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ABRA-CADAVER: THE ANTI-DETECTIVE STORY
IN POSTMODERN FICTION.

University of Washington, Ph.D., 1976
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LAURA PRINDLE RICE-SAYRE

1976

Abra-Cadaver: The Anti-Detective Story
in Postmodern Fiction

by

Laura Prindle Rice-Sayre

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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to Offer Degree Comparative Literature

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Date: May 18, 1976

We have carefully read the dissertation entitled Abra-Cadaver: The Anti-Detective Story in Postmodern Fiction

_____ submitted by
Laura Prindle Rice-Sayre _____ in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following
joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

This dissertation examines a major aspect of postmodern fiction: its various attempts at parody of the detective story. By discovering in turn the conventions of the classical detective story, the hard-boiled thriller, the spy and suspense thrillers and then by analysing the use of such forms by a wide variety of modern and postmodern writers, Rice-Sayre establishes a sense of development through literary generations. She is able to trace convincingly the movement from god-centered to man-centered to centerless universe in twentieth century European and American fiction. In arriving at this view, she compares and contrasts attitudes to plot as puzzle or enigma, hero and implied reader as detective or criminal, the creation of hypothetical fictions within fiction, spatial and temporal organization, self-reference in novel form and, in general, to the central issues of narrative logic--so stylized in the detective genre, so subverted in its literary parodies.

The dissertation thus combines close attention to the analyses of particular works with broad general perspective both in literary history and in the breadth of authors included: Stein, Borges, Butor, Robbe-Grillet, Hawkes, Puig, Queneau, Pinget, Cortázar, Pynchon, Ricardou and Nabokov. A special bibliography suggests other works for which her conclusions are relevant. She shows constant concern for the problems of critical definition inherent in such a far-reaching project and a real awareness of work already done on both general and specific issues.

Rice-Sayre's study is the first such thorough examination of literary detective parody and as such already represents an important contribution to scholarship; however, her careful attention to methodology and style as well as the imagination she has brought to the task make the result a particularly worthwhile one.

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Doctoral Dissertation

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Signature Laura Lee Sayre

Date June 8, 1976

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DEDICATION

To my mother and father.

INTRODUCTION

In Agatha Christie's detective novel Cards on the Table, a murder occurs at a bridge party. The host is stabbed to death with a poisoned dagger. Sergeant Battle of Scotland Yard is called in immediately to question the suspects (guests). All of the latter, with the exception of a Mrs. Oliver--a famous detective story writer--are kept in the smoking room by a constable and brought into the living room one by one to be questioned about the events of the evening. Mrs. Oliver, having a great interest in real life crime, is allowed to remain with Sergeant Battle to watch the proceedings. When Battle asks to see one Dr. Roberts first, the following conversation takes place between Sergeant Battle and Mrs. Oliver:

"I should have kept him to the end," said Mrs. Oliver.

"In a book I mean," she added apologetically.

"Real life's a bit different," said Battle.

"I know," said Mrs. Oliver. "Badly constructed."1

It is against the middle-class ethos and the positivist aesthetics of a traditional writer such as Mrs. Oliver that the modern writer and the postmodern writer have reacted. In a novel by Mrs. Oliver, we are assured of getting geographical realism (the setting will be London, for instance, or Bath); mental comfort (all the events will be linked by cause and effect); moral vindication (the real criminal will be caught and punished); and aesthetic balance (there will be a beginning, middle, and end). Mrs. Oliver, even if she has some doubts about how well real life is constructed, will assure us in her novels that man has his world well under control and that the world is a meaningful, intelligible, manipulable place. Her view of the world is comforting.

Aesthetically, the modern writers reacted against the traditional novel, the well-made novel of a Mrs. Oliver, the well-made plays of the pre-Ibsenites and the problem plays of the post-Ibsenites (i.e. those of Pinero or Augier) by refusing to create linear narratives, and in many cases, by turning away from what they considered to be the discursive, utilitarian traits of prose to the more lyric, poetic modes. This rejection of linear narrative is what William V. Spanos in defining Modernism calls the "anti-aristotelianism" of the modern writer:

. . . the anti-Aristotelianism of the Symbolists [Modernists] constituted a rejection of "prose" in favor of "poetry" or, as Henri Bergson observes in Time and Free Will, a rejection of language that solidifies "our conscious states" for the purposes of social action in favor of a language that achieves an autonomous and something like autotelic status. On the level of mimesis, Symbolist anti-Aristotelianism constituted a rejection of the primacy of linear and temporal plot in favor of the simultaneity of "spatial form."²

This rejection of linear form in favor of spatial form is evident in T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land or Ezra Pound's Cantos. Yet it is misleading to think the Modernists gave up prose in favor of poetry. Rather, prose too rejected the linear narrative and turned to spatial form. We see this in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury or Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse, for example. The particular aesthetic problem of the modern period, then, was to deal with the discrepancy between the structured, artificial nature of art and the contingent, chaotic, formless nature of our experience of life. Mrs. Oliver dismisses life as "badly constructed"; the Modernist rejects the traditional novel as positivistically constructed. In "Process and Product: A Study of Modern Literary Form," Donald Kartiganer discusses the complexity with which the modern writer confronted the conflict of movement and design, of contingency and

form, of process and product: "In the twentieth century, literature has become increasingly conscious of its own attempts to achieve viable form, has become what is largely a drama of human consciousness in the very process of encountering experience. At the same time it remains convinced that such a drama must move toward at least a momentary stasis which crowns that encounter yet does not belie its genuine process quality."³ It is precisely this self-conscious effort to give form to our experience of reality that led the modern writers to turn from the plotted, historical novel to the ahistorical, interior, spatial study of human consciousness. Like the Modernists, many contemporary writers reject the positivism of the traditional novel, but at the same time, they challenge the primacy of the interior world so central to the modernist aesthetic.

There is, it is generally agreed, a distinction to be made between Modernism and Postmodernism, yet the particular terms of this distinction are hard to formulate because Postmodernism is not so much a rejection of Modernism as a continuation of it with certain important differences. In "Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Post-War Fiction," Michael Holquist seeks to prove that "what the structural and philosophical presuppositions of myth and depth psychology were to Modernism (Mann, Joyce, Woolf, etc.), the detective story is to Postmodernism (Robbe-Grillet, Borges, Nabokov, etc.)."⁴ In defining Modernism, Holquist states that Modernism "had dual roots in psychology and myth, Freud and Frazer were the Siamese twins who presided muse-like at the creation of The Waves or Ulysses. The emphasis was on the innermost inner life, resulting in a psychological impulse that was lyrical, non-societal, relational--constantly exposing itself to the danger of aesthetic

solipsism" (Holquist, p. 145). Holquist goes on to say that in these ahistorical works where time is Bergsonian rather than chronological, we find an attempt to define the recurring patterns of experience, non-temporal paradigmatic human occasions, and an attempt to concretize the archetypal meaning of such events (Holquist, p. 146). In opposition to Modernism, Postmodernism is anti-psychological, anti-mythical, and anti-universal. It concerns itself not with people but with things (Holquist, p. 148).

If Holquist's distinctions between Modernism and Postmodernism are of interest to us here, it is neither because he is totally right in his delineations, nor because he is totally wrongheaded in making the distinctions he does. Rather, his definitions do point up the confusion that ensues when we try to generalize about the two movements (Modernism is this, Postmodernism is that) while at the same time retaining a certain validity. We can say that Ulysses is based on myth and is concerned with the inner depiction of experience, but we may question whether it is really "non-societal." This novel seems to tell us a great deal about Irish culture. On the other hand, we wonder about the "anti-mythical" nature of Butor's L'Emploi du temps or Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages. In what way is Joyce's use of the Odyssey different from Butor's use of the Theseus myth and the Cain myth or Robbe-Grillet's use of the Oedipus myth? We may agree that Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway and The Waves are psychological in that they are concerned with man's inner life, yet what are we to say about the inner lives of the characters in Nathalie Sarraute's Le Planetarium, Robbe-Grillet's La Jalousie or Nabokov's The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, Lolita, or Pale Fire? We may also well ask in what specific ways Borges is anti-mythical and anti-universal as we read his numerous stories about the

labyrinth. Clearly, the psychology in Mrs. Dalloway and in La Jalousie is different, just as the mythical ground in The Waste Land and Les Gattes is different, but calling Modernism mythological and psychological, calling Postmodernism anti-mythological and anti-psychological is perhaps too great a generalization to be very useful.

Both Modernism and Postmodernism are aesthetically anti-Aristotelian, and thus both have created self-consciously spatialized rather than linear works of art. As David Antin points out in "Modernism and Postmodernism: Approaching the Present in American Poetry," spatialized works "are modeled after collage and are based on materials without commitment to explicit syntactical relations between elements."⁵ A spatialized work of art not only denies the positivistic, linear, historical narrative, but is also to great extent in conflict with the structure of psychoanalysis which, like the detective story, works from effect back to the initial cause. In the same way, collage is also inimical to the archetypal narrative structure of myth. If modern writers such as Eliot, Pound and Woolf seem psychological and mythical, it is perhaps because their art, though spatialized, has at its center man and as its goal a search for definite meaning in terms of tradition and universality. Their collage is a collage with a focus to which all the elements of the collage relate. Claude Edmonde Magny points out the man-centeredness of Modernism in her discussion of Gide's Les Faux-Monnayeurs in which Edouard dreams of writing a pure novel: "Le roman pur dont rêve Édouard, c'est au fond celui qui serait seulement l'histoire d'une âme, considérée en dehors de tous les avatars historiques qui constituent son devenir temporel. 'Une sorte de tragique a jusqu'à présent, me semble-t-il, échappé presque à la littérature. Le roman s'est

occupé des traverses du sort, de la fortune bonne ou mauvaise, des rapports sociaux, du conflit des passions, des caractères; mais point de l'essence de l'être' . . ."6 In short, the modernist project, while denying the positivist view of man as manipulator of a rationally intelligible world, retains the idea of a meaningful, man-centered world--even if that world is chaotic and irrational.

The postmodern project challenges not only the positivist view of man as manipulator, but also the modernist view of man as the center of a chaotic world. William Spanos in his article on the postmodern imagination suggests that:

" . . . unlike the early modern imagination--indeed, in partial reaction against its refusal of historicity--the postmodern imagination, agonized as it has been by the on-going boundary situation which is contemporary history, is an existential imagination. Its anti-Aristotelianism--its refusal to fulfill causally oriented expectations, to create fictions (and in extreme cases, sentences) with beginnings, middles and ends--has its source, not so much in an aesthetic as in an existential critique of the traditional Western view of man in the world, especially as it has been formulated by positivistic science and disseminated by the vested interests of the modern--technological--City. It is not, in other words, the ugliness, the busyness, the noisiness of a world organized on the principle of utility that has called forth postmodern anti-Aristotelianism; it is rather, though the two are not mutually exclusive, the anthropomorphic objectification of a world in which God is dead or has withdrawn.7 [my emphasis]

Spanos points out that what is at the base of the existentialist critique of positivist humanism--thus, actually at the base of the difference between Modernism and Postmodernism--is the difference between furcht (fear) and angst (dread) as defined by Heidegger and Kierkegaard. Fear has an object which can be dealt with in some way, while dread has no object and cannot be dealt with by attacking it or by analyzing it (Spanos,

pp. 148-49). In brief, Spanos argues that the modern writer, while recognizing the existence of dread and while rejecting the Aristotelian linearity of the nineteenth-century positivists, created a spatialized, iconic, autotelic art which viewed phenomena in the world as problems to be solved, which turned dread into fear, and which did not challenge the positivistic "questions and answers" frame of reference. The existentialists reacted against this "final solution" mentality--be it positivist or modernist--but kept man, the giver of meaning, as the center of a world filled with angst. The Postmodernists deny that there is any center in the universe, but agree with the existentialists that there can be no final answers: "It is . . . no accident that the paradigmatic archetype of the postmodern literary imagination is the anti-detective story (and its anti-psychoanalytical analogue), the formal purpose of which is to evoke the impulse to "detect" and/or to psychoanalyze in order to violently frustrate it by refusing to solve the crime (or find the cause of the neurosis)" (Spanos, p. 154).

It is my belief, indeed, it is the basic assumption of this study, that Spanos and others⁸ are correct in stating that a major structuring principle of postmodern novels is the anti-detective story, or in other words, the parody of the detective story. Spanos, who has gone further than most in this regard, makes a crucial misinterpretation of much of the postmodern effort, however, when he assumes that spatialized works are necessarily man-centered. He states that some modes of postmodern writing, though they bear resemblance to aspects of the existential imagination, are really extensions of early iconic modern literature in that they are spatialized and thus jeopardize "the encouraging post-World War II impulse

to recover the temporality of the literary medium from the plastic arts, which is to say, to engage literature in an ontological dialogue with the world in behalf of the recovery of the authentic historicity of modern man" (Spanos, p. 166). Among the works Spanos lists as guilty of this form of "bad faith" are, for example, the field poetry of Charles Olson and the nouveaux romans of Michel Butor and Alain Robbe-Grillet. It is true that much of postmodern literature is based on the principle of collage, just as is much of modern literature, but there is an important distinction to be made here--one which Spanos overlooks: the modern collage is focused, centered on man; the postmodern collage is centerless. This distinction is the one Jacques Derrida makes in his essay "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines" which will be discussed in connection with Michel Butor's L'Emploi du temps later in this study. Perhaps for now the clearest explanation of the difference which occurs when a spatialized form becomes centerless is to be found in Jorge Luis Borges' views on the labyrinth as he expressed them to L. S. Dembo during an interview in 1970:

Dembo: Has the minotaur ever come out of the labyrinth?

Borges: Well, I have written two sonnets; in the first, a man is supposed to be making his way through the dusty and stony corridors, and he hears a distant bellowing in the night. And then he makes out footprints in the sand and he knows that they belong to the minotaur, that the minotaur is after him, and, in a sense, he, too is after the minotaur. The minotaur, of course, wants to devour him, and since his only aim in life is to go on wandering and wandering, he also longs for the moment. In the second sonnet, I had a still more gruesome idea--the idea that there was no minotaur--that the man would go on endlessly wandering. That may have been suggested by a phrase in one of Chesterton's Father Brown books. Chesterton said, "What a man is really afraid of is a maze without a center." I suppose he was thinking of a

godless universe, but I was thinking of the labyrinth without a minotaur. I mean, if anything is terrible, it is terrible because it is meaningless.

Dembo: Yes, that is what I was driving at. . . .

Borges: . . . because the minotaur justifies the labyrinth; at least one thinks of it as being the right kind of inhabitant for that kind of building.

Dembo: If the minotaur is in the labyrinth, the labyrinth makes sense.

Borges: Yes, if there's no minotaur, then the whole thing is incredible. You have a monstrous building built round a monster, and that in a sense is logical. But if there is no monster then the whole thing is senseless, and that would be the case for the universe, for all we know.⁹

The postmodern anti-detective story takes place in a labyrinth where the minotaur is missing; fear has become angst. No final solution can be given, only successive hypotheses. Man is not the center of this labyrinth as he is in existentialist thought, nor does the labyrinth itself have a center. Rather, man continues to relate to the elements of the labyrinth as he wanders through it, and each change of perspective varies or negates the previous perspective. The action of detecting continues, but the possibility of solution is gone. In this case, angst is given its full value:

Angst, of course, is the last element a popular writer, a writer of kitsch such as Agatha Christie's Mrs. Oliver, would include in her well-made novels--even fear is put on the sidelines in the classical detective story. In Mrs. Oliver's opinion, life is badly constructed because it includes angst, because it does not give us those final solutions that we find in the last chapter of her detective novels. Yet, for the post-modern writer, angst leads not only to despair but also to hope, freedom and possibility. The positive aspect of angst is brought to light by

Gertrude Stein, who like Mrs. Oliver compares real life crime and detective story crime, in her 1935 essay, "American Crimes and How They Matter":

It is a funny thing, this thing about detective stories and the difference between them and the story of a real crime. And the trouble is just that, in the real crime it is more interesting if you do not know the answer at all as in the Halls Mill case or if there is a mystery behind the answer as in the Hauptmann case, but in the other cases, however exciting the story if they find out all about who did it, and finding out who did know all about how and why he did it then nobody can remember later about it at all about that crime and it does not go on in the common memory.

So that is one kind of crime and I always come back to the Halls-Mill crime because it had almost everything that a crime could have to make it a completely interesting one, but how could one have invented it and left it like that and not done anything how could one and if one did would it have been interesting. The Hall-Mills case was one that was so completely American. Everyone had so much openness and honesty and directness and nothing told anybody anything and there was no feeling that anybody was lying or anybody was refusing to tell anything but nobody really told anybody anything and that was and that is so American and so very fascinating.¹⁰

The mass public, the consumers of kitsch (which means most of us at one time or another), however, would not agree with Stein that angst is fascinating. Rather, they would agree with Mrs. Oliver that both real life and postmodern art are badly constructed, confusing and difficult. Kitsch operates against all manner of discomfort whether mental, moral or intellectual. Kitsch, especially in the form of the detective story, makes life easy, by denying dread and meaninglessness. Popular fiction is popular because it is formulaic. Historian William O. Aydelotte says of the detective genre: "The charm of detective stories lies neither in originality nor in artistic merit, though they may possess both these qualities. It consists rather in the repetition of a formula that through trial and error has been found pleasing. We read these books, not to have a new experience, but to repeat in slightly different form an experience we

have had already."¹¹ The clockwork plot of the detective story reassures the reader that when a problem does occur, it can always be solved by rational, scientific means. This sort of fiction is a metaphysical bromide: it cures angst while generating security.

In using the detective story's structures and conventions to create anti-detective stories, postmodern writers set themselves against, that is deconstruct, three literary traditions. First, as has been pointed out, they challenge the linear narrative, the historical setting and the stock characterization of nineteenth-century realistic fiction. Next, although their works may be spatialized, they deny the man-centered space of the modern writers. Finally, postmodern fiction meets popular fiction on its own ground and parodies it. This parody is both comic and serious: it ridicules the facile, formulaic conventions of the detective genre, yet by undermining the expectations the reader brings to the traditional detective story, it forces the reader to acknowledge a view of reality stripped bare of the comfortable reassurances we are given by the detective genre—for example, that good and evil are clearly differentiated things or that if evil does manifest itself in crime, it can be solved and eradicated. Furthermore, this parody is serious because, as it challenges what is popular, it challenges society itself. In short, contemporary fiction often parallels detective fiction in over-all structure while it is the diametrical opposite of this fiction in its assumptions about reality: this is parody in its most complete sense.

The postmodern parodies of the detective genre are especially effective because, as Aydelotte stated, we read detective stories in order to repeat a pleasurable experience, not to have a new, disturbing

experience. Therefore, the uninformed reader who begins reading Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages or Borges' "La muerte y la brújula," or John Hawkes' The Lime Twig and discovers the familiar conventions--detectives, crimes, suspects, criminals--assumes immediately that he knows the pattern. It is precisely because of this complacency that the reader is surprised when he suddenly realizes that the pattern is being distorted, that the rules of the game have been changed. This sudden undercutting of reader expectation causes the reader to become involved: it forces him to examine the formulaic nature of the detective genre, to investigate the view of reality being presented by the novelist, and to attend to the writing, the structure of the fiction itself. Parody is always a critique of an existent form of literature which not only criticizes the intellectual assumptions of that literature, but its artistic assumptions as well. The serious and multiple effect of parody of this sort is manifest in Vladimir Nabokov's The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, for example. Here the narrator tells us that Knight's first novel, The Prismatic Bezel, was a parody of the detective story but insists that the parody was only a springboard to higher concerns such as criticism of the conventional, positivistic views of the genre and of the facility of its art:

But for Sebastian Knight, the merest trifle, as say, the adopted method of a detective story, became a bloated and malodorous corpse. He did not mind in the least "penny dreadfuls" because he wasn't concerned with ordinary mortals; what annoyed him invariably was the second rate, not the third or Nth rate, because here, at the readable stage, the shamming began, and this was, in an artistic sense, immoral.¹²

The effect of parody becomes more complicated, more involuted when we realize that Nabokov is parodying the detective story, on his own account,

in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight. As Page Stegner points out, Nabokov (like his creation Knight) has a great deal of fun debunking the conventional form, abusing and ridiculing its solemn rules of the trade, but on the other hand, has embarked on a serious discussion:

. . . he involves his readers in a puzzling search for reality, in his fictional world, a search that demands serious thought about illusions in life as well as in art. Through the parody of convention he offers the reader just enough to insure a complacent expectation of things to come before projecting second and third overlays on top of the initial image being viewed.

But more important, stock characters and stock themes are used by Nabokov largely to suggest the mindlessness of a passive acceptance of traditions, to demonstrate that real art does not consist of the reiteration of habits of mind. When a writer adopts a convention, he takes along with it certain implicit perceptions; in short, he accepts with stock methods a stock view of reality. But reality is largely subjective for Nabokov and perceptions of experience are extremely different, so that an "adopted method" limits the ability to confront reality in any original way, petrifies the imagination, and, in this sense, is artistically immoral. . . . Nabokov controls reality by parody to impress his own vision on his subjects, to suggest that man is capable of manipulating reality through art.¹³ /my emphasis/

I have quoted Stegner at length here because he shows clearly that parody is not only burlesque nor, beyond that, is it merely a critique of a conventional form of art and a conventional view of reality. It is also self-critical: it brings our attention to literature as artifice.

The self-referential nature of parody is extremely important to the postmodern artist because it underlines the fictionality of the novel: "Because its referents are either other works of art or itself, parody denies the possibility of a naturalistic fiction. Only an authorial sensibility can be responsible for the texture of a parody and self-parody. . . ."¹⁴ Contemporary fiction underlines the fact that man does

manipulate reality through art, that no work of art gives us reality whole and unquestionable, by presenting us with tentative hypotheses, artificial views subject to change, to negation, within the work itself and outside the work in terms of active reader involvement. This is one expression of the labyrinth without the minotaur: a book conscious of its fictionality, a view of reality conscious of its artificiality. The postmodern writer, by intentionally creating gaps in his narrative, keeps us aware that a larger narrative is going on--the creation of fiction and of reality. These gaps may be created by the technique of mise-en-abyme¹⁵ found in many of the French nouveaux romans, by the appearance of the author within the narrative as in some of Borges' short stories, by a dialogue between the author and his characters as in Queneau's Le Chiendent and by numerous other devices.

Thus, one of the chief devices to make a work of art self-referential is parody, and especially parody of the detective genre which because of its stylized, trite, patterned conventions is so close to being a parody in its own right of the traditional novel. The fictional author Sebastian Knight takes great care to manifest the multiple, shifting planes created by his use of parody in his first novel, so the narrator of The Real Life of Sebastian Knight assures us: "The Prismatic Bezel can be thoroughly enjoyed once it is understood that the heroes of the book are what can be loosely called "methods of composition." It is as if a painter said: Look, here I'm going to show you not the painting of a landscape, but the painting of different ways of painting a certain landscape, and I trust their harmonious fusion will disclose the landscape as I intend you to see it."¹⁶ Parody, in the complex form it takes in postmodern fiction and like other

techniques of involution, refuses to be contained by the work it occurs in. It is this obstinate refusal of particular works of art to be self-contained that Borges comments on in "Magias parciales del 'Quijote'":

¿Por qué nos inquieta que el mapa esté incluido en el mapa y las mil y una noches en el libro de Las Mil y Una Noches? ¿Por qué nos inquieta que Don Quijote sea lector del Quijote, y Hamlet, espectador de Hamlet? Creo haber dado con la causa: tales inversiones sugieren que si los caracteres de una ficción pueden ser lectores o espectadores, nosotros, sus lectores o espectadores, podemos ser ficticios. En 1833, Carlyle observó que la historia universal es un infinito libro sagrado que todos los hombres escriben y leen y tratan de entender, y en el que también los escriben.¹⁷

For Carlyle, the universe was a sacred book which had an intelligible purpose, even if particular men only partially understood and blindly participated in that narrative. For the postmodern writer, the world is a centerless place because God (or any other equivalent ordering concept) is dead or absent and man has been reduced to just one more of the world's scattered elements.

There are a great many works of literature--not only in the postmodern period--which critics have attempted to show have affinities to the detective genre. Yet many of these critical comparisons of serious literature with the detective genre have been general in that they dealt with over-all rhythms or atmosphere rather than specific detective story conventions and structures. One reason that these comparisons can be so general is that the detective genre itself has never been clearly enough defined (and with good reason) for us to say: yes, this is a detective story; no, this is not a detective story. For example, A. E. Murch in her history of the detective story states: "A detective story may be defined as a tale in which the primary interest lies in the methodical discovery,

by rational means, of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event or series of events. The story is designed to arouse the reader's curiosity by a puzzling problem which usually, though not always, concerns a crime."¹⁸ Murch's definition caused George Grella to remark, in his article "Murder and Manners: The Formal Detective Novel," that the same definition could serve to describe "a number of literary works, including Oedipus Rex, Hamlet, Tom Jones and Absalom! Absalom!"¹⁹ So, our problem is at least two-sided when we deal with the detective story's affinities with the literary novel. On the one hand, the detective genre itself contains many "kinds" of detective literature: the classical, formal, or puzzle story; the hard-boiled detective story; the suspense detective story; and the spy story. Although confusion, dissention and disagreement are rampant when we try to formulate a definition for the genre as a whole, we can define conventions and structures of each "kind" with relative clarity. On the other hand, in dealing with literary novels which have affinities with the detective novel, we find that those affinities may be quite general--as in Tom Jones or Absalom! Absalom!; they may be such that the author can be shown to be writing a "literary" detective story--as in Greene's Brighton Rock, Bernanos' Un Crime, François Mauriac's Thérèse Desqueyroux or Faulkner's Intruder in the Dust; they may be such that the author is merely burlesquing the detective story, a comic parody--as in Pepe Martínez de la Vega's "El muerto era un vivo"; and finally, the affinities may be such that the parody, though amusing at times, is serious--as in Butor's L'Emploi du temps, Nabokov's Lolita, Hawkes' The Lime Twig, Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages or La Maison de Rendez-vous.

Two major traits by which we can begin to delineate the postmodern parodies of detective fiction are: first, that the detective story structure and conventions are paralleled in the novel in such a way that they suggest a false analogy and ultimately a contrast to the contemporary world in which the main events of the novel occur; and next, that these structural and conventional parallels are clearly enough defined and are extended enough to be considered a major technical principle of the novel. Characterizing detective fiction parodies in this manner excludes such modern works as Brighton Rock or Intruder in the Dust because these works actually remain within the realm of the detective story. Because they are literary detective stories, they may well include philosophical issues, for example, which the popular detective story would never include, but their main purpose is not to undercut the detective story structure but rather to broaden it, to extend its possibilities. While detective fiction parodies are superficially analogous to popular detective fiction and while they contrast the world of the novel with the well-made world we find in the detective model, literary detective stories actually use and respect the detective model.

Thus, a characteristic which helps us identify detective parodies is that a manifest patterning--not simply the occurrence of one or two detective story conventions such as a crime or a limited milieu--suggests that the novel is actually being structured in the manner of one of the "kinds" of the popular detective genre and that attendant conventions are in evidence. In Les Gommès, for example, we see the typical classical "kind" of detective structure: the novel begins with a crime and the detective tries to locate clues which will lead back to the cause of the

crime; in The Lime Twig, we see the salient features of the hard-boiled detective novel: the first crime in the novel leads on to a series of crimes, and the characters involved are the tough, underworld, stock characters; in La Maison de rendez-vous, we notice the features of the popular spy story: the action takes place in an exotic setting, spies are disguised as dope dealers who are disguised as entrepreneurs, various crimes occur which are investigated not only by the local police but by the counter-spies in a race against time. In any of these postmodern novels, as in the popular detective novels of each kind, not all the conventions have to occur in any given novel--but enough have to occur to make the kind clearly definable. Also, the detective structures and conventions in the postmodern parodies must occur at significant points in the development of the narrative. There are a number of postmodern works which have affinities with the popular detective novel--such as an atmosphere of suspicion or a return in time such that the narrative follows the quest or inquiry of one character, or a strictly limited setting and group of characters--yet these traits alone do not make the novel a parody of the detective genre. For example, in his preface to Nathalie Sarraute's Portrait d'un inconnu, Jean-Paul Sartre states that it is "un anti-roman qui se lit comme un roman policier" into which Sarraute has put "une sorte de détective amateur et passionné qui se fascine sur un couple banal . . . et les épie et les suit à la trace . . . mais sans jamais très bien savoir ni ce qu'il cherche ni ce qu'ils sont. Il ne trouvera rien, d'ailleurs, ou presque rien. Il abandonnera son enquête pour cause de métamorphose: comme si le policier d'Agatha Christie, sur le point de découvrir le coupable, se muait tout à coup en criminel."²⁰ Yet the narrative of Sarraute's novel is not

structured like the classical detective story, the hero never calls himself a detective nor is he called a detective, no crime takes place. One important trait of postmodern detective parodies which does show up here is, as Sartre points out, that the detective often is also the criminal. Portrait d'un inconnu, like Claude Simon's Le Vent or Bioy Casares' "En memoria de Paulina," has detective rhythms but does not employ the conventions and structures of the detective genre in an extended enough fashion to be considered a detective story parody. An attempt will be made to list in a separate bibliography those postmodern works which I find have affinities with the detective novel but which are not clear parodies of that genre.

In novels which are anti-detective novels (parodies of the genre) such as Les Gommages, then, the detective paradigm is a prefigurative device: a model which leads us to expect the same pattern in the narrative we are in the course of reading. In his study Mythology in the Modern Novel, John J. White states: "Although now frequent in literary criticism, the word 'prefiguration' is of religious origin, a translation of the Latin technical term figura used to describe the scheme by which 'the persons and events of the Old Testament were prefigurations of the New Testament and its history of Salvation.'"²¹ Just as White makes the basic assumption that any identifiable narrative of a myth used as a prefigurative device is a part of the rhetoric of fiction, so we make the assumption here that detective story patterns used as prefigurations are also part of the rhetoric of fiction.²² A brief examination of Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages will show how the prefiguration works rhetorically. The novel is clearly based on two models: the myth of Oedipus and the classical detective story. The hero of the novel, Wallas, does not know that his own story is

modeled after the myth of Oedipus--only the author, Robbe-Grillet, could have put this information into the book. And although Wallas is certainly aware that he is a detective, he does not follow his narrative as we do, watching for places at which the expectations given us by the model of the puzzle detective story are undercut. The interesting point here is that the device of prefiguration, especially evident in the French nouveau roman, becomes more and more common as theorists of the novel begin to object to overt authorial comment and to omniscient narrators.

If we look at some of the literary theories Sartre put forth in Qu'est-ce que la littérature?, we can see not only how these theories, being put into practice by the nouveaux romanciers, led not only to prefiguration as a rhetorical device, but to the detective story prefiguration in particular. One of the major practices of the traditional novel which Sartre attacks is that of internal narrators such as those found in Maupassant's works:

On reconnaît en ce magicien, qui s'est délivré de l'histoire et de la vie en les comprenant et qui s'élève par ses connaissances et par son expérience au-dessus de son auditoire, l'aristocrate de survol [the omniscient narrator] Le narrateur interne est toujours présent. Il peut se réduire à une abstraction, souvent même il n'est pas explicitement désigné, mais, de toute façon, c'est à travers sa subjectivité que nous apercevons l'événement. Quand il ne paraît pas du tout, ce n'est pas qu'on l'ait supprimé comme un ressort inutile: c'est qu'il est devenu la personnalité seconde de l'auteur. Celui-ci, devant sa feuille blanche, voit ses imaginations se transmuier en expériences, il n'écrit plus en son propre nom mais sous la dictée d'un homme mûr et de sens rassis qui fut témoin des circonstances relatées.²³

Here, we find the omniscient point of view, whether expressed by the

narrator or in a less obvious manner by the author, to which postmodern writers and theorists alike object. The narrative always takes place in the past and thus is not history in the making, but history already made. The point of view is absolute: order exists. For Sartre as for William Spanos ("The Detective and the Boundary"), this explanatory attitude which is a mainstay of the traditional novel is positivistic to the point of totalitarianism. Sartre's major theories about the novel work toward putting the author, the reader and the work of art on the same footing.

To avoid positivistic, totalitarian views of both literature and life, Sartre suggests that writers change their techniques. Instead of one omniscient narrator, multiple points-of-view should be seen in the characters, who not only contradict one another but themselves as well. Beyond this, if the author refuses to make one of these points-of-view reliable, the reader will become more involved in the narrative, yet will never be sure that his reader's point-of-view was the right or true point-of-view. This ambiguity also gives the reader the power to make and unmake the narrative. In the same way, events should remain immediate and contingent. In urging these changes in literary technique, Sartre states:

Dans le monde stable du roman français d'avant-guerre, l'auteur, placé en un point gamma qui figurait le repos absolu, disposait de repères fixes pour déterminer les mouvements de ses personnages. Mais nous, embarqués sur un système en pleine évolution, nous ne pouvions connaître que des mouvements relatifs; au lieu que nos prédécesseurs croyaient se tenir en dehors de l'histoire et s'étaient élevés d'un coup d'aile à des cimes d'où ils jugeaient les coups en vérité, les circonstances nous avaient replongés dans notre temps: comment donc eussions-nous pu le voir d'ensemble, puisque nous étions dedans? Puisque nous étions situés, les seuls romans que nous pussions songer à écrire étaient des romans de situation, dans narrateurs internes ni témoins tout-connaissants; bref il nous fallait, si nous voulions rendre compte de notre époque, faire passer la technique romanesque

de la mécanique newtonienne à la relativité généralisée, peupler nos livres de consciences à demi lucides et à demi obscures, dont nous considérerions peut-être les unes ou les autres avec plus de sympathie, mais dont aucune n'aurait sur l'événement si sur soi de point de vue privilégié, présenter des créatures dont la réalité serait le tissu embrouillé et contradictoire d'appréciations que chacune porterait sur toutes--y compris sur elle-même--et toutes sur chacune et qui ne pourraient jamais décider du dedans si les changements de leurs destins venaient de leurs efforts, de leurs fautes ou du cours de l'univers; il nous fallait enfin laisser partout des doutes, des attentes, de l'inachevé et réduire le lecteur à faire lui-même des conjectures, en lui inspirant le sentiment que ses vues sur l'intrigue et sur les personnages n'étaient qu'une opinion parmi beaucoup d'autres²⁴

Sartre's theories have been applied, especially in the nouveau roman, but often for different or even opposite purposes from the ones Sartre suggests here. For example, Robbe-Grillet, though he applies most of the ideas expressed by Sartre, claims in his essays that his novels have no social content. Perhaps in the context of postmodern literature, they must have social content, even if the author does not intend it, or claims that it is not there.

