), just as in the Odyssey Odysseus does not return to Penelope until Book XXII, having left her palace for nineteen years.
- (91) Lilian Feder, Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry (Princeton, New Jersey, 1971), p 70.
- (92) According to Tiresias, Odysseus must offer to Hades and Persephone a dead ram and a black ewe; only then can he safely reach his destination.
- (93) Although Odysseus is not to blame for it, his men kill the cattle and roast the meat to satisfy their hunger. The storm that ensues is represented in Un Régicide where, defying the advice of Malus, Boris fulfils his bodily desires on the island and is then subjected to the tempestuous winds of the norois.
- (94) See Chapter Six, sub-section two, in a later discussion on the significance of Scylla in generating a further mythological parallel in the text.
- (95) Kerenyi remarks of the Greek tragic hero that 'he is doomed to enact his own destruction as though he were led by a temptress into the fires of his own grave; without a predestined route, he would wander aimlessly, reaching nowhere' (C. Kerenyi, The Heroes of the Greeks (London, 1959), pp 79-80).
- (96) The Wallas - Oedipus parallel is constructed in Les Gattes in a manner similar to the Boris - Odysseus identification, since it is developed on two levels: firstly, the text announces certain 'clues' which the reader, if he is 'competent' in mythology, can recognise and from which he is able to reconstruct a modern Oedipus; secondly, these specific details are brought together in a general, unifying portrait by the situation of the hero and the 'backgrounding' to his presence.
- (97) 'Telegonia' is another of Homer's epic poems, now lost to us, but known from references in Classical Writers. See Gilbert Murray, The Rise of the Greek Epic (Oxford, 1960), pp 10-11.
- (98) In Book IX of the Iliad, Odysseus is chosen to accompany Aias (son of Telamon) and Phoenix to persuade Achilles to resume his part in the war. Achilles ignores this advice, with fatal consequences.

- (99) The myth of Odysseus (not the Odyssey) relates how the hero feigns insanity in an attempt to deceive Palamedes and thus establish a reason for his not fighting in the Wars of Troy.
- 100) Neoptolemus finds Odysseus guilty, and exiles him. Boris's own trial (although never actually establishing his guilt) effectively 'exiles' him to the island on which he dies.
- 101) Odysseus, the only son of Laertes, is sometimes considered of dubious parentage: an alternative version of Laertes' paternity is presented in the story that Anticlea was already pregnant by Sisyphus before Laertes arrived. (This would explain Odysseus' cunning, since Sisyphus could outwit even Autolycus, Anticlea's father, thief and trickster.) The relationship between Boris and King Jean implies a fundamental confusion of roles in Un Régicide and even offers a father-son bond as an alternative to the king-assassin opposition.
- 102) At a self-conscious level, of course, such acknowledgements of its literary or fictive status prove subversive. See Chapter Nine, sub-section two and Chapter Ten, sub-section two.
- 103) The maze of Daedalus is reflected, then, in the construction of the mythological parallel, since the trial-and-error experimentation of the narrator in seeking a route to the 'gouffres de légende' creates the labyrinth of the Ancient world.
- 104) Max Cary, 'Reviving Dead Languages', Romans and Greeks, 3 (1) (1961), pp 7-16 (p 7).
- 105) The options for mythological allusion are signalled by Boris when he states " "Tous les chemins mènent à Rome" ' (Un Régicide, p 74). For an interesting connection with another nouveau romancier, compare this 'announcement' of civilisation with the more conscious references to Roman mythology in Michel Butor's La Modification, with its allusions to Virgil's Aeneid, Roman Goddess Venus, etc. See Jennifer Waelti-Walters, Michel Butor (British Columbia, 1977) for a comprehensive account of allusions in this novel.)
- 106) The same situation occurs in Le Voyeur when, having referred to 'une ancienne légende du pays', the narrator is then obliged to invent the legend of a young girl's sacrifice to appease the gods, etc. (Le Voyeur, p 221):
- 107) Alain Robbe-Grillet, preface to Projet pour une révolution à New York (non-paginated).
- 108) Myths and legends are, in a sense, pre-literary because they exist in the imagination prior to their inscription.
- 109) I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, p 124.

- 110) M.-M. Ball, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Scriptor Ludens": a Study of the Ludic Element in his Novels', p 64.
- 111) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Correspondence, (November, 1985). At this stage the author appears uneasy about the freedom with which his narrative re-created the 'poetic' in Un Régicide. Michel Rybalka, in his interview with Robbe-Grillet, remarks on the 'contraste entre l'aspect poétique, idéaliste, chaste même, du livre, et son aspect politique' ('Robbe-Grillet, artiste joueur', p 2). Robbe-Grillet proves more willing here to discuss the novel in terms of an 'attentat' than an 'innocent' narrative, however (p 2).
- 112) Eric Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature, p 26: Rabkin explains the operations by which fantastic literature 'liberates' its reader: 'The fantastic takes words, reconfigures their semantic ranges, puts them in new contexts, creates new grapholects for them, and, in so doing, it liberates us'.
- 113) Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic (Cambridge, 1981), p 13. Brooke-Rose argues that 'poetry is about the signified, leaving the referent behind in its wake' - in other words, the poetic language takes the reader immediately beyond the actual object represented in the text, to concentrate on the concept which it evokes (p 13).
- 114) Robbe-Grillet explains how the 'secondary' or 'deviant' meaning of words is what his narrative intends to evoke: 'Même pour l'emploi d'un mot, je vérifie souvent dans le dictionnaire son sens normal afin d'établir avec précision l'emploi déviant dans lequel je l'utilise. C'est une grande partie du travail. Une autre n'appartient pas spécifiquement à la modernité: c'est ce qu'on peut appeler grossièrement la musique du texte. Je lis et je relis pendant plusieurs jours à haute voix les pages que je viens d'écrire, comme faisait Flaubert, pour mesurer les écarts par rapport à la norme concernant les répétitions de sonorités (Alain Robbe-Grillet, in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie: 2 : cinéma/roman, p 428.
- 115) Paul Valéry, Oeuvres, Paul Valéry, vol I (Paris: Pléiade, 1957), p 1204.
- 116) Valéry's comments on creativity are relevant to the 'poetic' language of Un Régicide's 'high fantasy' narrative: 'Si donc l'on m'interroge, si l'on s'inquiète (comme il arrive, et parfois, assez vivement) de ce que j'ai voulu dire, dans un tel poème, je répons que je n'ai pas voulu dire, mais voulu faire, et que ce fut l'intention de faire qui a voulu ce que j'ai dit ...' (Valéry, Au sujet du Cimetière Marin', quoted from Valéry's preface to Gustave Cohen's Essai d'explication du 'Cimetière Marin' (Paris, 1933), p iii.



- 117) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Brise Marine', in section 'Du Parnasse Contemporain', in 'Poésies', Poésies choisies de vers de circonstance, Poèmes d'enfance et de jeunesse (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), pp 29-44 (p 40).
- 118) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Brise marine', line 16.
- 119) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Brise Marine', line 13.
- 120) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Brise marine', line 14.
- 121) Paul Valéry, 'Le Rameur', Oeuvres, Paul Valéry, I
- 122) Paul Valéry, 'Le Rameur', line 26.
- 123) Paul Valéry, 'Le Rameur', line 3.
- 124) This metaphor of the oarsman rowing for the activity of writing is repeated in 'Le Chemin de Retour' in Instantanés, p 46: 'Malgré ses vigoureux coups de rames, nous n'avancions d'ailleurs qu'à une allure dérisoire. Même, au bout d'un certain temps, il nous a semblé que toute sa force ne réussissait plus qu'à nous maintenir immobiles'. The image of the artist fighting against the currents for his survival gives a possible explanation for the recurrent motif of turbulent waters in Robbe-Grillet's fiction.
- 125) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Le Bateau ivre', in section 'Poésies', Poésies: Derniers vers, Une Saison en enfer, Illuminations (Paris: Livre de poche, 1972), pp 35-130 (pp 122-126).
- 126) Franz Hallens; remarks that Nerval's 'success' as a 'fantasy' poet lies in the immediacy of his evasion from reality (Franz Hallens, Le Fantastique réel (Bruxelles, 1976), p 17.
- 127) Didier Anzieu regards Mathias's dream, in Le Voyeur, to be 'un rêve d'un monde pur' in an attempt to escape from his 'other' being, 'son être sadique, criminel' and in fact the narrator does realise this temporarily (Didier Anzieu, 'Discours de l'obsessionnel chez Robbe-Grillet', Temps Modernes, 33 (October-December, 1965), pp 612-636 (p 618).
- 128) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Le Bateau ivre', line 9.
- 129) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Le Bateau ivre', line 24.
- 130) Cirlot explains the traditional symbolic role of the sea, which represents 'waters in flux, the transitional and mediating agent between the formal (earth and solids) and, by analogy, between life and death' (J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, translated from the Spanish by J. Sage (London, 1962), p 268.