In From Sartre to the New Novel, Betty T. Rahv points out that the nouveaux romanciers do present a world which needs to be deciphered by the reader, and because of this deciphering, because of the multiple hypotheses on the part of the author, the characters and the reader, these novels are frequently compared to the detective story.²⁵ The novelists' treatment of character and event has shifted from one of Newtonian mechanics to generalized relativity, but within a strictly structured frame, usually of time and space. The space in the interior of the frame, however, is centerless. In Claude Mauriac's La Marquise sortit à cinq heures, a case in point, we have an artificial patterning: the narrative takes place in one hour in

the Carrefour de Buci in Paris. Within this pattern we meet more than eighty characters, all portrayed by interior monologue, and we see each event that happens in the carrefour from multiple, equal perspectives. In numerous nouveaux romans, some aspect of the novel provides a fixed frame, but the narrative is open because it refuses to be definitely ordered. In Butor's L'Emploi du temps, the narrative is limited to one year, yet within that frame one event may be presented numerous times, the meaning of events change as their context or linking with other events changes, hypotheses proliferate and actions echo one another until an entire web of events, all relative to one another is created. As readers we are at first tempted to think that if the events were put back in linear order, if we knew what happened during the three months in the middle of Revel's year in Bleston, then we would understand the "true" meaning of Revel's experience. It is just this linear cause and effect reader mentality that Butor frustrates by carefully framing a centerless space. We begin to realize that artifice, the strict patterning of narrative, does not necessarily mean order, but can mean its opposite. The example of Mauriac's La Marquise indicates that novels written "in situation" tend to have a general affinity with the act of detection. Novels such as Butor's L'Emploi du temps carry this general affinity a great deal further as we find we are dealing with a work patterned on the novel of detection--the popular detective novel. The works dealt with in this study are those, which like Butor's, involve specific detective conventions within an atmosphere of general detection.

Given the use of obvious artifice by the postmodern writer, we should find postmodern works to be in direct opposition to Sartre's theory that the author should efface himself from the work. In actuality, however, the

author's presence as artificer in these works often does serve precisely to involve the reader in the work and to create a work which denies positivistic ordering. In The Rhetoric of Fiction, Wayne Booth states that "though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear."²⁶ In many cases, artifice when it takes the place of direct authorial commentary is as obtrusive as that commentary. Once we recognize the rules an author has set for himself in creating a work (for example, the detective story pattern), we begin to speculate about the way in which, the degree to which, those rules will be respected. If, for instance, the detective story prefiguration is respected in all ways, we lose interest in proportion to the number of our hypotheses which are borne out: in a detective story burlesque, we are not so much involved as entertained; we know what (the crime does exist; the detective will solve it), so we concentrate on how. In terms of the general unrolling of the narrative pattern, we are not challenged. If, on the other hand, we are continually led to formulate hypotheses about the narrative pattern, some of which are borne out, others of which are denied, we become involved in the work and the work itself gains depth. In discussing the intellectual games which Vladimir Nabokov constructs in his works, Page Stegner quotes a passage on the construction of chess problems which occurs in Nabokov's Speak Memory:

Themes in chess, it may be explained, are such devices as forelaying, withdrawing, pinning, unpinning, and so forth; but it is only when they are combined in a certain way that a problem is satisfactory. Deceit, to the point of diabolism, and originality, grading into the grotesque, were my notions of strategy, and although in matters of construction I tried to conform whenever possible to classical rules, such as economy of force, unity, weeding out of loose ends, I was always ready to sacrifice purity of form to the exigencies of fantastic content,

causing form to bulge and burst like a sponge-bag containing a small furious devil.

It should be understood that competition in chess problems is not really between White and Black but between the composer and the hypothetical solver (just as in a first-rate work of fiction the real clash is not between the characters but between the author and the world), so that a great part of a problem's value is due to the number of "tries"--delusive opening moves, false scents, specious lines of play, astutely and lovingly prepared to lead the would-be solver astray.²⁷

The difference between the chess problem and the postmodern literary work is that in the literary work delusive moves and specious lines of play may exist, but no final solution exists: the number of "tries" quickly becomes an infinite series. Still, both the author and the reader explore their notions about reality and fiction in the process of playing the game. Often, the postmodern parody is created in a spirit of great delight at the gratuitousness of the construction, once its premises are removed (i.e. the problem exists, but no final solution exists). The enjoyment of this sort of parody may be the mystification of the reader, and of the author sometimes too, as they play the game.

When a writer uses the device of prefiguration, he often tends to create a distance between the reader and the characters in the work. The extent to which the reader is distanced from the character depends upon what information each has. If the reader sees the prefiguration but the character does not, the reader tends to withdraw and watch the character act within the framework. Yet this distance may serve to enmesh the reader even deeper into the game. An interesting case in point here is Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages in which both the character Wallas and the reader are aware of the role detection plays, but their perspectives differ because the reader knows that the initial murder has not been committed, but Wallas

does not. With some feeling of superiority, we watch Wallas carry out his investigation within the framework. On the other hand, Wallas is unaware of the fragments of the Oedipus story which are scattered throughout the narrative, while the reader--seeing these clues--is sent on an investigation which may be every bit as ill-founded as that of Wallas. And in some cases, both the reader and Wallas become criminals. In other novels, the reader may be caught within the character's perspective, at least for a time. This happens in a novel such as L'Emploi du temps where Revel seems quite lucid and reliable at first. Then, as he reads further in Revel's diary, both Revel and the reader get more and more confused. It is only when the reader fully realizes that Revel is unreliable, although generally sincere, that he begins to stand back and examine the device of prefiguration. Finally, the actual existence of prefiguration may be ambiguous. Given an unreliable and perhaps insane narrator and an author who only appears at rare gaps in the narrative, the reader may become confused. Of this reader-novel relationship, Booth says: ". . . though the narrator may have some redeeming qualities of mind or heart, we travel with the silent author, observing as from a rear seat the humorous or disgraceful or ridiculous or vicious driving behavior of the narrator seated in the front. The author may wink and nudge, but he may not speak. The reader may sympathize or deplore, but he never accepts the narrator as a reliable guide."²⁸ Certainly this is the situation the reader finds himself in when reading Lolita. How seriously are we to regard the detective story prefiguration in Humbert Humbert's paper chase? On the one hand, we think of Humbert Humbert as a madman who is playing detective; on the other, the coincidences in the novel, the planting of clues, reveal the silent hand (or elbow) of Nabokov in the

detective narrative. If we look at the detective structure in the novel as the invention of Humbert Humbert rather than as that of Nabokov, it changes our reading of the novel. The problem of the origin of the prefiguration becomes even more acute in the case of Kinbote in Pale Fire.

In examining the use the postmodern writer makes of the detective story pattern as a rhetorical device—in particular as it occurs in novels and short stories—this study will be divided into sections dictated by the "kind" of popular detective story which is used as a model. Unlike modern literary masterpieces which tend to defy genre classifications, the best popular fiction tends to be that which most closely respects the rules of its genre. It is precisely because detective fiction is formulaic that its various types can be easy to describe in terms of narrative structure and literary conventions. As has been mentioned, the detective genre includes different types of detective stories: the classical puzzle story; the hard-boiled thriller; the suspense thriller and the spy thriller. These types of detective stories are delineated and studied by Tzvetan Todorov in his article "Typologie du roman policier."²⁹ Donald A. Yates also discusses the various types of detective stories in his dissertation "The Argentine Detective Story."³⁰ The types of detective stories called the inverted detective story (in which the narrative follows the commission of the crime rather than the investigation of the crime) and the psychological detective story have not been included as separate sections in this study because they both are only aspects of the four major types of detective story. In short, the inverted story and the psychological story are only elements of the detective story genre and do not dictate many specific conventions of their own. The literary works looked at in this study are

novels and short stories of English, American, French and Latin American origin. Obviously, not all the postmodern works which contain detective story prefigurations can be examined; therefore, the fictions examined here are those I have found most useful or interesting in terms of defining postmodern literature. Other novels which I believe to use detective story prefigurations or to have reasonably strong detective story rhythms will be listed in a separate bibliography.

PART ONE

THE CLASSICAL DETECTIVE STORY

The detective fiction which has enjoyed the most critical renown is the classical detective story cultivated especially in England. This type of detective fiction was inaugurated by Poe in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) and, according to Howard Haycraft's Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story, came into its Golden Age in England and America from 1918 to 1930.¹ It is the classical form which influenced early Latin American detective fiction to the extent that the authors often published their works under English pseudonyms. As Argentine author Abel Mateo says: "For me, one of the requirements of the detective story is an Anglo-Saxon background. . . . The reading public understands that an Argentine setting is not appropriate. England and America offer the proper backgrounds for detective fiction, just as the picaresque novel has to be laid in Spain and the 'cloak-and-dagger' story set in France."² Not only Poe, but authors such as Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, E. C. Bentley and S. S. VanDine are associated with the puzzle story.

The formula for the puzzle detective story has been defined time and time again, but the clearest explanation of it, I think, is given by the fictional detective story author, George Burton, in Michel Butor's L'Emploi du temps. Burton tells the narrator, Jacques Revel, that "Tout roman policier est bâti sur deux meurtres dont le premier, commis par l'assassin, n'est que l'occasion du second dans lequel il est la victime du meurtrier pur et impunissable, du détective . . ."³ and that "dans le roman policier, le récit est fait à contrecourant, ou plus exactement qu'il superpose deux séries temporelles: les jours de l'enquête qui commencent au crime, et les

jours du drame qui mènent à lui"4 Thus, the purest type of puzzle story would open with the crime already a fait accompli. For example, the Sherlock Holmes tale, "The Bascombe Valley Mystery" opens: "We were seated at breakfast one morning, my wife and I [Dr. Watson] when the maid brought in a telegram. It was from Sherlock Holmes, and ran this way: 'Have you a couple of days to spare? Have just been wired for from the West of England in connection with Bascombe Valley tragedy.'"5 At this point our major interest as readers (once we find out what crime was committed) is who committed the crime and how—perhaps even why. We have little interest in the victim of the crime (murder in this case) because we hardly know him. The drama of the first narrative period (the actions leading up to and including the murder) is absent. It is the second narrative period (the investigation) we are dealing with here. We feel no apprehension, no suspense, no fear about the murder, first because it has already taken place, and second because the detective Holmes, like Poe's Dupin, belongs to that class of super investigators who are rarely in danger of physical retribution while solving a case. As Todorov says of the second narrative: "Les personnages de cette seconde histoire . . . n'agissent pas, ils apprennent. Rien ne peut leur arriver"6 Our interest is centered on the inquiry; we have the effect (murder) and are trying to discover the cause (the criminal). Rather than fear, we feel curiosity. This type of detective story concludes with the revelation of the guilty party and the explanation of how the clues are linked together to work back from effect to cause.

It was Poe, so admired for his stories about the mysterious and the irrational, who was the father of the detective story and who created the

logical, geometric double narrative of the detective story. And these stories--specifically "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Roget," and "The Purloined Letter"--also contained the now codified conventions of the classical type. Howard Haycraft writes:

In the very first tale he proceeded to lay down the two great concepts upon which all fictional detection worth the name has been based: (1) That the solvability of a case varies in proportion to its outré character. (2) The famous dictum-by-inference (as best phrased by Dorothy Sayers) that "when you have eliminated all the impossibilities, then, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth," which has been relied on and often re-stated by all the better sleuths in the decades that have followed. As for the almost infinite minutiae, time hallowed to-day, which Poe created virtually with a single stroke of the pen, only a suggestive catalogue need be given. The transcendent and eccentric detective; the admiring and slightly stupid foil; the well-intentioned blundering and unimaginativeness of the official guardians of the law; the locked room convention; the pointing finger of unjust suspicion; the solution by surprise; deduction by putting one's self in another's position (now called psychology); concealment by means of the ultra-obvious; the staged ruse to force the culprit's hand; even the expansive and condescending explanation when the chase is done In fact, it is not too much to say--except, possibly, for the influence of latterday science--that nothing really primary has been added either to the framework of the detective story or to its internals since Poe completed his trilogy.⁷

Most of these conventions are quite familiar and self-explanatory. A brief look, however, at the "two great concepts" and at the roles of the detective and the foil in classical detective fiction will help us to define more specifically the positivistic assumptions of this type of popular fiction on the one hand, and to set down the less obvious elements in the construction of the geometric double narrative on the other.

The first concept mentioned (the solvability of a case varies in proportion to its outré character) is based on the assumption that the initial mystery--outré or commonplace--can be solved by logical reasoning, by ratiocination. The second concept, the dictum-by-inference ("when you

have eliminated all the impossibilities, then, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth") also is predicated on a view of reality which assumes that the world is ultimately accessible and knowable. In his essay "The Great Detective Stories," Willard Huntington Wright (pseudonymically S. S. VanDine) states: "A sense of reality is essential to the detective novel. The few attempts that have been made to lift the detective story plot out of its naturalistic environment and confer on it an air of fancifulness have been failures. . . .the objective of a detective novel--the mental reward attending its solution--would be lost unless a sense of verisimilitude were consistently maintained."⁸ But this verisimilitude which the detective story requires is clearly trompe-l'oeil. Most murders are not committed in English country houses by kindly old ladies who are the least likely suspects, but rather take place, for example, on the streets of the inner city. Often the victims of the crime are previously unknown to the criminal (as in the instance when a man is killed during the course of a street hold-up), and rarely are the police able to find clues much less follow them. There is little question of eliminating all the "impossibilities" because the impossibilities, like the possibilities, are infinite. Poe's dictum-by-inference finds little application in real life and is constantly undercut by the postmodern writer. The classical detective story tends to throw all its weight on plot construction, and the reality we find in the well-made plot is generally a factitious one.

As for the hero of the classical detective story, although he is given a few salient qualities such as Holmes' use of cocaine and his ability to play the violin, he is usually treated as a hardly human piece of finely tuned machinery. Of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson tells us in "A Scandal in

Bohemia":

All emotions, and that one [love] particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen; but, as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his.⁹

Holmes is not a being; he is a machine. And as a machine, he is not so much a personality as a function.

The transcendent and eccentric detective of Poe's stories has evolved significantly within the confines of the puzzle story structure. Poe's detective is reassuring because, despite his eccentricities, he encourages us in the belief that reality is infinitely permeable to human reason. Any enigma can be solved by acute analysis of that enigma, and this particularly applies to mysteries like crime which are created by human agents. Jean-Pierre Richard says in "Petites notes sur le roman policier," that Dupin comforts us because of his belief "que tout événement possède une cause découvrable, bref qu'il n'existe dans l'univers aucun recoin, aucune zone d'ombre ni d'épaisseur où la pensée ne puisse faire entrer la chaîne de ses opérations."¹⁰ Dupin is exceedingly condescending toward the official police, who are well-intentioned if bumbling and hasty, because they lack his ability at ratiocination. In "Rue Morgue" Dupin defines their mentality: "The Parisian police, so much extolled for acumen, are cunning, but no more. There is no method in their proceedings, beyond the method of the moment.

They make a vast parade of measures; but, not unfrequently, these are so ill adapted to the objects proposed as to put us in mind of Monsieur Jourdain's calling for his robe-de-chambre -- pour mieux entendre la musique.¹¹ As we shall soon see, in the postmodern detective parodies it is the detective employing Dupin's ratiocinative methods, measures ill-adapted to a centerless universe, who will remind us of Monsieur Jourdain.

Moving from Dupin to Sherlock Holmes, we find the detective and the world view of the detective story have evolved; they are more positivistic. Jean-Pierre Richard notes that the stories of Conan Doyle were contemporaneous with the first great modern, scientific advances so that the detective's transcendent power was double-pronged: Holmes possesses the amazing power of analysis we saw in Dupin, but he adds to that an encyclopedic knowledge.¹² In "The Five Orange Pips," Holmes explains to Watson how he uses his manifold powers:

"The ideal reasoner," [Holmes] remarked, "would, when he had once been shown a single fact in all its bearings, deduce from it not only all the chain of events which led up to it, but also all the results which would follow from it. As Cuvier would correctly describe a whole animal by the contemplation of a single bone, so the observer who has thoroughly understood one link in a series of incidents, should be able to accurately state all the other ones, both before and after. We have not yet grasped the results which the reason alone can attain to. Problems may be solved in the study which have baffled all those who have sought a solution by aid of their senses. To carry the art, however, to its highest pitch, it is necessary that the reasoner should be able to utilize all the facts which have come to his knowledge; and this in itself implies, as you will readily see, a possession of all knowledge, which, even in these days of free education and encyclopaedias, is a somewhat rare accomplishment. It is not so impossible, however, that a man should possess all knowledge which is likely to be useful to him in his work, and this I have endeavored in my case to do."¹³

It is important here to notice that Holmes, when he mentions Cuvier, is

talking not about deduction but induction. The assumption is made that man and events fit into a structured, intelligible, universal system which, given enough facts, can be understood by the scientifically-minded. The fantastic element we find in Poe's stories--Dupin's ability to start from an enigma and by a chain of reasoning discover the cause--is not the same fantastic element we find in Conan Doyle's stories. The fantastic here springs from the fact that Holmes, given an object such as an old hat ("The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle") or a watch ("The Sign of the Four"), can not only discover its owner but can make extensive comment on the nature, habits and environment of the owner. Holmes' brand of knowledge convinces us that the world has been completely observed, studied and catalogued, that any object or clue contains and will reveal its complete history if one has enough knowledge to know how to observe it: "A l'image d'une raison liante et cheminante, propre au rationalisme traditionnel [i.e. Dupin's], s'est substitué ici le schème d'une raison classifiante, qui n'articule plus discursivement le réel, mais qui l'investit en le recouvrant peu à peu, en s'étalant sur lui, et finalement en l'absorbant en elle. Le monde aboutit à un musée, ou à un fichier."¹⁴ The affirmation of positivistic determinism we find in the Holmes stories is like a large, spreading stain which voraciously envelopes mystery, denies chance and ignores contingency.

In our own century, determinism has been proven false, and although eccentric detectives still exist in the classical detective story, they tend to be more human and less transcendent. A case in point is Simenon's Maigret. The central question Maigret asks is not whodunit or howdydoit, but why. Rather than flaunting his powers of reason, Maigret uses his intuition and empathy in solving crimes. Maigret identifies criminals by

understanding them, by putting himself in fraternity with them. When he captures the guilty party, we no longer feel satisfied because order has been restored and justice has taken place, rather we feel the dissolution of the fraternity which had been created. Still, it is important to note that Maigret inhabits an essentially man-centered world where everything is secondary to man, an extension of man. In this world, crimes still are solved, if not by reason then by intuition. A definite pattern still exists for the universe. The advocates of the detective story of ratiocination damn Simenon for writing "psychological" detective stories which try to be "literature." In A Catalogue of Crime, Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor say of the "psychological" detective story: "It scarcely concerns itself with detection or mystery or crime, but with the inner life of the protagonist and the surmised emotions of those whom he watches and wears down. Simenon's stories about Maigret are of this kind. They make one think of what Proust could have done had he chosen to write a western."¹⁵ Be that as it may, the Maigret stories retain the geometric double narrative of the classical model, and the detective, even if by unorthodox methods, still solves the crime.

Lastly, Poe's convention of "the admiring and slightly stupid foil" can, above all other conventions, tell us most about the double narrative structure of the classical detective story. Butor's fictional detective Burton has told us that the purest classical detective story is one in which the first murder, occurring at the beginning of the story, points to a second murder that occurs when the detective reveals the criminal at the end of the story. As we move from Dupin to Maigret, we note that the detective moves from savior to murderer: in solving crime, a detective of

the transcendent type is making the world safe for honest people; by the same action, a detective of the humanist school is ending the life of a fellow human being, a brother. Using Burton's definition of the detective story as a base, Todorov states that the fact that the "inquiry" (the movement from initial murder to final eradication of the criminal) is often narrated by a Watson character, who underlines the fact that he is writing a story, is no chance occurrence. Watson tells us how the story came into existence and how it came to be written. The fictionality of the narrative we read (the story of the inquiry) is its chief quality: "La première histoire ignore entièrement le livre, c'est-à-dire elle ne s'avoue jamais livresque En revanche, la seconde histoire est non seulement censée tenir compte de la réalité du livre mais elle est précisément l'histoire de ce livre même."¹⁶ In short, Todorov suggests that what we are discussing here are two aspects of the same narrative: the drama of the crime is what happened (in Russian formalist terms: fable); the story of the inquiry is how the narrator came to know what happened (in Formalist terms: subject). Todorov's distinctions between fable, the crime, and subject, the inquiry, are somewhat tenuous. In reality, we are dealing with three levels of narrative: the crime; the inquiry (Holmes'); and the writing of the inquiry (Watson's). Butor, Burton's creator, recognizes that although the double geometric narrative is a convenient way to refer to the events in the classical detective story, the superimposition of temporal series may be much more complex, especially as we move from the popular detective narrative to the parody of it:

Dans le roman policier le problème de la succession chronologique est très important. C'est passionnant pour les gens qui cherchent à voir quels sont les modes de la représentation,

quels sont les problèmes qui se posent lorsqu'on veut essayer de décrire la réalité. C'est très intéressant de voir un genre populaire dans lequel certains aspects de la narration sont étudiés d'une façon si fine. Vous dites qu'il y a trois séries temporelles dans le romans de Conan Doyle. C'est parfaitement exact. Il y a d'autres, bien d'autres roman policiers, où il y a aussi la présence d'un narratuer qui raconte soit plus tard, soit au cours même de l'action, ce qu'il voit et ce que fait le détective. Et dans certains cas il peut même y avoir plus de séries superposées. Dans L'Emploi du temps, il y a cinq séries qui peuvent être superposées à la fin.¹⁷

In the classical detective story, even if no actual Watson character exists, the story is still generally told from a point of view which preserves these three levels of narration for we rarely know what the detective knows until he explains it to us at the end of the story. Looking carefully at the role of a Watson character reveals two basic fallacies which are generally applied to the detective story: first, that the story of the inquiry must be transparent so that it does not obscure the story of the crime; next, that we are led from clue to clue until the evidence points straight to the guilty party.

Theoreticians of the detective novel such as Marie Rodell, Ronald Knox and S. S. VanDine caution against clogging the plot with unnecessary embellishment like character analysis, atmosphere or love interest. We are advised that clarity is absolutely necessary in the story of the inquiry so that the development of the events of the crime can be seen. Yet, the real interest of the entire detective story depends on the fact that the second narrative be opaque to a great extent. If the narrative of the inquiry were transparent, much of the challenge, the game-playing and puzzle-solving, would be lost to the reader. The clouding of the narrative of inquiry takes place in several ways. First, the clues may be so recondite that only the super-detective has the exotic knowledge needed to

make sense of the clues (i.e. "the killing distance of a South American blowgun, the rate at which curare is absorbed into the bloodstream or the effects of an English summer on the process of rigor mortis"¹⁸). Next, the concatenation of clues may be a totally artificial one. For example, in "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," Holmes deduces that the mysterious owner of an old felt hat is a man of great intellect because the hat is so large that when Holmes puts it on, it settles on the bridge of his nose. Might we not just as well deduce from this clue that the suspect is a hydrocephalic, and thereby locate him more easily--if we assume that London contains fewer hydrocephalics than men of great intellect? Finally, Watson is the reader's foe in that he often, but not always, asks questions which are red herrings of a sort; they switch our thinking on to the wrong track. Watson is sincere but unreliable.

Dorothy Sayers writes in "Aristotle on Detective Fiction" that the cornerstone of the classical detective story is "the art of framing lies in the right way."¹⁹ The second narrative, then, must not be completely transparent. The vital principle of the second narrative, the inquiry, depends on the fact that we mistake the innocent for guilty, the guilty for innocent, the vital clue for a red herring, the red herring for a vital clue: the validity of the first narrative, the drama of the crime, depends on this opacity also. Although we have the impression that the inquiry works from effect to cause, step by step, the actual process is much more complicated. Butor's detective author Burton explains that the structure of the detective story is architectural as well as geometric:

. . . Burton parlait en son nom propre, nous déclarant que dans les meilleures oeuvres du genre, il saluait l'apparition à l'intérieure du roman comme d'une nouvelle dimension, nous expliquent que ce ne sont plus seulement les personnages et

leurs relations qui se transforment sous les yeux du lecteur, mais ce que l'on sait de ces relations et même de leur histoire, l'aspect final, l'aspect fixé de celle-ci, sanctionné, comme il nous l'a montré la semaine suivante, par l'anéantissement du coupable, par le meurtre pur dans lequel le détective atteint à sa plus haute vie, l'aspect final n'apparaissant qu'après et au travers d'autres aspects, de telle sorte que le récit n'est plus la simple projection plane d'une série d'événements, mais la restitution de leur architecture, de leur espace, puisqu'ils se présentent différemment selon la position qu'occupe par rapport à eux le détective ou le narrateur.²⁰

So it is that the reader of the detective story reconstructs the absent narrative, the drama of the crime, not one time but many times over, changing the narrative each time a clue is added, each time a different character becomes the number one suspect. The better popular detective stories keep this architecture in suspension until the final moment when the "true" version of the final narrative explodes on us at the end of the story. In the popular detective story, however, that final version collapses the architecture of hypotheses. A cardinal rule of the classical detective story is that the final explanation must be the truth; the crime must be solved; justice must prevail. This final version of the absent narrative is given validity simply by the fact that the other hypotheses have been destroyed. The hypothetical narratives we have constructed are fiction; the final narrative, seen through the destroyed narratives, is non-fiction, "truth." We get satisfaction, as readers, from the explanation which gives us the truth, yet at the same time we are disappointed--disappointed because the architecture has been deflated, returned to a single plane, and the game is over.²¹ And if, indeed as most critics say, our interest in the classical detective story is based on curiosity, on the intellectual game of solving a riddle, it is easy to see why once the

riddle is solved, we lose interest. Most of us do not reread detective stories because once the essential clues are known, the architecture of false clues is lost, and we only experience the vaguest shadow of the scaffolding of false hypotheses which we believed and experienced in the first reading. If we were really interested in the straight step by step tracking down of essential clues, we would reread the story with pleasure. Our interest in the second narrative, then, is kept alive by the fact that the text continually denies and contradicts itself, that the text is a fabric of false hypotheses. What the postmodern writer objects to in the popular detective story is that it gives us a final solution, a bromide, which appeases our curiosity by means of a series of induced false hypotheses which lead us to believe that the solution finally given is the "truth"; in actuality, the final solution given is as counterfeit as the preceding hypotheses but more perverse because of its seeming validity.

In the popular, classical detective story, we have seen a movement from a romanticized intellectual world (that of Dupin) to a positivistically catalogued, well-made world (that of Sherlock Holmes), to an interiorized, man-centered world (that of Maigret). So too, in serious literature, has this same movement been seen to much greater degree. We have moved, for example, from the exterior, deterministic world of Arnold Bennett which Virginia Woolf criticizes in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" to Woolf's own evocations of an interior, man-centered world in The Waves or To the Lighthouse. The popular detective story has evolved much more slowly than the literary novel because the popular novel is, and is expected to be, formulaic. Some modern writers, as in the case of Bernanos, have attempted to write literary detective stories, but in giving the detective plot an

unexpected depth have created works which deny the basic assumptions of the genre, which displace the plot-centered emphasis of the genre and replace it with a different metaphysical emphasis. Other writers, especially in Latin American countries, have burlesqued the detective genre. Although these travesties of the detective story serve to criticize the prosaic assumptions of the popular genre, although these caricatures make us laugh, the burlesque--as the word suggests--is little more than skin-deep criticism. Finally, the postmodern writers have turned to meet the popular novel on its own ground. In parodying the popular novel, perhaps these writers are creating the only kind of detective literature which is still possible in a world which is neither positivistic nor man-centered.

CHAPTER ONE: EARLY REVERSALS

In Esthétique du roman policier, Thomas Narcejac states: "Le roman policier éliminant résolument le surnaturel, tout roman qui fait place au surnaturel dans l'explication final n'est pas policier. Le roman de Bernanos, Un Crime, a donc été assimilé à tort à un roman policier. Il utilise un merveilleux que le raisonnement ne peut entamer."¹ Yet we know that with Un Crime Bernanos was specifically trying to write a classical detective story whose formulaic conventions would control the surabundance of fantasy, dream and symbol in his writing.² And those formulaic conventions are manifest in Un Crime. We find the traditional plot of the detective story: a murder (double in this case), an investigation of the crime, the final revelation of the criminal and his subsequent demise. We even have, in Un Crime, the well-known detective peripetias: disguise, falsehood, clues, false trails, and even the happy coincidence of a photograph which allows the magistrate Frescheville to link the false curate of Megère to the murder of the Chatelaine and to the murder of the real curate of Megère. Bernanos does not deny the conventions of the detective story on a technical level, especially in the first two parts of the novel. What he does deny are the positivistic assumptions of the classical detective story. The telling of the classical detective tale is no longer an exercise in mental acuteness, no longer a bromide for angst; rather, the detective story has become a tool, a means of revealing a metaphysical system which ultimately denies the validity of the rationalistic system we expect in a classical detective story.

In the tale of ratiocination, the initial murder is merely a pretext necessary to start the investigation; it is the first term of the puzzle. It is also the action which admits chaos into an otherwise secure, orderly

and ordered world. The suspects in the tale are flat, exteriorized characters whose main function is to serve the progress of the plot. So, too, the detective is a function, as we have seen in the case of Holmes. Once the detective carries out his function and reveals the criminal, order is restored to the world, and chaos, shadow, the unknown are banished. To close the tale, the criminal is dispatched, more often than not by his own hand. In Un Crime, Bernanos emphasizes not the puzzle (whodunit) but rather the problem of the existence of evil in the world, the struggle of men with free will, the choice of salvation or damnation. The double murder at the beginning of the novel is not a mere pretext to set the puzzle working, nor is it merely an indication that a spot of chaos has erupted into a serene world. The act of murder attests to the fact that the world is chaotic and nightmarish, and even worse, it sanctions the existence of evil.

In the first section of Un Crime, we see the false curate only from the outside as is traditional in the detective story. What is not traditional is the attention and even anguish we feel for the victim who is later revealed to be the real curate, the representation of salvation. In the next section, we meet the investigator, the magistrate Frescheville who is far too human, too sentient to function like a faultless machine as does Holmes. Finally Bernanos omits the detective from the narrative by having him fall ill. If the detective solves the crime, it is not by reason but by intuition and even hallucination. We move, therefore, in the third section of the novel to a first person narrative told by the criminal. Intelligence, rather than being the means by which the crime is solved, becomes the means by which it is perpetrated. Intelligence and pride combined with free will lead the false curate of Megère to break human and divine law by committing

murder. Intelligence leads to catastrophe not clarity. In this last section, we see the criminal from the inside. The false curate of Megère is not the last term in the puzzle, but rather is a human being possessed by the devil, and the act of murder she committed serves to help reveal the interior of this complex being. When she commits suicide at the end of the novel, this suicide does not close the novel because the time period, the perspective, we are dealing with is not merely that of the course of an investigation but rather, as Astier in her essay on Un Crime points out, that of eternity.³ The fall of the false curate is the failure of evil but not the banishment of evil. The problem of evil still exists at the end of the novel although the puzzle of whodunit is solved.

In Un Crime the game of detection has been used as a tool of meditation, a means of exploring the human condition. Although Bernanos generally respects the conventions of the classical genre, he replaces time with eternity, and he denies psychological determinism of its characters and its glorification of pure intelligence. What we are most aware of in reading Un Crime is that although the detective story intrigue is interesting, it is not necessary to the essential theme of the novel; rather, the detective story intrigue has been used as a means of dramatizing the theme. In short, Bernanos faithfully employs the major conventions of the classical genre, but his universe and world view not only go beyond that which is customary in the detective story but finally are diametrically opposed to those of the detective genre. The absolutes of logical positivism are replaced by the absolutes of religion. Man is at the center of this system because it is his salvation or damnation which is at stake. Bernanos does not undercut detection as a means but replaces its solution with a solution of a

different order. The postmodern writers will not only refuse the idea of solutions and of absolute orders, but will challenge and undercut the means of detection also.

Another, much lighter, form of detective story parody is the burlesque of the genre found in works such as in Mexican humorist Pepe Martínez de la Vega's stories about the transcendent detective Peter Pérez or H. Bustos Domecq's⁴ tales about Don Isidro Parodi. In these tales the caricature stems from the fact that certain detective conventions are pushed to a ridiculous extreme. The usual means of detection are still employed and solutions are reached, but the whole process is shown as bordering on the ridiculous. For example, in Latin Blood Donald Yates points out how the familiar convention of the locked room suffers at the hands of Peter Pérez: "Called to the scene of the crime, Peter confirmed that the dead man had indeed been found in a locked room, with the windows locked and barred, no secret passages, no trap doors An impossible crime. But not for Peter.

'Elementary, my dear chaps,' he observed calmly. 'I have the solution. You will note that the room has no roof.'⁵ In another Pérez tale, "El muerto era un vivo," the convention of the air-tight alibi is travestied. The murderer, one Juan Bouquet Méndez, proves that he was at a political rally at the time of the crime. Pérez, however, breaks this alibi: "Ud. . . . estuvo aquí antes de ir al teatro y se bebió siete tazas de café para no dormirse durante la soporífera charla del salvador de masas. Logró permanecer despierto, pero los demás asistentes cayeron dormidos. Usted salió cuando todos roncaban. Cometió el crimen . . . y regresó al teatro, donde los agremiados permanecían roncando."⁶ These sorts of burlesque of the detective story generally show us that reason, as an ordering principle

and a tool of detection, does still work, but that most often the regular police forces are incapable of using this tool. The seed of this sort of caricature was planted in the first detective story by Poe. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," C. Auguste Dupin says of the Perfect G--: "I like him especially for one master stroke of cant, by which he has attained his reputation for ingenuity. I mean the way he has 'de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas.'"⁷

The satire in Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi (1942) not only pushes detective conventions to extremes and attacks the average man's ability to reason clearly, but also brings to the fore the foibles of a varied group of characters from Buenos Aires and parodies various porteño dialects. Don Isidro Parodi is the traditional armchair detective, but in his case the convention is pushed to an extreme because he works from jail cell 273 of the local penitentiary; he is one of the criminal-innocent. Classical armchair detectives like Poe's Dupin, the Baroness Orczy's Little Old Man in the Corner, Futrelle's Professor Van Dusen (the Thinking Machine) or Stout's Nero Wolfe are called "limited" detectives because they solve crime by thought rather than by action. Parodi must solve crime by thought because he no longer has the option of action. The reason Parodi is in jail is explained in the first tale, "Las doce figuras del mundo":

Hace catorce años, el carnicero Agustín R. Bonorino, que había asistido al corso de Belgrano disfrazado de cocoliche, recibió un mortal botellazo en la sien. Nadie ignoraba que la botella de Bilz que lo derribó, había sido esgrimido por uno de los muchachos de la barra de Pata Santa. Pero como Pata Santa era un precioso elemento electoral, la policía resolvió que el culpable era Isidro Parodi, de quien algunos afirmaban que era ácrata, queriendo decir que era espiritista. En realidad, Isidro Parodi no era ninguna des las dos cosas: era dueño de una barbería en el barrio Sur⁸

All six of the tales in this collection have the same structure; the client visits Parodi in his jail cell, tells him the problem and then leaves. Parodi reasons out the solution and reveals it to the client on the next visit. Parodi's clients are often involved in a particular crime in the first place because of their personal vanity and their inability to be logical. In "Las doce figuras del mundo," the suspected murderer, Aquiles Molinari, is actually a "fall guy." He has gotten involved in the crime in the first place because of his vanity. After having been chosen as the victim of a practical joke, Molinari (always a pawn) is later made to believe, by only a slight extension of his gullibility, that he has actually murdered someone with his "occult powers." Both the vanity and the illogicality of Parodi's clients is underlined by the parody of their dialectical speech patterns in the stories.

In these burlesques, despite the incompetence of the official police force and of men in general, the truth is still given to us, finally, by the epitome of reason, the transcendent detective. Nuances of political satire occur in both the burlesques we have looked at, but that satire is pointed at the incapability of the official political system to carry out justice. In a detective story satire written in 1948, Manuel Peyrou demonstrates what occurs when detective story conventions work both as a means and an end, but truth, the "final solution," though it exists, is simply "inoperative" in the real world. In El estruendo de las rosas, the setting is an unspecified country controlled by a totalitarian regime which greatly resembles the Third Reich. Place and character names are germanic. The inquiry concerns the murder of Cuno Gesenius, the country's dictator. The investigation of the crime, carried out by Hans Buhle head of

the police, is straight forward in terms of the detective story formula. A number of suspects exists, alibis are checked, a careful study of the time of the murder is made, and a reconstruction at the scene of the crime is carried out. The complexity of the detective element of the novel stems from the fact that so many hypothetical solutions are presented, one after another. As in all good detective stories, the solution of the crime is not revealed to us until the very last pages. Yet, the common reader expectations associated with the detective story are denied in two important ways: first, the narrative point of view is omniscient in such a way that the reader is greatly distanced from the tale; and second, the final solution when given is as unimportant to "reality" in the novel as were the fictional false hypotheses.

"There is inherent in this novel, to be sure, a satire on the inhumanity of a totalitarian regime. However, the story does not strike me as essentially a parable," says Donald Yates in his discussion on the novel. "It has, certainly, a vague, melancholy sense of fatality about it, but I am convinced that El estruendo de las rosas is basically an entertainment."⁹ The novel may not be a parable, but it is not an entertainment either, precisely because it does deny the two above mentioned reader expectations. Rather, it is a criticism of political totalitarianism and of the detective story, the basis of both being found in logical positivism. The readers who accept and believe in the formulaic, clock-work certainties of plot in the classical detective story, "also demand the kind of social and political organization that finds its fulfillment in the imposed certainties of the well-made world of the totalitarian state, where investigation or inquisition on behalf of the achievement of a total, that is, pre-ordained or teleologi-

cally determined structure--a 'final solution'--is the defining activity."¹⁰

The hero of El estruendo de las rosas, Felix Greitz, is both a political revolutionary and a writer. In a safety deposit box, Investigator Buhle finds that Greitz has left a copy of G. K. Chesterton's Orthodoxy and an essay written by Greitz entitled "Hamlet y el género policial." Since Greitz is the chief murder suspect, Buhle reports on his findings. In a report to his superior, Buhle summarizes the key to Greitz's notes on Orthodoxy, specifically on the chapter entitled "The Maniac" as follows:

"En él se hace una defensa general de la imaginación y de la fantasía. Dice que la fantasía nunca arrastra a la locura; que lo que arrastra a la locura es la razón."¹¹ In Greitz's own essay, Buhle unearths another key idea: "Se deduce de él que Hamlet es el relato dramático de una tentativa de crimen perfecto, y, entre otras cosas, se afirma que si en 1940 un crimen perfecto es el que queda en el misterio, en 1600 era el que puede justificarse moralmente."¹²

At the end of El estruendo de las rosas, as Felix Greitz is about to be executed for the murder of Cuno Gesenius (Gesenius was actually murdered by his political successor), Buhle--having solved the crime, but finding the solution impractical--brings Greitz's two key ideas together and explains to Greitz:

"Mi estimado amigo," dijo, con sarcasmo; "en nuestro régimen no se puede hablar con libertad porque está basado en una mentira. Es la mentira de la eficiencia. Si se empezara por admitir la ineficiencia y la posibilidad de error, cabrían la burla saludable y la crítica, pero la presunción de infalibilidad, en vez de ayudar, limita el horizonte y enseguece."¹³

The curious, unexpected, unsettling depth the reader finds in Peyrou's

novel originates from the paradoxical vibrations of Peyrou's two-pronged satire: both the detective story and the political regime assume a well-made, clock-work world view, and yet here they are diametrically opposed. The classical detective structure is respected by Peyrou in this novel, but finally he denies the most comforting convention of the formula--that when a final solution is found it will have some effect on reality, that justice will be restored. Peyrou demonstrates that the seductive power of the immoral political regime of El estruendo is that it justifies itself by appealing to our desire for order. The totalitarian regime, however, abuses logic and finally denies order based on reason. In this way, the political system denigrates man as an individual (an intellect) and as a social being (since the basis of all society is a sense of order).

In Un Crime, the secular rationality of the classical detective story is replaced by a religious order, a "higher" rationality. In El estruendo de las rosas, the deterministic order of the detective story is negated by the equally deterministic order of a political regime. Both of these orders are rational, therefore we as readers are brought face to face with the fact that rational order has become arbitrary in so far as a man-centered view of reality is concerned. Peyrou's novel marks the border of the postmodern parody of detective stories. The hero of his story, Felix Greitz, believes in "el desorden como orden."¹⁴ In the full-fledged postmodern parody, we find that the order of disorder, in a centerless universe, is the only possible truth.

One of the earliest postmodern writers to express the order of disorder (and conversely the disorder of order), and to attach these ideas directly to the detective story was Gertrude Stein. Stein attempted to write one

detective novel, Blood on the Dining-Room Floor (started in 1933 and published in 1948), and two detective short stories, "A Water-Fall and a Piano" and "Is Dead" (both published in 1936). In an essay published in 1937 entitled "Why I Like Detective Stories," Stein discusses not only the classical English detective story, but also her own attempts at creating detective stories. Her comments on the detective genre underline the bromide effect of the formula: "I used to think that a detective story was soothing because the hero being dead, you begin with the corpse you did not have to take him on and so your mind was free to enjoy yourself, of course there is the detection but nobody really believes in detection, that is what makes the detection so soothing, they try to make you believe in the detection by trying to make you fond of the character that does the detecting, they know if you do not get fond of him you will not believe in the detection, naturally not and you have to believe in it a little or else it will not be soothing."¹⁵ Stein's own effort to write detective stories began in 1933 after the publication and successful reception of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. She was spending the summer in Bilignin where she was upset by her own inability to continue writing, by unexpected (unwanted) guests, and household problems. Added to this were strange occurrences in the neighborhood: "Mme Pernollet, the hotelkeeper's wife, for whom she had great affection, had mysteriously fallen from a high window to her death in the cement courtyard of the hotel; and an Englishwoman visiting a neighbor had shot herself in a nearby ravine."¹⁶ Like so many other writers, Stein turned to the disciplined, formulaic detective story narrative when she lacked the urge to write, but felt compelled to write nevertheless. The result of this imposed exercise was Blood on the Dining-Room Floor, not a

detective story but a parody of one. Its parodic quality is described succinctly by John Malcolm Brinnin:

This short "novel" has the quality of a literary pastiche in its genre and is full of numbers and suspicions and an indiscriminate air of portentousness. A little roman à clef, in which Gertrude's visitors and neighbors are transparently present, the story begins with the time-honored convention of a dead body, but then, unlike most detective stories makes no headway whatsoever toward unmasking the criminal. Conditions for criminal activity are suggested in a score of ways, many motives are hinted at and every event is touched with presage, but nothing is solved, resolved, or brought to any conclusion other than mystification.¹⁷

The story reminds one of Stein's comments on American crimes and how they matter; we have all the facts and no one is hiding anything, but the facts don't mean because they have no causal connection. In commenting on her novel in "Why I Like Detective Stories," Stein decides that perhaps it is really not a detective novel: ". . . it was such a good detective story but nobody did any detecting except just conversation so after all it was not a detective story so finally I concluded that . . . on the whole a detective story has to have if it has not a detective it has to have an ending and my detective story did not have any."¹⁸

Stein was to reverse her decisions about whether or not a detective story had to honor all the conventions, such as that of a final solution. In her two page detective story "A Water-Fall and a Piano," the subject is the death of the Englishwoman who shoots herself in a ravine. The epigraph points up the order of disorder--an order based on chance, contingency:

There are so many ways in which there is no crime.

A goat comes into this story too.

There is always coincidence in crime.¹⁹

This is a detective story in which everyone, including the author, wonders whether or not a crime--other than the crime of death in general--has been

committed. The Englishwoman was living in France, left France, returned and was happy we are told. She has plans for the care of nine puppies and of the garden. Her death is unexpected: "Then the dogs found her. She had put her cap beside her and there were two bullets in her head and she was dead."²⁰ The suggestion of foul play is obvious: how can anyone shoot himself twice in the head? Stein's above description of the scene of death indicates both suicide (she had put her cap beside her) and murder (there were two bullets in her head). Everyone wonders about the death, the police and the doctors argue about the possibility that a person could shoot himself twice, and the church buries the woman, but no one is satisfied about the agent of death. This detective story has no ending, just as Blood on the Dining-Room Floor has no ending--that is, no final solution. The final lines of the story involve a repetition of narrative pattern, a suggested circularity, common to the postmodern anti-detective story, but alien to the traditional detective story: "And everyone still talks about it all but not so much now as they did. An American comes to visit in place of the Englishwoman but she has not come to be dead."²¹ The existence of a crime, whether general or specific, in the death of the Englishwoman is never resolved. This ambiguity is retained by Stein's last phrase, "but she has not come to be dead," which can be read as intention in one context and as simple present fact (with the future possibility left open) in another context.

"Is Dead" deals with the other mysterious neighborhood occurrence, the death of the hotelkeeper's wife. The story opens with an account of the funeral and, of course, of the circumstances surrounding the death. Stein retains the double geometric narrative of the popular detective story in all of her own stories. Again, we do not know here whether we are investigating

an accident, a suicide or a murder. The facts given are such that all three possibilities are indicated. The victim may have walked in her sleep. She may have committed suicide because somebody had to die, and her second son was the person chosen, so she took his place. Finally, foul play is suggested by the fact that her husband was unfaithful to her.

In "Is Dead" as in "A Water-Fall and a Piano," we sense that the crime is death in general: "In every country there is some way in which it is not right to be dead, that is to die. And why? Each one knows why."²² We are given the facts which relate to this particular death, but the facts don't collate--they proliferate. The detecting remains general. Stein, herself, says of these two short stories: "Anyway I finally did write two very little ones, all about the same time, one was called 'A Piano and a Water-Fall' [sic] the other one was called 'Is Dead,' but there was no detective hero there were corpses but no detecting and there was money but that was there completely separated from what had been happening, if you have no motive and no detecting can it be a detective story I can only hope so because I would really and truly like to write one."²³ Thus, Stein has asked if it is possible to write a detective story with no ending, no detective, no detecting and no motive. What she is actually asking is if a detective story is possible where there is no final solution, no official detective, no linking of clues and no ascertainable cause for a particular crime. This form of detective story exists as the postmodern parody of the popular model-- a parody in which hypothetical solutions proliferate to leave the ending of the story open, where perhaps a character, the reader and/or the author all take on the role of detective, where many questions are asked and "detecting" is a general process which does not uncover any linear sequence of

events, and where both the cause of the crime and often the existence of a crime in the first place, remain ambiguous. Stein's stories are more concerned with the interior of the mind which attempts to order exterior reality, fact. The exterior world refuses to be convincingly anthropomorphized, remains alien to the ordering process of the mind. This is the "order of disorder"--a tentative patterning from which we learn possible solutions, not final ones.

Some postmodern parodies demonstrate that the formulaic, rational ordering of exterior events leads to solutions which are at best meaningless, as in El estruendo de las rosas, and at worst destructive for the detective who pretends to discover such an order. In 1942, shortly after Borges and Bioy Casares wrote the burlesque Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi, Borges wrote a parody of the detective story entitled "La muerte y la brújula." It contains all the conventions--victims, an official detective, a criminal--and it follows closely the geometric double narrative of the classical story. In fact, in an article "Los laberintos policiales y Chesterton," Borges lists his own standards for the ideal detective story, and his own parody conforms to these standards just as the Father Brown stories of Chesterton do:

- A. Un límite discrecional de seis personajes.
- B. Declaración de todos los términos del problema.
- C. Avara economía en los medios.
- D. Primacía del cómo sobre el quién.
- E. El pudor de la muerte.
- F. Necesidad y maravilla en la solución.²⁴

Borges' great admiration for Chesterton would lead us to look for a strong Chestertonian influence in Borges' own detective stories. The influence is there, but the relationship between the two writers is inverse instead of

direct, just as the Father Brown stories are classical detective stories and Borges' stories are parodies of the genre. In his essay "Sobre Chesterton," Borges' insights into Chesterton's writing lead us to insights about Borges' own works. Borges states that "cada una de las piezas de la Saga del Padre Brown presenta un misterio, propone explicaciones de tipo demoníaco o mágico y las reemplaza, al fin, con otras que son de este mundo."²⁵ In Borges' own work, we often seem to start with premises which may well be false. We follow them through logically, and we end up not with a solution but with a mystery. What we have traced is the labyrinth of human thought which is also, for Borges, the universe. Later, after examining several of Chesterton's stories, Borges concludes:

Tales ejemplos, que sería fácil multiplicar, prueban que Chesterton se defendió de ser Edgar Allan Poe o Franz Kafka, pero que algo en el barro de su yo propendía a la pesadilla, algo secreto, y ciego y central. . . . Esa discordia, esa precaria sujeción de una voluntad demoníaca, definen la naturaleza de Chesterton.²⁶

Borges restrains himself from being chaotic and demoniacal by constructing works which seem to be logical, geometrically symmetrical, clear-cut--this accounts in part for his extreme use of artifice. Yet it is precisely by the creation of these artificial patterns, so reassuring at first glance, that Borges leads us toward "la pesadilla, algo secreto, y ciego y central."

The formulaic detective genre offers the perfect structure for the metaphysical and philosophical hypotheses Borges is continually testing:

The mystery genre offers unreality, inaccuracy, distortion, deception, and hiding of truth and identity to a mind obsessed with deciphering a more precise equation for an unbelievable universe. The mystery format for Borges satisfies both his awareness of the way things are and his desire to order them, even if the order is an image of disorder, because the detective story is also a genre for wishfulfillment. The mystery form is perfect for the labyrinthine imaginings,

documented with verisimilitude, of that concrete universe Borges dreams of, that mathematically exact world in which geometrical but terrible lives are constructed for men to live.²⁷ [my emphasis]

The disorder of order is found in "La muerte y la brújula." Here, the detective, in trying to formulate a precise equation for an unbelievable world, is led by his exact logic to his own destruction. In the opening paragraph of this tale, Borges tells us that although his detective, Erik Lönnrot, did not prevent the last in a series of crimes, he did foresee it. We also are told that although he did not solve the first crime in the series, he did divine that the series of crimes would happen and that the notorious criminal Red Scharlach was involved. Lönnrot considers himself the typical transcendent detective so familiar in classical detective stories, but he is something more, as Borges indicates at the end of the opening paragraph: "Lönnrot se creía un puro razonador, un Auguste Dupin, pero algo de aventurero había en él y hasta de tahur."²⁸ The opening lines give us enough detail as to what will occur in the story (a series of crimes, the suggested criminal) that we are prepared to challenge, even to outguess, Lönnrot in solving the crime. If Lönnrot is something of an adventurer and gamester, so are we as readers.

The first murder, Doctor Marcel Yarmolinsky's, occurs on December third in the Hôtel du Nord. Commissioner Treviranus and Lönnrot investigate the death. Treviranus hypothesizes that Yarmolinsky's death was accidental, that the criminal was after the sapphires of the Tetrarch of Galilee who was staying across the hall. Lönnrot replies:

Possible, pero no interesante Usted replicará que la realidad no tiene la menor obligación de ser interesante. Yo le replicaré que la realidad puede precindir de esa obligación, pero no las hipótesis. En la que usted ha improvisado,

interviene copiosamente el azar. He aquí un rabino muerto; yo preferiría una explicación puramente rabínica, no los imaginarios percances de un imaginario ladrón.²⁹

Then, in Yarmolinsky's typewriter are found these words: "La primera letra del Nombre ha sido articulada" (The first letter of the Name has been written). Lönnrot collects Yarmolinsky's books and begins looking for a rabbinical solution. The newspapers report that Lönnrot is studying the name of God in order to unearth that of the assassin. Cashing in on the excitement, an ambitious bookseller brings out a cheap edition of the Historia de la secta de los Hasidim.

On January third, a second crime occurs in the western sector of the city. Daniel Simón Azevedo, an underworld character, is the victim. The modus operandi matches that of the Yarmolinsky murder. On the yellow and red rhombs of a paint store wall is written: "La segunda letra del Nombre ha sido articulado" (The second letter of the Name has been spoken).

A third crime occurs on February third at a tavern in the eastern sector of the city. The victim, Ginzberg alias Gryphius, was an informer who had called Treviranus. Ginzberg has been spirited away by two figures in harlequin costumes. The sentence, "La última de las letras del Nombre ha sido articulado" (The last letter of the Name has been spoken) is scrawled on a shed door. In the informer's room at the tavern, Lönnrot finds the Philologus hebraeograecus (1739) of Leusden in which a passage is underlined which states that the Hebrew day lasts from sundown to sundown. Lönnrot begins to divine the workings of a series, a sacrificial plot. Treviranus, however, asks: "¿Y si la historia de esta noche fuera un simulacro?" (And supposing the story of this night were a sham?). Lönnrot, the transcendent, keeps working on his hypothesis.

On March first, Treviranus receives a letter from one Baruj Spinoza and a city map. Spinoza explains, and demonstrates on the map, that there will be no fourth crime because the locations of the first three form an equilateral triangle which echoes the symmetry in time. "Treviranus leyó con resignación ese argumento more geometrico y mandó la carta y el plano a casa de Lönnrot--indiscutible merecedor de tales locuras" (This argument, more geometrico, Treviranus read with resignation, and sent the letter and map on to Lönnrot--who deserved such a piece of insanity). Lönnrot, with the aid of a geometric compass and a directional compass, figures out that the pattern of the crimes is a four-sided one--a rhomb not a triangle--since the murders actually occurred on the fourth day of the Hebrew month and since the "Tetragrammaton" (the secret name of God) contains four letters. He sets out for the estate of Triste-le-Roy in the southern sector in order to capture the criminal. Upon arriving, he enters the deserted house which is an architectural labyrinth of superfluous symmetries and maniacal repetitions. Lönnrot, ascending numerous stairways and passing through repetitious antechambers, finds that the house seems to grow larger because of its shadows, its symmetry, its mirrors, because of his years, his ignorance, his solitude. For the first time Lönnrot becomes uncertain; he intuits that the abstract minotaur he has been looking for perhaps doesn't exist in the labyrinth. Arriving at the oriel high in the center of the house, Lönnrot is accosted by two thugs who disarm him. In the moonlight streaming through the rhombs of the windows, Red Scharlach appears and explains to Lönnrot how he has created his minotaur.

Scharlach says he has trapped Lönnrot out of vengeance--for the imprisonment of his brother and his own near death engineered by Lönnrot

three years earlier. Lönnrot had been looking for a rabbinical solution to Yarmolinsky's death, an accidental death perpetrated by the double crosser Azevedo who was after the Tetrarch's sapphires. Scharlach gave him that solution in order to trap him. The fourth victim of the quaternary solution will be Lönnrot, its creator. Lönnrot replies: "En su laberinto sobran tres líneas. . . . Yo sé de un laberinto griego que es una línea única, recta. En esa línea se han perdido tantos filósofos que bien puede perderse un mero detective."³⁰ Scharlach promises that when he kills Lönnrot again, the labyrinth will be a single straight line. Then, he fires.

Lönnrot's empiricism, his transcendent logic, his ability to unearth the hidden morphology of the series of crimes is what leads him to his destruction. We, as readers, who have been trying to outguess Lönnrot are also frustrated rather than rewarded. Certainly, on one level, the story undercuts the classical detective story because it demonstrates the vain machinations, the rage to order, which the intellect tries to impose on an alien, impermeable universe. The simple, common sense mind of Treviranus hypothesizes correctly about the first crime and intuits a hoax in the third. The effect is the same as it would be in a Sherlock Holmes story in which Watson was right all along. Lönnrot's downfall is not that his process of ratiocination is faulty, but rather that his original premise--the rabbinical solution--is false and has little to do with reality. On a metaphysical level, Borges seems to indicate that the clues to the structure of the universe are myriad, that they can be logically concatenated, but that we have no way of knowing that our original premise or perception is valid. As in Stein's work, we have numerous facts, and everyone is telling the truth, but if we reach any solution it is only by denying all other

possible linkings of clues along the way. Our "final solution" is only one of the many possible solutions. Borges underlines Lönnrot's compulsion to order reality, to replace fact with pattern. He says of Lönnrot: Virtualmente, habia descifrado el problema; las meras circunstancias, la realidad (nombres, arrestos, caras, tramites judiciales y carcelarios), apenas le interesaban ahora."³¹

The geometric horror of the abstract world of the metaphysical detective appears as a mise en abyme in Ernesto Sábato's crime novel, El túnel. The hero of El túnel, Juan Pablo Castel, has murdered the woman he loves, María Iribarne. What we read is his confession, the events which led to the crime. The detecting which goes on is double: the reader tries to ferret out from Castel's unreliable discourse the psychology of this tormented and lonely man. Castel in his own right is cursed with logic; he constantly tries to discover explanations for the experiences he undergoes--logical explanations for loneliness, for love, for jealousy, for death. A maniacal faith in logic is what Sábato sees encouraged by the popular detective story. He associates the reasoning of the transcendent detective with the philosophy of Leibnitz:

De Leibniz a Poe: Para Leibniz no existen en el Universo hechos brutos ni casualidades: todo tiene su raison d'être, y si muchas veces no la alcanzamos es porque nos parecemos a Dios pero no lo suficiente. De todos modos, el ideal del conocimiento humano es el de ir reduciendo la masa caótica de las verdades de hecho al orden divino de las verdades de razón. Los físicos, que encajan el tumultuoso movimiento de una catarata en una fórmula matemática, realizan en la tierra ese ideal leibniziano; el día en que los hombres puedan calcular un odio o deducir un crimen, Leibniz por fin respirará tranquilo.³²

As Sábato suggests, abstract philosophy falsifies the concrete world.

Sábato shows us, through Castel, that the fallacy of ratiocination lies in

treating it as an objective science rather than as a subjective process. Castel's brand of logic leads him to see betrayal and conspiracy all around him and points to the dangers of trying to treat logically a world seething with jealousy and permeated with subjectivity. Castel's irrational and emotional interior world denies that logic can explain anything, and Castel's own false logic destroys him. In El túnel, the character Hunter's idea for a twentieth-century detective story is a mise en abyme for the destruction of Castel himself caught in the tunnel of his own subjectivity. The hero of Hunter's projected story is to be a Don Quixote type who believes as fanatically in the rationalism of the detective story as Don Quixote does in the chivalric world:

Fíjate: un hombre tiene madre, mujer y un chico. Una noche matan misteriosamente a la madre. Las investigaciones de la policía no llegan a ningún resultado. Un tiempo después matan a la mujer; la misma cosa. Finalmente matan al chico. El hombre está enloquecido, pues quiere a todos, sobre todo al hijo. Desesperado, decide investigar los crímenes por su cuenta. Con los habituales métodos inductivos, deductivos, analíticos, sintéticos, etcétera, de esos genios de la novela policial, llega a la conclusión de que el asesino deberá cometer un cuarto asesinato, el día tal, a la hora tal, en el lugar tal. Su conclusión es que el asesinato deberá matarlo ahora a él. En el día y hora calculados, el hombre va al lugar donde debe cometerse el cuarto asesinato y espera al asesino. Pero el asesino no llega. Revisa sus deducciones: podría haber calculado mal el lugar; no, el lugar está bien; podría haber calculado mal la hora; no, la hora está bien. La conclusión es horrorosa: el asesino debe estar ya en el lugar. En otras palabras: el asesino es él mismo, que ha cometido los otros crímenes en estado de inconsciencia. El detective y el asesino son la misma persona. . . . La conclusión es evidente . . . el hombre se suicida. Queda la duda de si se mata por remordimientos o si el yo asesino mata al yo detective, como en un vulgar asesinato.³³

The resemblance between Hunter's story, Castel's fate, and Borges' story is evident: logic creates a pattern which the protagonists try to force on the concrete world, and that abstract patterning destroys them.

Lönnrot's fault, like that of Castel, is that he treats a genuine mystery, the emotional world of revenge and jealousy, as if it were a mathematical problem--a mistake most classical detectives make but which positivism hides from us. In Chesterton's stories, Borges has noted that the fantastic, mysterious explanations suggested at first are replaced by solutions of this world. In the postmodern story, the opposite occurs. The key to this paradox is perhaps found in our understanding of the word "mystery" itself. That a mystery is not the same as a "puzzle" or a "problem" is probably best demonstrated by the works of Poe. For Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Gold Bug," and "Marie Roget" were all mysteries. Yet it is obvious that they are not all the same type of mystery. In an article entitled "On Poe's Use of Mystery," S. K. and Linda Wertz point out that Poe's works include three types of mystery. The first is the "genuine mystery" which involves the relations of man to the world. This mystery has metaphysical import; we know that this mystery has no solid, logical solution:

A mystery, according to Gabriel Marcel [author of *Being and Having*], appears at first to be merely a problem that is difficult to solve. Reflection shows, however, that in a genuine mystery the distinction between subject and object, between what is in one and what is before one breaks down. Marcel says "a mystery is something in which I myself am involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity." In other words, when one is faced with questions where there is no objective standpoint which one can adopt to answer such questions, we have a genuine mystery. The subject is involved in, and a part of that about which he is asking. . . . The recognition of a mystery provides the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of human existence, but does not end in any solution which can be verified by an appropriate technique or observation.³⁴

We find genuine mystery in Poe's grotesque and fantastic tales, those like "The Fall of the House of Usher" or "William Wilson." Here we are in the

realm where events are ambiguous and we are dealing with our own rationality and irrationality. Mystery in this sense, however, is not mere subjectivity. The mysterious permeates objects as well as beings. We can gain some knowledge of the mystery, not by means of rational thought, but rather by secondary reflection, "reflection that seeks to recover the unity of an experience by asking from within the experience of belief what meaning it has for one."³⁵

The mystery in a tale like "The Gold Bug" is not a genuine mystery but rather a puzzle. We solve puzzles, not by gaining further knowledge about the unknown, but by examining what we already know. Once we clarify what we already know and put the facts in the right sequence, we are able to solve the puzzle. When Legrand solves the cipher in "The Gold Bug," he is solving a puzzle, not a genuine mystery.

The third type of mystery is the "problem." In solving the problem, the detective does not have all the facts he needs when he starts to work on the solution. He must look for clues just as Dupin does in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Mystery of Marie Roget." The problem differs from the genuine mystery because the problem has an answer which can be reached via rational thought. The mystery in classical detective fiction is presented as a problem rather than a genuine mystery or a puzzle. In postmodern detective parodies, we find that the fictional detective, and often the readers, are foiled because they attack genuine mysteries as if they were puzzles or problems. The gap between "reality" seen as a problem and as a genuine mystery is brought to the fore in fiction such as Borges' "La muerte y la brújula," Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages and Butor's L'Emploi du temps. Ernesto Sábato writes of Borges in Uno y el universo: "A Borges

le gusta confundir al lector: uno cree estar leyendo un relato policial y de pronto se encuentra con Dios o con el falso Basílides."³⁶ The geometrical narrative of the classical detective story and its conventions are used by Borges, and others, only to be undercut when we find that we are dealing with a genuine mystery rather than a problem.

The parody of the detective genre in "La muerte y la brújula" includes more than the undercutting of the "problem" convention and the Sherlock-Watson convention. The characters in the traditional detective story are flat characters so that the plot won't be clogged by unnecessary personal detail. Borges' characters, however, are dehumanized to the extent that they are pawns tracing a pattern. They are functions in a mathematical problem. In fact, one of the most curious aspects of this story is that the relationship of the characters, their function, is one of identity as well as of opposition. At the end of the tale when Scharlach explains the architecture of the clues to Lönnrot, the convention of the detective unmasking the criminal and explaining how he solved the crime is reversed. Scharlach explains that he foresaw that Lönnrot would be able to discover that the pattern was based on quaternary relationships rather than the more obvious trinary relationships. Borges has laid clues to this alternating pattern throughout the story:

Yarmolinsky is attending the Third Talmudic Congress and he possesses "the ageless resignation that had made it possible for him to survive three years of war in the Carpathians and three thousand years of oppression in the pogroms." Lönnrot comes upon the passage about the Jewish day in the thirty-third dissertation of the Philologus (although that passage points to the fourth, not the third day of the month). The supposedly dead Red Scharlach emerges in trio with two harlequins from the tavern where the third, spoof crime is committed. At the tavern he had moreover given three false names. Unforgettably, when Lönnrot begins to elaborate his rabbinical

hypothesis, Treviranus says "No hay que buscarle tres pies al gato"--literally "there's no point in looking for three legs on the cat," an eccentric version of a Spanish expression that means something like "Let's not complicate matters" and which normally states that "there's no point in looking for five legs on a cat" Yet cats of course have four legs, and four is as present as three in the story: in the lozenges, in the discovery about the Hebrew day, in the Tetragrammaton, in the Tetrarch of Galilee. It is characteristic of Borges that several of the numerical clues (such as the Tetrarch of Galilee) are gratuitously irrelevant to the plot.³⁷

Borges' artifice, his architecture of clues, does not collapse, however, after Scharlach has explained that the pattern is based on the number four rather than three. Several aspects of the story turn us, as readers, back to the trinary relationship. We realize that Lönnrot is the third person to be murdered, not the fourth, since what we thought was the third crime (the murder of Ginzberg) was a hoax. Also, since this is a Jewish story, Lönnrot, killed on the night of the second of March is actually killed on the third day of the Jewish month. Returning to a trinary pattern after having discovered these additional clues, the reader begins to see the entire narrative take on a new form, yet ominously the new form is a variation of or an echo of the original trinary one. Since Red Scharlach is omniscient insofar as his ability to predict Lönnrot's process of reasoning and his subsequent actions, Lönnrot actually becomes an extension of Scharlach's intellect, a pawn caught in Scharlach's labyrinth. It is Lönnrot's cleverness which leads him to his own demise. We readers tend to challenge Lönnrot by trying to outsmart him. If we figure out that the series of crimes is based on a quaternary relationship before Lönnrot does, we become detectives who arrive at the scene of the final crime first--and the final murder is, indeed, the murder of the detective. If we go beyond Lönnrot and return to a variation of the trinary version of the murder plot,

then we should begin to wonder if we have not been pawns in a labyrinth set up by Borges, an extension of his intellect. Finally, we suspect that Borges' play with numerology points to yet another intellectual artifice being superimposed on the world of fact. Has Borges caught his detectives in the same way that Scharlach caught Lönnrot? In either case, whether we outsmart Lönnrot or go beyond his death in solving the mystery, we find the same sort of curious circular pattern that we saw in Stein's "A Water-Fall and a Piano." Just as it is suggested that the "American" has taken over the place (and the fate?) of the Englishwoman at the end of Stein's story, it is possible that we have taken over the place (and the fate?) of the original detective who was led to his death by his urge to discover, to order. Because these types of detective parodies remain open in form, because the architecture of hypotheses remains in suspension, the reader cum investigator remains involved, is caught in the labyrinth.