- 131) Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilisation (New York, 1946), p 230.
- 132) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Le Bateau ivre', line 13.
- 133) The song within the main prose narrative recurs in the same appealing - 'c'est une voix qui se porte bien' (La Jalousie, p 100) - and unintelligible - 'aux paroles incompréhensibles' (La Jalousie, p 99) - form in La Jalousie.
- 134) Charles Baudelaire, 'Brumes et Pluies', LXIII of section 'Spleen et Idéal', Les Fleurs du Mal (Paris, : Livre de poche, 1972), pp 9-114 (pp 93-94), line 2. See note in Bibliography.
- 135) For a discussion on the colour-imagery of the 'glaïeuls', see Chapter Ten, sub-section two.
- 136) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'A une petite laveuse blonde', in section "Poèmes d'enfance et de jeunesse", Poésies, pp 153-185 (pp 174-177).
- 137) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'A une petite laveuse blonde', line 26.
- 138) Fernand Verhesen, 'Du Roman au Poème', Synthèses, 194 (July, 1962), pp 350-351 (p 350).
- 139) Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Soleil', II in section 'Tableaux Parisiens', Les Fleurs du Mal, p 13.
- 140) Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Soleil', line 5.
- 141) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Soleil et Chair', in section 'Poésies', Poésies, pp 35 - 161 (pp 56-61).
- 142) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Soleil et Chair', lines 1-2.
- 143) The image of the male aggressor and conqueror is one which re-appears throughout Robbe-Grillet's fiction. See Notes to Chapter Six, note no.(87), above, and also the discussion of Boris and Laura's relationship, Chapter Six, sub-section one.
- 144) Charles Baudelaire, 'Chanson d'après-midi', LVIII of section 'Spleen et Idéal', Les Fleurs du Mal, pp 163-207 (pp 197-198).
- 145) Charles Baudelaire 'Chanson d'après-midi', line 21-24.
- 146) Charles Baudelaire, 'Les Bijoux', VI of section 'Pièces Condamnées', Les Fleurs du Mal, pp 9-114 (pp 35-36), lines 1-2.
- 147) Charles Baudelaire, 'La Chevelure', XXIII of section 'Spleen et Idéal' Fleurs du Mal, pp 163-208 (pp 184-185). Baudelaire's highly

sensuous description draws together both the natural and the unnatural beauty of the 'chevelure': 'O boucles! O parfum chargé de nonchaloir!' (line 2).

- 148) Charles Baudelaire, 'La Chevelure', lines 31-32.
- 149) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'La Chevelure', III of section 'Autres Poèmes', Poésies, pp 45-74 (p 63), line 4.
- 150) Several interesting studies have been made regarding Robbe-Grillet's use of colour-imagery. Of these the most relevant here are M.G. de Boer's 'Essai d'interprétation du Voyeur de Robbe-Grillet', Bulletin des Jeunes Romantistes, 3 (May, 1961), pp 5-12, in which he offers a 'lecture symbolique' of the Viol(ette) metaphor, and Marie-Georgette Steisel's 'Etudes des couleurs', French Review, (1964-1965), pp 485-494, where the critic discovers, in La Jalousie, that 'la prédominance de telle ou telle couleur a des racines profondes' and refers the 'monde coloré de l'écrivain' to 'la poésie pure' (p 494). The discussion of the 'subversive' role of colours in Un Régicide takes place in Chapter Ten, part two.
- 151) The reference to La Bruyère ('La bruyère) appears an impasse, but nevertheless one the reader cannot help but walk down! It is interesting to speculate that this might allude to the tension between 'traditional' 'poetic' narrative and that analysed in Chapter Nine: is Robbe-Grillet referring to the 'querelles des anciens et des modernes' of his fiction (See Jean de La Bruyère, Querelle des anciens et des modernes (Paris, 1693)?
- 152) Paul Valéry, 'Les Grenades', in section 'Charmes', Oeuvres, Paul Valéry II
- 153) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Fleurs', in section 'Illuminations', Poésies, pp 203-250 (p 234).
- 154) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Fleurs', lines 6-8.
- 155) Raymond Jean in his introduction to Gérard de Nerval, Les Filles du feu, suivi de Petits Châteaux de Bohême et de Odelettes (Paris: Livre de poche, 1973), pp ix-xxxiv (p xiv).
- 156) Paul Verlaine, 'Mon rêve familial', in section 'Poèmes saturniens'

(1866), Oeuvres (Paris: Librairie Messein, 1898-1903). Verlaine's female figure fulfils a number of fantasies because of her indeterminate nature:

'Est-elle brune, blonde ou rousse? Je l'ignore  
Son nom? Jeme souviens qu'il est doux et sonore  
Comme ceux des aimés qu la Vie exila'

(Paul Verlaine, 'Mon rêve familial', lines 9-11.

- 157) Arthur Rimbaud, 'Sensation', in section 'Poésies', Poésies, pp 35-130 (p 49), lines 6-8.
- 158) Daniel Leuwers, in his preface to Arthur Rimbaud, Poésies, pp vi-xii (p ix). *For Robbe-Grillet, however, the escape into fantasy is necessarily temporary, rather than 'infatigable'.*
- 159) Charles Baudelaire, 'Brumes et Pluies', lines 1-2:
- 'O fins d'automne, hivers, printemps trempés de boue,  
Endormeuses saisons (...)'
- 160) Charles Baudelaire, 'Chant d'Automne', LXII of section 'La Mort', Les Fleurs du Mal, pp 163-208 (pp 193-194).
- 161) Charles Baudelaire, 'Chant d'Automne', line 5.
- 162) Paul Verlaine, 'Chanson d'Automne', V of section 'Paysages Tristes', Œuvres poétiques, Ed, Garnier Frères, 1969 (p. 39)
- 163) Paul Verlaine, 'Chanson d'Automne', line 7.
- 164) Paul Verlaine, 'Mon rêve familial', lines 5-6.
- 165) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Soupir', in section 'Poésies' of Poésies, pp 19-105 (p 41), line 7.
- 166) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Salut', in section 'Poésies', Poésies, pp 19-105, (p 19).
- 167) Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Salut', lines 1-4. This 'negating' device is used to open Topologie d'une cité fantôme: 'Mais il n'y a plus rien, ni cri, ni roulement, ni rameur lointaine (...)', p 9.
- 168) Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to Stéphane Mallarmé, Poésies, pp 5-15 (p 11).
- 169) Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic (Cambridge, 1981), p 174. Brooke-Rose refers the reader to the terminology of A.J. Greimas, Sémantique structurale (Paris, 1966), pp 174-203, and A.J. Greimas,

Du Sens (Paris, 1970), pp 249-267.

- 171) Gaëtan Picon, 'Le Roman et son avenir; Mercure de France, 328 (November, 1956), pp 498-503 (p 498).
- 172) B.G. Garnham, in his introduction to Alain Robbe-Grillet: La Jalousie (London: Methuen's Twentieth-Century Texts, 1969), pp vii-xxvii (p xi).
- 173) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 130.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

### Sub-section one

- (1) T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition<sup>1</sup> and the Individual Talent' in Selected Essays (London, 1966), pp 13-22 (p 15).
- (2) Roland Barthes, S/Z, pp 17-18: 'Le "moi" qui s'approche du texte est déjà lui-même une pluralité d'autres textes, de codes infinis, ou plus exactement: perdus (dont l'origine se perd) ...La subjectivité est une image pleine, mais dont la plénitude, truquée, n'est que le sillage de tous les codes qui me font, en sorte <sup>de</sup> ma subjectivité a finalement la généralité des stéréotypes'.
- (3) Renato Poggioli, 'Poetics and Metrics', in Proceedings of the Second of the International Comparative Literature Association, vol I, edited by Werner P. Friedrich (North Carolina, 1959), pp 193-4 (p 193).
- (4) Renato Poggioli, 'Poetics and Metrics' in Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, vol I, p 194. Poggioli argues that 'modern poetics is but a system of literary genres', all of which adhere to strict 'normalizing' laws (p 194).
- (5) Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-memory, Practice, translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Smith (Ithaca, New York, 1977), p 115.
- (6) Robert P. Morgan, 'On the Analysis of Recent Music', Critical Inquiry, 4 (1977), pp 33-53 (p 46).
- (7) This seems worth re-emphasising since there is, amongst the nouveaux romanciers a fundamental discrepancy between the various conceptions of originality, creativity, etc. Nathalie Sarraute bemoans the inevitability of working within a pre-established network, unlike Robbe-Grillet, who exploits the irrecuperable 'loss' of creative individualism with a sense of fatalism: '(...) une fois que le livre est achevé, accepté, l'écrivain prend rang parmi les autres, on lui donne un numéro, on le compare, on le mesure, en fait il est "pris". Et il lui devient difficile de retourner à sa solitude d'où il sort' (Nathalie Sarraute, 'Entretien avec Geneviève Serreau: Les Secrets de la création', Quinzaine Littéraire (May 1, 1968 (pp 9-12 (p 11)).
- (8) Jean-Pierre Vidal in his introduction to Alain Robbe-Grillet: 'La Jalousie' (Paris: Classiques Hachette, 1976), p 6: '(Toujours dérivé, il (le mot) ne saurait non plus prétendre être le dernier'.
- (9) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous', Paragraph, 3 (1984), pp 9-21 (p 9).