This repetitive architecture of trinary and quaternary relationships which we try to solve echoes the final reversal of "La muerte y la brújula" when Lönnrot tells Scharlach that his maze has three lines too many, that there exists a Greek maze that is a single, straight line. The maze referred to is that of Zeno the Eleatic in his paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. Borges explains the substance of Zeno's paradox in Otras inquisiciones:

Aquiles corre diez veces más ligero que la tortuga y le da una ventaja de diez metros. Aquiles corre esos diez metros, la tortuga corre uno; Aquiles corre ese metro, la tortuga corre un decímetro; Aquiles corre ese decímetro, la tortuga corre un centímetro; Aquiles corre ese centímetro, la tortuga un milímetro; Aquiles Piesligeros el milímetro, la tortuga un décimo de milímetro y así infinitamente, sin alcanzarla . . . Tal es la versión habitual. Wilhelm Capelle . . . traduce el texto original de Aristóteles: "El segundo argumento de Zenón es el llamado

Aquiles. Razona que el más lento no será alcanzado por el más veloz, pues el perseguidor tiene que pasar por el sitio que el perseguido acaba de evacuar, de suerte que el más lento siempre le lleva una determinada ventaja."³⁸

Capelle's version of Zeno's paradox is important because it allows us to see how Borges moves from an infinite series involving Achilles and the tortoise to an infinite series involving the pursuer and the pursued, to an infinite series--an inescapable maze--based on vengeance and persecution. In her book La expresión de la irrealidad en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges, Ana María Barrenechea states:

El final de "La muerte y la brújula" une la forma dramática de la venganza y la persecución con la simplicidad del dibujo geométrico: el esquema de Zenón de Elea que Lönnrot propone para que lo maten en una vida futura es simple como una línea recta pero patético por la posibilidad de perderse en él como en un desierto.³⁹

The intellect, like vengeance, is in constant pursuit of itself. It unendingly creates labyrinths only to destroy them in favor of other labyrinths. The movement is archetypal, and it matters little whether we are dealing with a specific intellect--that of Lönnrot, or Scharlach, or Borges, or ourselves--the movement remains caught in an infinite pattern. Reason builds perfectly logical constructs which are, finally, impossible and false--as is Zeno's paradox. Reason creates a mystery which reason cannot solve.

A last important convention which Borges undercuts is that of the eradication of the criminal by the detective. It becomes clear in "La muerte y la brújula" that this sort of justice is not possible in a world where the detective and the criminal may be interchangeable, or even identical. In a commentary on "La muerte y la brújula" Borges states:

The killer and the slain, whose minds work in the same way, may be the same man. Lönnrot is not an unbelievable fool walking into his own death trap but, in a symbolic way, a man committing suicide. This is hinted at by the similarity of their names. The end syllable of "Lönnrot" means "red" in German, and "Red Scharlach" is also translatable, in German, as "Red Scarlet."⁴⁰

The identity of all men is a recurrent concept in Borges' stories. As his fictional John Vincent Moon states in "La forma de la espada": "Acaso Schopenhauer tiene razon: yo soy los otros, cualquier hombre es todos los hombres, Shakespeare es de algun modo el miserable John Vincent Moon."⁴¹ In "La muerte y la brújula," the identity of Lönnrot and Scharlach can be pinned down more specifically in reference to the detective story genre. The classical detective story's major characters are three: the victim, the murderer and the detective. Burton, the fictional detective story author in Butor's L'Emploi du temps explains, as was noted earlier, that all detective novels are constructed on two murders, the first committed by the criminal being only the occasion of the second in which he is the victim of the unpunishable murderer, the detective.⁴² Scharlach is obviously a murderer; Lönnrot is obviously a detective. Yet, if we look at Scharlach's motive for hunting down Lönnrot, we find that Scharlach is avenging the imprisonment and death of his brother and his own victimization at the hand of Lönnrot, the pure and unpunishable murderer. In order to trap Lönnrot, Scharlach has had to become a detective himself. Just as the spatial and temporal labyrinth which Scharlach has constructed can be simplified so that it is a single, straight line, invisible and everlasting, so too can the functions of detective, victim and murderer be simplified to a relationship which is identity.

Although many of Borges' stories have strong affinities with the detective story, "La muerte y la brújula" is the only one which has an official detective and which manifestly parodies the classical pattern. Other stories such as "Abenjacán el Bojarí, muerto in su laberinto" and "Tema del traidor y del héroe" contain characters like Ryan and Unwin who play the role of the detective. Still other stories follow narrative patterns which link them to types of detective stories other than the classical type: "El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan" is a sort of spy story; "Emma Zunz" is close to being an inverted detective story. Borges also, as is his wont, refers to fictional detective stories within the framework of another story; this is the case in "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain" and "El acercamiento a Almotásim." The detective rhythm of narrative is evident in many more Borges stories. In her essay "The Flaunting of Artifice in Vladimir Nabokov and Jorge Luis Borges," Patricia Merivale says: "In numerous other stories ('El sur' or 'Hombre de la esquina rosada,' for instance), where the hero follows a devious route to his doom, Borges leaves to the reader the detective's function of reasoning from clues, or supplying the missing scene or the true explanation. Detective story structure is still there; 'story' still equals 'puzzle,' but some of its paraphernalia has dropped away."⁴³ What is important to this study, of course, are those stories which manifestly parody the detective story and which depend to great extent on this detective prefiguration for their effect: "La muerte y la brújula" does this. Its narrative pattern is such that we begin thinking that we are dealing with the geometric double narrative--subject and fable, or crime and inquiry--only to find that the narrative convolutes itself and repeats itself with variation in a way that makes the narrative of the

inquiry become an infinitely regressing series of narratives. In the popular detective narrative, the reader usually identifies with the detective and this identification carries on into the postmodern narrative, but with major differences. As Merivale suggests, the reader may be left alone to carry on the detective function. If the reader does have a detective with whom to identify, that relation is undercut when the detective and victim become one person, as is suggested in Stein's "A Water-Fall and a Piano," in Hunter's outline for a detective plot in El túnel, and in Borges' "La muerte y la brújula." The reverse of this relationship--i.e. a situation in which the detective and criminal are one person--is also commonplace in postmodern parodies. This last relationship is found in Borges' "La muerte," and in Sábato's El túnel both on the level of Castel's narrative and on the level of Hunter's outlined plot. The reader who starts out innocently detecting in these stories soon finds he is unwittingly involved in victimization and criminality.

CHAPTER II: LATER SUBVERSIONS

Both Michel Butor's L'Emploi du temps and Alain Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommages are postmodern parodies of the classical detective story. In these works, the geometric double narrative of the classical story is maintained but undercut, and the association of detective and criminal is overt. The two novels are, however, very different in style although both Butor and Robbe-Grillet are writers associated with the movement known as the nouveau roman. It is important to realize here that the grouping nouveau roman has come into being for convenience rather than because it names a unified movement: "Le sens habituel qu'on donne à l'expression nouveau roman dans les manuels de littérature c'est un ensemble d'écrivains dont on a commencé à parler entre cinquante et soixante et qui ont publié au moins un livre aux Editions de Minuit."¹ The postmodern writers grouped under the catch-all title nouveau roman include novelists as different as Robbe-Grillet, Butor, Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Ollier, Marguerite Duras, Claude Simon and Jean Ricardou. This grouping of convenience, however, has led some literary critics of the French contemporary novel into treating these novelists as if they presented a unified school with a "doctrine" of literary creation to peddle. In attacking this non-existent doctrine, Andre Frossard wrote in a 1961 article entitled "Technique of Nothing" that what is important to the new novel

is not the theme
is not the plot
is not love
is not life
is not death
is not the characters
nor the situations
nor things
but the Technique of the novelist.²

The critics adverse to the nouveau roman find that it "has presumed to 'fix' the laws of the future novel; it seeks to sweep away all ties with the past; it wishes to expel Man from the world; it aims at a complete objectivity; and it is so difficult to read that only specialists can cope with it. Robbe-Grillet argues (in the Revue de Paris, September, 1961), on the contrary, that the new novel is not a theory or a set of theories but an experiment; that instead of sweeping away the past it pursues an evolutionary course; that its primary interest is Man and his situation in the world; that it aims at a total subjectivity; that it is accessible to all readers of good will; and that it avoids not meaning, but predetermined meaning."³ The modernist critical attack on and subsequent postmodernist defense of the nouveau roman is fertile ground for anyone wishing to discover the differences between the modernist project (which seems to be the perspective from which the critics of the new novel direct their attacks) and the postmodernist project. Further, the various forms this postmodernist defense takes reveal the differences among the novelists grouped under the term nouveau roman. All of these novelists are united against something roughly defined as the "modernist" point of view, but there is no uniformity of definition among them as to what precisely the "postmodernist" project might be. Almost all of the authors of the nouveau roman have accorded special attention, however, to one specific novelistic form: the detective story. The interest they have shown in the detective story leads Bruce Morrisette to remark that it is "a genre whose influence in France would be difficult to overestimate."⁴ And in Une Parole exigeante, Ludovic Janvier states "le Nouveau Roman, c'est le roman policier pris au serieux."⁵

The parody of the classical detective story, as was noted earlier, is the most clear-cut in Butor's L'Emploi du temps and Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommés. Also, these two works are of special interest because Butor and Robbe-Grillet are not only two very major new novelists but also are two very different postmodern writers. Since the early sixties, Robbe-Grillet has become more and more the "voice" of the nouveau roman while Butor has become more and more distant from the nouveau roman both in terms of practice and theory. The rift between Butor and writers such as Robbe-Grillet, Ollier and Ricardou became manifest at the colloquium "Nouveau Roman: hier, aujourd'hui" held at Cérisy-la-Salle in July 1971. Butor's works were discussed at this colloquium, and he did contribute an essay, "Comment se sont écrits certains de mes livres," although he did not attend. After Georges Raillard's presentation "Référence plastique et discours littéraire chez Michel Butor," Robbe-Grillet opened the discussion of Butor's work and is quoted at length here because, whether we agree with his views or not, he does bring into relief the literary concerns of the postmodern writers:

Les recherches de Butor, qui sont presque le négatif des nôtres, vont peut-être nous permettre de préciser les réponses à ces questions que nous nous posons ici et dont les principales, pour moi, sont: qu'est-ce que l'écriture? qu'est-ce que la modernité? la modernité a-t-elle ou non changé le fonctionnement de l'écriture. Ce qui m'a frappé dans l'exposé de Georges Raillard, c'est que presque tous les aspects formels qu'il a signalés semblaient appartenir aux recherches étudiées jusqu'à présent par notre assemblée: la polysémie du texte, la littérature comme jeu, l'écriture productrice, les nombres générateurs. Et pourtant Raillard a bien montré que toutes ces opérations formelles accomplies par Butor, et qui dans une certaine perspective pouvaient être confondues avec celles d'Ollier ou de Ricardou, sont exactement l'inverse. Je ne dirais pas, comme Raillard, que cela indique que Butor n'appartient pas au Nouveau Roman; mais il est évident que son absence dans ce colloque n'est pas un hasard, tandis que, peut-être, il serait venu dans un semblable congrès il y a dix ans. Cela permet de souligner un changement progressif

dans le Nouveau Roman. Ce changement, plus ou moins daté de 1960 C'est depuis 1960, et de plus en plus au fur et à mesure que nous avançons dans cette recherche de la modernité, que nous nous apercevons de la rupture, dont nous étions d'ailleurs plus ou moins conscients dès le début. Car, personnellement, j'ai toujours fait de Butor une lecture à la fois intéressée et sur la défensive.⁶

The rupture which Robbe-Grillet signals here between Butor and the writers who present a solid theoretical front--Robbe-Grillet himself, Ricardou, Ollier--is of key importance: both Butor and the writers with whom Robbe-Grillet identifies himself are interested in novelistic technique, the creation of fictions. But Robbe-Grillet finds Butor's experiments--his use of myth, monument, and history--philosophically antagonistic to what he sees as the major concerns of the nouveau roman.

In a very real sense, this rupture returns us to the discussion of the differentiation between modernism and postmodernism dealt with in the introduction. In brief, from the perspective of Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou and Ollier, Butor's work is modern, not postmodern, in that it appears anthropocentric and appears to be in search of an origin or a tradition rather than to be forging ahead into new territory. This assumed orientation of Butor's research into reality is supposedly reflected in his style of writing. Each of the aforementioned novelists stated in clear terms at Cérisy-la-Salle his objections to Butor's opus. Jean Ricardou noted:

L'une des différences est sensible au niveau de la mise en jeu de l'ensemble culturel dans le texte. Chez Butor, la mise en jeu est ample, mais c'est moins son ampleur, qui doit être soulignée que le fait qu'elle ne conteste pas du tout le domaine culturel. Au contraire, elle l'enrichit de relations nouvelles dans son cadre même.⁷

Ricardou concludes by finding that modernity (or postmodernism in our context) marks itself by the conflicts it establishes with cultural

tradition. Ollier continues Ricardou's line of reasoning in his idea that these conflicts are registered on both a personal and a social level. Those registered on a social level are the same for all four novelists, however those conflicts registered on a personal level differ greatly:

Il me semble, à propos de Butor, que les inscriptions conflictuelles personnelles s'emboîtent parfaitement avec les inscriptions conflictuelles socialisées. A mon avis il n'y a pas d'affrontement dramatique. L'écriture de Butor semble opérer au sein des différentes inscriptions culturelles sans cette déchirure, cette rupture qui . . . est l'événement capital de l'écriture. C'est là peut-être que gît la différence profonde: une certaine harmonie, quasiment naturelle chez l'un et heurt, situation relativement catastrophique à dénouer, chez d'autres, peut-être chez nous précisément. De la viendrait le fait que si tous les projets de Butor m'intéressent énormément (il est plein d'idées), je suis régulièrement déçu par sa lecture, notamment par la texture de sa phrase que je trouve manquer de vigueur et de brutalité, d'agressivité et d'érotisme.⁸

Agreeing with Ollier that Butor's prose is indeed harmonious, beautiful, smooth, Robbe-Grillet returns to the broader issue on which Butor's rupture with these new novelists has been based: philosophy. Robbe-Grillet states this philosophical difference concisely: "[Butor] cherche toujours à retrouver un accord possible du moi et du monde, alors que pour nous ça n'a plus guère de sens."⁹ Following this observation, Robbe-Grillet pins down the exact philosophical failing he finds in Butor's thought, the problem he finds in his work: "c'est perpétuellement cette notion de vérité supérieure qui juge et domine."¹⁰ These last remarks by Robbe-Grillet demand examination both in terms of his own theory of the novel as well as in terms of their application to Butor's work.

The first complication to arise here is the seeming contradiction between Robbe-Grillet's 1961 statement that the new novel's "primary interest is Man and his situation in the world" and his observation at Cérisy-la-Salle

in 1971 that the rediscovery of a possible harmony between man and his world no longer has any meaning. This contradiction is only an apparent one, however, and can be resolved by taking into consideration Robbe-Grillet's essay "Nature, humanisme, tragédie" (1958) in which he points out that charges to the effect that his works are "inhuman" are unfounded. What Robbe-Grillet objects to in the humanist novels of the past is their anthropocentric philosophy: their tendency to invest the entire world with human signification. It is Robbe-Grillet's refusal to create anthropocentric novels which has led to the charge that his works are inhuman:

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 de crime contre l'humanité.

Le crime, c'est d'affirmer qu'il existe quelque chose, dans le monde, qui n'est pas l'homme, qui ne lui adresse aucune signe, qui n'a rien de commun avec lui. Le crime. . . c'est de constater cette séparation, cette distance, sans chercher à opérer sur elle la moindre sublimation.¹¹

Thus, Robbe-Grillet's project is to situate Man in the world, but without subsuming the world under the concept of man. This relationship, as we will see more concretely in Les Gommes, is neither one of complicity nor one of divorce (in the Camusian sense).

A second, much more telling confusion arises from Robbe-Grillet's view of Butor's work as an effort to rediscover (retrouver) the relationship of man and his surroundings and to demonstrate an underlying truth. The observations made by Ollier and Ricardou serve to enmesh us further in this confusion. They are correct in singling out in Butor's writing the use of cultural associations and the texture of his prose as different from their own styles of writing, but they misinterpret Butor's theory of the novel and his philosophy on the one hand, and ignore the innovations of his style

on the other. The elements in Butor's novels to which these new novelists object are all evident in L'Emploi du temps. This novel is also of special interest to this particular study because it is one of the only novels which not only parodies the detective genre but also explicates the genre at the same time. Butor's novel contains two detective stories: Jacques Revel's journal and George Burton's traditional narrative Meurtre de Bleston. Butor's use of the classical detective story structures and conventions is not based upon a desire to make a difficult novel palatable for the reader: "la technique du roman policier dans des livres comme Les Gommes ou L'Emploi du temps, ça n'est pas du tout quelque chose qui est surajouté. Il n'y a pas un roman d'abord et puis ensuite on ajoute une intrigue policière pour que ce soit plus facile à lire."¹² Nor is Butor attempting to create a novel which would fit into the genre of the detective story: "On peut définir le roman policier par un certain nombre de règles. . . . On peut s'intéresser au roman policier et faire quelque chose de différent. Faire quelque chose de différent, ça sera refuser un certain nombre de ces règles. . . . Mais, on sait que si on tourne ces règles suffisamment, on ne fait plus un roman policier. On fait autre chose--par exemple, un nouveau roman."¹³ That Revel's journal and Burton's Meurtre de Bleston are not echoes or parallels of one another is clear in the text of Butor's novel: the traditional detective story is subsumed by, while it remains part of, Revel's journal which is L'Emploi du temps. The key to L'Emploi du temps is the dialogue which is carried on between the traditional detective story and its parody in the form of Revel's journal. In reading L'Emploi du temps, we are aware that Butor is undercutting the structures and conventions associated with the detective genre in Revel's journal. The

idea that Butor is purposely parodying the traditional form seems to be corroborated by his theory about form in the novel as expressed in "Intervention à Royaumont" (1958) which followed the publication of L'Emploi du temps (1957):

S'il est vrai qu'il existe une liaison intime entre fond et forme, comme on disait dans nos écoles, je crois qu'il est bon d'insister sur ce fait que dans le réflexion sur la forme, le romancier trouve un moyen d'attaque privilégié, un moyen de forcer le réel à se révéler, de conduire sa propre activité Nous sommes obligés de réfléchir à ce que nous faisons, donc de faire consciemment, sous peine d'abêtissement et d'aviilissement consentis, de notre roman un instrument de nouveauté et par conséquent de libération.¹⁴

The novel for Butor is a tool of research; the area of research is reality as it is experienced by contemporary man.

In early criticism of L'Emploi du temps, and even in some more recent criticism, the dialogue between Revel and Burton was misunderstood. Revel was seen merely as a detective manqué, as the man guilty of the near death of Burton, as the man who is vanquished by the dull, grimy industrial city of Bleston. In contrast Burton, because his name is a near anagram of Butor and because he theorizes convincingly about the structure of the detective novel, is seen as the successful detective and novelist. In this light Revel appears to be a neurotic who is increasingly burdened by his journal, and increasingly more confused, so that at the end of the novel he must beat a hasty retreat from Bleston, leaving the way he arrived. This view of the relationship between Burton and Revel leads to the conclusion that L'Emploi du temps itself is a failed novel which Butor has had to truncate artificially in order to salvage it from total chaos.¹⁵ This point of view, however, distorts the dialogue which is being carried on between the novels of Burton and Revel. Burton's theories about the

structure of the detective novel are employed to no avail by Revel and are finally undercut by L'Emploi du temps. To understand this dialogue, we must discover how it bears upon time and space in the novel, upon style and structure and upon the central symbols--the myths of Cain and Theseus.

On the most general level, we find that Revel's journal distorts the rules of the detective genre to the point that his journal is a total failure as a detective story or rather is a very different type of investigation of reality. Burton's novel, Meurtre de Bleston follows the codified rules of the genre: a detective, Barnaby Morton; an initial crime, the murder of Johnny Winn; an investigation conducted via rational, analytic thought; a solution, Bernard Winn is caught; and order restored to Bleston. Revel, who reads Burton's novel and records all Burton's very perceptive theories about the structure of the detective story, fails to create a codified narrative: he has a detective (himself), but the detective is also the criminal; a crime occurs at the beginning of the novel (the symbolic burning of the map of Bleston) but we do not discover what the crime is until a considerable amount of detecting has already taken place; other crimes--those of Cain, Theseus, Bernard Winn, as well as the circumstances surrounding Burton's accident--divert our attention and confuse us; Revel's investigation is carried on via associative, intuitive thought; and finally the only order attained by the end of the journal is a provisional one. Burton's traditional detective structure has a beginning-middle-end pattern which orders and clarifies the reality presented in the novel so that all the gaps in reality, and our understanding of it, are filled. We know "what happened." We know "whodunit." The criminal is captured. Order is restored. Once again, we are dealing with Mrs. Oliver's "well-made" reality.

And in comparison to this version of reality, the reality we find in Revel's journal is "badly constructed." In Revel's journal, as in our own experience of reality, we are aware, and uncomfortably so, that we do not know exactly "what happened" and much less why.

In an interview conducted by Georges Charbonnier, Butor explained the major questions which apply to Revel: "Est-ce que le personnage va être capable de comprendre ce qui se passe autour de lui ou non. S'il est capable de comprendre, ça va, il est sauvé et il pourra sortir; s'il n'est pas capable de comprendre il sera écrasé."¹⁶ The task which Butor sets for Revel is the same task he sets for the new novelist: "[Le roman] est ainsi un prodigieux moyen de se tenir debout, de continuer à vivre intelligemment à l'intérieur d'un monde quasi furieux qui vous assaille de toutes parts."¹⁷ When we ask what Revel discovers at the end of his journal and when we ask what Butor has achieved in creating the dialogue between Burton's structured narrative theories and Revel's ever more complex and confused journal, we find ourselves on the very ground on which Robbe-Grillet based his criticism of Butor's project. Is Revel looking for an underlying truth, an origin upon which he can structure his experience? Yes, and he fails to find a structure which will fit--Burton's theories fail to order Revel's experience of reality and in exactly the same way, the myths of Theseus and Cain fail to work as archetypes for Revel's experience. Yet, at the end of his journal Revel has discovered a way to survive; he is not crushed. Is Michel Butor seeking to rediscover a harmony between man and his surroundings? Is he collecting bits and pieces of the past, weaving them into mellifluous prose, constructing an incantation? No. I think we must see his project as something entirely different, and it is in this difference that we discover

his innovation as a postmodern novelist.

Butor's project is one of orientation and exploration as Arnold Weinstein points out in his article, "Order and Excess in Butor's L'Emploi du temps." Yet Weinstein goes on to misinterpret Butor's work in the same way as Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou and Ollier did at Cérisy-la-Salle. Weinstein states: "Butor in no way rejects tradition. Like Eliot, Joyce, Pound and Faulkner, he seeks to create an art which can render the present scene with fidelity while also honoring deeper, less visible ties with tradition and the past."¹⁸ Weinstein goes on to explain Butor's ties with the past in a footnote: "In his essay on Pound, "La tentative poétique d'Ezra Pound," Répertoire, p. 236, Butor illuminates his own goal as well as that of the American poet: 'Il faut inventer de nouveaux procédés d'expression pour parvenir à maîtriser la complexité mentale dans laquelle nous nous débattons, ces rencontres de civilisations dans nos esprits, leurs oppositions, leur mélanges, pour résoudre tous ces problèmes, retrouver au-delà le sol, la vérité, une société raisonnable."¹⁹ It is true that Butor does not reject tradition, but he most definitely does not use tradition in the way that Eliot or Pound did, for example. Eliot's search is for a pre-existent origin, whether it be "the moment in the rose garden" or "the still point in the turning world." Much in the same way Pound regrets the loss of the origin, the center, those periods in time when the word and the thing were one. The problem, or crime, for Eliot and Pound is that the center has been lost, we are all post-lapsarian, and the crime must be solved. When Eliot constructs a collage, shores fragments against his ruin, he assumes that there is a center, a focus, an origin which invests these fragments with meaning. Butor's use of tradition, his project, differs greatly. Tradition in

L'Emploi du temps is constantly being mediated by "passing time." The whole of the novel attests to the fact that no origin or center exists. Butor does not reject tradition as do Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou and Ollier; nor does he accept tradition as do Pound and Eliot. The truth which Butor discovers is not a "thing found" but rather a "way of exploring." In L'Emploi du temps the dialogue of the detective stories, and within them the myths, and within them the prose style itself, all demonstrate that Butor's project is to discover an act, a function or process, not a center or an origin.

In the introduction to this study, the postmodern project was defined as the creation of literary collages which no longer had a center or focus: labyrinths in which the minotaur no longer roams and in which angst is allowed its full value. Perhaps the clearest literary expression of this postmodern labyrinth is found in Butor's L'Emploi du temps and the clearest critical analysis of it in Jacques Derrida's essay "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines." Derrida first explains the type of structure we have associated with Pound or Eliot:

Le concept de structure centrée est en effet le concept d'un jeu fondé, constitué depuis une immobilité fondatrice et une certitude rassurante, elle-même soustraite au jeu. Depuis cette certitude, l'angoisse peut être maîtrisée, qui naît toujours d'une certaine manière d'être impliqué dans le jeu, d'être pris au jeu, d'être comme être d'entrée de jeu dans le jeu. A partir de ce que nous appelons donc le centre et qui, à pouvoir être aussi bien dehors que dedans, reçoit indifféremment les noms d'origine ou de fin, d'archè ou de telos, les répétitions, les substitutions, les transformations, les permutations sont toujours prises dans une histoire du sens--c'est-à-dire une histoire tout court--dont on peut toujours réveiller l'origine ou anticiper la fin dans la forme de la présence.²⁰

This structure is clearly the one we find in Eliot's Four Quartets. It is

also the structure underlying Pound's attempt to "found a paradise" in the Cantos. It is not, however, the structure found in L'Emploi du temps.

Butor's novel is a centerless, or more precisely a non-centered novel. In it we see that the existence of a "center" has come to be recognized as a function rather than a thing, a fixed locus. The notion of a "non-center" is distinctly postmodern, of our own era, according to Derrida: "C'est alors le moment où le langage envahit le champ problématique universel; c'est alors le moment où, en l'absence de centre ou d'origine, tout devient discours . . . c'est-à-dire système dans lequel le signifié central, originaire ou transcendantal, n'est jamais absolument présent hors d'un système de différences. L'absence de signifié transcendantal étend à l'infini le champ et le jeu de la signification."²¹ A non-centered structure like that of L'Emploi du temps is on-going, and it is this open quality that has led to the charge that L'Emploi du temps is not a finished work but rather a truncated one: that it is artificially cut off after Revel's stay of one year in Bleston; that it is not "well-made." Yet what Butor has done is to delineate within this closed structure--one year in time; the area of Bleston in space--another form of non-centered structure which shows us that "non-totalization" (the infinitude of possible relationships) is not simply a matter of ever extending boundaries but is also a matter of infinite freeplay within a closed space:

Si la totalisation alors n'a plus de sens, ce n'est pas parce que l'infinité d'un champ ne peut être couverte par un regard ou un discours finis, mais parce que la nature du champ . . . exclut la totalisation: ce champ est en effet celui d'un jeu, c'est-à-dire de substitutions infinies dans la clôture d'un ensemble fini. Ce champ ne permet ces substitutions infinies que parce qu'il est fini, c'est-à-dire parce qu'au lieu d'être un champ inépuisable, comme dans l'hypothèse classique, au lieu d'être trop grand, il lui manque quelque chose, à savoir un centre qui arrête et fonde le jeu des substitutions.²²

In the classical detective story, the center is the concept of linear time according to which events are linked by means of cause and effect. This concept gives the function of detecting a base in certitude: we expect the detective to solve the crime by creating the cause and effect concatenation of clues. In L'Emploi du temps Revel, as opposed to Burton, finds that the concept of linear time is a factitious one. He discovers that freeplay is the structure of reality.

As we have seen, Burton explains in L'Emploi du temps that any detective story is based on two superimposed temporal series: the drama leading up to the crime and the days of inquiry following the crime. We have also noted, however, that even in the most codified detective stories--those of Conan Doyle, for example--we also have a third temporal series: the days in which Dr. Watson records the story of the inquiry. Revel begins his journal the day after the crime (the symbolic burning of the map of Bleston). In the first chapter we are dealing with the chronological events leading up to the crime. In the second chapter, the events of the present (the inquiry) are superimposed on those of the past almost as in the traditional detective novel. By the third chapter, Revel is examining the two superimposed, parallel time series mentioned above but has added to this an inverse temporal series moving toward the past and beginning at the time when he started his journal. Revel begins to reinterpret in chronological fashion what he has already written by the fourth chapter, and by the last chapter he begins to reinterpret his journal but in inverse order. Butor explains that L'Emploi du temps is composed like a musical canon in which five voices are superimposed: "Donc, dans la cinquième partie du livre nous aurons cinq voix qui iront ensemble. Une première voix: souvenirs,

une deuxième voix: journal, un troisième voix: souvenirs en sens inverse, un quatrième voix: reprise de ce qui a déjà été raconté mais avec autre éclairage en sens normal et une cinquième voix: reprise de ce qui a déjà été raconté mais en sens inverse."²³ This musical architecture is closed because the voice of the journal will end at the end of the year, and the two other sets of voices will converge, though on different dates. This architecture is infinitely open, however, not only because there is a gap left in the two sets of voices which are in the process of converging (January and February are missing) but also because the meaning of the events recounted is infinite since meaning arises from the particular juxtaposition of voices, events, which we are given and this process of juxtaposition is infinite, is freeplay. By juxtaposing the freeplay of Revel's journal to Burton's codified detective novel--and the detective genre is one popular genre in which chronology is of the essence--Butor underlines the contrast between reality as it is presented in the positivist detective novel and reality as a non-centered field of exploration as we see it in Revel's journal.

In his essay, "Le Roman comme recherche," Butor states that the novel is the best tool for us to use in studying how reality appears--or might appear--to us. New forms of the novel are necessary: "L'exploration de formes romanesques différentes révèle ce qu'il y a de contingent dans celle à laquelle nous sommes habitués, la démasque, nous en délivre, nous permet de retrouver au-delà de ce récit fixé tout ce qu'il camoufle ou il fait, tout ce récit fondamental dans lequel baigne notre vie entière."²⁴ The structures and conventions of the classical detective genre are employed by Revel only to be undercut and then replaced by a new, more experimental

form in his journal as a whole. Revel's journal records the progressive undercutting of the fixed positivistic detective structure. As was noted earlier, Burton explains the architecture of the detective story to Revel: "l'aspect final n'apparaissant qu'après et au travers d'autres aspects, de telle sorte que le récit n'est plus la simple projection plane d'une série d'événements, mais la restitution de leur architecture, de leur espace, puisqu'ils se présentent différemment selon la position qu'occupe par rapport à eux le détective ou le narrateur."²⁵ When reading a traditional detective novel, we are aware of this architecture, of this progressive modification of the characters and events, and of our progressive understanding of them. Yet in this sort of narrative, we are always given a final version which tends to collapse and to deny the validity of the relations we had understood earlier. Only one version of the truth is valid; only one configuration of the clues or details is in clear focus when we have the final, complete pattern in our hands. And in fact, since we are working within a centered structure--a structure based on the certitude of cause and effect relationships which predicates a true version of the narrative--we are curious about the "solution" to the "problem," not about how the problem is structured, how it is recounted. In L'Emploi du temps which is a non-centered structure, Revel finds that his journal, while paralleling the architecture of the detective novel at first, refuses to resolve itself into a coherent whole:

Le cordon de phrases qui se love dans cette pile et qui me relie directement à ce moment du 1^{er} mai où j'ai commencé à le tresser, ce cordon de phrases est un fil d'Ariane parce que je suis dans un labyrinthe, parce que j'écris pour m'y retrouver, toutes ces lignes étant les marques dont je jalonne les trajets déjà reconnus, le labyrinthe de mes jours à Bleston, incomparablement plus déroutant que le palais de

Crête, puisqu'il s'augmente à mesure que je le parcoure, puisqu'il se déforme à mesure que je l'explore."²⁶

It is clear that at this point in the novel, Revel is still unaware that he is caught in a non-centered structure, an area of freeplay. The rope he is weaving will become a network of phrases rather than a linear narrative which would lead him to the final, one true version of events. This labyrinth has no minotaur to give it meaning, but for a long time, Revel looks for the minotaur. As readers, we become aware that what is important for Revel is not a "solution," a thing, but rather a recognition of the process he is going through in his journal: the way in which that journal is constructed. For Revel, when one series of events is clear in a specific context, other parts of his experience become vague and cloudy. He cannot be sure at any one moment that he has amassed all the relevant clues. He constantly forgets to mention important events in their chronological context because they do not begin to mean anything until they are repeated, echoed, or paralleled by later events.