- (10) Leslie Hill, 'La maison de rendez-vous', p 9.
- (11) Mikhail Bakhtin, 'L'Enoncé dans le roman', Langages, 12 (1968), pp 126-132 (p 127).
- (12) Roland Barthes, S/Z, pp 23-25: 'L'Enoncé est proféré par une voix collective, anonyme (...)'
- (13) Jacques Derrida, Marges de la philosophie (Paris, 1972), p 12.
- (14) See Jacques Derrida, L'Écriture et la différence (Paris, 1967), pp 9-50; Jacques Derrida, Marges de la philosophie, pp 1-30; Jacques Derrida, 'La Différence', Tel Quel: Théorie d'ensemble (Paris, 1968), pp 41-66.
- (15) Robert Young, Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Reader (London, 1981), p 15.
- (16) Michael Riffaterre, 'A Stylistic Approach to Literary History', in New Directions in Literary History, edited by Ralph Cohen (London, 1974), pp 147-164 (p 147).
- (17) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in his introduction to Glissements progressifs du plaisir (Paris, 1974), p 14.
- (18) See Jean Ricardou in Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui edited by Jean Ricardou and F. van Rossum - Guydon (Paris, 1972), p 375: Loin du rapport de représentation l'on assiste à la transformation réciproque du texte et de la citation'.
- (19) Valerie Minogue, Nathalie Sarraute and the War of Words (Edinburgh, 1980, p 1.
- (20) Roland Barthes, in his preface to Essais critiques (Paris, 1964), p 15.
- (21) See Roland Barthes' discussion of the triumph of the il over the je in Le Degré zéro de l'écriture: (que) le il [est] une victoire sur le je, dans la mesure où il réalise un état à la fois plus littéraire et plus absent' (p 31). This is re-iterated in Essais critiques, where Barthes concludes that '(...) écrire, c'est décider de dire il (et le pouvoir' (p 17). In fact, the very act of writing, for Barthes, is the attempt of the individual to communicate through convention: '(...) l'écrivain ne tente jamais rien d'autre que de transformer son je en fragment de code' (Essais critiques, pp 16-17).
- (22) Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Parody and Appropriation in Francis Picabia, Pop,-and Sigmar Polke', Artforum, 20 (7) (1982), pp 28-34 (p 34).

- (23) Geneviève Idt, 'L'Autoparodie dans Les Mots', Cahiers du XXe Siècle, edited by Claude Leroy, published by the Société d'Etude du XXe Siècle (Paris, 1976), pp 53-86 (p 79).
- (24) Jacques Derrida, L'écriture et la différence, p 411.
- (25) See Peter J. Rabinowitz, ' "What's Hecuba to Us?": The Audience's Experience of Literary Borrowing', in The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation, edited by Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), pp 241-261. Rabinowitz describes these processes as means of 'artistic recycling' of literary material (p 241). See also Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, pp 11-16.
- (26) See the definition of 'refunctioning' in Victor Erlich, Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine (New Haven, Conn.), pp 67-71 especially.
- (27) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 7.
- (28) Angus Easson, 'Parody as Comment in James Joyce's Clay', James Joyce Quarterly, 7 (1970), pp 75-81 (p 81).
- (29) Jacques Derrida, L'écriture et la différence, p 411.
- (30) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 83.
- (31) Catherine Belsey, Critical Practice (London, 1980), p 97.
- (32) Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach', New Literary History, 3 (1972), pp 290-297 (p 293).
- (33) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature (London, 1975), p 114. Culler defines 'literary competence' as the 'means by which we read literature as literature, i.e. our 'recognition of its conventions' and 'internal grammar' (p 114).
- (34) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: the Metafictional Paradox (Ontario, 1980), p 29.
- (35) Michael Riffaterre, Semiotics of Poetry (Bloomington, Indiana, 1978), p 19.
- (36) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman (Paris, 1978), p 30.
- (37) Peter Hutchinson, Games Authors Play (London, 1983), p 61; underlining in the original text.
- (38) Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, translated by



R.W. Rotsel (Michigan, 1973), p 153.

- (39) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous: p 13.
- (40) The terms of assimilation and dissimilation refer to the process whereby a text incorporates and resembles past material, on the one hand, and rejects and distorts, on the other. The best account of these definitions is given in Antoine Albalat, La Formation du style par l'assimilation des auteurs (Paris, 1910), pp 5-11, especially.
- (41) The reader should, however, beware of the 'intentional fallacy', or the 'view that talks about the author's "real" intention' (E.D. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation (New Haven, Conn., 1967), p 67. Stanley Fish warns against the 'assumption that one is dealing with the marks and sounds produced by an intentional being, a being situated in some enterprise in relation to which he has a purpose or a point of view' (Stanley Fish, 'Working on the Chain Gang: Interpretation in the Law and Literary Criticism', Critical Enquiry, 9 (1982), pp 201-216 p (213).
- (42) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 6.
- (43) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 24.
- (44) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 23.
- (45) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 24.
- (46) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 24.
- (47) Heather Dubrow, Genre. The Critical Idiom Series (editor John D. Jump) (London, 1982), p 34. For Dubrow, 'familiarisation' is the essential feature of genre distinction and recognition.
- (48) The term 'defamiliarisation' comes from the Russian Formalist notion of priëm ostraneniĭa, the 'device for making strange', or ostraneniĭe, 'strangeness'. The fullest definition is that provided by Tzvetan Todorov, Théorie de la Littérature, translated and edited by Tzvetan Todorov (Paris, 1965), pp 43-44, especially.
- (49) Frederic Jameson, The Prison-House of Language: a Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism (Princeton, New Jersey, 1977) p 51.
- (50) Nathalie Sarraute, 'Entretien avec Geneviève Serreau: Les Secrets de la Création', p 10.
- (51) Umberto Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (Indiana, 1976), pp 263-264.

- (52) Roland Barthes, S/Z, pp 10-11.
- (53) Viktor Shklovsky, O teorii prozy (Moscow, 1929), translated into English by Richard Sheldon (Ithaca, New York), p 83.
- (54) Lawrence Crawford, 'Viktor Shklovskij: "Différance" in Defamiliarization', Comparative Literature Studies, 36 (3) (Summer, 1984), pp 209-211 (p 210).
- (55) V. Chlovski, Sur la théorie de la prose, translated into French by Tzvetan Todorov (Lausanne: L'Age de l'Homme, 1973).
- (56) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 6.
- (57) Roland Barthes, in Roland Barthes and Maurice Nadeau, Sur la littérature (Grenoble, 1980), p 40.
- (58) Jean Cohen, 'Comique et poétique', Poétique, 61 (February, 1985), pp 53-60 (p 53).
- (59) Leo Steinberg, 'The Glorious Company', in Art about Art, edited by Jean Lipman and Richard Marshall (New York, 1978), pp 8-31 (p 25).
- (60) See the definition of parody as a genre in R.P. Falle and W. Beare, 'Parody', Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, edited by A.S. Preminger (Princeton, New Jersey, 1965).
- (61) Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'Fictional Music: Toward a Theory of Listening', in Theories of Reading, Looking, and Listening, edited by Harry R. Garvin (Lewisburg, 1981), pp 193-208 (pp 206-208). Rabinowitz points out that what distinguishes parody from other forms of assimilation is its constant self-consciousness.
- (62) Victor Erlich, Russian Formalism: History and Doctrine (New Haven, Conn., 1965), p 193.
- (63) The reader is, then, responsible for the deconstruction of the parodied text as much as he has been for its reconstruction. See Gerald Prince, 'On Readers and Listeners in the Narrative', Neophilologus, 55 (1971), pp 117-122.
- (64) Robert Alter, Partial Magic: the Novel as a Self-conscious Genre (California, 1975), p 15.
- (65) Tzvetan Todorov, Littérature et signification (Paris, 1967), p 49.

- (66) Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les choses (Paris, 1966), p 313.
- (67) Gérard Genette, 'Frontières du récit', Communications 8, pp 158-169 (p 169).
- (68) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 97.
- (69) Tzvetan Todorov, Poétique de la prose (Paris, 1971), p 93.
- (70) Michel Butor 'La Critique et l'invention' in Michel Butor, Répertoire III (Paris, 1960), pp 7-20 (p 7). See also Jean Ricardou, 'La Littérature comme critique' in Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman (Paris, 1971), pp 9-32.
- (71) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 31.
- (72) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 63.
- (73) Laurent Jenny, 'La Stratégie de la forme', Poétique, 27 (1976), pp 257-281 (pp 266-267).
- (74) E.D. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, p 74. Hirsch explains: 'An interpreter's preliminary generic conception of a text is constitutive of everything that he subsequently understands, and (...) this remains the case until that generic conception is altered' (p 74).
- (75) W.J. Bate, The Burden of the Past and the English Poet (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p 136. Bate detects in all literature a 'historical consciousness', which becomes 'a mode of aesthetic foregrounding in the novel' (p 136).
- (76) I.A. Richards breaks down 'meaning' into its components in I.A. Richards, Practical Criticism: a Study of Judgement (London, 1978): firstly, sense ('to say something'); secondly, feeling ('the whole conative-affective aspect of life'); thirdly, tone ('attitude to his listener'); lastly, intention ('purpose modifies speech' (pp 181-182). While these four constituents of meaning do not always expose themselves as in self-conscious fiction, Richards argues that they are invariably present in language and that any genre must have a pre-scribed law for each of these to follow.
- (77) Barbara Johnson, 'The Critical Difference: Balzac's Sarrasine and Barthes' S/Z', in Untying the Text, edited by Robert Young, pp 161-191 (p 167).
- (78) See Ziva Ben-Porat, 'The Poetics of Allusion - a Text Linking Device - in Different Media of Communication (Literature versus Advertising and Journalism)', in Panorama Sémiotique: Actes du Premier Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique, edited by Seymour Chatman, Umberto Eco, et al. (The Hague, 1979), pp 588-593.

- (79) Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 223.
- (80) Jean Ricardou, 'Pour une lecture rétrospective', Revue des Sciences Humaines, 177 (January - March, 1980) pp 51-60 (p 58).
- (81) Robert Young, in Untying the Text, edited by Robert Young, p 16.
- (82) Robert Scholes points out that 'at the heart of Structuralism is the idea of a system: a complete, self-regulating entity that adapts to new conditions by transforming its features while retaining its structure' (Robert Scholes, Structuralism in Literature (New Haven, Conn., 1974), p 15).
- (83) Claude Abastado, 'Situations de la parodie', Cahiers du XXe Siècle, 6 (1976), pp 9-37 (p 27).
- (84) Claude Bouché, 'Lautréamont: l'enjeu d'une écriture parodique', Cahiers XXe Siècle, 6 (1976), pp 39-51 (p 50).
- (85) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 18.
- (86) Robert Young, Untying the Text.
- (87) Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Parody and Appropriation in Francis Picabia, Pop, and Sigmar Polke', Artforum, 20 (7) (1982), pp 28-34 (p 30).
- (88) Robert Scholes, Structuralism in Literature (New Haven, Conn., 1974), p 84.
- (89) Raman Selden, 'The Reader in the Text', Durham University Journal, 73 (2) (June, 1982), pp 262-271 (p 269).
- (90) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous', p 15.
- (91) Robert Young, in Untying the Text, edited by Robert Young, p 16. Derrida himself describes 'cette dérive essentielle tenant à l'écriture comme structure itérative, coupée de toute responsabilité absolue' (Jacques Derrida, Marges de la philosophie (Paris, 1972), p 376). This lack of 'responsibility' to the fulfilment of a single meaning allows the text infinite freedom to create.
- (92) Barbara Johnson, 'The Critical Difference' in Untying the Text, p 166.
- (93) Jacques Derrida, 'Facteur de la vérité', Poétique, 21 (1975), pp 96-147 (p 96).
- (94) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 122.
- (95) Jacques Derrida, L'Écriture et la différence, p 426.

- (96) Barbara Johnson, 'The Critical Difference' in Untying the Text, p 116.
- (97) Raymond Federman, 'Federman: Voices within Voices', in Performance in Postmodern Culture, edited by Michel Benamon and Charles Carmello (Milwaukee, Wisc., 1977), pp 159-198 (p 161).
- (98) Jean Ricardou, 'Penser la Littérature aujourd'hui', Marche Romane, 21 (1-2) (1971), pp 15-16 (pp 15-16). See also Frank Kermode, 'Novels, Recognition, Deception', Critical Inquiry, 1 (1) (September, 1974), pp 106-111: Kermode compares the 'produced' text (scriptible), in which the reader must complete the work of creation, with the traditionally 'received' text.
- (99) Culler remarks that 'the function of genre convention is essentially to establish a contract between writer and reader so as to make certain relevant expectations operative and thus to permit both compliance with and deviation from accepted modes of intelligibility' (Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 147).
- 100) Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction (London, 1980), p 194.
- 101) Paul Ricoeur, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text', New Literary History, 5 (Autumn, 1973), pp 91-117 (p 116).
- 102) Roman Ingarden, 'Des différentes conceptions de la vérité dans l'oeuvre d'art', Revue d'Esthétique, 2 (1949), pp 162-180. Ingarden dispels the myth of vérité by arguing that, on account of its necessarily dynamic, evolving form, the 'vérité de texte' is not an absolute, fixed phenomenon. Georges Lavis, in 'Le Texte littéraire, le référent, le réel, le vrai', (Cahiers d'Analyse Textuelle, 13 (1971), pp 7-22) maintains that no human construction is definitive or ultimate, and that the literary signified (signifié) is therefore a temporary, indeterminate structure.
- 103) Robert Pinget, Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui Pratiques II (Jean Ricardou and Françoise Rossum-Guydon (Paris, 1972), p 317.
- 104) Julia Kristeva, 'Pour une sémiologie des paragrammes', Tel Quel, 29 (Spring, 1967), pp 49-61 (p 58). Kristeva redefines the reader's position as in league with the writer himself, or joint-creator of the text: ' "Ecrire" serait le "lire" devenu production, industrie: l'écriture - lecture, l'écriture paragrammatique serait l'aspiration vers une agressivité et une participation' (p 58). This is similar to Linda Hutcheon's notion of the 'composite identity' of the modern reader (Linda Hutcheon, 'Composite Identity: the Reader, the Writer, the Critic', in Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, pp 138-152).

- 105) Jeffrey Mehlman, Revolution and Repetition: Marx/Hugo/Balzac (California, 1977), p 109.
- 106) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte (Paris, 1973), p 10.
- 107) Mikel Dufrenne, Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique, vol I (Paris, 1953), p 287.
- 108) Jacques Derrida, L'Écriture et la différence, p 44.
- 109) Paul de Man first uses this term in 'Literature and Language: a Commentary', New Literary History, 4 (Autumn, 1972), pp 188-201 (p 188). This notion is later developed more fully in Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust (New Haven, Conn., 1979), pp 244-249, especially. 'Misreading', according to de Man, involves the reader in a continuous untying of the narrative, an unravelling of the compositional elements, so that the potential sense of the text is destroyed as it is perceived. This point is made also by David Caute in his book, The Illusion (New York), 1972), where the author remarks that 'the dialectical novel must inevitably de-mystify fiction by recognizing its fictitious nature' and that 'this recognition can be made only by the reader himself' (p 265). Finally, Linda Hutcheon describes how the reader is, therefore, caught up in a 'double movement', since he 'at once moves centrifugally and centripetally', as he builds and deconstructs at the same time (Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative, p 141).
- 110) Manfred Frank, Die unendliche Fahrt, (Frankfort, 1979), translated by Michael Schwerin as The Infinite Text (London, 1980), pp 77-78.
- 111) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 14.
- 112) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 31.
- 113) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 31.
- 114) Jean Ricardou, Problèmes du nouveau roman (Paris, 1967), p 91.
- 115) Jean Miesch, Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1965), p 90.
- 116) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 107.
- 117) Roland Barthes, Essais critiques, p 164.
- 118) The most detailed and serious discussion of the 'parasitical' nature of parody is found in Karl-Heinz Stierle, 'Werk und Intertextualität', in Dialog der Texte: Hamburger Kolloquium zur Intertextuelität, edited by Wolf Schmid and Wolf-Dieter Stempel (Vienna, 1983), pp 7-26.

- 119) The question as to whether or not parody is a 'parasitical' genre or mode is a parallel debate to that concerning the role of the deconstructionist narrative. J. Hillis Miller describes the deconstruction process as an 'alien' as well as a 'parasite', 'who has not simply the ability to invade a domestic enclosure, consume the food of the family, and kill the host, but the strange capacity, in doing all that, to turn the host into multitudinous proliferating replications of itself' (J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host', in Deconstructive Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, et al. (London, 1979), pp 217-251 (p 221). M.H. Abrams agrees with this interpretation of deconstruction as parasitical, in 'Historian as Critic, Critic as Pluralist', Critical Inquiry, 3 (3) (Spring, 1976), pp 441-446 (p 441).
- 120) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 108.
- 121) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 107.
- 122) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 108.
- 123) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 123.
- 124) Roland Barthes, 'L'Effet de réel', Communications 11 (Paris, 1968), p 88.
- 125) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 105.
- 126) Ziva Ben-Porat explains that 'the parodic representations expose the model's conventions and lay bare its devices through the co-existence of the two codes in the same message' (Ziva Ben-Porat, 'Method in Madness: Notes on the Structure of Parody, based on MAD TV Series', Poetics Today, 1 (1979), pp 245-272 (p 247).
- 127) M. Bal describes the functions of 'embedding' in 'Notes on Narrative Embedding', Poetics Today, 2 (Winter, 1981), pp 41-59). See also M. Bal, Narratologie (Paris, 1977), pp 57-63, especially.
- 128) Tzvetan Todorov first uses and describes the term enchâssement, in 'Les Catégories du récit littéraire', Communications 8, pp 131-155 (p 146).
- 129) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 32. Ricardou contrasts the 'récit conforme' with the 'récit abymé' which subverts the main narrative (p 32).
- 130) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 33.
- 131) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 50. It is useful to recall Gide's original conception of the mise en abyme operation: 'J'aime assez qu'en une oeuvre d'art, on retrouve ainsi transposé à l'échelle des personnages, le sujet même de cette oeuvre. Rien n'éclaire mieux