Revel realizes that he is discovering a process, not a factual answer, by the end of his journal. He describes this non-centered freeplay as a harmonics of time, a process of resonances in which various versions of his experiences are superimposed. Unlike the architecture of the detective story, this architecture remains in suspension because it is never completed:

Ainsi la succession primaire des jours anciens ne nous est jamais rendue qu'à travers une multitude d'autres, changeantes, chaque événement faisant en résonner d'autres antérieurs qui en sont l'origine, l'explication, ou l'homologue, chaque monument, chaque objet, chaque image nous renvoyant à d'autres périodes qu'il est nécessaire de ranimer pour y retrouver le secret perdu de leur puissance bonne ou mauvaise, d'autres périodes souvent lointaines et oubliées dont l'épaisseur et

la distance se mesurent non plus par semaines ou par mois
 mais par siècles, se détachant sur le fond confus et obscur
 de notre histoire entière. . . .²⁷

It is this passage of L'Emploi du temps which best demonstrates Butor's use of the past, tradition, history. Unlike Pound or Eliot, he is not searching for an origin which explains and gives meaning to his experience of reality. Revel does not discover an origin but rather discovers a structure based on the interplay of past and present. History no longer simply explains the present via a cause and effect linking as in the detective novel. Rather, some fragments of history emerge from the body of the past in the context of present events. These fragments may help to explain the present, or they may simply correspond to the present, or the present may reinform, reawaken the past: chronological order may be inverted. This resonance which Revel discovers has very little to do with linear chronology. This passage of L'Emploi du temps also illustrates why Butor does not reject tradition in the way that Robbe-Grillet, Ollier and Ricardou claim to. What we are dealing with in this novel is specifically the use of the past (l'emploi du temps). In the terminology of Derrida or Levi-Strauss, Butor is a bricoleur: "celui qui utilise 'les moyens du bord,' c'est-à-dire les instruments qu'il trouve à sa disposition autour de lui, qui sont déjà là, qui n'étaient pas spécialement conçus en vue de l'opération à laquelle on les fait servir et à laquelle on essaie par tâtonnements de les adapter, n'hésitant pas à en changer chaque fois que cela paraît nécessaire, à en essayer plusieurs à la fois, même si leur origine et leur forme sont hétérogènes. . . . Si l'on appelle bricolage la nécessité d'emprunter ses concepts au texte d'un héritage plus ou moins cohérent ou ruiné, on doit dire que tout discours est bricoleur."²⁸ Thus any postmodern writer--Butor,

Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou, Ollier--is a bricoleur because he is forced to use a pre-existent language. What is important is that these writers realize that they are using the tools of an earlier system, and that they modify these tools to fit their experiments in the present. All of these writers use the past--complete rupture is an impossibility--but some deliberately play with it. Robbe-Grillet's criticism of Butor's use of the past (his lack of aggression, rupture) is perhaps based on a misunderstanding--that Butor's novels belie a search for origins--and on a misconception--that there is only one way to modify the tools of language, violence.

If we look at the way in which Butor uses some of the major signs or symbols of the novel, we see that they are employed as a direct mise en abyme of the dialogue between the detective structure and the harmonic structure of Revel's journal. The three major symbols of the novel which show the mise en abyme effect most clearly are the map of Bleston, the tapestries which record the legend of Theseus, and the legend of Cain found in the Murderer's Window of the Ancient Cathedral. The simplest demonstration of the mise en abyme is the map because it is not burdened with historical or literary associations. The map is a flat plane on which all possible trajectories or routes are clearly marked. Like the detective narrative once the final version has been given, a map clearly sets out the relations, the directions of the various routes. Yet Revel finds out that the moment this space on the map becomes "lived-in" space, an architecture is created. As Butor points out in "L'Espace du roman": "L'Espace vécu n'est nullement l'espace euclidien dont les parties sont exclusives les unes des autres. Tout lieu est le foyer d'un horizon d'autres lieux, le point d'origine d'une série de parcours possibles passant par d'autres régions plus au moins

déterminées."²⁹ The space of Revel's Bleston is far from uniform. Several sites become charged with signification--the museum, the Ancient Cathedral, the New Cathedral, the movie houses--while other streets and buildings are only described in passing or are not mentioned at all.

Like his attempt to use detective story structures in his journal, Revel's attempt to use the flat map of Bleston to guide him becomes a project which is complicated at every turn by his experience. When Revel first obtains a map of the city, he must revise his mental picture of the city because the city he had imagined while walking or riding the bus was not the same one laid out before him on the map: "J'ai identifié le petit bloc rose correspondant à l'endroit où je me trouvais, dans le quart nord-est, tout près du bord gauche; j'ai repéré . . . les quelques places, les quelques rues dont je me souvenais parmi celles que j'avais déjà vues, ce qui m'a révélé l'étendue de mon ignorance, les régions à peu près connues étant minuscules par rapport à l'ensemble. . . ." ³⁰ Revel's centered structure, the map, becomes a non-centered structure the moment he begins to use it. In the first place, the map becomes difficult to use because the index is on the reverse side: when looking at the index, Revel cannot trace the streets; when looking at the plan of the city, Revel cannot see the index. To complicate this process further, the bus routes which Revel must trace to get from one part of the city to another are not marked on the large map of Bleston. He has a separate map of the bus routes which he must superimpose on the city map in order to find not only where he wants to go, but also how to get there. When Revel is able to translate all these maps correctly, he discovers that experience changes the maps: "C'est le grand jour gris qui éclaire le plan de cette ville encore tellement inconnue, qui

se camoufle elle-même comme un manteau dont les plis cachent d'autres plis . . . ce plan qui est comme sa réponse ironique à mes efforts pour la recenser et la voir entière, m'obligeant à chaque nouveau regard à confesser un peu plus grande l'étendue de mon ignorance, ce plan sur lequel se superposent dans mon esprit d'autres lignes, d'autres points remarquables, d'autres mentions, d'autres réseaux, d'autres distributions, d'autres organisations, d'autres plans en un mot . . ."31 Butor has placed a map of Bleston at the beginning of his novel, but we become aware very rapidly that, unlike the floor plan placed at the beginning of a detective novel, the map of Bleston does little to clarify Revel's trajectories.

Butor also explains in his essay "L'Espace du roman," that some places are centers of information, that they have the power to establish new relations between far distant places. Paris, for example, is a receiver and distributor of information. Works of art, in the space of the novel, are centers of information, therefore a novelist who wishes to illuminate the space of his novel introduces works of art--either real or imaginary: "Les oeuvres d'art seront donc, en ce domaine de l'espace comme en tant d'autres, un outil de la réflexion, un point sensible par lequel l'auteur inaugure sa propre critique."32 The legend of Theseus found in the Harrey tapestries becomes a sensitized point in the novel. Revel discovers the tapestries when he is waiting to get his identity card from the Bleston police. He immediately identifies with the Theseus of the tapestries because he feels in complicity with him: a hero who kills a monster (Bleston and the time lost there) in a labyrinth (Bleston). Next he assigns the roles of the legend to his life: Ariadne represents Ann Bailey, Phaedra represents Rose, Revel himself is Theseus, and Lucien, his friend, is

Pirithous. Revel is once again trying to fit his experience into a pre-existent structure. He wants to see his life as based on and explained by the archetypal. We recognize that Revel is coming at reality with a detective story mentality and that his experience is not parallel to the narrative of Theseus. Yet the way in which the tapestries are a mise en abyme of Revel's journal only becomes apparent when we look less at the narrative of Theseus and more at the particular way in which it is told. The disposition of the art work is such that the eighteen panels of the tapestries occupy five rooms in the museum. They are hung on walls which face one another so that once Revel traces their correct sequence, he still cannot capture the narrative in clear linear order. To look closely at one panel, Revel must turn his back on the others hung in a particular room. In the same way, Revel forgets Ann when he sees Rose, betrays Burton to impress Rose, and loses Rose when he begins to investigate Burton's accident. When Revel holds one aspect of his journal in focus, understands one panel of the time he has spent in Bleston, he finds all the other panels of time blurred, ignored or lost completely.

Revel learns with the aid of James Jenkins that he has even misunderstood the structure of each individual panel. The essential aspect of the tapestries is that they are not "des instantanés mais qu'elles représentent presque toutes des actions qui durent un certain temps, ce qui s'exprime par le fait que l'on peut voir, réunies dans la composition d'un seul panneau, plusieurs scènes en succession. . . ."33 In the journal, each separate person or event that Revel mentions is placed in a context of other events, often widely separated in time. Just as one panel of the tapestries may telescope the progress of a long narrative, so one phrase of Revel's

journal may telescope a long succession of events: "C'est ce jour-là que [Burton] a commencé à manigancer sa mise en scène pour nous intriguer davantage, Lucien et moi, Lucien l'évadé, l'heureux, et moi, Lucien le fiancé, le bien-aimé, le bien-aiment, et moi, Lucien qui va très bien, qui va on ne peut mieux, qui écrit des lettres à Rose, qui ne désire que sa Rose, qui a déjà conquis sa Rose, et moi."³⁴ For those who already know the narrative of Theseus, the peculiar structure of the panels and their disposition may seem unimportant. All is subsumed by the pre-existent narrative, and Revel's attempt to apply it to his life once he learns the fixed narrative. However, once we realize that the narrative will not parallel Revel's story, we are sent back to the tapestries, to their peculiar structure, to how their story is told. The dialogue of the legend and its structure as an artwork is a mise en abyme of the dialogue of the detective structure (a fixed, pre-existent form) and the way this structure is undercut and replaced in Revel's journal.

It is Burton's Meurtre de Bleston which leads Revel to the Ancient Cathedral to look at the Murderer's Window. Revel immediately sees a resemblance between Cain and Theseus: "Cain dans une cuirasse lui moulant le ventre avec des rubans flottant sur ses cuisses comme Thésée, presque dans la même attitude que Thésée aux prises avec le Minotaure, penché comme lui, le pied gauche posé sur la poitrine de sa victime allongée mais relevant la tête, nue, déjà blessée, si différent pourtant, brandissant un tronc aux racines échevelées sur le ciel rouge."³⁵ When Revel recognizes that the narrative of Theseus will not serve as a mold for his experience, he tries to mold his experience to the fixed narrative of Cain: Revel/Theseus, the hero, exchanged for Revel/Cain, the criminal. Yet this fixed

narrative is not parallel to Revel's experience either. Once again we are sent back to the artwork, the Murderer's Window in this case, to examine the structure. Like the tapestries, the sections of the stained glass window are disposed in such a way that "pour les apercevoir entièrement, il faut se mettre le plus loin possible, mais alors le détail échappe."³⁶ Beyond this, the different sections of the window do not tell the legend of Cain in chronological order. The window is constructed in such a way that on top in the center is the crime. On either side of the crime are the events which led up to it: Cain tilling the soil and Cain offering corn and fruit to God. Beneath these scenes we see the sequel to the crime, but these scenes are out of linear order too: Cain as a vagabond on earth; Cain being branded by God; Cain the mason. Finally across the bottom of the window we see the heirs of Cain: Jabal, father of weavers; Jubal, father of musicians; Tubalcain, father of artistic metalworkers. As with the narrative in the tapestries, the narrative of the window must be explained to Revel. Yet by the end of the novel, we learn that it is once again the dialogue between the fixed narrative and its distortion in the work of art that is important.

Butor as bricoleur is not using these myths as a means of finding a lost origin. In fact, the moral ordering of the world we find in the Theseus myth is the opposite of that which we find in the Cain myth: Theseus, the Greek hero, kills his enemies and because of that becomes famous and celebrated; he kills his father by negligence and because of that becomes King of Athens; he founds one of the most advanced civilizations of antiquity and is banished by that same civilization. In contrast, Cain offers the fruits of his labor to God and is rejected; kills his brother

and is punished; is banished and then founds the first city which he inhabits as father of the arts until his death. In both myths, the actions are similar, but the centered structure which gives meaning to the myths, which gives them moral ordering, is different. Revel is faced with conflicting origins, and this conflict indicates the impossibility of origin itself. It is not a matter of choosing. Revel, inheritor of both contradictory traditions, finds neither will suffice to explain the architecture of his world to him. In L'Emploi du temps, the mythical narratives criticize themselves. They only fit into Revel's world fragmentarily.

Finally, even the texture of the prose in L'Emploi du temps reflects the tension between linearity and collage. For example, when Revel records, on May 12, his first real visit to a restaurant, the Burlington, with James Jenkins, his description is minimal: "Je l'ai suivi dans une gargotte de Tower Street, un sous-sol sans fenêtres."³⁷ By the time Revel nears the end of his journal, however, each place, each name recalls a myriad of events. On August 13, Revel mentions a restaurant, the Oriental Bamboo, and this place-name leads to an enumeration of a complicated series of events all connected with the place-name:

C'est ce jour-là, le samedi 19 avril, comme nous avons . . . bu notre dernière tasse de thé vert, Lucien et moi, au première étage de "l'Oriental Bamboo," a cette même table, près de cette fenêtre qui donne sur la façade de l'Ancienne Cathédrale, sous l'oeil de bienveillant reptile du garçon jaune . . . avec ce même dessin de lèvres, qui était peut-être un sourire, que lors de ce dîner de novembre avec James, où nous avons parlé du Meurtre de Bleston, que lors de ce dîner de juin avec Lucien, où nous avons parlé de J.-C. Hamilton et des soeurs Bailey, que lors de ce déjeuner de l'hiver; dont je retrouverai la date exacte en poursuivant cette recherche . . . que lors de ce déjeuner de samedi dernière avec Rose . . . c'est ce jour-là, le samedi 19 avril . . . que cet homme, George Burton, qui a frôlé la mort de si près, et qui n'est pas encore complètement remis, que cet homme dont nous ne pensions pas alors qu'il était J.-C. Hamilton,

George Burton, dans toute sa santé, dans toute sa gaîté,
 George Burton magnifique est entré dans la salle
[my emphasis] 38

In this enumeration, the chronology of events becomes a maze. As in the case of the tapestries and the Murderer's Window, we are tempted to play detective, to put the elements back into chronological order to "see what they mean." In fact, our expectations lead us to straighten out the whole of Revel's journal so that events follow one another through the correct, chronological calendar year. Doing this, however, defeats meaning since the structure Butor has created is dependant on our understanding of the central process in the novel: relationships, the harmonics of time. Butor's prose, as a mise en abyme of this architecture, is essentially postmodern although it does not express its project in terms of overt aggression and brutality, as Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou and Ollier suggest must be done.

Derrida explains that freeplay is always in tension with history, and that beyond that is it is in tension with presence: "Le jeu est la disruption de la présence. La présence d'un élément est toujours une référence signifiante et substitutive inscrite dans un système de différences et le mouvement d'une chaîne. Le jeu est toujours jeu d'absence et de présence"39 If we look again at the artwork Butor has used as a mise en abyme for the whole of L'Emploi du temps, we see this interplay of absence and presence. A structure which takes as its center a non-center, that is a function, condemns this center to continual substitution. None of the art works in L'Emploi du temps work as total structures, rather they illustrate the ever-changing relationships of the parts. Derrida points out that the recognition of freeplay leads to two diverse attitudes toward non-centered structure:

Tournée vers la présence, perdue ou impossible, de l'origine absente, cette thématique structuraliste de l'immédiateté rompue est donc la face triste, négative, nostalgique, coupable, rousseauiste, de la pensée du jeu dont l'affirmation nietzschéenne, l'affirmation joyeuse du jeu du monde et de l'innocence du devenir, l'affirmation d'un monde de signes sans faute, sans vérité, sans origine, offert à une interprétation active, serait l'autre face. Cette affirmation détermine alors le non-centre autrement que comme perte du centre. Il y a donc deux interprétations de l'interprétation, de la structure, du signe et du jeu. L'une cherche à déchiffrer, rêve de déchiffrer une vérité ou une origine échappant au jeu et à l'ordre du signe, et vit comme un exil la nécessité de l'interprétation. L'autre, qui n'est plus tournée vers l'origine, affirme le jeu et tente de passer au-delà de l'homme et de l'humanisme, le nom de l'homme étant le nom de cet être qui, à travers l'histoire de la métaphysique ou de l'onto-théologie, c'est-à-dire du tout de son histoire, a rêvé la présence pleine, le fondement rassurant, l'origine et la fin du jeu.⁴⁰

Derrida has been quoted at length because his insights apply not only to L'Emploi du temps but to the distinction between modernism and postmodernism. Revel's journal is, for its greater part, a lyric expression of his realization that the origin has been lost. It is only in the last few pages that he begins to affirm freeplay, the harmonics of time. Butor, on the other hand, seems to be affirming freeplay by the careful construction of the dialogues between the centered and non-centered detective structures, by careful description of the artwork which is a mise en abyme of this dialogue, and even by the very texture of the prose which reflects the tension of nostalgia and freeplay.

In using and undercutting the detective story structure in L'Emploi du temps, Butor's project is to deny the certitude of a centered structure which that genre assures us of:

Je veux empêcher les gens de dormir, oui. J'estime qu'il y a des gens qui dorment toute la journée. . . . Je veux faire le contraire de ce qui fait le roman policier dans son utilisation habituelle. . . . Le roman policier est fait pour que les gens

dorment. C'est un médicament, si vous voulez. C'est un calmant très efficace, très bien fait, qui fonctionne très bien. En étudiant la façon dont il fonctionne, on peut essayer de faire des drogues qui aient un autre effet. C'est pour ça que c'est si intéressant d'étudier le roman policier.⁴¹

That this use of the detective story and its dialogue with Revel's journal is revolutionary, is postmodern, is undeniable. The prose style and the use of history as a tool of research differ from that which we find in the novels of Robbe-Grillet, but they do support and explore an essentially postmodern research into reality.

In L'Emploi du temps Burton, the detective story expert, tells Revel: "Le détective est le fils du meurtrier, Oedipe, non seulement parce qu'il résout une énigme, mais aussi parce qu'il tue celui à qui il doit son titre. . . ."42 We find ourselves dealing with both an Oedipus figure and a detective/murderer in the character of Wallas, anti-hero of Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommés. That the detective structure is being used in this novel is clear: we have several crimes, a detective, a victim, several murders, a series of clues. That this detective structure, the classical double geometric narrative is being parodied is also evident. In his prière d'insérer to Les Gommés, Robbe-Grillet summarizes the detective framework of the novel:

Il s'agit d'un événement précis, concret, essentiel: la mort d'un homme. C'est un événement a caractère policier--c'est-à-dire qu'il y a un assassin, un détective, une victime. En un sens, leurs rôles sont même respectés: l'assassin tire sur la victime, le détective résout la question, la victime meurt. Mais les relations qui les lient ne sont pas aussi simples, ou plutôt ne sont aussi simples qu'une fois le dernier chapitre terminé. Car le livre est justement le récit des vingt-quatre heures qui s'écoulent entre ce coup de pistolet et cette mort, le temps que la balle a mis pour parcourir trois ou quatre mètres--vingt-quatre heures "en trop."⁴³

In one sense, we could say the various roles of the detective story stock characters have been respected, but in other more striking ways their roles have been undercut. The assassin, Garinati, fires at the victim, Daniel Dupont, but he only wings him. Daniel Dupont allows the rumor to circulate that he has been murdered as a means of insuring his future safety. Wallas, special agent, is sent in to solve the crime, the ninth in a series of politically motivated murders. Wallas follows a series of clues, deals with conflicting testimony, puzzles over possible hypotheses concerning the facts of the murder, and finally returns to the scene of the crime where, surprised by the sudden entry of a gun-wielding Daniel Dupont, he kills the original victim--and thereby discovers the identity of the murderer.

Because we are dealing with a detective story structure we bring the expectations that genre creates to the novel. Yet time and again these expectations are reversed. From the outset of the novel, the prologue, we are aware that Daniel Dupont is not dead, however our detective, Wallas, does not learn of this until the end of the novel when, in fact, he has just killed Dupont. Since our knowledge is more extensive than Wallas' knowledge, we are distanced from his investigation. Our expectations as detective story readers tend to make us suspicious that we are not being told all because we are told so much. We suspect that perhaps Dupont really is dead, or that Wallas not Garinati is the original assassin. We look for clues to back up our suspicions, and the clues are there in excess--some too obvious, others too recondite. The effect of the knowledge we are given from the beginning of Les Gommes is the same as the effect which the poster with the headline Attention Citoyens! and the political speech in fine print which is beneath it have on the old man in the novel:

[17] met ses lunettes et déchiffre avec application le texte entière en déplaçant les yeux le long des lignes du début jusqu'à la fin, se recule un peu pour considérer l'ensemble en hochant la tête, remet ses lunettes dans leur étui et l'étui dans sa poche, puis reprend sa route avec perplexité, se demandant s'il n'a pas laissé échapper l'essentiel. Au milieu des mots habituels se dresse ça et là comme un fanal quelque terme suspect, et la phrase qu'il éclaire de façon si louche semble un instant cacher beaucoup de choses, ou rien du tout.⁴⁴

Not only do we know what Wallas knows and more, we are given the information circulating in the minds of Garinati, Dupont and numerous other characters. A cardinal rule of point of view in the detective story is being broken here: if we know what the detective is thinking, where is the "challenge"; if we are let into the criminal's thoughts where is the "whodunit" puzzle; if we are let into the victim's thoughts, what is the crime we are solving? In figuring out the puzzle of this detective story, the reader finds himself challenging the author who is no longer hidden behind the detective role but is in full evidence as artificer of the detective structure.

Our suspicions, our close attention to possible "clues" to what is going on in this detective story are concomitantly exacerbated and stymied by the shifting of narrative focus. As Morrissette says of Les Gommés: "The specific narrative mode in most cases is a third person pronoun, but one deepened and extended by use of the Flaubertian indirect discourse and passages of interior monologue, as well as pseudo-objectification of conjectures, memories and even hallucination."⁴⁵ These scenes which present fiction on the same level as fact in the novel confuse our search for clues while making us all the more determined to straighten out the narrative, to find clues as to the real cause and effect linkings. In essence what we are doing is moving from the exploration of the "whodunit plot" where we challenge the detective to an exploration of the "howdydoit construction"

where we challenge the author. What Robbe-Grillet has done with point of view in Les Gommages is to employ a method of depicting reality usually associated with the film in the novel. In the novel the interior film which is projected in all its presentness on the mind's eye of each character is narrated objectively to the reader without the accustomed mediation (i.e., "he thought," "she imagined") by the novelist. In his introduction to the script of Last Year at Marienbad, Robbe-Grillet explains how this technique occurs in the movies, especially detective movies:

Having granted memory, the spectator can also readily grant the imaginary, nor do we hear protests, even in the neighborhood movie theaters, against those courtroom scenes in a detective story when we see a hypothesis concerning the circumstances of a crime, a hypothesis that can just as well be false as true, made mentally or verbally by the examining magistrate; and we then see, in the same way, during the testimony of various witnesses, some of whom are lying, other fragments of scenes that are more or less contradictory, more or less likely, but which are all presented with the same kind of image, the same realism, the same presentness, the same objectivity. And this is equally true if we are shown a scene in the future imagined by one of the characters, etc.⁴⁶

The technique frustrates our attempt to form a concatenation of clues. It forces us to pay attention to how the story is being narrated as well as to what is being narrated. Our suspicions are further aroused by the impersonal mode of narrative which abruptly enters the text from time to time and which is prophetic, which seems already to be in possession of the narrative we are reading. When we read of the owner of the café des Alliés: "Il promène un regard fatigué sur la salle qui paisiblement attend ceux qui vont venir, les chaises où s'assoieront les meurtriers et leurs victimes, les tables où la communion leur sera servie,"⁴⁷ what are we to believe? Is this privileged information or are we being thrown a red-herring? At the end of the novel we discover that this impersonal voice

gives us information which is both true and a red-herring. What this voice predicts does usually happen, but never as we expect it to, just as the roles which are described in Robbe-Grillet's prière d'insérer are respected while they are also undercut.

As Robbe-Grillet has stated in his prière d'insérer, the relations between the assassin, the detective, and the victim become more complicated once we read the final chapter. Les Gommages, as opposed to the traditional narrative, gives us all the information at the outset, complicates that information, and leaves us with a riddle to solve at the end. In the traditional detective novel if we miss an important clue in the first chapter, and then realize it further on in the novel, we rarely go back to look at that clue again. We know the detective will do that work for us. Once we finish the last chapter and are given all the explanations, we are satisfied. We do not reread the novel. Yet, as Michel Butor has suggested, it is possible to imagine a very different type of detective novel:

On peut très bien imaginer un livre dans lequel le détective nous dit: Allez donc regarder de nouveau à la page vingt-cinq. Il nous demande de retourner de nouveau à la page vingt-cinq. Alors, là, on a une forme qui est toute différente de celle du roman policier classique parce que ça ne se consomme plus de la même façon. C'est ça qui est important. C'est la façon dont on se sert de ça. Alors on arrive à un genre qui est différent.⁴⁸

The last chapter of Les Gommages forces us to reread the novel. The novel as a whole refuses to be read like a detective novel.

In Agatha Christie's The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, the narrator and Watson-character, Dr. Shepard, is revealed at the end to be the criminal. The novel's structure is circular in that a detective (Shepard not Poirot, of course) turns out to have perpetrated the crime. Once we discover this

fact, all the clues fall in place, all the gaps in our knowledge are filled. Agatha Christie's innovative circular plot still depends on cause and effect reasoning, and Hercule Poirot is still able to fill in the gaps so that the crime is solved and the criminal is punished. In Les Gommès this same circular plot becomes repetitive and labyrinthine. The characters proliferate and, rather than objectively analyzing their motives, we find we are subjectively experiencing their affective points of view. The investigation of the clues leading up to the crime at the beginning of Les Gommès doesn't explain that crime, rather it determines, leads to the commission of a second, parallel crime at the end of the novel. The final chapter exposes the gaps in our knowledge rather than fills them. As Stephen Heath states in his book The Nouveau Roman:

Sent to solve a crime, to survey the scene and make meanings, Wallas finds meaning everywhere and nowhere; nowhere but in himself as man, the final criminal, always everywhere eagerly seeking signs and symbols, constantly attempting to rape objects that present, finally no more than a solid surface for the perusal of the eye. All expectation of meanings are to be erased.⁴⁹

Certainly we find in Les Gommès early indications of a style of writing which will become more and more marked in Robbe-Grillet's later novels: repetition of events, contradiction of major events in the novel, objective description of the surface of objects, a refusal of anthropocentricity. Les Gommès does tend to erase traditional meanings--the meaning of the detective story for example--by means of parody, but the story is finally retrievable. However, it is not the story but rather the narrative technique, the act of writing which is central to the novel. The parody of the detective structure emphasizes the centrality of the act of writing.

Some critics, following ample clues in Les Gommès, have retrieved from the text not the detective story but the story of Oedipus (which as we noted earlier is in itself a detective story structure). That Robbe-Grillet used the story of Oedipus as a generating principle for Les Gommès is certain. He states as much in a discussion with Jean Alter at Cérisy-la-Salle, but he makes it clear that the generating principle was neither the myth of Oedipus nor the Oedipus complex, but rather a text: Sophocles' Oedipus Rex.⁵⁰ The critics who have followed, deciphered, the clues which allude to the Oedipus theme seem to have fallen into a trap; they tend to see Les Gommès as a modern version of the Oedipus myth (Morrissette, Barnes), or in extreme cases the Oedipus complex (Stoltzfus).⁵¹ Morrissette's reading of Les Gommès is an extremely close one, and he does set forth a convincing case for the application of the story of Oedipus to the novel. In searching out these clues, however, he has at times ignored their context and for that reason has perhaps misinterpreted their connection with Les Gommès. In Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence, Olga Bernal states: "Les Gommès n'est ni un roman policier ni l'histoire d'un nouvel Oedipe. C'est le roman d'une rupture et c'est aussi, bien entendu, un manifeste pour les romans futurs de Robbe-Grillet."⁵² Bernal is absolutely correct, I think, in stating that Les Gommès is neither a detective story nor the story of a modern Oedipus--it is a parody of the detective story and of the story of Oedipus. These parodies work hand in hand. In fact many of the "clues" seen in Les Gommès lead us, in our quest for meaning, to the conclusion that the story is really about Oedipus. But, as Bernal shows, the parody of the Oedipus story is there--it simply is not as evident as the detective parody; we only discover it by becoming parodies of the detective ourselves.

Morrisette points out that the epigraph to the novel is a quotation from Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and the epigraph should inform the entire novel: "Le temps, qui veille à tout, a donné la solution malgré toi" (Time, which sees all, has given the solution in spite of you). Bernal points out that the usual translation of this line is "Le temps, qui voit tout, a découvert malgré toi ce mystère" (Time which sees all, has discovered in spite of you this mystery).⁵³ And finally, Richard Howard's translation of Robbe-Grillet's epigraph reads: "Time that sees all has found you out against your will."⁵⁴ Robbe-Grillet has changed the idea of mystery or identity to the idea of the "solution" to a problem--a change which indicates perhaps a parody of the "problem-solving" mentality. Next, the prologue of Les Gommages states that it is precisely time which will no longer be the master:

Bientôt malheureusement le temps ne sera plus le maître.
Enveloppés de leur cerne d'erreur et de doute, les événements de cette journée, si minimes qu'ils puissent être, vont dans quelques instants commencer leur besogne, entamer progressivement l'ordonnance idéale, introduire ça et là, sournoisement, une inversion, un décalage, une confusion, une courbure, pour accompli peu à peu leur oeuvre: un jour, au début de l'hiver, sans plan, sans direction, incompréhensible et monstrueux.⁵⁵

This is an inversion of the notion of time in the Greek tragedy: inexorable fate. At the end of the novel, events repeat themselves with slight distortion. Wallas (the Oedipus figure) not only discovers that he is the murderer, but also commits the murder. The murder is a mirror image of the attempted murder at the beginning of the story so that time is not only circular, i. e. is a gap or hole in which the majority of the narrative is subsumed. The manager of the café des Alliés is once more in his aquarium at the end of the novel, as he was when the novel opened: we have passed through a lost time, twenty-four hours "en trop." The novel not only negates

the powerful time (fate) of the Greek tragedy, but also the chronological time which is so important to the detective novel. In a review of Jean-Charles Pichon's detective story, La Loutre, written in 1951, Robbe-Grillet says: "Quant au temps--personnage principal de tout roman, dit on--il acquiert dès lors une acuité singulière, chaque seconde devenant, entre les mains du juge, une pièce à conviction pouvant faire la preuve de l'innocence ou de la culpabilité."⁵⁶ The all important chronological time of the detective story is overtaken by the human time of the various viewpoints of the characters. And the entire time it takes the detective narrative to run its course is en trop.

The parody of the fixed forms of the classical detective story and the classical tragedy is also evident in the humor of the novel. Robbe-Grillet has said that Les Gommes has always amused him: "Dans mes propres petits travaux, l'humour a très mal passé au début. Personnellement, je riais beaucoup en lisant Les Gommes our Le Voyeur, mais ça ne faisait à l'époque rire personne d'autre."⁵⁷ Certainly, the picture created of Fabius, Wallas' chief, is amusing; so, too, are the scenes depicting Garinati's confusion at finding out that Bona believes that Dupont is dead, Wallas making up stories about telegrams so he can surreptitiously get information about the way to the center of town, the fact that the drunk and the post office clerk identify Wallas as a gangster. Wallas' search for the eraser, and his resultant collection of various undesirable erasers, is ridiculous. Most of the "clues" which allude to the Oedipus myth are balanced by other clues of the same category but which are patently irrelevant. There is a rue de Corinth in the town: there is also a rue de Brabant; the debris in the river forms a picture of the Sphinx: it also forms pictures of a clown and

the United States; Garinati does pick up from the mantle piece a statue of a blind man led by a child: he also picks up a tobacco jar and an ashtray. Examples of "clues" deflated by the existence of equal but unimportant objects are rampant in Les Gommès. The best example of this sort of humor are the riddles the drunk asks. We find a direct clue to the Oedipus structure in the riddle which asks what animal is a parricide in the morning, incestuous at noon and blind at night. The riddle, however, immediately begins to undergo permutations: blind at noon, blind in the morning; parricide at night, deaf at noon; limps in the morning. Moreover, we have many other riddles to deal with if we are going to regard this one as a serious clue. The drunk also asks what is the worst thing for a telephone lineman; what is the difference between a railroad and a bottle of wine; what animal is black, has six legs, and flies. At this point we are tempted to ask, what critic discovers a detective story in the morning, a version of the Oedipus complex at noon, and a modern tragedy at night.

Les Gommès is, as Bernal suggests, a denial of the fixed, traditional literary forms. This view of the novel is not only in line with Robbe-Grillet's later criticism of the novel in Pour un Nouveau Roman and his subsequent novels, but also with the evidence found in the novel itself. It is the first in a long line of novels by Robbe-Grillet which examines the act of writing. In his essay "Sur quelques notions périmées," he explains that a narrative represents order: a centered system, an intelligible, rational, stable, unequivocal, decipherable universe. For the postmodern writer, telling a story has become impossible because the structure in which he is operating is based on freeplay. We still have events, anecdote, in the novels of Robbe-Grillet, but they are no longer

linked by cause and effect. What Robbe-Grillet says of Beckett's work is true of his own: "Chez Beckett lui-même, il ne manque pas d'événements, mais qui sont sans cesse en train de se contester, de se mettre en doute, de se détruire, si bien que la même phrase peut contenir une contestation et sa négation immédiate."⁵⁸ For Robbe-Grillet, as well as for Butor, the novel is a tool of research: a way of discerning man's position in the world, a way of investigating how man uses language to deal with that world. The rupture with tradition--be it the conventional novel, the popular novel, or the Modernist search for a central myth--which we see in Robbe-Grillet's method of writing is much less subtle, much more violent than the prose of Butor's novels, yet both writers are postmodern bricoleurs because they use the conventions at hand--expose them, undermine them, distort them, and explore them.

PART TWO

THE THRILLER

"Philo Vance needs a kick in the pance," Ogden Nash tells us, and writers of thriller detective fiction would agree.¹ Gentlemen detectives like Philo Vance, Ellery Queen and Lord Peter Wimsey were challenged because their method of solving puzzling crimes by means of ratiocination seemed either unrealistic or dull, or both. Etiquette and erudition seemed an unrealistic and impractical way to deal with crime and criminals. Violence, the fantastic, and suspense were what the thriller added to the detective genre. That the thriller--be it hard-boiled, suspense or spy--is much more sensational than the traditional detective story is clearly indicated by some of the chapter titles of Ralph Harper's The World of the Thriller: "Villains, From Evil to Evil, Crisis Literature, The End of Our Time, Boundary Situations, On the Run, Terror, Danger, Tension, Chaos, The Unexpected, Identity Crisis, Deception and Mistrust, Violence."² Even so insistent a debunker of detective fiction as Edmond Wilson seems to come to the defense of the thriller when he says of Raymond Chandler:

. . . [he] does not really belong to this school of the old-fashioned detective novel. What he writes has much less in common with Hammett [grouped here with classical detective story writers] than with Alfred Hitchcock and Graham Greene--the modern spy story which has substituted the jitters of the Gestapo and the G.P.U. for the luxury world of E. Phillips Oppenheim. It is not simply a question here of a puzzle which has been put together, but of a malaise conveyed to the reader, the horror of a hidden conspiracy that is continually turning up in the most varied and unlikely forms. To write such a novel successfully you must be able to invent character and incident and to generate atmosphere, and all this Mr. Chandler can do. . . .³

What Wilson points out here--suspense, atmosphere, hidden conspiracy--is central to the thriller. Suspense is always there whether it be in the form of a chase over Paris rooftops, a gun battle on the mean streets of

America's cities, or a desperate attempt to elude counterspies and cross the Berlin wall with important information. Hidden conspiracy is also a key; the world of criminal bands, gangsters, spies is an ordered world which exists along with, but on a different frequency from, everyday life. When we step from everyday life into these parallel and vicious worlds, the fantastic arises. These underground, parallel worlds are all the more fantastic when we realize that in many ways they are much more realistic than the calm, polite society of the traditional detective story. These hidden worlds leave their calling cards in the newspapers everyday, sandwiched between human interest stories and the sports. It is little wonder that the writers of thrillers would probably agree with Wilson: "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?"

Thrillers in general share the same narrative pattern but have distinct conventions as we shall see in detail later. All three types of thrillers (hard-boiled, adventure, spy) involve mysteries and/or murders which are solved or simply resolved by action rather than by intellect, although intellect may come into play also. Although Todorov notes in "Typologie du roman policier," the thriller differs from the classical detective story in that it fuses the geometric double narrative in such a way that the drama of the crime is suppressed and the days of the inquiry given life, the narratives of crime and inquiry actually become one narrative. We are not interested in tracing the cause of a crime which occurred previous to the text, rather we see the first crime as a point of departure for the action which follows. We read out of suspense rather than curiosity; the initial murder or crime is a cause from which other effects (gang wars, murders, thefts, international intrigues) will follow. We pursue the fused

narrative in serial fashion and often solutions are doled out to us serially, too. We move from complication to complication: A is murdered; then B, who murdered A, is found murdered, etc. Briefly, "la prospection se substitué à la retrospection."⁴ In Mortal Consequences: A History from the Detective Story to the Crime Novel, Julian Symons makes more detailed differentiations between the classical story (detective) and the thriller (crime). The thriller is often "based on psychology of characters or . . . on intolerable situation that must end in violence"; there is "often no detective" and little method to the murder(s); there are "quite often no clues in the detective story sense" and setting is "often important to the tone and style of the story, frequently an integral part of the crime itself"; the puzzle value is "sometimes high, sometimes almost nonexistent"; and finally, in contrast to the conservative social attitude of the classical story, the thriller is "often radical in the sense of questioning some aspect of law, justice, or the way society is run."⁵

The thriller is at once more realistic than the classical detective story (it shows violence on "the mean streets" rather than "bad form" in the country house) and more fantastic (it caters to our daydreams of one day becoming heroic, of suddenly stepping out of the quotidian and into the world of international intrigue where we alone have the special talents needed to stop the enemy). The fact that the enemy is stopped, that the crime is solved or the balance of nations restored, is what makes the thriller as unrealistic as the classical story. A thriller generally begins with shocking, sensational events; evil and the threat of evil emerge on all sides and tension mounts. However, we are aware that poetic justice will prevail. Law, justice and the way society is run are thrown into question,

but we know that at the end equilibrium--even if tenuous equilibrium--will be restored and the system will have been set to rights. It is this idea that the system can be set to rights that the postmodern writers undermine. In the thriller, pockets of corruption (crime syndicates, SMERSH, etc.) are eradicated so that the system can go on working, while in avant-garde literature, the system itself and all its positivistic discourse is the enemy. For this reason, perhaps, the hero of the thriller is usually a detective--someone outside the official law enforcement establishment but inside the social system--and the hero of the avant-garde work is quite often a criminal--someone outside the system. The relationship between the popular thriller (the sensational) and the avant-garde work (the absurd) is complex because they seem often to be using the same material--violence, crime, uncertainty. Harper in his study of the popular thriller or "shocker" points out: "The 'shocker' is the mass media's imagination of the absurd, making credible the chaos which the champions of justice and gentleness will successfully control" (Harper, p. 10). This popular literature is disseminated widely by the mass media and eagerly consumed. Popular literature and art are consumer goods, "manufactured for a mass public by specialized agencies. . . . an anonymous product and anonymous producers," Renato Poggioli states in his The Theory of the Avant-Garde.⁶ In making the absurd palatable to this public, the popular arts turn angst into furcht and then give a solution.

Poggioli believes that along with the widespread dissemination of mass produced popular literature has come the alienation of the creative artist from the society which consumes this product. Whether or not we agree with Poggioli that a specific connection can be made between mass produced

popular art and alienation, we can be certain that the avant-garde has reacted strongly in the last few decades against kitch, and its reactions are complex and sometimes conflicting. For example, an avant-garde group may be so dynamic that it involves itself in all cultural fields out of the sheer joy of creation, action and adventure. General agitation may be the rule of the game. On the other hand, the avant-garde may expend much of its energy in reacting against specific traditions or social groups. It may agitate not in order to create new art but rather to destroy older art. Most often, these two impulses are joined as they are in the avant-garde reaction to the thriller. Love of adventure, action and fantasy are traits of the thriller and the avant-garde literature, too. Yet the postmodern novelist displays a definite antagonism to the easy world of the formulaic thriller by undercutting the genre as a whole: action and violence may be parodied by making them gratuitous and overtly fictional; dream and wishfulfillment may be parodied by making them into the stuff of nightmares. The avant-garde, however, brings to this violence and nightmare, as John Hawkes notes, "a savage or saving comic spirit and the saving beauties of language."⁷

This juxtaposition of violence and nightmare to the "comic spirit" and the "beauties of language" suggests two other impulses evident in avant-garde movements. The savage side of the reaction may extend to complete and utter nihilism. Having decided that art has reached a dead end and that popular art is an indication of this descent, the serious artist may decide that nothing is worth anything and that even destruction is a useless gesture in a meaningless universe. Against this nihilism, however, is another possible reaction to a meaningless universe. This reaction is to face angst and in it to find possibility. In Derrida's terminology, the

former would be the Rousseauistic facet which treats the loss of a center as tragic, negative and guilty; the latter would be the Nietzschean facet which sees freeplay as other than the loss of a center and treats it with joy, affirmation and activity.

The tension between these two reactions brings to the fore both post-modern parody of the thriller and postmodern self-parody. Parody directed at the popular form of the thriller is a type of literary criticism which aims to undercut and destroy the assumptions of the thriller. As Richard Poirier points out in "The Politics of Self-Parody" and as was mentioned in the introduction to this study, traditional parody leads us to an examination of reality: "it treats writing as a performance, rather than as a codification of significances."⁸ When parody also becomes self-parody, we find that what began as nihilism becomes its opposite:

. . . a literature of self-parody. . . makes fun of itself as it goes along: it proposes not the rewards so much as the enterprise, the activity itself of creating any literary form, of empowering an idea with style. . . . While parody has traditionally been anxious to suggest that life or history or reality has made certain literary styles outmoded, the literature of self-parody, quite unsure of the relevance of such standards, makes fun of the effort even to verify them by the act of writing (Poirier, p. 339).

To show that literary "realism" is a hoax and to demonstrate that the destruction of one fiction by another is an exercise in factitiousness are nihilistic impulses. Delight in our power to create fictions--delight which we see in Hawkes, Nabokov, Robbe-Grillet, Ricardou, Cortázar, Butor, Borges, Pynchon to mention some of the authors this study deals with--is freeplay: catastrophe turning into miracle, destruction leading to affirmation, angst generating possibility. Poirier, speaking of Joyce as the initiator of a tradition of self-parody, shows that the discovery that

fictions destroy one another leads to affirmation: ". . . Joyce responds not by the contemplation of futility or with ironies about human invention and its waste, but with wonder at the human power to create and then to create again under the acknowledged aegis of death" (Poirier, p. 349).

The postmodern writers' insistence upon the idea that the proper study of literature is literature not "reality" be it political, social, or historical, makes postmodern works the bête noire of some literary critics and the cause célèbre of others. In either case, it leads to a reexamination of the role of literature. Poirier states that "literature has only one responsibility--to be interesting about its own inventions--and it can do this without paying much attention to alternative inventions coexisting under the titles of history, life, reality or politics" (Poirier, p. 342). Robbe-Grillet seems to espouse this same idea when he writes in "Sur quelques notions périmées" that art and society, though they seem to be undergoing similar crises, cannot solve those problems in the same manner because the interests of the political and the literary avant-garde are often antagonistic: "Ou bien l'art n'est rien; et, dans ce cas, peinture, littérature, sculpture, musique, pourront être enrôlées au service de la cause révolutionnaire; ce ne seront plus que des instruments, comparables aux armées motorisées, aux machines-outils, aux tracteurs agricoles; seule comptera leur efficacité directe et immédiate. Ou bien l'art continuera d'exister en tant qu'art; et dans ce cas, pour l'artiste au moins, il restera la chose la plus importante au monde."⁹ Robbe-Grillet goes on to point out that commitment or engagement for the writer is not political but literary--it deals with the problems of language and tries to solve them from within: "C'est là, pour lui, la seule chance de demeurer un

artiste et, sans doute aussi, par voie de conséquence obscure et lointaine, de servir un jour peut-être à quelque chose--peut-être même à la révolution."¹⁰

Robbe-Grillet's ideas have been modified by the more recent literary group, Tel Quel, who in 1970 "claimed that 'the prerequisite of revolution is a revolution of the language.' The claim is formulated in several versions: to make revolutionary activity possible, the prevailing ideology, i.e. conventional discours, has to be abolished. The more profound, the more resolute, the more radical the innovations that a writer introduces into his language and design, the greater the service he does to the revolutionary cause; it must be made easier for the masses to absorb an entirely new type of culture."¹¹ Whether the ideology of the avant-garde is purely literary or extends to politics, ideology is always a social phenomenon as Poggioli shows us: "In the case of the avant-garde, it is an argument of self-assertion or self-defense used by society in the strict sense against society in the larger sense. We might even say that avant-garde ideology is a social phenomenon precisely because of the social or anti-social character of the cultural and artistic manifestations that it sustains and expresses" (Poggioli, p. 4). The relationship of the avant-garde to mass culture is not one of total antagonism, however, because popular culture tends to absorb and to standardize the novelties of the avant-garde: "Today's experiment becomes tomorrow's habit: Reproductions of Jackson Pollock paintings are to be found in motel rooms all across the country."¹² In terms of this study, the example of American "tough" fiction is useful. Hemingway's "tough" style is absorbed by popular fiction (Hammett, James M. Cain, Mickey Spillane) and then the popular hard-boiled

novel is parodied by the postmodern writers such as Robbe-Grillet and Hawkes. The postmodern writers, however, are interested neither in Hemingway's behavioristic realism nor in the pulp writer's violent adventure: realism is looked at as a fiction; violence and adventure are found on the level of language, of literary technique.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PRIVATE EYE IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

The hard-boiled detective novel in its material, style and literary tradition is indigenous to the United States. Looking at Raymond Chandler's "The Simple Art of Murder," we see that tough writers find that the classical English murder mystery lacks a kind of social realism, lifts "murder" from the environment in which it usually occurs. Chandler writes:

This, the classical detective story, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. . . . fundamentally it is the same careful grouping of suspects, the same utterly incomprehensible trick of how somebody stabbed Mrs. Pottington Postlethwaite III with the solid platinum poignard just as she flatted on the top note of the "Bell Song" from Lakmé in the presence of fifteen ill-assorted guests; the same ingénue in fur-trimmed pajamas screaming in the night to make the company pop in and out of doors and ball up the timetable; the same moody silence next day as they sit around sipping Singapore slings and sneering at each other, while the flatfeet crawl to and fro under the Persian rugs, with their derby hats on.¹

The carefully constructed murder puzzle and the country house setting were unrealistic as far as Chandler was concerned. He tells us that the police, "the boys with their feet on the desks know that the easiest murder case in the world to break is the one somebody tried to get cute with; the one that really bothers them is the one somebody thought of only two minutes before he pulled it off" ("Simple Art," p. 56). In short, murder needed to be put back on the mean streets where violence and death were a way of life.

Chandler hails Dashiell Hammett as the master of the tough detective story: "Hammett wrote at first (and almost to the end) for people with a sharp aggressive attitude to life. They were not afraid of the seamy side of things; they lived there. Violence did not dismay them; it was right down their street. Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people who commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse. . . . He put these people down on paper as they were, and he made them talk and think in the language they

customarily used for these purposes" ("Simple Art," p. 58). Putting murder back where it happens leads to a number of conventions which set the hard-boiled story apart from the classical detective tale. Like the English tale, the American murder mystery insists on rational explanations and avoids both description and psychology which tend to clog the plot. This tale, however, may include a number of detectives (or none), a gang of professional criminals, numerous corpses, a good deal of sex, and a language full of cynicism and slang. Chandler says of the setting of the tough detective story: "It is not a fragrant world, but it is the world you live in. . ." ("Simple Art," p. 59).

The hard-boiled dick who inhabits this world belongs to a long line of American romantic heroes. George Grella points out a distinction made by Richard Chase that whereas the English novel absorbs all extremes into a normative view of life, "the American novel has 'a penchant for the marvelous, the sensational, the legendary, and in general, the heightened effect.' The American novel is less interested in incarnation and reconciliation than in alienation and disorder."² The hard-boiled novel inherits the romantic narrative pattern of the quest, is influenced by the gothic novels of Brockden Brown and the romances of Cooper and demonstrates a world view informed by both the Puritan imagination with its obsession with sin, with the struggle of good and evil and by the frontier belief in self-reliance.³ The hero of the hard-boiled detective story, when there is a hero, is the private eye or private I. He dictates his own moral norm and lives with it in his conscience. This man is a loner. Chandler's Phillip Marlowe fits his idea of the hero: "Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. . . .

He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. . . . If there were enough like him, the world would be a safe place to live in, without becoming too dull to be worth living in" ("Simple Art," p. 59). Marlowe is a knight in a world too late for knights, a picaresque hero making his way through a wasteland landscape. He is a poor man of common stock who is vulnerable to attack, though he often wins out in the end. He lives in an amoral world where justice will not win out unless someone sees to it that it does.

Hammett's Sam Spade has some professional ethics, even if he seems to have few personal ones; in The Maltese Falcon, he turns Brigid O'Shaughnessy over to the police although he is in love with her: "I'm a detective and expecting me to run criminals down and then let them go free is like asking a dog to catch a rabbit and let it go. It can be done, all right, . . . but its not the natural thing."⁴ Chandler's Marlowe, descendant of Leatherstockings and the Pathfinder, fuses professional and personal ethics. As Grella points out, Marlowe in The Long Goodbye is motivated by compassion. He tells his friend Bernie:

"I'm a romantic, Bernie. I hear voices crying in the night and I go see what's the matter. You don't make a dime that way. You got sense, you shut your windows and turn up more sound on the T.V. set . . . Stay out of other people's troubles. All it can get you is the smear . . . You don't make a dime that way."⁵

That Marlowe is a knight, an American hero, is important not only to the world of the thriller, but to the world of recent American fiction as well. Grella discusses concisely Marlowe's connections with the world of knights and deserves to be quoted at length here:

Chivalric romance serves a more than incidental function, providing not only the hero, but the narrative structure and

moral judgment as well. The initial omen of The Big Sleep capsulizes the action of the novel. Visiting the Sternwood mansion, Marlowe notices a stained glass panel ". . . showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on. . . I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him (ch. i)." Marlowe, "the shop-soiled Galahad" (The High Window, ch. xxviii), does in fact become the knight of the novel. Hired by the incredibly old, incredibly feeble General Sternwood, an impotent Fisher King, to save his daughter from the Gorgon of blackmail, Marlowe finds the beautiful, depraved girl naked, and saves her, only to discover she is a murderess, the Loathly Lady instead of the fair damsel, the Dark Sister of romance. The detective realizes "It wasn't a game for knights" (The Big Sleep, ch. xxiv). His quest is ironic since the hidden truth he discovers is a source of further evil.⁶

Marlowe's situation here is a great deal like that of the hero in the American novel of the sixties. The wasteland landscapes of Hawkes' The Lime Twig or Pynchon's V. remind us of Marlowe's world--fragmented, sinister, chaotic--except unlike Marlowe, the heroes don't solve the crimes even temporarily and unlike Chandler, Hawkes and Pynchon realize that "realism" is fiction. Often the hero is not the private eye in this postmodern world but is a sort of criminal and clown.

One link between the world of Chandler and that of the postmodern novel is Graham Greene's Brighton Rock. Its narrative pattern is like that of the thriller in that one event leads to another through action primarily, although a bit of detection takes place. The intrigue of the novel is not a puzzle which we solve but a pursuit which we follow. At the beginning, we meet Hale who like the private detective is a loner and is dedicated to his job. But Hale is not the detective here; rather, he is the victim and the book opens on this note: "Hale knew they meant to murder him before he had been in Brighton three hours."⁷ Although the novel is written in the third person, we experience the fear and suspense from Hale's point of

view as he tries to elude the gangsters. Through his eyes we first see Pinkie, the boy gangster who will murder him, and Ida, the good-hearted floozy who will become the detective in the name of right and wrong. From Hale we learn that his victimization is the result of his witnessing an earlier murder, that of the gangster Kite. By chapter two of the novel, Hale has disappeared, has become victim number two. Soon Spicer, a member of Pinkie's gang, will become victim three. Rose, Pinkie's young wife, is in danger of becoming victim four, but Ida tracks them down in time, and it is Pinkie, with vitriolic acid spewed all over his face, who runs screaming to his death over the edge of a cliff. At the end of the novel, Rose thinks she might be pregnant, and confesses her sins (not being married by the church and wanting to be damned along with Pinkie) to a priest. The priest tells her: "If he loved you, surely . . . that shows . . . there was some good . . ." (Brighton Rock, p. 357). Pinkie had recorded a record on which he had put something "loving" for her on the day they were married. The recording which we heard Pinkie making, but which Rose has never heard says: "God damn you, you little bitch, why can't you go back home forever and let me be?" (Brighton Rock, p. 257). The last line of the novel shows Rose leaving the priest to listen to the record, and to become a victim of evil even after Pinkie's death: "She walked rapidly in the thin June sunlight toward the worst horror of all" (Brighton Rock, p. 358).

Brighton Rock does have the plot structure and the conventions of the thriller, and can be treated as a popular narrative of sensational violence. Yet, as in Bernanos' Un Crime, we feel that evil in the world can't be "solved"; once more the time period we are dealing with is not that of the pursuit and capture of the criminal but rather that of eternity. At the

end of the novel, because of the importance given to Rose, we have moved to an interrogation of destiny, of the role of good and evil. Ida, as the investigator of crimes, can only understand the world in terms of right and wrong. She tracks down Pinkie but never realizes that he too is a victim of evil. Greene is careful to show us that conventional standards are not enough. As Wayne Booth notes, Greene "does not hesitate to comment directly, distinguishing carefully between the pitiable but 'blessed' hole where Rose lives, knowing 'murder, copulation, extreme poverty, fidelity, and the love and fear of God,' and the glaring, 'open world outside' where people make a false claim to 'experience.'"⁸ Brighton Rock is an investigation of a world which is spiritually ill because God seems absent and evil seems pervasive. However, if we reformulate the priest's words to Rose--If you loved him surely that shows there was some good--we realize that the recognition of God's absence premises his existence; the pervasiveness of evil in Brighton Rock posits the necessity for good. The facts of the story are clues to some knowledge of good and evil in the world; it is this ordering superstructure which is denied in Hawkes' The Lime Twig. Just as Bermanos extended the boundaries of the classical detective story and Robbe-Grillet and Butor undercut and parodied that form, so Greene extends the boundaries of the thriller and Hawkes undercuts and parodies the form.

In his preface to Hawkes' novel, Leslie Fiedler writes: "If The Lime Twig reminds us of Brighton Rock, which in turn reminds us of a movie by Hitchcock, it is of Brighton Rock rewritten by Djuna Barnes."⁹ The surface resemblances of Brighton Rock and The Lime Twig are easily definable: both take place in England, the honky-tonk atmosphere of Brighton pier is replaced by the "fancy flutter at the races" (p. 3), the world of gangsters is central

to both, Rose in her plainness and devotion to Pinkie is similar to Margaret who "would always ride through the night if she were bidden" (p. 70), the degradation of the slums where Rose and Pinkie were born is echoed in the descriptions of the Banks' flat in Dreary Station.¹⁰ Other more subtle allusions to Brighton Rock are hinted at in the text of The Lime Twig, but these allusions suggest differences between the novels as well as similarities: there is reference to Pinky Road near Dreary Station; reference to Violet Lane ("I was going to . . . hear what I could of the cries coming from Violet Lane," p. 18) and Violet occurs in Brighton Rock as the murdered girl in the newspaper clipping, violated and left on the seashore; reference to a landlady named Lily Eastchip (one of Ida's nicknames is Lily); reference to "Reggie's Rose" painted on the belly of a plane ("her leg was long, she sat on a parachute with one knee raised," p. 21); and finally Brighton Rock stick candy is echoed by the names of the race horses in The Lime Twig ("Candy Stripe" and "Rock Castle," p. 79). The fragmentary, displaced references to Brighton Rock deny the likeness of the two novels at the same time they connect them,¹¹

When Fiedler states that The Lime Twig reminds us of "Brighton Rock recalled in a delirium," he points to the central differences between Greene's novel and that of Hawkes. Greene depicts a believable if degraded world in which a logical sequence of events takes place. Ida hunts down Pinkie by means of cause and effect, by tracing clues. The narrative is that pursuit. The novel creates verisimilitude of character, place and event, as well as verisimilitude of action. In Hawkes' novel, verisimilitude serves only as a springboard for fantasy; the people living at Dreary Station need to dream. As these dreams become flesh, however, we begin to blur traditional distinc-

tions between fact and fiction, between reality and dream. Events seem to follow one another without causation. In Beyond the Waste Land, Olderman points out:

Indeed, part of the frightening impact of the recent novel is in the suggestion that its fantastic events may not just be capturing the truths of the human heart; they may be truly rendering the actual texture of human experience. The criteria of what is realistic in a novel must necessarily become shaky when we lose our confidence in recognizable fact. If reality has become surrealistic, what must fiction do to be realistic?¹²

In a world where the CIA is plotting to make Fidel Castro's beard fall out and the Watergate Cover-up is exposed by a mysterious figure named "Deep Throat," we question the distance between fact and fiction.

The depiction of the underworld which we find in Hammett and in Greene is nightmarish, but factual. Their underworlds exist parallel to quotidian reality and seem to work according to the same basic logic if on a different level.¹³ Harper states:

All the so-called classic thrillers--all, that is, until we reach the ones with pros as heroes--begin . . . casually and unexpectedly. One day a man leads a humdrum life, the next he is inextricably swept into someone else's crisis that has complications both perilous and secret. The peril initially involves a small circle of conspirators and their opponents, and at the same time must be kept hidden by both sides. Sometimes the hero must attempt to live in both worlds at once; sometimes he is forced to drop out of sight, partly to stay alive, partly to carry on his battle against the powers of darkness. . . . all leave civilian life by chance. How else could one expect the dream mechanism to work?¹⁴

Hammett's Spade drops into the underworld of The Maltese Falcon knowingly; he is a pro. Ida Arnold, Hale and Rose become involved in the underworld of Brighton Rock by chance. What is important here is that these underworlds, however fantastic they may appear at first, are still operating under the laws of traditional realism, the rules of good and evil, cause and effect.

In The Lime Twig, a different sort of causality is at work. The dream mechanism doesn't work according to chance, rather it seems to operate according to purposeful but uncanny rules. The dreamer who wants to escape the humdrum life creates a world out of his dreams. Hencher, Michael Banks and Margaret all dream of illicit, destructive love: dream becomes reality; reality becomes nightmare. And the underworld, Larry the Limousine and the gang, conspire with the dreamers to make interior fiction exterior fact.

Hawkes indicates some of the reasons why we might see his novel as a demented Brighton Rock when he states that his novels are loosely plotted but elaborately structured:

I began to write fiction on the assumption that the true enemies of the novel were plot, character, setting and theme, and having once abandoned these familiar ways of thinking about fiction, totality of vision or structure was all that remained. And structure--verbal and psychological coherence--is still my largest concern as a writer. Related or corresponding event, recurring image and recurring action, these constitute the essential substance or meaningful density of my writing. . . . Of course it's obvious that from The Cannibal to Second Skin I've moved from nearly pure vision to a kind of work that appears to resemble much more closely the conventional novel. . . . the shift came about, I think, from an increasing need to parody the conventional novel.¹⁵

Both The Maltese Falcon and Brighton Rock are conventional novels in which traditional vraisemblance and plot development are evident. The Lime Twig, like Second Skin, is far more "realistic" than Hawkes' earlier novels, and in it we do find character, setting and theme, but we do not find the traditional causal and linear plot. Hawkes states that his purpose in The Lime Twig was "to parody the traditional plot of the thriller."¹⁶ This parody is evident in the structure of the novel. We do move from an initial crime to subsequent ones, but the connection between these crimes is not causal.

In The Maltese Falcon, Spade turns Brigid O'Shaughnessy over to the police at the end of the novel because she is guilty of Miles' death at the beginning. In The Lime Twig, the constable shoots the child Monica for no ascertainable reason. Monica's death only makes sense on an aesthetic level as an event which corresponds to and echoes other murders in the novel. In this way, the novel is structured rather than plotted; Hawkes is interested in fiction as literature not fiction as verisimilitude: "I want to create a world, not represent it."¹⁷ The structure of The Lime Twig shows that Hawkes has indeed created a world rather than imitated the conventional view of reality.

On the simplest level, The Lime Twig is the story of Michael Banks--an average, commonplace young man living in a drab postwar England--who dreams of owning a race horse. The horse symbolizes power and sexual potency which are not only absent from but forbidden in Michael's world. With the help of Hencher, his lodger, Banks sees his dream horse materialize as Rock Castle, and in collusion with Larry's gang, Banks and Hencher steal the horse so they can run it in the Golden Bowl at Aldington. Hencher is soon trampled to death by the horse, leaving Banks to be the somewhat unwitting "front" for the underworld gang. Banks' wife, Margaret, falls into the hands of the gang as a hostage and is tortured and raped while Michael is under the sensual spell of Sybilline Laval, the woman of his dreams and Larry's mistress. Finally, during the race, Michael repents his betrayal of Margaret and runs out on the track to stop the race. Horses and jockeys are strewn all over the track; the bodies of Banks and Needles the jockey are pinned under that of Rock Castle. Larry and the gang throw the injured Margaret into a car and make their get-away. The last chapter finds the

Violet Lane detectives investigating the particulars of the crime surrounding Hencher's accidental death. Were the events of the novel the result of jealousy, greed, or pride, The Lime Twig would be a traditional logical novel. But the events in the novel do not fall into a logical cause and effect pattern, rather they are caused by the interlocking secret dreams of the characters. As Olderman points out, the final scene--two detectives investigating an accident while actual crime runs rampant--serves primarily to bring into relief the difference between the traditional thriller and Hawkes' novel: "It is the novel's final joke--two keystone cops flailing around trying to handcuff a handful of dream. And it is the novel's final terror, for the dream is a powerful threat and the two clowns are almost all we have."¹⁸

The aesthetic idea underlying the way in which the events of the novel are generated by various dreams rather than by cause and effect is probably stated most concisely by Borges in his essay "El arte narrativo y la magia" (1932). After examining novelistic technique in William Morris' The Life and Death of Jason and Poe's The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym, Borges concludes that the central problem in the novel is causality. This is especially evident in the novel of character which arranges cause and effect linking of events which are supposed to be representative of the real world. Borges adds, however, that this sort of logic is not the most common in the novel. In stories which present continual hazards, the action is governed not by logical motivation but rather by a different order--that of magic:

. . . la magia es la coronación a pesadilla de lo causal, no su contradicción. El milagro no es menos forastero en ese universo que en el de los astrónomos. Todas las leyes naturales lo rigen, y otras imaginarias. Para el supersticioso, hay una necesaria conexión no sólo entre un balazo y un muerto, sino entre un muerto

y una maltratada efigie de cera o la rotura profética de un espejo o la sal que se vuelca o trece comensales terribles.

Esa peligrosa armonía, esa frenética y precisa causalidad, manda en la novela también Ese recelo de que un hecho temible pueda ser atraído por su mención, es impertinente o inútil en el asiático desorden del mundo real, no así en una novela, que debe ser un juego preciso de vigilancias, ecos y afinidades. Todo episodio, en un cuidadoso relato, es de proyección ulterior. . . . He distinguido dos procesos causales: el natural, que es el resultado incesante de incontables e infinitas operaciones; el mágico, donde profetizan los pormenores, lúcido y limitado. En la novela, pienso que la única posible honradez está con el segundo. Quede el primero para la simulación psicológica.¹⁹

It is this magic causality which is operative in Hawkes' novel. We are dealing here with an elaborate structure of vigilances, echoes and affinities. The details of early episodes not only foreshadow but actually cause the later events. The naming of an action, an event, gives it body, precipitates it. This is the "menacing harmony" which we find in The Lime Twig.

The magical causality which Borges discusses--seen at work in both his "La muerte y la brujula" and in Hawkes' The Lime Twig--was examined in a somewhat different and instructive way by Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay "The Uncanny."²⁰ Freud begins by citing a study by E. Jentsch ("Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen") in which the basic factor in producing the uncanny is defined as intellectual uncertainty, so that the uncanny would always be linked to the unfamiliar (Freud, p. 370). Freud takes care to show that although Jentsch is right to some extent, not all strange, foreign occurrences are frightening, and that the most uncanny of uncanny experiences may occur when familiar surroundings suddenly become foreign to us: ". . . an uncanny effect is often and easily produced by effacing the distinction between imagination and reality, such as when something we have

hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes . . ." (Freud, p. 398). Michael Banks knows that his own best and worst dream is that of a race horse:

. . . knowing this dream, that the horse was in their sitting room--he had left the flat door open as if he meant to return in a moment or meant never to return--seeing the room empty except for moonlight bright as day and, in the middle of the floor, the tall upright shape of the horse draped from head to tail in an enormous sheet that falls over the eyes and hangs down stiffly from the silver jaw; knowing the horse on sight and listening while it raises one shadowed hoof on the end of a silver thread of a foreleg and drives down the hoof to splinter in a single crash one plank of that empty Dreary Station floor. . . (p. 33).

This dream is so real, the violent horse so alien to the sitting room, that it is uncanny. When the horse does come into being for Michael, when he first sees it standing in the hold of the barge, he experiences the uncanny because of the inanimate, nightmarish quality of the animal:

He stared down at . . . the animal whose two ears were delicate and unfeeling, as unlikely to twitch as two pointed fern leaves etched on glass, and whose silver coat gleamed with the colorless fluid of some ghostly libation and whose decorous drained head smelled of a violence that was his own" (p. 50).

For Michael, and for all of us, it is familiar for us to use thought to cope with and to explain phenomena in the world around us; it is uncanny when our thoughts seem to have created that phenomena.

Freud mentions several other experiences which lead to the uncanny. He believes, for example, that the feeling that one has a double was once regarded as protection against death, but later came to be a premonition of death (Freud, p. 387). In the Hawkes novel, the double as a premonition of death does occur when the death of Cowles is rhymed with the earlier death of Hencher. Cowles, the trainer, and Hencher work in concert to steal

the race horse. During the unloading of Rock Castle at the stable and during Hencher's death, Cowles and Hencher are closely identified. After they have, with identical motions, let down the ramp at the back of the horse van, we read: "Two gray men who stand with hands on hips and look up into the interior of the van" (p. 60). Hencher enters the van to unload the horse, and Cowles sees him slide suddenly into the dark:

And Cowles shouts, doubles over then as powerless as Hencher in the van. The ramp bounces, shakes on its hinges While Cowles is shouting for help and dodging, leaping away, he somehow keeps his eyes on the visible rear hoofs and sees that, long as it lasts . . . those rear hoofs never cease their dancing. . . . Then Cowles is vomiting into the tall grass-- he is a fat man and a man as fat as himself lies inside the van (pp. 60-61).

Cowles experiences the uncanny at this point because he knows that Hencher's death means that he too will die by violence. A third face of the uncanny which organizes much of the structure of the novel is what Freud calls involuntary repetition. This causes the uncanny because what we had thought was a chance event recurs in a number of contexts so that we begin to sense that we are involved in a conspiracy over which we have no control (Freud, p. 390). A final face of the uncanny occurs in the case of "dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, feet which dance by themselves" (Freud, p. 397). Michael often has this experience in the novel as things he dreams of or fears are revealed to him bit by bit out of darkness or mist. For example, when Cowles is killed in the steam bath, Michael sees first Larry's boot through the fog, then Cowles' fat shoulder, then Cowles' throat which has been slit, then the constable's congealed, blue-tinted face floating in the clouds of steam (pp. 116-17). The success of an effort to create and structure a world, Hawkes has stated,

"depends on the degree and quality of consciousness that can be brought to bear on the fully liberated materials of the unconscious."²¹ His creation of the structure and series of events in The Lime Twig, its curious parallels to Freud's idea of the uncanny, seem to indicate that Hawkes is indeed bringing to light some elements of the unconscious.