et n'établit plus sûrement toutes les proportions de l'ensemble. Ainsi, dans tels tableaux de Memling ou de Quentin Metzys, un petit miroir convexe et sombre reflète, à son tour, l'intérieur de la pièce où se joue la scène peinte. Ainsi, dans le tableau des Ménimes de Velasquez (mais un peu différemment). Enfin, en littérature, dans Hamlet, la scène de la comédie; et ailleurs dans bien d'autres pièces. (...) Aucun de ces exemples n'est absolument juste. Ce qui le serait beaucoup plus, ce qui dirait mieux ce que j'ai voulu dans mes Cahiers, dans mon Narcisse, et dans la Tentative, c'est la comparaison avec ce procédé du blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à mettre un second "en abyme" (André Gide, Journals 1889-1939 (Paris: Pléiade, 1948), p 41. This is analysed as a means to enlighten the main text by Lucien Dällenbach, in his work Le Récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme (Paris, 1977). A reflection of the work within the work is, however, not necessarily 'supportive of that incorporating text, as Valéry implies when he remarks that 'montrer dans la même phrase (le même récit) son reflet' is also to reveal 'son néant, ses fondements' (Paul Valéry, Oeuvres II (Paris: Pléiade, 1960), p 575). This subversive potential is realised in parody, so that the incorporated text actually fails to reflect the narrative which contains it. This is pointed out by Bruce Morrissette, in his comparison of Gide's original intention the mise en abyme device with the practice of 'false' mirror structures in the nouveaux romans (Bruce Morrissette, 'Le Nouveau roman et Gide', Comparative Literature Studies, 8 (1971), pp 125-142).

- 132) Jacques Derrida, De la grammatologie (Paris, 1967), p 434.
- 133) Wayne Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago, 1974), p 177. Co-existing narratives are mutually 'subtractive' because they literally take away the narrative focus from one another.
- 134) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 35.
- 135) Lucien Dällenbach, 'Réflexivité et lecture', Revue des Sciences Humaines, 177 (January-March, 1980), pp 17-35 (p 30).
- 136) Ann Jefferson, The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction, p 195.
- 137) Jean Ricardou, Problèmes du nouveau roman, p 173. See the discussion of 'L'Histoire dans l'histoire' (pp 171-190).
- 138) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 50.
- 139) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 50.
- 140) Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetorical of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the fantastic (Cambridge, 1981), p 117).



- 141) Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions: the Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre (Columbia, New York, 1983), p 224).
- 142) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, p 50.
- 143) Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions, p 206. Suleiman describes this situation as one semantic 'overflow' (p 206).
- 144) Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts (Bloomington, Indiana, 1979), p 20.
- 145) Brooke-Rose explains: 'A Code is over-determined when its information (narrative, ironic, hermeneutic, symbolic, etc.) is too dear, over-encoded, recurring by and responding to the purely informational need. The reader is then over-encoded (...)' (Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetoric of the Unreal, p 106). See also Michael Riffaterre's analysis of 'textual over-determination', in his article 'Interpretation and Descriptive Poetry: a Reading of Wordsworth's "Yew Trees" ', PTL, 2 (1) (1977), pp 103-122 (p 113).
- 146) This is not to suggest that parody is necessarily ridiculous. See Linda Hutcheon, 'Parody without Ridicule: Observations in Modern Literary Parody', Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, 5 (2) (Spring, 1978), pp 201-211.
- 147) Parody can be created from the interaction of the serious and the farcical. See Paul de Man, 'And Reading There', Modern Languages Notes, 99 (5) (December, 1984), pp 917-919 (p 919). See also Jean Cohen, 'Comique et poétique', Poétique, 61 (February, 1985), pp 53-60. Cohen analyses the effect of the comic on the text as 'une dé-dramatisation' (p 53).
- 148) 'Ce que nous appellerons ironie, c'est la référence moqueuse, le tournant en dérision, au roman traditionnel et simultanément donc à une conception de la vie' (Jean Miesch, Robbe-Grillet, p 89). Robbe-Grillet feels the need to distinguish between the ironic and the humorous, but concludes that such a distinction amounts to one of terminology: 'L'ironie ne demande à la fois qu'un parleur, l'humour demande à la fois un parleur et un écouteur. (...) je peux faire de l'ironie sans que personne n'y participe, je ne peux faire de l'humour que si vous participez, par exemple, à l'interrogation. Mais enfin, c'est une simple question de terminologie (Alain Robbe-Grillet in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie, colloque 2: cinéma/roman, p 212). Nevertheless, it is important to re-iterate Robbe-Grillet's emphasis on the reader-participation in humour.
- 149) Jean Ricardou defines 'l'humour textuel' as 'une rupture, un saut, qui donnent une mobilité à l'ensemble' (Jean Ricardou in Robbe-Grillet: analyse, théorie, colloque 2: cinéma/roman, pp 300-301.

- 150) Jean Cohen, 'Comique et poétique', p 53. Cohen considers comedy as a 'négation de l'émotion, une distanciation' (p 53). Miesch recognises the distancing effect of Robbe-Grillet's narrative, but describes the humour involved in such a distance between the serious, representational text and the subversive nouveau roman - as 'une simple reconnaissance de la distance (...) de l'oeuvre à la réalité' (Jean Miesch, Robbe-Grillet, p 91).
- 151) Culler describes mimesis as 'a serious statement of feelings about real problems or situations' (Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 153).
- 152) Gérard Genette, Figures, essais (Paris, 1966), p 84.
- 153) Stephen Bann expands on this 'criminal' or 'deviant' mentality of such devices in his article, 'L'apocryphe ou la loi nouvelle', Revue des Belles-Lettres, 1 (1982), pp 42-47 (p 45).
- 154) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, p 15
- 155) For a 'traditional' conception of artistic originality, see Jurij Tynyanov, quoted in Boris Eichenbaum, 'The Theory of the Formal Method', in Russian Formalist Criticism, edited by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reiss (Nebraska, 1965), pp 132-177 (p 134): 'All literary succession is first of all a struggle, a destruction of old values and reconstruction of old elements.' Tynyanov's point is that this 'succession' precludes the notion of 'absolute' originality.
- 156) Loy D. Martin, 'Literary Invention: the Illusion of Individual Talent', Critical Inquiry, 6 (1980), pp 649-667 (p 666). See also, for a discussion on the 'mortality' of literary forms and genres, Alistair Fowler, 'The Life and Death of Literary Forms', New Literary History, 2 (2) (Winter, 1971), pp 199-215.
- 157) Raman Selden, 'The Reader and the Text', Durham University Journal, 74 (2) (June, 1982), p 269.
- 158) Edward Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p 135.
- 159) See Jacques Derrida, 'Force et signification', L'Écriture et la différence (Paris, 1967), pp 30-44 especially.
- 160) Paul de Man, 'Action and Identity in Nietzsche', in Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Reader, edited by Robert Young (London, 1981), pp 266-268 (p 266).
- 161) Paul de Man, 'Action and Identity in Nietzsche', in Untying the Text, p 266. See also Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (New York, 1971).

- 162) Rodolphe Gasché, 'The Mixture of Genres, The Mixture of Styles and Figural Interpretation: Sylvie, by Gérard de Nerval', translated by Robert Vollrath, in Glyph: Textual Studies (7) (London, 1980), chapter V, p 103.
- 163) Rodolphe Gasché, 'The Mixture of Genres, The Mixture of Styles and Figural Interpretation: Sylvie, by Gérard de Nerval', in Glyph: Textual Studies (7), p 111.
- 164) Tuvia Shlonsky, 'Literary Parody: Remarks on its Method and Function', in Actes du IVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée II (The Hague, 1966), pp 797-801 (p 799).
- 165) Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Dialogic Imagination', translated by Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist, edited by Michael Holquist (London, 1981), p 76.
- 166) Tzvetan Todorov, 'Les Catégories du récit littéraire, Communications 8, pp 131-155 (p 146).
- 167) Stern is quoted as having described parody as 'eclectic, a technique of collage and juxtaposition' (Robert Stern, quoted by Paolo Portoghesi, After Modern Architecture (New York, 1982), p 89).
- 168) Sartre, in studying the references in Camus' La Peste, describes 'ce mouvement unificateur qui fond dans l'unité organique d'un seul mythe une pluralité de thèmes critiques et constructeurs' (Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Situation de l'écrivain en 1947', Situations I (Paris, 1947), pp 203-358; notes pp 359-374 (p 374)).
- 169) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- 170) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 106.
- 171) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 18.
- 172) Stephen Heath, The Nouveau Roman: a Study in the Practice of Writing (London, 1972), p 125.
- 173) Roland Barthes, in his preface to Catalogue de l'Exposition Emmanuel Pereire (Paris, 1965) (non-paginated).
- 174) This is Genette's term, and refers to the relations of one text to earlier texts. (Genette prefers this neologism to parody, because, he argues, critics can at least agree to its meaning). See Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes (Paris, 1982), pp 235-236.
- 175) Roland Barthes, Essais critiques, p 183.
- 176) Claude Simon, 'Je ne peux parler que de moi', Nouvelles Littéraires,

- 1809 (May 3, 1962), p 11.
- 177) See Christine Brooke-Rose on 'Parody of Literary Traditions', in her book, A Rhetoric of the Unreal, pp 113-117.
- 178) Louis Aragon, Les Collages (Paris, 1965), p 124.
- 179) Michel Butor, 'Comment se sont écrits certains de mes livres', in Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui, edited by Jean Ricardou and F. van Rossum-Guydon (Paris, 1972), pp 249-253 (p 249).
- 180) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, pp 85-86.
- 181) Roland Barthes, La Plaisir du texte, p 10.
- 182) Umberto Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (Indiana, 1976), p 139.
- 183) Ricardou establishes a causal link between non-representational or non-mimetic literary description and the replacement of the central signified by a plurality of meanings in the text: 'En toute perspective anti-représentative, le texte s'écrit au pluriel' (Jean Ricardou, Pour une théorie du nouveau roman (Paris, 1971), p 264).
- 184) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 106. Barthes believes that to limit the text to a single signifying structure is to sever its braid - 'c'est couper la tresse' (p 106).
- 185) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, p 10. Barthes has described the text of jouissance as 'Babel heureuse', since it grants the freedom necessary for unrestricted and interacting communication (p 10).
- 186) Roland Barthes, S/Z, p 206.
- 187) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, pp 25-26.
- 188) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, p 38.
- 189) Roland Barthes, Critique et vérité (Paris, 1966), p 53.
- 190) Susan Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions, p 203.
- 191) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, p 88.
- 192) Roland Barthes, Critique et vérité, p 189.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

### Sub-section one

- (1) Michel Foucault, 'Le Langage à l'infini', Tel Quel, 15 (Autumn, 1963), pp 44-53 (p 47).
- (2) B. Tomachevski, 'Thématique', in Théorie de la littérature, edited and translated by Tzvetan Todorov (Paris, 1965), pp 263-307 (pp 274-276, especially).
- (3) For an explanation of this Formalist term, see Boris Eichenbaum, 'La Théorie de la "methode formelle"', in Théorie de la littérature, pp 31-75; Juriij Tynjanov, 'On Literary Evolution', in Readings in Russian Poetics, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Michigan, 1978), pp 66-78.
- (4) Even the first effort to establish the narrator's status as that of the literary hero is hesitant, raising the reader's doubts as to Boris' suitability: 'Le héros se retourna, Maurice ... Moritz ... Boris ...' (Un Régicide, p 13).
- (5) From now until the Conclusion, references to Un Régicide will be given in brackets in the main text, after the quotation.
- (6) The adjective 'symbolic' is being used in a loose sense, denoting not only the representation but the generation of something beyond the particular object of description. For Barthes' definition of the symbolic, see his preface to Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet.
- (7) The term 'dégonflage' corresponds to Flaubert's technique of causing a sudden slump in the reader's expectations through the interjection of inappropriate, even comic, language or imagery. See Jonathan Culler, Flaubert: the Uses of Uncertainty (London, 1974), pp 97-100, especially. See also, for discussion of bathos in literature, J. Berryman, Berryman's Sonnets (New York, 1967).
- (8) The deliberate confusion of 'political' issues in Un Régicide is 'disrespectful' because, as Culler points out, genre is 'a conventional function of language, a particular relation to the world which serves a norm or expectation to guide the reader in his encounter with the text (Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature (London, 1975), p 136. In the event of this role and function of genre being abused, and the reader being knowingly misguided in the text, the narrative 'disrespects' its raison d'être.
- (9) Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions: the Ideological Novel

as a Literary Genre (New York, 1983), p 203. For Suleiman, the 'demonstrative force' of a text is invariably weakened by the introduction of irrelevant detail.

- (10) The recurrence of 'disait-il' after the newspaper accounts implies that Boris is reluctant to embrace unequivocally the Party Line and to adopt it as his own.
- (11) Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme (Paris, 1977), p 16.
- (12) Claude Simon provides the details implied in his term: 'J'avais le projet de faire un roman irréductible à tout schéma réaliste, c'est-à-dire un roman où les rapports entre les différents "séries" ou "ensembles" ne relèveraient pas d'un quelconque enchaînement ou déterminisme d'ordre psychologique, où encore de similitudes de situations ou de thèmes (...), et où encore il n'y aurait pas de personnages, de temps ou de lieux apparemment privilégiés' (Claude Simon, 'Claude Simon à la question', in Claude Simon: analyse, théorie, (Paris: 1974: 10/18 Union Générale d'Éditions), p 424. Simon's theory of non-realist literature corresponds to the 'fantasy' narration of Un Régicide.
- (13) André Gide, in Gide: Journal, 1889-1939 (Paris: Pléiade, 1948), p 41.
- (14) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Fragment autobiographique imaginaire', Minuit, 31 (November, 1978), pp 7-9 (p 7).
- (15) Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit Spéculaire, p 25.
- (16) Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman (Paris, 1978), p 49. Ricardou explains how the division of the textual unity in two parts is the beginning of a never-ending proliferation of narrative 'doubles'; Hamlet he takes to demonstrate this: 'C'est une double action qui traverse le drame et qui le reflète en petit (...) Ainsi Hamlet fait au-dessous de lui un Hamlet; il tue Polonius, père de Laertes, et voilà Laertes vis-à-vis de lui exactement dans la même situation que vis-à-vis de Claudius. Il a deux pères à venger. Il pourrait avoir deux spectres. (...) Le double est partout' (p 49).

#### Sub-section two

- (17) See Fred. Householder's analysis on the forming of 'critical ridicule', and how ridicule and farce can be employed to force the reader to

reflect on the textual strategies (Fred. W. Householder, Jr., 'Parodia', Classical Philology, 39 (1944), pp 1-9 (p 3)).

- (18) As Culler explains, the parodic prohibits a consistently 'serious' attitude towards the text: 'In calling something a parody we are specifying how it should be read, freeing ourselves from the demands of poetic seriousness and making curious features of the parody intelligible' (Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p 152).
- (19) Boris' 'insanity' has been analysed in detail in M.-M. Ball's 'Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Scriptor Ludens": a Study of the Ludic Element in his Novels' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queen Mary College, University of London, 1981), pp 83-95, especially. See also Jean Ricardou, Le Nouveau roman, for a parallel between the Boris - King character and King Lear (p 49). Finally, Boris reappears in La Maison de rendez-vous as 'Boris, le roi fou'.
- (20) For a general definition of the 'political' novel genre, see Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions, pp 17-21, especially. See also the criteria upon which La Jalousie is considered 'political', in Jacques Leenhardt's Lecture politique du roman, 'La Jalousie' d'Alain Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1973).
- (21) According to Riewald, parody is 'synthetic and analytic in its economical "trans-contextualising" of backgrounded material' (J.G. Riewald, 'Parody as Criticism', Neophilologus, 50 (1966), pp 125-148 (p 130). Riewald's particular application of the term 'trans-contextualising' is significant here because of its association with an analysis of the textual devices used in the parodied text.
- (22) The notion of the 'political' narrative coming into sharper focus is brought to light by M.-M. Ball who identifies the problem of the regicide - and by extension, the novel - as one of continually failing to produce a sharp, clear representation of the king himself: 'For the king to die, a clear représentation of him must be obtained (...)' (M.-M. Ball, Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Scriptor Ludens" , pp 19-20). Significantly, Robbe-Grillet has referred to his fiction as 'la poursuite d'une représentation impossible', thus implying the endless deferral of a determinate narrative (Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Fragment d'autobiographie imaginaire', p 7).
- (23) Boris' perseverance in spite of his incredulity mirror the reader's reaction, and the tension in his response to Un Régicide as a whole. See Wolfgang Iser, 'Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction', in Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore, 1978), pp 42-48, especially.
- (24) While it is true, as Linda Hutcheon argues, that parody is not 'simply a post-structuralist differential or relational kind of repetition that stresses only difference', it is also the case that 'parody is

not repetition that stresses sameness and stasis' (Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 101). Repetition is certainly being employed as a subversive, dissimilating device here.