Hawkes' novel begins with a newspaper clipping, a column written by Sidney Slyter the race reporter. In fact, not only the prologue, but every chapter excluding the final one is prefaced by Slyter's column. Slyter is perhaps the figure in the novel who plays detective the most--a private and prying eye. His reporting of the events which take place is accurate as far as facts are concerned and his reportage would seem to be a touch of verisimilitude in an otherwise fantastic novel. Oddly enough, however, the events he reports only happen after he has reported them, so that he becomes a sort of prophet of doom. From page one we realize that traditional causality has been reversed. Naming an event tends to precipitate it rather than to explain it. Slyter's creation occurred after the novel was completed and at the suggestion of Hawkes' publisher, James Laughlin, who thought a sort of reader's guide would make the novel more accessible. Hawkes explains:

I believe that he even suggested the idea of a newspaper sports-writer as an appropriate kind of "chorus" to comment on the action of the novel. . . . To me it's interesting that Sidney Slyter's column was in effect another afterthought, since his sleazy character and cheap column afforded me perhaps the best opportunity for dramatizing the evil inherent in the world of The Lime Twig. Slyter's curiosity, his callow optimism, his lower middle class English ego, his tasteless rhetoric, his vaguely obscene excitement in the presence of violence--all this makes him one of the most degrading and perversely appealing figures in the novel. I would say that in reporting the criminal actions of the novel, Slyter carries degradation to its end.²²

Like the chorus in a Greek play, Slyter is the conservative actor in the novel who is the articulate spokesman for traditional values and conventional

forms. And like the chorus, he attempts out of his knowledge of traditional moralities to understand, cope with, explain away the action which takes place; his limited judgment brings his view into tension with that of the rest of the novel. Slyter, like Ida Arnold, looks for solutions, enjoys vicarious violence. Hawkes has said that the function of the experimental writer is "constantly to test in the sharpest way possible the range of our human sympathies and constantly to destroy mere surface morality."²³ Slyter's column certainly seems to represent all that is abhorrent in surface morality. And the comic, grotesque, violent events in which Hencher, Banks, and Margaret are involved do test the range of our sympathies. If we do sympathize with these weak but innocent characters, it is because unlike Slyter, they can love and dream. They are destroyed because their dreams are destructive; they are saved, or at least we do not totally condemn them, because they do dream. Even Larry the Limousine for all his criminal action is less despicable than Slyter for at least two reasons: first, his criminality is like Hencher's fat or Margaret's plainness--it just is--and Slyter's criminality is hidden by a façade of conventional morality; second, Larry too has his moments of devotion, his dreams ("And then a ship, trees with limes on the branches, niggers to pull us round the streets, the Americas . . .") (p. 165).

After Slyter's column, the book opens with Hencher's prologue, and it sets the tone and structure for the rest of the novel. His devotion to his mother, their moving from lodging house to lodging house during the war, his dreams and desires are repeated with variation throughout the novel. Hawkes has explained Hencher by saying: "He became the carrier of Michael and Margaret's past as well as of their future; I thought of him as the seedbed

of their pathetic lives."²⁴ Hencher not only helps us see the drab lives of Margaret and Michael as the spawn of the war and gives a historical perspective to the novel, he also sets the scene for dreams to become reality. Hencher has always been "the lonely lodger" (p. 4) who moves from place to place and longs to be devoted to someone (to "Mother" or to Michael and Margaret), to appropriate a home. Hencher's dream is one of excessive, obsessive, acquisitive love: "Margaret's estimation of my character is correct. Heavy men are most often affectionate. And I, William Hencher, was a large man even then" (pp. 9-10). "Even then" was during the war when Hendher lived with his mother in the same house where he is now renting from the Banks. Then, the house was owned by "Lily Eastchip with bird feathers round her throat and a dusty rag up the pearl lacing of her sleeve" (p. 11) who curiously projects the figure of the temptress Sybilline, "her red hair was like the orange of an African bird, and when she sipped, the jockey-pink rose water sent a delicate color up the tiny pearls which she had sunk into the deepness of the hair" (p. 98). At Lily Eastchip's lived "the captain dishonorably mustered from the forces" (later Larry the Limousine) and "the pasty corporal" (Sparrow, p. 11).

Hencher begins to bring Sybilline, Larry and Sparrow into the lives of Michael and Margaret when he transfers his love from "Mother" to them. The only way he can appropriate Michael and Margaret and work out his dream of obsessive love is to help them realize their own dreams. In the prologue, we see this movement. First, he moves into the redecorated flat where his mother had died in a fire fifteen years earlier: "But one of Michael's four rooms was mine, surely mine, and I knew I'd smell the old dead odor of smoke if I pushed my face close enough to those shabby walls. Here's home,

old girl, here's home" (p. 24). Next, he begins to transfer his devotion from mother, now dead, to the Banks: "I wondered what I might do for them" (p. 24). He cooks for them as he did for Mother and sneaks into their bedroom one morning to surprise them with breakfast in bed: "Behind each silent face was the dream that would collect slack shadows and tissues and muscles into some first mood of the day. Could I not blow smiles onto their nameless lips, could I not force apart those lips with kissing? one of the gulls came round from the kitchen window and started beating the glass" (p. 26). The pathetic and destructive nature of Hencher's desires are symbolized by the bird image which recurs in the novel whenever dreams become reality and destroy the dreamer. A limed twig is a trap for birds as we see in W. I. Gilbert's "Yeomen of the Guard":

If he's made the best use of his time,
His twig he'll so carefully lime
That every bird
Will come down at his word
Whatever its plumage or clime.²⁵

It is Larry who limes the twig of dreams, but it is Hencher, the henchman, who makes the trap possible.

At the end of his prologue Hencher, who has lived with the Banks for a month, sends them out on a picnic. While they are gone, he appropriates their house, their lives and their dreams:

. . . I prowled through the flat, softened my heart of introspection: I found her small tube of cosmetic for the lips and, in the lavatory, drew a red circle with it round each of my eyes. I had their bed to myself while they were gone (p. 27).

Hencher, pathetic clown that he is, gives us a reality which is fantastic. Yet his activity is leading him toward his dreams, has its own magical logic: "But red circles, giving your landlord's bed a try, keeping his flat to

yourself for a day--a man must take possession of a place if it is to be a home for the waiting out of dreams" (p. 27). Hencher, at the end of his prologue, has appropriated Michael and Margaret: "I can get along without you, Mother" (p. 28).

In the first chapter when Michael is planning to leave Margaret and the flat forever, to meet Hencher and to steal the race horse, the details of his desires, the naming of these details, allow them later to become actualities:

From out the window the darting of a black tiny bird makes him wish for its sound. He would like to hear it or would like to hear sounds of a wireless through the open door or sounds of tugs and double-deckers and boys crying the news. Perhaps the smashing of a piece of furniture (pp. 30-31).

As Robert Scholes points out, in every chapter of The Lime Twig, we have a bird on a branch.²⁶ After Hencher is trampled by Rock Castle in the barn "comes the sound compact, malcontent, of a hive of bees stinging to death a sparrow" (p. 66). In the following chapter, when Larry, the dark angel, is administering morphine to Sparrow, he remembers other times he has performed the same duty for him. Once in an antique shop where they were hiding from the police, Sparrow "had collapsed on a scabrous tiger skin, pulling a tea set with him and falling with his mouth jammed into the heel of a brass boot" and Larry had knelt and given the morphine to him while "a parrot in the back of the shop kept screaming, 'Piss in his eye, piss in his eye!' from a great fortress-shaped wire cage" (p. 89). Larry strangles the bird. When Thick beats Margaret with a truncheon, Hawkes writes: "it made a sound like a dead bird falling to empty field" (p. 129). Thick turns up the wireless to drown out the sound. During this long night, Margaret sees an oven tit on a branch outside her window, Michael wakens

after an orgiastic night to find the mate of the oven tit outside his window, and the bird flies off as the shot which kills the child Monica is fired. Later, when Michael is running out onto the track, he sees a dove on a bough. The bird beating against the window in Hencher's prologue, the small black bird named by Michael seem to give birth to all the rest of the birds in the novel and the violence which occurs when they are mentioned. Michael's other brief desires all recur as fact in the novel: the sound of tugs is heard as the barge carrying Rock Castle docks; Sidney Slyter is the boy crying the news; the smashing of furniture occurs with Rock Castle's destructive hoof and the smashing of Banks' flat by the gang. The naming of an action brings it into being.

Hencher dies first in the novel because he is the first to live out his dream, a dream of devotion. Unfortunately, his devotion to Michael and Margaret conflicts with his devotion for Larry, and Larry destroys him. Michael and Margaret's dreams of destructive love are entwined with one another and with the dream of the horse from the first chapter on, but take longer to work themselves out. Michael perpetrates the violence of the novel unconsciously when he tries to fulfill his dreams "knowing how much [Margaret] feared his dreams: knowing that her own worst dream was one day to find him gone, overdue minute by minute some late afternoon until the inexplicable absence of him became a certainty; knowing that his own worst dream, and best, was of a horse which was itself the flesh of all violent dreams . . ." (p. 33). Hencher's attempt to live out his dream unleashes Michael's dream and allows it to become fact; Michael's attempt to live out his dream unleashes Margaret's dream underworld and allows it to become fact. Margaret dreams that "men with numbers wrapped round their fingers would feel

her legs" and that they would "go at her with truncheons, knuckles or knives" (pp. 68, 70). These dreams materialize, once they are named, as Thick with his truncheon and Larry with his knife and bullet-proof vest. Margaret also dreams of children tied to a railroad track "the toads hopping off their bodies at the first whisper of wheels, the faint rattling of oncoming rods and chains, . . . the sparks hitting the pale heads and feet" (p. 71). The theme of tortured children recurs throughout the novel with variations; it is part of the menacing harmony which determines the structure of the novel. Dora tells Margaret on the train that she hated being parked out as a child but that she is "at the good end now" (p. 72). Being a child--or an innocent--is to be at the bad end of the stick. We see this in the torture or death of all the innocents in the novel from the little boy in the sailor's hat who is barely mentioned in Hencher's prologue ("the whipping marks were always fresh on his legs and one cheek bone was blue," p. 8), to Hencher who is trampled, to Cowles who has his throat slit, to Margaret who is beaten and raped, to Monica who is shot by the constable (echoing Larry's story about the inspector to whom he told "the killing of kids was no concern of mine but the hanging of Knifeblade was unacceptable" p. 147), to Michael's death on the track. The structure of the novel is uncanny because events develop, out of context, once they are mentioned. Hencher, in telling Rock Castle's lineage, says to Banks, "What's in this name if not the very evolution of his life?" (p. 38). As far as the magic causality of the novel is concerned, we could say what is in the act of naming if not the very evolution of a future.

The structure of The Lime Twig, which appears to be episodic like the picaresque tale and the popular thriller, actually has this magic causality

at work behind the apparently random events of the novel, and this magic ordering creates an architecture for the events, gives them meaning. In an interview Hawkes defined the avant-garde as something constant running through the fiction of Quevedo, Nashe, Lautr eamont, Celine, Faulkner, West, O'Connor, Heller, Nabokov and himself: "This constant is a quality of coldness, detachment, ruthless determination to face up to the enormities of ugliness and potential failure within ourselves and the world around us, and to bring to this exposure a savage or saving comic spirit and the saving beauties of language. The need to maintain the truth of the fractured picture; to expose, ridicule, attack, but always to create and to throw into new light our potential for violence and absurdity as well as for graceful action."²⁷ The black comedy of Hawkes' work has led to charges that "it is morbid, indulging in excesses of brutality when it could be persuading us to some sort of uplifting social commitment."²⁸ Certainly we are dealing in Hawkes fiction with a world inherited from the picaresque where misfortune is grotesquely exaggerated and poetic injustice is rampant. What remains to be tested is how and whether comedy and poetic language redeem this violence, and how this violence differs from that in the traditional, tough-style, hard-boiled thriller.

Comedy, according to Hawkes, creates sympathy and compassion while at the same time serving as a means to judge human failings.²⁹ In the hard-boiled novels of Hammett we find comedy in the dialogue, and in those of Chandler in both dialogue and description. Yet the best selling of the popular thrillers are those of Mickey Spillane, and in these novels comedy has no place. A comparison of the scenes which take place in the "Men's" in both The Lime Twig and Spillane's The Erection Set will perhaps not only

stand witness to Hawkes' claims about comedy and poetic language, but will also bring to light the antagonism the avant-garde feels toward the surface morality of the popular thriller.

In "Mickey Spillane and his Bloody Hammer," Christopher La Farge writes: "Mike Hammer is the logical conclusion, almost a brutal apotheosis, of McCarthyism: when things seem wrong, let one man cure the wrong by whatever means he, as a privileged savior, chooses."³⁰ From the mouth of Mike Hammer we hear no humor, wit or cynicism as in Marlowe's or Spade's dialogue, rather we hear the voice of righteousness: ". . . I'll tell you how sick I am of what goes on in this town. I live here, see? I got a damn good right to keep it clean even if I have to kill a few bastards to do it."³¹ Mike Hammer and his counterpart, Dogeron Kelly, hero of The Erection Set, typify what Richard Hofstadter calls the "vigilante mind."³² In The Erection Set, Dogeron Kelly is being followed into a men's room by two thugs, Markham and Bridey. Kelly immediately sets traps for them when he gets into the men's room. He locks the door of a toilet booth and places his shoes under the door so that it looks as if he is occupied. He then hides behind the main door and waits for Markham to enter:

He came in right on schedule with a snub-nosed .38 in his hand He never heard me come up behind him in my stocking feet and was just raising his foot to kick the toilet door when I smashed him in the skull behind his ear and sent him splintering through the wooden partition so hard his knees broke the seat right off the bowl. Before he could yell I had his head in my hands, slamming his face against the two-inch dirty ceramic and his teeth broke like dry matzos in a spatter of blood that speckled the stagnant water like obscene curds.

Markham was totally unconscious and never felt what happened to him. He never heard me break the bones in both his hands and never even moaned when I cupped my palms and clapped his eardrums into split pieces of delicate flesh.³³

As if this weren't sufficient to quench a reader's taste for violence, we find Kelly again lying in wait for Bridey, a thug who generally paralyzes his prey with an ice pick. Kelly breaks his wrist with the barrel of the .38 and then knocks him out with it. But, of course, the gratuitous violence, the righteous mutilation of the criminal, is yet to come:

So I broke every finger on Bridey's hands too, then stitched him up the side of each cheek so he'd never be invisible in a crowd again. I opened his belt, pulled his pants and shorts down and waited the two minutes until he started to wake up, holding the point of the pick right over the two goodie sacs, and just as a groan wheezed through his lips and his eyes opened and rolled toward mine I drove the ice pick through those two lumps of tissue into the rubber tiled floor³⁴

Violence in Spillane's work is often joined with a sense of fulfillment which we never find attached to violence in Hawkes or even in Hammett and Chandler. Spillane's violence is generalized in such a way that it is somehow divorced from character and setting: abstract violence. Characters like Mike Hammer and Dogeron Kelly differ from Sam Spade, Phillip Marlowe and Michael Banks because the former are often the sources of violence rather than its opponent or unwitting victim. Hammer and Kelly never show any shift in their attitudes toward violence and the world around them; the sordidness of this world elicits from them neither reluctance nor stoicism and they do not reflect on the irony or pathos of the actions in which they are caught up. Most of Spillane's books follow the same pattern: teasing, voyeuristic pornography is cut short in one scene to climax in the violence of a following scene (violence of the sort that takes place in the men's room, one might say), and all this sadism is legitimized by the hero's primitive and unswerving sense of justice. Spillane, unwittingly, presents good and evil as identical.

Michael Banks, too, has his day in the Men's at the race track. His first thought as he enters the Men's is that "a man could hide even at the base of one of those toilets if he crouched low enough, made himself small" (p. 90). Next, while whistling "Barrels of Fun" to himself, he remembers that "once he had seen a man die on a toilet--from fear--then had found the notice of the death in the papers" (p. 91). Banks is slightly afraid of lavatories in general: "he could not bring himself to touch the copper ball, slime covered, gently breathing, that lay in the bottom of a toilet tank" (p. 91). These scattered thoughts set the scene, and Michael is thrown into a panic when he hears footsteps approaching the door. He thinks of hiding at the far end of the room when two men materialize in seemingly dismembered pieces from behind the pipes there. They are identical to the first man who comes through the door: "A man smaller than Banks, humped over, with feet as large as boxes and a slate strapped across his chest. The name of a horse was on the slate: Rock Castle" (pp. 91-92). These silent men shuffle into a circle around Banks, bump him with their slates, splash his shoes as their rubbers, two sizes too large, smack in the latrine water on the floor. These are the men who generally perch on the rail of the track and communicate with the crowd by means of their slates. They are variously called soothsayers, eunuchs, the mathematicians, the bad-luck fellows. Surrounded, Banks thinks: "They were just the three to stand beside him in the Men's . . . just the sort to gang up on a lone man underground" (p. 92). These men have come to deliver a message which the first man keeps whispering: "Sybilline's in the Pavilion." They advise Banks not to run, and to persuade him, they show him some small pellet bombs which they roll around on their palms. Next, they seat him on a broken toilet: "They were standing close

to his knees, making wet sounds with their boots and rubbers, and it was worse than the crowds" (pp. 94-95). Having made sure that Banks has understood the message, they turn suddenly and "far apart, shoes scraping and slates caught close--raced off swiftly and with terrible clatter in the direction of the swinging door" (p. 95).

Banks' reactions in this scene are comic, and it is on comedy not brutality that the scene is focused. Banks' thought of death by fear on a toilet prepares him to meet the thugs. We laugh at Michael's thought that three small men wearing large slates and oversize rubbers are just the sort to ambush you in the Men's. Their mission is not to rub out Banks but to set up a rendez-vous. Michael's inappropriate reactions are pathetic and humorous, as are Margaret's reactions to her beating: "she told herself it was what she might have expected: it was something done to abducted girls, that's all . . . something they couldn't even show in films" (p. 126). And later she thinks: "what a sight if they flashed this view of herself on the screen of the old Victoria Hall where she had seen a few pictures with Michael. What a view of shame" (p. 130). Hawkes focuses on the incongruous thoughts of the victims--a strange mixture of thoughts, some civilized, some taboo. Michael's terrorization in the Men's and Margaret's beating are related by the "menacing harmony" of which Borges spoke. Margaret is beaten because she has pilfered an old trunk for clothes (hers having been taken away to keep her from going out) and escaped to the race track to find Michael. After his episode in the Men's, Michael catches a glimpse of Margaret at the track. She is dressed in "an enormous flower hat and a taffy-colored gown with black-beaded tassels sewn about the waist and sewn just above the bottom that was dragging. A dress from another age, too large,

too old. Margaret clothed in an old tan garden gown and lost" (p. 106). As Michael runs through the crowd to catch up with her, he sees her dragged off by a man and a woman. When he reaches the spot where she disappeared, he finds he is at the top of the stairs leading down to the Men's. By the swinging doors, a cigarette flung down in anger is burning, and Michael hears the public squeak of the hinges. He is afraid to go into the Men's.

The grotesque and comic events which occur in The Lime Twig show that we are dealing with a representation of the absurd, and violence is only one result of the chaos of this world. In The Erection Set, violence and sex are the tools with which Dogeron Kelly conquers his world, whips it into shape, makes it safe for the right-minded masses to live in. The Lime Twig makes no such claims. Its comedy bears witness to a certain joy in creating fictions; its antagonism to the conventional and the sensational mentality is captured in the person of Sidney Slyter, obscenely thrilled at the smell of violence. A certain nihilism is revealed in that all the innocents of the novel are dead or dying while Larry and his gang make their get-away, yet this nihilism is mediated by the fact that Larry does not win the money he had planned on--does not escape dreary England to the Americas where there are "trees with limes on the branches" (p. 165)--and by the description of Michael Banks as he runs onto the track: "small, yet beyond elimination, whose single presence purported a toppling of the day, a violation of that scene at Aldington, wreckage to horses and little crouching men" (p. 170).

Hawkes undermines the causal series of crimes of the thriller by presenting successive crimes as permutations of, echoes of, repetitions of earlier events. The Lime Twig has a structure which denies the reality of

causal plots on the one hand, and the realism and effectiveness of conventional morality on the other. Dread is translated by the uncanny, by the idea that fiction (imagination) and fact (conventional reality) occur on the same level of believability for the reader. In discussing the idea of destroying conventional reality, Hawkes says: "I suppose all this is to say that to me the act of writing is criminal. If the act of the revolutionary is one of supreme idealism, it's also criminal. Obviously, I think that the criminal act is essential to our survival."³⁵ Hawkes suggests here two important ideas: first, why the detective has been replaced by the criminal in postmodern parodies; second, why the radical abuse of conventional realism and extreme experiment with the material of fiction (language) is equal to, but separate from the revolutionary political act. Marlowe, the last of the knights, seeks by means of detection and action, to counter in however small a way the corrupting forces in the system. By solving crimes, he tries to put the system of justice back on the track. The malaise and the irony we sense in Hammett and Chandler is brought forth by the fact that the hidden truths they discover in some way indicate that perhaps it is not corruption in the system that is causing the ills, but rather it is the system in and of itself. This is why Marlowe realizes "it wasn't a game for knights." When the hero is fighting the system itself, rather than corruption within it, he becomes a criminal or a revolutionary.

The way in which literary experimentation with language and traditional conventions are linked to the criminal and revolutionary act is discussed by both Spanos and Poirier in terms of recent American politics. Spanos points out that conventional literary realism (a positivistic structure of consciousness) is evident in The Pentagon Papers and governed American

involvement in Vietnam from the overthrow of Diem on:

It is no accident that everywhere in these secret documents the Southeast Asian situation is seen by their American authors as a problem to be solved; that the planning to solve the problem--to achieve conclusive American objectives--is referred to in the metaphor of plotting a scenario; that the execution--the acting out--of the scenario in this recalcitrant theater of operations is to be accomplished, first, by the CIA--the international detective agency whose job it is to coerce the reality under investigation to conform to a preconceived order--and then, by the military arm by way of massive assault on the "criminal" enemy. In short, what emerges in these disturbing documents, if we pay critical attention to the language (especially to its trite metaphors), is an image of an action in which virtually everyone involved in this terrible human disaster--from the executive branch and its councils to the intelligence agencies and the military and the American press and its public--speaks and acts as if he is playing a role in a well-made fiction in the utterly dehumanized mode of a play by Eugène Scribe, a novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or closest of all, an episode of Mission Impossible.³⁶

The postmodern writer creates anti-detective stories, parodies of detective fiction, because the literary tradition and the conventional political system supporting it are both based on a detective story mentality. It is perhaps only natural that the hero of this new fiction, the anti-detective, should be a criminal.

The exact relation of linguistic and literary habit to the undermining of the system is alluded to by Spanos and examined by Poirier:

Insofar as they are available for discussion, life, reality and history exist only as discourse, and no form of discourse, as Santayana insisted, can be what it expresses; no form of discourse can be life, reality or history. . . .

No wonder anyone who cares about politics, especially anyone reading the script for 1968, finds the claims made for literature by most critics ridiculously presumptuous. Why should literature be considered the primary source of fictions, when fictions are produced at every press conference; why should novelists and dramatists be called "creative" when we have had Rusk and McNamara, the mothers of invention, "reporting" on the war in Vietnam? . . . Challenges to the fictional uniqueness of literature have come . . . from the people, especially the novelists and dramatists, who create it.³⁷

Hawkes carries out his literary revolution by denying causal connections between events and substituting other possible structures for reality--for example, the magic causality of the unconscious. Also, he rhymes his fiction on the level of discourse rather than plotting it mimetically. A similar sort of revolution is carried out by Alain Robbe-Grillet in Projet pour une révolution à New York. In this novel, all stories--whether of the canny or uncanny--are affirmed, denied, played with on the level of discourse itself.

The specific connection of Projet (and many other Robbe-Grillet novels) to American tough fiction is a complex one. At first glance, Robbe-Grillet's polished, cold language and careful structuring seem to be at the opposite pole from that of the slang-ridden, serialized, hard-boiled thriller. Despite this seeming opposition, we are clearly aware when reading Projet that the novel evokes and parodies the thriller. In his essay on Projet, Jean Ricardou points out that the novel is based on various types of popular thrillers: detective fiction, spy fiction, erotic fiction and adventure fiction.³⁸ Projet parodies popular fiction in general and cannot be limited by any means to a simple parody of tough fiction. Yet, the discussion of Projet in connection to the hard-boiled novel seems to me to be the most fruitful way to examine the novel as a parody. Both subject matter and frequent mention of detective fiction within the novel make the ties between Projet and the hard-boiled thriller a central interest. This discussion is not meant to deny the connection of Projet with other types of popular fiction, but rather in the end, to reinforce and elucidate that connection.

Robbe-Grillet has said that of the American writers,³⁹ he feels closest to those of the last generation, "to Faulkner, or even to Dos Passos, you know, or even to Hemingway," and to a writer like Nabokov, also.⁴⁰ It is

Faulkner, Dos Passos, and Hemingway who occupy a major portion of Claude-Edmonde Magny's L'Age du roman américain (1948), and they are all associated with the movies, hard-boiled thrillers, and the art of ellipsis in fiction. The behavioristic novels of Hammett and Hemingway, written in a sparse and austere style, show like a camera-eye only what the characters do, not what they think or feel. This stenographic reporting creates a hole or ellipse insofar as the psychology, the motivation of the character is concerned.⁴¹ This technique of information withheld is a central aspect of not only novels written by Hammett and Hemingway but also in novels like Faulkner's Sanctuary and Camus' L'Étranger.⁴² The objective description and the sparse style of Hemingway and Hammett both are picked up and changed by Robbe-Grillet.

A descriptive passage in Hammett's The Glass Key is particularly reminiscent of the type of geometrical, frozen images we now associate with the novels of Robbe-Grillet:

They stood thus, less than a yard apart--one blond, tall and powerfully built, leaning far forward, big shoulders hunched, big fists ready; the other dark of hair and eye, tall and lean, body bent a little to one side with an arm slanting down from that side to hold a heavy glass seidel by its handle--and except for their breathing there was no sound in the room. No sound came in from the bar-room on the other side of the thin door, the rattling of glasses nor the hum of talk nor the splash of water.⁴³

This mathematical and primarily visual description is very similar to many of the descriptions in Les Gommés, La Jalousie, Le Voyeur, Dans le labyrinthe etc. The surface quality of these descriptions sets up barriers to explanation. Roland Barthes, in his essay "Littérature objective" discusses the role of this sort of objective description:

La tentative de Robbe-Grillet . . . vise à fonder le roman en surface: 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. Le roman devient l'expérience directe de l'entour de l'homme, sans que cet homme puisse se prévaloir d'une psychologie, d'une métaphysique ou d'une psychanalyse pour aborder le milieu objectif qu'il découvre.⁴⁴

In Hammett's passage, we see nothing but the behavior of Ned Beaumont. If we are to find out why he is fighting Paul Madvig, we will have to guess by watching his actions because his psychology is withheld. In his novel La Jalousie, Robbe-Grillet pushes this element of "psychology withheld" one step further. The narrator of La Jalousie does not describe his emotions nor do we ever see his actions from a distance. Rather, since we are caught in the perspective of this narrator who never even says I, we must attend to the manner in which he describes the surfaces, the objects, which he views. A second element of Hammett's passage will also be picked up by Robbe-Grillet: the description by negatives. When Hammett says "no sound came in from the bar-room," he is emphasizing silence. Robbe-Grillet states in Dans le labyrinthe: "Et toute la scène demeure vide: sans un homme, ni une femme, ni même un enfant" (And the entire scene remains empty: not a man, not a woman, not even a child).⁴⁵ And what this negation does, more than serving to indicate the emptiness of the scene, is to allow for the sudden presence of a man, a woman and even a child in the novel. On a metaphysical level, Greene in Brighton Rock asserts the existence of God by the description of his absence. In Dans le labyrinthe, Robbe-Grillet creates the same sort of affirmation by negation, but on a textual level. We are dealing here with a self-referential type of writing, not a mimetic one, and this blocks many of our conventional ways of reading meaning into texts. We find these blocks when we consider certain fictional scenes, for example: there was no door made of imitation wood with a brass knob which Robert

turned quietly so that he could now slip into the room unnoticed. On the level of discourse, which Santayana states cannot be the thing itself, we have no logical problem: the description of the non-existent door simply fuses with the description of the existent door; the turning of the knob is the revolution.⁴⁶

Another link between the work of Robbe-Grillet and the tough style American novel is also difficult to pin down because it, too, involves a reversal as well as a similarity; this link is that of tough style dialogue to the polished style of Robbe-Grillet which in Projet is sometimes hard-edged and classical, sometimes self-consciously literary. The American tough style in dialogue, as Sheldon Norman Grebstein shows us in "Hemingway and His Hard-Boiled Children," depends on three major elements: first, simple sentence constructions, heavy with parallelism, which have the effect of control, terseness, blunt honesty; second, a diction which avoids all abstractions and literariness and thus seems to be directly recorded from reality (verisimilitude not imagination); and finally, use of repetition and verbal counterpoint which work either through pairing or juxtaposition, or else by running the same word or phrase through shifting meanings.⁴⁷ These qualities are evident in Hemingway's "The Battler" from In Our Time. The following scene occurs after Nick Adams has been thrown off a freight train and approaches a campfire:

The man sat there looking into the fire. When Nick stopped quite close to him he did not move.

"Hello!" Nick said.

The man looked up.

"Where did you get the shiner?" he said.

"A brakeman busted me."

"Off the through freight?"

"Yes."

"I saw the bastard," the man said. "He went through here about an hour and a half ago. He was walking along the top

of the cars slapping his arms and singing."

"The bastard."

"It must have made him feel good to bust you," the man said seriously.

"I'll bust him."

"Get him with a rock sometime when he's going through," the man advised.

"I'll get him."

"You're a tough one, aren't you?"

"No," Nick answered.

"All you kids are tough."

"You got to be tough," Nick said.

The man looked at Nick and smiled. In the firelight Nick saw that his face was misshapen. His nose was sunken, his eyes were slits, he had queer-shaped lips. Nick did not perceive all this at once, he only saw the man's face was queerly formed and mutilated. It was like putty in color. Dead looking in the firelight.⁴⁸

The tough, terse, clipped colloquial dialogue of Nick and the man is juxtaposed to the more literary vocabulary of the last paragraph (misshapen, perceived, mutilated). This shift from the vulgate of dialogue to the more literary exposition "permits the writer to attain the immediacy of the I-narrator and yet the flexibility and objectivity of the outside narrator. That is, Hemingway simultaneously hovers above the scene, controlling all its elements, and at the same time renders what Nick sees and thinks as though Nick's voice told the story" (Grebstein, p. 32). This same narrative mode, through different techniques, is achieved by Robbe-Grillet in Le Voyeur. Bruce Morrissette says: "The absence of the pronoun 'I,' or of any other autoreference in the first person, would seem to imply that the mode is one of traditional third-person authorial 'omniscience.' But at once, as we read many scenes, it is obvious that the point of view--visual as well as psychological--is directly related to Mathias, and that the narrative third person functions here only as a more 'objective' way of presenting his sensations and his interior world."⁴⁹ In Le Voyeur, the

stylized narration clashes with the demented optics of Mathias, causing the same sort of marriage of first and third person narration as in "The Battler," but the use of this narrative mode in Le Voyeur caused many disagreements among critics while Hemingway's use of the same narrative mode was easily accepted. One reason for this may be that colloquial dialogue seems bluntly honest and verisimilitudinous whereas Robbe-Grillet's polished style makes us suspicious, incites us to detection. Certainly the title of Robbe-Grillet's novel urges us on to find out who the "real" voyeur is, and the narrative mode sets up barriers to this search.

In the passage from Hemingway, the resonance of the idea of toughness develops as "shiner," "bastard," "busted," "get him," and "tough" are repeated, juxtaposed, and subtly varied. Behind the resonance of this language, an ellipsis is created: the dialogue seems good-natured, but an undertone of violence is also created (Grebstein, pp. 32-33). A similar sort of ellipse or hole is created in Le Voyeur by variation, juxtaposition, and repetition of scenes evoking a rape and murder, but the crime is never described; it is an absence at the center. Geoffrey Hartman says of fictions like Le Voyeur or Antonioni's Blow-Up: "The center they scan is an absence; the darkness they illumine has no heart. There is pathos here but no defined scene of pathos. Instead of a whodunit we get a whodonut, a story with a hole in it."⁵⁰ The effect of suppressing material in both the hard-boiled detective story and in Robbe-Grillet's Le Voyeur is to make us concentrate on this absence. Jean Ricardou explains: "Loin d'être évoqué, le viol de la jeune Jacqueline, dans Le Voyeur, est dissimulé par le blanc d'une censure; c'est à partir de cette absence contrainte que s'élabore son efficace: le récit en est hanté, agressé de toutes partes."⁵¹ In "The

Battler" we find out what violence fills the ellipsis, and in The Glass Key, Hammett finally explains the motives behind the fight between Ned Beaumont and Paul Madvig. In Le Voyeur, the ellipsis is never filled; the center is an absence, a non-center.