- (25) It is of interest to note that the 'execution' (in its ambiguous sense) is dramatised in a 'scène de théâtre' entitled 'Un Régicide' in Souvenirs du triangle d'or, pp 95-96.
- (26) Boris' attempts to incriminate himself prefigure those of Mathias in Le Voyeur, whose ostensible intention of self-acquittal disguises the narrator's effort to construct a sado-erotic murderer.
- (27) This textual 'trou' is re-enacted in Le Voyeur, where, after the narration informs us that 'Mathias n'a plus qu'à se laisser descendre' (i.e. and perform the murder) there follow two blank pages in the novel, during which time the act ought to have taken place (Le Voyeur, pp 87-91). Similarly, in Un Régicide, the 'gap' in the text represents the non-event of the regicide act.
- (28) 'Sa torpeur' is deliberately ambiguous' for Laura wishes as much for Boris to 'wake up' as she does herself - otherwise the 'political' narrative will 'sleep'. See Chapter Ten, sub-section one.
- (29) The role of clichés and stereotypes is significant in parody, for they represent, as Sartre explains, the most firmly established of myths: 'Elle (la parodie) consiste à (...) souligner le caractère conventionnel et culturel de ce qui passait pour original et naturel. Elle prend donc pour matériau les formes stéréotypés du langage et de l'idéologie, les mythes, les lieux communs, les formules figés' (Jean-Paul Sartre, Qu'est-ce que la littérature? Situations II (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp 55-330 (p 73). The incorporation of a 'panoply of popular thematics' in Robbe-Grillet is considered by Morrisette to represent the 'playful' interaction of parodied material and turn the 'inter-textual assemblage' into a confusion of images inevitably recognisable to the reader (Bruce Morrisette, Intertextual Assemblage in Robbe-Grillet, from 'Topology' to 'The Golden Triangle' (Fredericton, 1979), p 12.
- (30) See Susan Stewart, Nonsense Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature (London, 1979), pp 34-47, especially. Stewart identifies one of the most popular types of nonsense in the contemporary novel as that of 'simultaneity', which transforms the text from the communication of a single meaning to a field of play in which the ambiguity of language and the proliferation of puns has free rein. The ultimate outcome is, of course, nonsensical.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

### Sub-section one

- (1) Dieter Petzgold, Formen und Funktionen der englischen Nonsense - Dichtungen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert (Nuremberg, 1972): Petzgold refers to his fifth 'mode' of nonsense as that of compositional neologisms (i.e. not new words, but a new arrangement of words) with no denotative sense.
- (2) Elizabeth Sewell, The Field of Nonsense (London, 1952), pp 2-3.
- (3) See Bruce Morrissette, 'Games and Game Structures in Robbe-Grillet', Yale French Studies, 41 (1968), pp 159-167 (p 163). At Cerisy in 1971, Robbe-Grillet gives the theoretical and ideological justification of the conceptual model of the 'jeu' in the nouveau roman: as the sense of the 'sérieux' of 'traditional' art disappears, so the 'jeu' of contemporary writing surfaces to give the author the opportunity to exploit the 'champ de cette liberté' and thereby fulfil his creative potential: 'votre organisation du jeu dans votre main, la bataille sur la table seront en même temps la création des règles, la création du jeu et l'exercice de votre liberté, donc aussi bien la destruction des règles, pour laisser de nouveau le champ libre à l'homme libre qui viendra encore après' (Alain Robbe-Grillet in Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui I, edited by Jean Ricardou and F. van Rossum-Guydon (Paris, 1972), pp 127-128). The words of his text are, therefore, the instruments by which the writer can locate the 'game' and exercise his freedom.
- (4) For a discussion of the particular components of the fantastic and their overall sense, see Rudolf B. Schmerl, 'Fantasy as Technique', in SF: the Other Side of Realism, edited by Thomas D. Claeson (Ohio, 1971), pp 110-115.
- (5) 'Elle (Aimone) se content/de rire, comprenant mal encore ces mots que je décline et conjugue pour elle' (Un Régicide, p 140). This grammatical reference to Boris' words is exploited in Djinn where the text is 'intended' to provide a guide to 'la progression régulière des difficultés grammaticales de notre langue' for American students (Djinn, p 9). The allusion to the laws of grammar interrupts the 'fantastic' sense of Boris' words, by focussing the reader's attention on the mechanics rather than on the effects of the communication.
- (6) Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (London, 1985), p 96. See also Roman Jakobson, 'The Dominant', in Readings in Russian Poetics, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Michigan, 1978), pp 82-87.
- (7) Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago, 1974), p 10. The force is 'oppositive' because it forms an ironic 'counter-movement'

in the text.

- (8) The recurrent use of 'nous' as a device to incite in the reader the same doubts as in the narrator re-inforces, or 'doubles', the deconstruction process in Un Régicide. Georges Poulet describes how the reader is encouraged by the narrative to expose its 'ineffability and its fundamental indeterminacy' by the notion of 'conspiracy with the narrator' (Georges Poulet, 'Phenomenology of Reading', New Literary History 1 (Autumn, 1969), pp 53-68 (pp 57-58).
- (9) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (10) Lucien Dällenbach draws the connection between 'cette expérience gidienne du miroir' with 'celles d'autres symbolistes' (Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme (Paris, 1977), p 16. For Dällenbach, the mirror structure creates the same paradoxical movement of any symbol: it reflects er, and is therefore similar to an object, yet its image inverts and distorts that object. The sirens, similarly, represent the fantastic, but, as semi-human creatures, are partly 'real' phenomena.
- (11) From another perspective, the tower can also be seen to incorporate Malus, rather than be incorporated in his imagination: observing the tower for the first time, Boris remarks that '(...) une vieille légende veut que, jadis, un homme solitaire l'ait habitée, vivant à l'écart, dont on ne sait quelles chimères' (Un Régicide, p 82). This reveals the so-called mirror-structure of the tower in a subversive change of roles, as it moves from the reflecting image to the actual, reflected object.
- (12) The pun of 'tour' thus generates the legend of the 'tower' itself as Boris takes his 'turn' to recount a story.
- (13) David Green describes the process whereby 'a statement, or presentation of an action or situation (...) intentionally diverges from, and is incongruous with, the apparent or pretended meaning presented to the initiated' (D.H. Green, Irony in the Medieval Romance (Cambridge, 1979), p 9. The expectations of the reader are, certainly, as Blanchot reminds us, fictional - 'la phrase du récit nous met en rapport avec le monde de l'irréalité qui est l'essence de la fiction' - but they relate, nevertheless, to the intelligible, recognisable world of fantasy and not the fictiveness of the literary text itself (Maurice Blanchot, 'Le Langage de la fiction', in Maurice Blanchot, La Part du feu (Paris, 1949), p 83. Malus le Solitaire 'disappoints' the reader because he is not a ready-made creation of the fantasy world, but a creation-in-the-making, whose very fictiveness destroys the fantastic illusion.
- (14) Jacques Lacan, Ecrits (Paris, 1966), p 298.

(15) Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit Spéculaire, p 16.

(16) It is not monotonous for long: Boris, Eric le blond, and Marc all produce their own variations of Malus' 'poetic voice' in the construction attempts of 'la vieille chanson'.

Sub-section two

(17) Both Le Voyeur and Dans le labyrinthe employ the metaphor of weather to the same effect: Mathias and the soldier are engaged in a constant struggle to find their way through the fog and mist, but are, in the end, imprisoned in the clouds of 'brumes' and 'brouillard'; similarly, the weather cycle, which returns invariably to the thick mist, marks the cyclical, repetitive form of the narrative.

(18) For a discussion of the replacement of rational order by randomness and anarchy in the narrative, see Gerhard Hoffmann, Alfred Hornung, and Rüdiger Kunow, ' "Modern", "Postmodern", and "Contemporary" as Criteria for the Analysis of Twentieth Century Literature', Amerikastudien, 22 (1977), pp 19-46.

(19) It is interesting to speculate whether the recurrence of the sleep-motif in Robbe-Grillet's fiction is an ironic reference to Valéry's metaphor ('Le lion est fait de mouton assimilé') (Paul Valéry, Oeuvres II, edited by Jean Hytier (Paris: Pléiade, 1960), p 478). In the case of Un Régicide, it is Boris, the intended motor of fiction, who is 'assimilated' by sheep, and not vice versa (See end of Chapter Nine, sub-section two).

(20) Robbe-Grillet equates literary 'silence' with 'traditional' narrative which, he argues, operates as a silent expression of ideas, unlike the nouveaux romans (and its precursors) which produce the sounds of a dynamic utterance: 'Je peux vous réciter des pages entières de Flaubert, de Mallarmé... les mots sont des paroles que j'entends toujours, trente ans après. Ça se retient. Mais Balzac, Malraux, voilà que je n'ai rien retenu' - il n'y a pas de production de sons' (Alain Robbe-Grillet, Private Interview (August, 1986)).

(21) James Allen considers the contemporary writer to be 'fighting like a lunatic for the survival of his own identity, constantly feeling the need to stop his work and take stock of his self' (James Sloan Allen, 'Self-consciousness and the Modernist Temper', Georgia Review, 33 (3) (Autumn, 1979), pp 601-620 ( p 618)).

(22) The change of the mist into snow upon the narrator's death occurs again at the end of Dans le labyrinthe, where the soldier fades completely from the narrative, as though invisible through the heavy snowfall. In both cases, the snow marks the end of the novel itself.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER TEN

### Sub-section one

- (1) Julia Kristeva, 'Problèmes de la structuration du texte' Tel Quel: Théorie d'ensemble (Paris, 1968), pp 297-316 (p 299). Kristeva's 'polysémie' is the term given to the permutation of 'grammatical' or literary possibilities worked by and in the text, whose infinite play becomes the work of the reader's productivité (p 299).
- (2) Roland Barthes, Critique et vérité (Paris, 1966), p 50.
- (3) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte (Paris, 1973), p 10.
- (4) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, p 86.
- (5) Michel Butor, Répertoire I, p 10.
- (6) Direct presentation is my term, and refers to the immediate recording, free from analysis, of what is perceived.
- (7) Lucien Dällenbach, Le Récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme (Paris, 1977), p 119.
- (8) See Notes to Chapter Eight, note no.(4), above.
- (9) As in Le Voyeur, where Mathias struggles against time (which incriminates him), so here Boris is forced to react against the pressures of chronology (as a novelistic convention) in order to ensure his freedom.
- (10) Jacques Derrida, 'La Loi du genre', Glyph: Textual Studies 7, chapter 8 (London, 1980), p 184. By débordement, Derrida means the 'overlapping' of one narrative, or genre, into another.
- (11) In fact, it could be argued that the character of the king is absent from Un Régicide altogether: the 'appearance' of the king is invariably in representational form (in the newspapers, on the radio, in the photograph, post-card, in Boris' imagination) and that he mocks the novel itself by his refusal to attend. This would also explain the motif of the 'référence moqueuse' of the allusions to the Roi Jean, and the perpetual grin on the character's face.
- (12) The most detailed discussion of the irony produced by the discrepancy between the reader's knowledge and the aspirations of the narrative ('dramatic irony') is to be found in Groupe MU, 'Ironique et iconique', Poétique, 36 (1978), pp 427-442. (This article also studies the

relationship between the ironic and the parodic ethos.)

(13) Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du Texte, p 10.

(14) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture (Paris, 1953), p 124.

#### Sub-section two

(15) Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: the Metafictional Paradox (Ontario, 1980), p 126.

(16) Roland Barthes, Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, pp 87-88.

(17) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Sur les thèmes générateurs', his preface to Projet pour une révolution à New York (non-paginated).

(18) Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Sur les thèmes générateurs', his preface to Projet pour une révolution à New York (non-paginated).

(19) In fact, the colour re-appears in its same murderous role in 'la tueuse chevelure rousse' of Projet pour une révolution à New York which turns out to be that of Laura, the revived political activist now turned underground assassin (p 67).

(20) Boris' role of the 'double agent' of killer and victim, appears as an early figuration of Wallas, of Les Gommés who, as an ' "Agent Spécial" ', is both the detective and assassin (p 41). Both protagonists, in this sense, exercise what Hutcheon calls the 'de-marginalization of literature', in that they break out of the conventional character-role boundaries into autonomous, fictive structures (Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody, (p 100).

(21) The 'allegiance', of course, is created by the reader's expectation and not the 'behaviour' of Red or Malus, which has in itself done little to promise any particular role-fulfilment. That reader-expectation can still be counted on - there would be no final déception without it - is an indication that the reader is torn between an active participation in the text and the passive receipt of a fait accompli in which 'he gives himself up (...) to imaginative experience' (Lianne Norman, 'Risk and Redundancy', PMLA, 90 (1975), pp 280-287 (p 285).

(22) The word 'soleil' produces the narrative's colours, since it allows for the first time for the natural beauty of the island to be described. In this sense it is vital to the generative word play of the 'high fantasy' narrative - dramatically cut dead when the sun disappears beyond the horizon. See Bruce Morrissette, 'Post-Modern Generative Fiction: Novel and Film', Critical Inquiry, 2 (2) (Winter, 1975), pp 249-255 (pp 253-254, especially), and Jean Ricardou, in Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui I, edited by Jean Ricardou and Françoise van Rossum-

Guydon (Paris, 1972), pp 118-120.

- (23) The fear of the dark represents the fear of artistic sterility: a parallel can be drawn between the 'couloirs sombres' of Dans le labyrinthe and the 'cabine sombre' of Un Régicide where both narrators reach an impasse in the narrative. Significantly, Boris and the soldier die, as do their creations, in the darkness.
- (24) The flight of the crows, like that of the seagulls in Le Voyeur, is emphatically unrealistic: they are those of the narrator's imagination and not of the outside world (See Pour un nouveau roman, p 139).
- (25) It has been pointed out that the death of narrator/narrative in Dans le labyrinthe is generated by the snow (See Chapter Ten, sub-section one). The total absence of colour (as opposed to the textual 'blancheur') also brings about death elsewhere in Robbe-Grillet's fiction: Violette disappears (the colour) and dies (the young girl) in Le Voyeur: the 'trou rouge' - the absence of red - leads to Simon Lecoeur's death in Djinn.
- (26) The description of this noise as 'unpleasant' is an admission that, however 'fictive' the referents of the language, words inevitably refer beyond themselves: the actual phonetic sound of 'la trépidation des moteurs ...' does not produce the 'unpleasantness', but rather reflects it, since it reminds the reader of a sound he already knows. In this sense, literature is not fully self-contained (See Jean-Paul Sartre, 'L'Ecrivain et sa langue', Situations 9 (Paris, 1972), pp 40-82, and Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Qu'est-ce que la littérature', Situations 2 (Paris, 1948), pp 57-330).
- (27) The office to which Boris retreats in the Usine Générale and where he invents his 'fantasy' narrative, recurs elsewhere in Robbe-Grillet's novels as the place of artistic activity: in Les Gommés, Daniel Dupont is last witnessed writing in his office; in Dans le labyrinthe, the narrator returns periodically to his bedroom to continue with his novel. Yet these places of artistic solitude fail to guard the narrator from external affairs, just as the writer never creates in a vacuum and 'tous les livres contiennent la fusion de quelques redites comptées (...)' (Stéphane Mallarmé, Oeuvres complètes, edited by Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Pléiade, 1945), p 367).
- (28) The 'siren' is ambiguous: it is both the manifestation of danger (the legendary mermaid figure) and the warning against that danger (the bell). This is sounded 'again' in Le Voyeur - it is conceivably to Boris that the narrator of Le Voyeur refers when he writes 'C'était comme s'i personne n'avait entendu' - where the siren at once warns the passengers of the boat's departure and creates 'une (...) violence sans objet' (Le Voyeur, p 9).

- (29) The 'chien noir' re-appears in La Maison de rendez-vous and Projet pour une révolution à New York as the same cryptic, horrific creature: its only purpose in the text seems to be to imply violence, to represent a threat.
- (30) Alain Robbe-Grillet, 'Sur les thèmes générateurs', preface to Projet pour une révolution à New York (non-paginated).

## NOTES TO THE CONCLUSION

- (1) Philippe Sollers is among many when he makes the confusion of the difficulties in reconciling the interpretations of Pour un nouveau roman with Pour un nouveau roman itself; he concludes, ironically, it would seem: 'Jamais, en somme, la confusion ne semble avoir été plus forte' (Philippe Sollers, 'Alain Robbe-Grillet: Pour un nouveau roman' Tel Quel, 18 (Summer, 1964), pp 93-94 (p 94).
- (2) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 18.
- (3) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 18.
- (4) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 65.
- (5) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 116.
- (6) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 117.
- (7) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 126.
- (8) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 140.
- (9) Although, as Chapter Two has demonstrated, it is justifiable to claim that Pour un nouveau roman expounds the theory for a highly 'subject-ivised' narrative throughout the compilation.
- (10) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 128.
- (11) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (12) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 35.
- (13) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 36,
- (14) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 39.
- (15) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 41.
- (16) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 43.
- (17) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (18) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (19) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 130.
- (20) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 40.



- (21) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 133.
- (22) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 143.
- (23) Roland Barthes, Critique et vérité (Paris, 1966), p 36.
- (24) Paul Bové, 'A "New Literary History" of Modern Poetry: History and Deconstruction in the Works of Walt Whitman, Stevens and Olson' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1975), pp 106-107.
- (25) Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p 127.
- (26) Julia Kristeva, Semiotikè: Recherches pour une sémanalyse (Paris, 1969), p 146.
- (27) Fred. J. Householder, Jr., 'Parodia', Classical Philology, 39 (1944), pp 1-9 (p 4).
- (28) F.R. Leavis, quoted in Kingsley Amis, 'Introduction', New Oxford Book of Light Verse (London, 1978), p 143.
- (29) Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic (Cambridge, 1981), p 367.
- (30) Gérard Genette, Figures, essais (Paris, 1966), p 127.
- (31) Leslie Hill, 'La Maison de rendez-vous', Paragraph 3 (1984), pp 9-21 (p 19). The 'irreconcilability' of Robbe-Grillet's writing is discussed in more 'positive' terms in Franklin J. Matthews, Alain Robbe-Grillet: La Maison de rendez-vous (1965), pp 159-185). Matthews considers the paradox of 'surface et profondeur' as creative of 'une littérature conflictuelle, c'est-à-dire une littérature de tensions non résolues' where the reader is engaged, like the narrative itself, in 'un conflit de chaque instant entre une objectivité absolue et une subjectivité totale' (p 169).
- (32) Daniel Bilous, 'Récrire l'intertexte: La Bruyère pasticheur de Montaigne' Cahiers de littérature du XVIIe siècle, 4 (1982), pp 106-114 (p 107).
- (33) Roland Barthes, S/Z, XXXIV 'Le babil du sens', pp. 85-86 (Paris, 1970). (p 16).
- (34) Roland Barthes, 'Le Point sur Robbe-Grillet', preface to Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (Paris, 1963), pp. 7-16 (p. 16).

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