The technique of repetition-variation-juxtaposition which we find in tough fiction suggests verisimilitude. As Grebstein notes, the speech of the unlettered is heavily repetitious because it depends on varying inflections of the same words to achieve emphasis whereas more educated speech achieves this emphasis through analogy or amplification. The stripped vocabulary of tough speech indicates disdain for abstractions, imaginations, joy in language for its own sake; doing is more important than saying (Grebstein, p. 33). Thus the heavily representational quality of tough dialogue would seem to be diametrically opposed to Robbe-Grillet's play with discourse in Projet, for example. There is a connection, however, and that connection is the work of Gertrude Stein. Richard Bridgman in his book, The Colloquial Style in America, cites various places in which Hemingway, despite his strained relations with Stein, acknowledges his debt to her. In an interview in The Paris Review Hemingway, after noting that Stein wrote with considerable inaccuracy about her influence on his work, says: "Here it is simpler and better to thank Gertrude for everything I learned from her about the abstract relationship of words."⁵² And, in A Moveable Feast, Hemingway says of Stein: "She had also discovered many truths about rhythms and the uses of words in repetition that were valid and valuable and she talked well about them."⁵³ Hemingway uses what he learned from Stein to emphasize the representational, the mimetic, quality of his writing as we have seen in the passage from "The Battler." Stein, in her "portraits," also

thought that by repetition we get closer to representing the object, and she likens this to the use of frames in moving pictures. Of her work from 1906 to 1914, she says: "I was doing what the cinema was doing, I was making a continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not many things but one thing. . . . In a cinema no two pictures are alike each one is just that much different from the one before."⁵⁴ Clearly Stein is attempting to capture the world of things and people as completely as possible by the world of words. Robbe-Grillet, as we will see most clearly in Projet, uses repetition-variation-juxtaposition to show us the fissure between the world of things and the world of words. As Wallace Stevens has put it: "It is a world of words to the end of it,/ In which nothing solid is its solid self."⁵⁵

Projet differs from Le Voyeur in that the repetitions in Le Voyeur indicate suppressed information and, in a sense, reinforce one another, while in Projet, the repetitions of scenes of violation and torture sometimes contradict one another, sometimes reinforce one another, always proliferate. In the end, the plot of Le Voyeur is retrievable: we can trace Mathias' itinerary; we can make some distinctions between the "real" scenes and the "imagined" ones. In Projet, the material is presented in such a way that no plot summary is possible. In short, in the hard-boiled novel, in The Lime Twig and even to some extent in Le Voyeur, we are reading "le récit d'une aventure" (the narrative of an adventure) while in Projet we are definitely reading "l'aventure d'un récit" (the adventure of a narrative).⁵⁶ The type of adventure we find in Projet does not eradicate all reference to the concrete world outside the novel, rather it may present this reality and then deny it by presenting an equally referential but

absolutely incompatible version of reality. This odd mixture of the self-referential and the mimetic in a text is perhaps best explained, in general, by Jonathan Culler. Culler points out that when we are reading a text and we come across items which are in no way symbolic or thematic elements (i.e. trivial gestures, insignificant objects, superfluous dialogue), these items serve to denote a concrete reality:

Elements of this kind confirm the mimetic contract and assure the reader that he can interpret the text as about a real world. It is possible, of course, to trouble this contract by blocking the process of recognition, preventing one from moving through the text to a world, and making one read the text as an autonomous verbal object. But such effects are possible only because of the convention that novels do refer. Robbe-Grillet's famous description of a tomato slice, which tells us first that it is perfect and then that it is flawed, plays on the fact that this description at first appears to have a purely referential function, which is troubled when the writing introduces uncertainties and thus lifts our attention away from a supposed object to the writing itself (Les Gommages, III,iii). Or again, in the opening paragraph of Robbe-Grillet's Dans le labyrinthe, description of the weather seems at first to establish a context ("Outside it is raining") but when the sentence introduces a contradiction ("Outside the sun is shining") we are forced to realize that the only reality in question is that of writing itself which, as Jean Ricardou says, uses the concept of a world in order to display its own laws.⁵⁷

This view of the type of narrative process by which Projet is created points to some interesting reasons as to why it would parody the thriller. First, the thriller challenged the classical detective novel on the grounds that the latter was unrealistic. The pretended harsh realism of the tough style makes it a prime target for parody. And second, the thriller as Hammett especially pointed out, is based primarily on deception rather than violence. Deception is the heart of evil. Violence or the threat of violence is always in the background of the thriller, but it is not the basic element; it is the explosive result of the tension generated by deception.⁵⁸ Violence

is evoked by Projet, and the "mimetic deception" of language is the heart of the novel, but here--as opposed to the violence in a Spillane novel-- violence is finally a form of play because it is not mimetic (the mimetic spell is always broken) and is revolutionary because it attacks our conventional use of language. In The Glass Key, the hero Ned Beaumont says: "I went there to trap the gent and he out-trapped me," (Hammett, p. 91). In many ways this is the same relation the reader intent on retrieving Projet has with Robbe-Grillet.

As Projet opens, we read what seems to be a commentary by a narrator. He tells us that the first scene goes very fast, that everyone knows his part, the words and gestures follow one another smoothly like well oiled parts of a machine. Next, there is a blank space when nothing happens. Then the action resumes and it is the same scene. Finally we are given the scene in first person narration. At this point, we assume that the commentary of the first two paragraphs is the "concrete reality" and that the "scene" is the fictional reality. The scene we are given is:

Je suis en train de refermer la porte derrière moi, lourde porte de bois plein percée d'une petite fenêtre rectangulaire, étroite, tout en hauteur, dont la vitre est protégée par une grille de fonte au dessin compliqué (imitant le fer forgé de façon grossière) qui la masque presque entièrement. Les spirales entremêlées, encore épaissies par des couches successives de peinture noire, sont si rapprochées, et il y a si peu de lumière de l'autre côté de la porte, qu'on ne distingue rien de ce qui peut, ou non, se trouver à l'intérieur.

La surface du bois, tout autour, est recouverte d'un vernis brunâtre où des petites lignes plus claires, qui sont l'image peinte en faux-semblant de veines théoriques appartenant à une autre essence, jugée plus décorative . . .⁵⁹

At this point, the theme of deception has already worked its way into the text. We are faced with a wrought iron grille which is really cast-iron and which is masked by paint; we have a wooden door varnished to represent

another sort of veined wood. We have a window masked by the grille. What remains to be seen is whether, in typical thriller fashion, this deception and violence will be exposed on the level of self-referential discourse as well as the mimetic level.

The next part of this scene moves to a third series of actions which are imagined by the I-narrator of the "scene." As Jean Ricardou points out, the reader's desire for a story, a continuity without cuts (in the cinematic sense) in it, is a strong convention--it is this story telling ability that Edmond Wilson praises Chandler for. If an author wishes to undermine this convention, he has at least two paths open to him: open rupture or clandestine rupture. In the detective story, clues are often hidden in the rhythm of the narrative itself. For example, the essential clue to the initial murder may be given just before a scream announces a second murder; in our hurry to get to the scene of the second murder, we overlook the clue. Robbe-Grillet uses our desire to be pulled along by the narrative to set a trap for us, to introduce a clandestine rupture. The "imagination" of the narrator of the "scene" begins as he stares at the imitation wood door:

Des lignes constituent des réseaux parallèles ou à peine divergents de courbes sinueuses contournant des nodosités plus sombres, aux formes rondes ou ovales et quelquefois même triangulaires, ensemble de signes changeants dans lesquels j'ai depuis longtemps repéré des figures humaines: une jeune femme allongée sur le côté gauche et se présentant de face, nue de toute évidence puisque l'on distingue nettement le bout des seins et la toison foncée du sexe; ses jambes sont légèrement fléchies, surtout la gauche dont le genou pointe vers l'avant, au niveau du sol; le pied droit se trouve ainsi croisé par-dessus l'autre, les chevilles son réunies, liées ensemble selon de fortes présomptions, de même que les poignets ramenés dans le dos comme d'habitude, semble-t-il, car les deux bras disparaissent derrière le buste: le gauche au-dessous de l'épaule et le droit juste après le coude.

Le visage, rejeté en arrière, baigne dans les flots ondulés d'une abondante chevelure de teinte très sombre, répandue en désordre

sur le dallage. Les traits eux-mêmes sont peu visibles, tant à cause de la position où repose la tête que d'une large mèche de cheveux qui barre en biais le front, la ligne des yeux, une joue; le seul détail indiscutable est la bouche généreusement ouverte, dans un long cri de souffrance ou de terreur.⁶⁰

A clandestine fissure has appeared in the text. The image of the woman has by an accumulation of details become present, alive. If we take this scene simply as the narrator's "imagination" we can cover that fissure but certain details, for example the fact that the wrists are bound "as usual" ("comme d'habitude"), insinuate a bothersome ambiguity into the text: does "as usual" mean as is customary in bondage, or rather, as it has been done before suggesting that we are witnessing a scene that has happened before? We ignore this sort of ambiguity in order to continue our reading.

The next part of the text begins when the narrator asks questions and formulates hypotheses about the "imagination." This questioning seems to make the "imagination" exterior to the narrator, but in our hurry to go on, we ignore this clue also:

Pourtant, il ne peut guère s'agir d'un interrogatoire; la bouche, en effet, qui conserve trop longtemps la même position grande ouverte, doit plutôt se trouver distendue par une sorte de bâillon: quelque pièce de lingerie noire fourrée de force entre les lèvres. Et d'ailleurs les cris de la fille, si elle était en train de hurler, traverseraient au moins partiellement l'épaisse vitre du judas rectangulaire à grille de fonte.

Mais voilà qu'un homme aux cheveux argentés, vêtu de la longue blouse blanche à col montant des chirurgiens, entre dans le champ par la droite, en premier plan . . .⁶¹

The essential clue, the fact that the narrator says he would be able to hear cries through the glass if the girl weren't bound, should make us realize that this scene is illogical, impossible in a mimetic sense. If he has seen the girl in the wood of the door, how can he now be talking about the possibility of hearing her screams through the window? The sudden entrance of the mysterious, ominous doctor allows us to ignore this illogical

situation. As conventional readers we become, in a sense, like Hawkes' Sidney Slyter feeling an obscene excitement at the smell of violence. We read on.

The doctor fills a long hypodermic needle and walks over to the helpless girl. He seems to be performing some sort of forced artificial insemination (we can't tell; his coat blocks our view). Suddenly a man wearing a tuxedo and a mask appears on the scene and behind him a workman:

un petit homme chauve en costume de travail avec la courroie d'une boîte à outils passée sur l'épaule, qui doit être quelque chose comme plombier, ou électricien, ou serrurier. Toute la scène alors se déroule très vite, toujours identique à elle-même.

On sent qu'elle a déjà été répétée plusieurs fois: chacun connaît son rôle par coeur. Les gestes se succèdent d'une manière souple, continue, s'enchaînent sans à-coup les uns aux autres, comme les éléments nécessaires d'une machinerie bien huilée, quand tout à coup le lumière s'éteint. Il ne reste plus, devant moi, qu'une vitre poussiéreuse où se distinguent à peine quelques reflets de mon propre visage . . .⁶²

The revolution promised in Projet's title has occurred; we seem to have traveled in a complete circle and are once more back to the first passage: commentary. Our return, however, is not quite as we expected. The return, to be a full revolution, should bring us back to the grain of the wood, not to the window through which nothing can be seen, yet behind which the doctor's light has just gone out. The repetition of the commentary unifies the first commentary with the imagination and destroys its link with the scene. At the same time it throws doubt on the "concrete reality" of the first commentary. The window makes impossible the imagination which has its starting point in the grain of the wood. The changing alliances and ruptures among these three passages (commentary, scene, imagination) make it impossible to tag any one of them as "concrete reality" or to the contrary "pure imagination." The writing must be read as self-referential rather than

mimetic. The entire text of Projet, by means of partial alliances and incomplete ruptures between mimetic passages, becomes irretrievable on the mimetic level. Our narrator keeps changing identities. Various live scenes recur later as the covers on detective thrillers or passages from commercially made pornographic tapes. Characters are doubles: two Lauras of different ages; Ben Said and the false Ben Said; Dr. M. and Dr. Morgan who appear to be the same man but are really two men both wearing the same doctor's mask to inspire confidence, etc. People on posters and in window displays later become animate and vice versa. References to historical fact (Statue of Liberty; Abraham Lincoln) are joined with references to fiction (the Blue Villa, Edward Manneret, Juard, Old King Boris, etc.). Not only do the passages in the text set up barriers to mimetic readings, but parts of the narration discuss how the text we are reading is constructed. When Laura is questioned about her reason for using the word "reprise" (retake) in her narration, she replies:

La raison, gros, malin, qu'on ne peut pas tout raconter à la fois, et qu'il y a toujours un moment où une histoire bifurque, revient en arrière ou fait un bond en avant, ou se met à proliférer; alors on dit Reprise, pour que les gens sachent bien où ils en sont.⁶³

In other parts of the text, we find defenses of the use of the word "coupure" (cut, p. 191) and defenses of the use of literary language (p. 189).

In discussing how Projet was constructed, Robbe-Grillet has stated that he did not use generating words (i.e. rouge, rogue, orgue, goure) but rather the color red and the mythology which surrounds the word (blood, fire, revolution). This mythology surrounds us in popular expressions (Thriller covers, sex-shops, comics, posters) and Projet was an effort to make the elements of this mythology talk about themselves.⁶⁴ In his prière d'insérer

to Projet Robbe-Grillet notes that given the erotic and violent images which surround us in a city like New York, we can either condemn them in the name of the morality of true values (a reaction of refuge and flight) or we can appropriate them and play with them (a revolutionary act). The devaluation of these mythological elements (the content of Projet) is linked to the devaluation of traditional, chronological, mimetic conventions.⁶⁵ We have seen how the chronological mimetic convention is destroyed by the self-referential discourse of Projet in the example of the opening scenes. What remains to see is how this revolution is being carried out in terms of the content; how generative elements play a part in the architecture of the writing.

By reading various reviews of Projet, we become aware that the reviewers, though they recognize the destruction of the traditional, chronological format of the novel, find the content an impoverishment (the mythology has no depth), a scandal (mere sadistic eroticism) or a hoax (no real revolution takes place). Of Projet, Ben Stoltzfus writes:

Project [sic] pour une révolution à New York . . . is the latest example of an existential nihilism which seems to say that art, like the world, lacks purpose and meaning and is therefore absurd. No longer bound by the constraints of the traditional novel, the liberated novelist is free to explore those oft expressed facets of the libido which are forever contradicting and expressing themselves in surrealist images. Appropriately, we have a steam iron as big as a locomotive and a voyeur locksmith who seems to hold the key to the novel's social mythology and its Freudian eroticism. The novel's recurrent images are presented to us as "King Size" manifestations of the human psyche beyond which nothing seems to matter. The novel's intricate games, mistaken identities and puzzles of busybodydom are irritating by comparison, though perhaps provide essential detail for the figure in the carpet.⁶⁶

To Stoltzfus's damning praise, we may add Guy Rohou's view that Projet is the grand pirouette of a writer who is too easily satisfied with the

mysterious and cruel shams with which the novel's nymphets are amused.⁶⁷ Anne Villelaur's opinion adds to this that even the detective story atmosphere can't stave off the boredom of this novel and that for all Robbe-Grillet's explanations of revolutionary activity, the revolution represented by the novel has little to do with "real" revolution because we must believe that the sadists and dangerous neuropaths in the novel make up the revolutionary force.⁶⁸

Stoltzfus finds two excessively irritating quirks in Robbe-Grillet's style: he blocks conventional mimetic reading; he refuses to complete the stories he begins to tell us. These quirks get in the way of the reader who is trying to retrieve the Freudian content of the story. In Projet we find the elements of the "uncanny" (which Freud eventually links to castration complexes and primal scenes) as we did in Hawkes: doubles, severed hands, symbols becoming animate, a conspiracy of repetitions. Hawkes, in purposely trying to structure the material of the unconscious, does create a work which is somewhat uncanny. Freud notes at the end of his essay, however, that his discussion is incomplete because even given the occurrence of all these elements, an experience or a work of art may not be uncanny but rather amusing. Robbe-Grillet's use of severed heads and hands occurs in the scene where the narrator (Laura's brother/uncle/step-father) stops to look in the window of a shop where masks, wigs etc. are sold. Here, the advertising slogans, the calm smiling faces of assassinated presidents, the mask of the doctor who inspires confidence, the face of Doctor Morgan's blonde nurse, give rise to laughter rather than fear because we are so aware of the author's tampering with the mimetic elements of the text. The same amusement arises when doubles proliferate wildly through the text,

scenes are repeated with increasing rapidity, and inanimate covers to thrillers recur as animate scenes. The amusement we feel at seeing this artifice not only gives the lie to any tragic exploration of the libido, but also indicates that the writing is not demonstrating "existential nihilism," or lack of meaning in art.

The exploration of the type of revolution going on in the content of Projet is more difficult than the exploration of the style simply because our conventional habits concerning content are harder to destroy. Illogical constructions force us to acknowledge self-referential writing; a content which undermines its representation of the world in order to emphasize its representation of the writing itself is harder to see. One example of self-referential content might be the mise-en-abyme which is important to a novel not only for its mimetic value but also as a representation of the structure of the text: it is a metaphor for the construction of the work itself. In Projet, we see many other examples in which not only the writing but the content as well are self-referential. For instance, Stoltzfus mentions the iron which, at one point is dropped by J. R. onto the ironing board when a rapist/policeman breaks into her apartment. The fact that the iron burns a triangular hole in the front of J. R.'s dress can be read as a detail which resonates with the scene of rape and torture. Another reading, however, gives us information which destroys the mimetic reading: the scene represents, of course, a robe grillée. The pun recalls us to a literal level. Similarly when we are told in the revolutionary lecture that the color red is the radical solution to an irreducible antagonism between black and white, we begin looking for representations of a bloody racial war in New York. We don't find any. If we read the lecture as a non-mimetic metaphor, however,

we do find it clearly in the text: black (ink) and white (paper) combine to form the revolution which is Projet. When we are told in the first paragraphs that the mechanical gestures and speeches are followed by a long blank space where nothing happens and then the same scene plays again, we may begin to look for blank spaces in the text, exact duplications; we don't find them. Ricardou, in "La Fiction flamboyante," suggests that the scene is the whole of Projet, that the blank space occurs when we finish the novel and set it down, and that the scene recurs (the revolution is completed) when we begin to reread.⁶⁹ This idea is presented metaphorically when young Laura is listening to the tapes of pornographic adventures. When the story is over, a long silence occurs on the tape. Laura rewinds the tape to the adventure again. The text doesn't explain the content, rather the content explains the text.

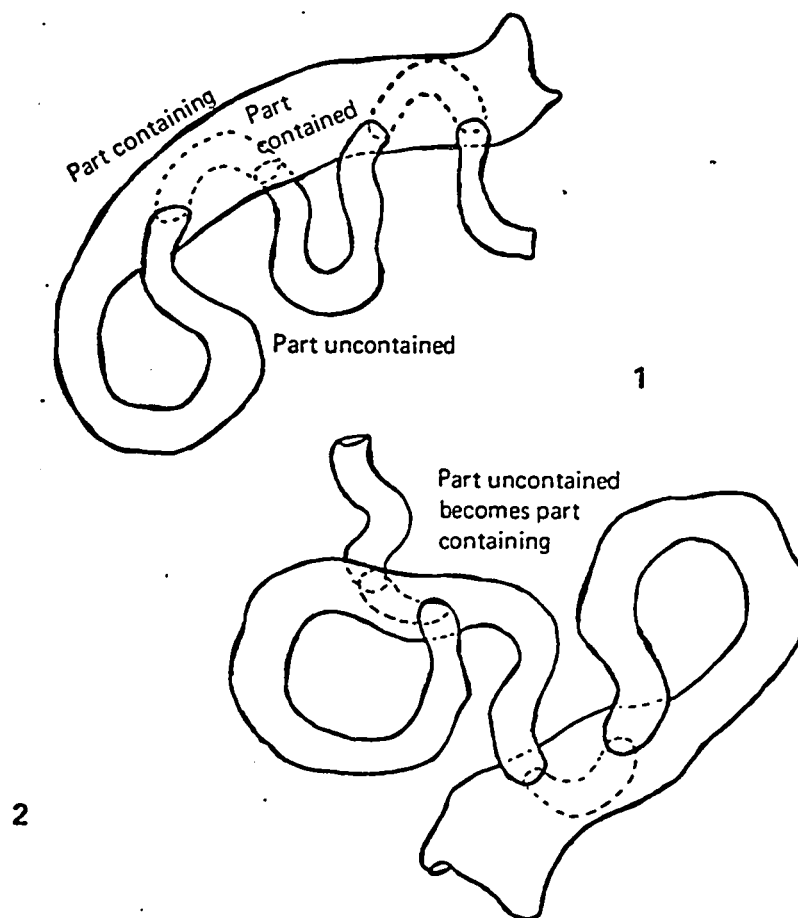
This undermining of mimetic content occurs throughout the text. The idea of a content which describes form (rather than the traditional form which describes content) can perhaps be extended to the entirety of Projet. Le Voyeur, as we noted, created an ellipse by suppressing the crime at its center. Projet, on the other hand, is a proliferation of rapes; the idea is obsessive in the novel. This should lead us to ask to what extent rape serves as a representation of the process of writing. Bruce Morrissette's effort to give a structural model of Projet becomes quite suggestive in light of the major content of the novel. Morrissette, finding that the fictional techniques of Projet are far more complex than those of the elliptical Le Voyeur, suggests that the text can be compared to a Klein form. Morrissette finds the multi-dimensional interpenetrations of narrative fields (the opening commentary, scene, imagination, for example) of

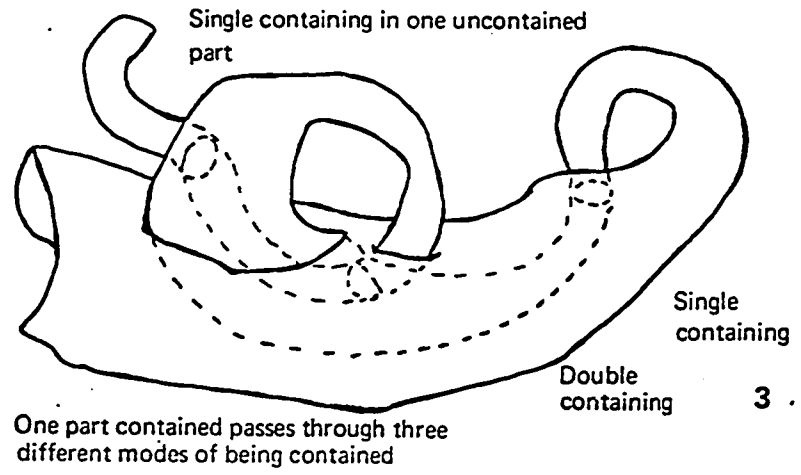
Projet are analogical to the Klein form as it is described by Warren Brody:

The Klein form is different from conventional geometric forms such as the doughnut or sphere. There's no inside; there's no outside. Instead, you have a contained tube and an uncontained tube, a contained hole and an uncontained hole from which you can make interlocking Klein forms in a chain. . . . Any part of the form can touch, contact, communicate with, flow with any other part, and the parts, the whole, in time flow through each other in a way the doughnut and sphere cannot. We have a quality of continuousness in the form and at the same time intracontainment or infolding The Klein form is permeated by context. It has no walls. Yet it uses its structural infolding for maintaining itself changing is a sufficiently regular way to find new relations.

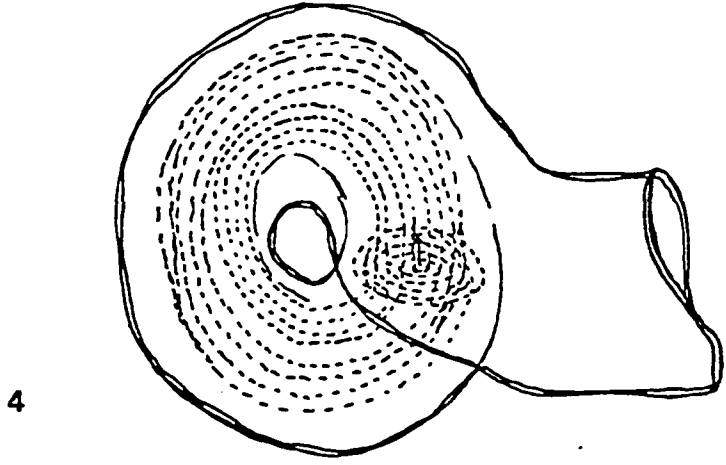
(Warren Brody, "Biotopology," Radical Software, No. 4, Summer, 1971)⁷⁰

KLEIN WORMS

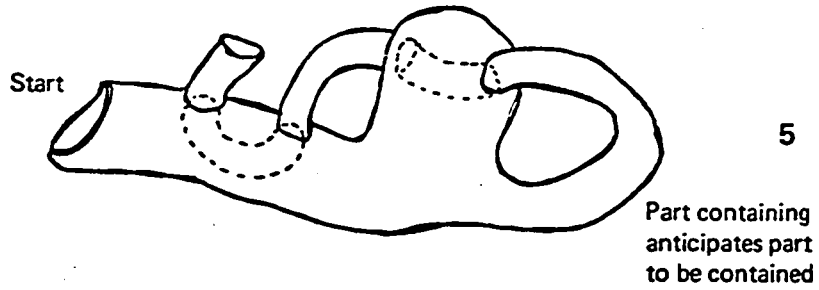




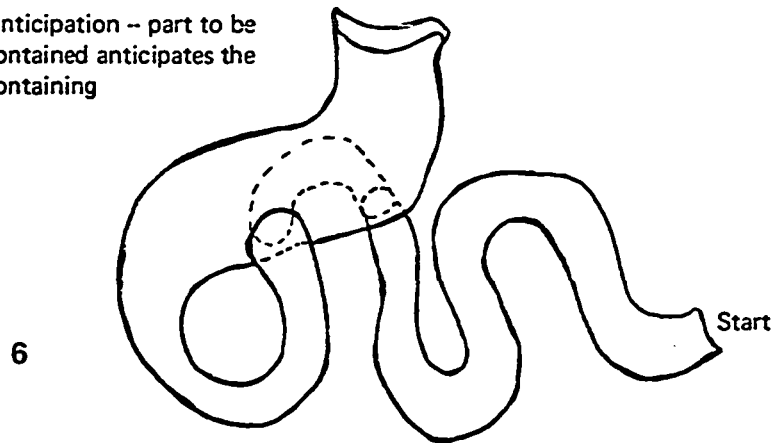
Inspin -- part contained continues containing itself ad infinitum



Deliberate anticipation of containing



Anticipation – part to be contained anticipates the containing



Illustrations: "Klein Worms," Radical Software, No. 3 (Spring, 1971), p. 2.

The recurrent content of Projet is violation and torture; the recurrent symbols are vaginas, phalli, breasts. If we read everything that happens in Projet mimetically, our reaction is likely to be like Anne Villelaur's-- this is a book about sadists and dangerous neuropaths. But it seems to me that the style of the novel is constantly pushing us to read it non-mimetically. The content, though taken from the real world where pornography and detective thrillers sell like hotcakes from the bookstands and everyone knows better than to go into Central Park or ride the subway at night, represents not the world but rather the text. Here, we realize that Robbe-Grillet's parody of the "shocker" is a total parody of content as well as form, and that a violation takes place whenever an ellipsis is filled with the construction of another falsely mimetic scene. In short, rape points to fictional techniques--holes, projections--not to the world of sadists and masochists.

The conventions of the hard-boiled thriller--that "realistic" form of detective fiction--are parodied by Robbe-Grillet and Hawkes in antithetical ways: Hawkes tends toward a sort of super-mimesis in which the word and the world are so strongly identified that the act of naming creates the world; Robbe-Grillet lures us into accepting the representational scene only to bring us sharply back to the level of language by suddenly moving from a mimetic to a self-referential use of language. The parody of the "true to life" tough novel, whether achieved by means of super-mimetic language or self-referential language, makes us inescapably aware of the game of language in which--as Derrida has clearly pointed out in "La structure, le signe et le jeu"--we are all irrevocably implicated. The use of obtrusive artifice to make us unavoidably aware that language is a system rather than raw reality

is a postmodern project which is neither devoid of nor divorced from "life." Our awareness of our implication in the game, our awareness that discourse patterns the way we see reality, brings us closer to understanding reality, that "other" which is "out there"--or rather forces us to recognize how we are molding that "other" into conceptual and linguistic patterns.

The French novelist Raymond Queneau--a gamester like Robbe-Grillet, a magus like Hawkes--defines the dangers of the misuse of language and the necessity for the constant renewal of language systems in his "Conversation avec Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes." When asked about the renewal of written language by emphasis on the living spoken language, Queneau replied:

Je ne veux pas dire qu'il faut ramener la littérature, et la poésie, à une simple sténographie de ce qu'on appelle méprisamment le langage "concierge" lequel n'est somme toute que celui des académiciens avec quelques petites incorrections. Il s'agit. . . de donner un style au langage parlé. Nous pourrions peut-être assister à la naissance d'une nouvelle littérature. Je crois qu'une syntaxe morte est un tel éteignoir que lorsqu'on s'en sera débarrassé, il y aura non seulement une nouvelle poésie, mais encore une nouvelle philosophie. ¶

Misinterpretation of language and thoughtless use of ossified syntax by characters in Queneau's works lead to semantic zones of error; the creation of these zones of error, then, becomes the plot in his novels.

Misuse of language often gives rise to mysteries, to intrigues, to various forms of detection which pivot upon this linguistically falsified reality. Thus, in Chiendent, Sidonie Cloche overhears a chance remark which leads her to the false belief that Etienne and his friends are criminals, that a great deal of money is involved, and that old Père Taupe has that money. Eventually her misunderstanding of language and her detective story mentality cause the death of a young waitress who had been talked into marrying old Père Taupe for his money (the money he never had). In Les

Fleurs bleues, M. Labal, a night watchman at a camp ground, has done away with three or four hundred people in the name of Justice (la balance). His own justification of his right to be self-appointed judge and executioner is that his name (Louis-Antoine-Benoît-Albert-Léopold-Antoine-Nestor-Charles-Emile La Balance) has predestined him to play this role: the word and the world are fused.⁷² "La balance" mistakes his name for destiny. Like a perverse version of Hugo's Javert in Les Misérables, Labal as detective tirelessly hunts down those he imagines to be criminal. Queneau has also tried his hand at writing a popular tough novel. Under the pseudonym Sally Mara, he wrote the thriller On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes (1947) which never had the success of his avant-garde parodies.

A definite parody of the tough detective finally occurs in Queneau's recent novel Le Vol d'Icare. Here, the use of words to create worlds, the adventure of a narration, is clear in the title which means both "the flight of Icarus" and "the theft of Icarus." Icarus, a character in a novel being written by Monsieur Hubert, escapes from the pages of a manuscript. Hubert suspects that his fellow novelists have stolen his character, so he engages a hard-boiled detective to find Icarus and the thief. The detective Morcol, who specializes in "Discretion" begins his investigation under two misconceptions: first, that Icare has been stolen when actually he has fled, and second, that the character he is looking for is named Nick Harwitt since Hubert has asked him to return "mon Icare vite" (in translation, the name becomes Dicky Ruscombe because Hubert has said he will get no rest unless the mystery is solved "and Icarus comes back"). Icare is found quite by chance and is returned to Hubert only to be stolen for real by Hubert's fellow novelists. This time, however, Icare confuses the matter more by managing

to escape from his kidnappers; once again a theft turns out to be a flight. More and more characters begin to escape from the writers' manuscripts, and Morcol, who has been hired to find them all, decides instead he will give up detecting and flee to the peace and quiet of the Riviera. Icare finally meets his end by falling from a giant kite in which he is trying to fly. At this point, Hubert declares his novel finished and all the various fictional levels we had detected fuse: the novel Queneau is writing, the novel Hubert is writing about authors in search of their characters, the novels the characters have escaped from.

Although Queneau's fictional characters often confuse language and reality, Queneau himself always insists upon the separation of the two and upon the tendency of language to distort the real:

On ne mange pas le mot pain, on ne boit pas le mot vin, mais bien dits ils ont leur importance. Je ne crois pas au langage qui se prend pour ce qu'il n'est pas, je ne crois pas à une poésie qui serait mensonge. C'est l'exactitude qui donne toute leur valeur aux métaphores les moins évidentes. Un Empereur changea les moeurs des Chinois en modifiant la langue, voilà qui me paraît fort possible. Il y a une force du langage, mais il faut savoir où l'appliquer, il y a différentes sortes de levier et l'on ne soulève pas un bloc de pierre avec un casse-noisettes.⁷³

In Le Vol d'Icare, we see clearly how Queneau is using the ambiguity of the word vol and is employing narrative prefigurations to create his novel. Vol, as theft, invokes an entire detective narrative, yet the idea of theft is undercut because we know a flight rather than a theft has taken place, and the detective prefiguration is undercut by our observation that Morcol's investigations lead nowhere. This pattern is repeated in reverse when a second vol, this time a theft, takes place. We imagine that we have the narrative well in hand when the theft actually does become a flight as Icare escapes from his character-nappers. The flight of Icare, of course, suggests

the Icarus myth, but as readers we suspect that this prefigurative myth, like the tough detective narrative, will not be borne out by the actual narrative. By a circuitous route, however, Icare does end up falling from the sky.

A novel which brings together the violence of the unconscious dream world which we saw in The Lime Twig, the violence of style in Projet and the spoken language and humor of Vol d'Icare is Manuel Puig's The Buenos Aires Affair, a self-acclaimed detective story. According to Donald A. Yates, the American hard-boiled writers, with the exception of perhaps James M. Cain, had little popular success in Latin America, especially in Argentina, the country which has produced the most detective stories both popular and postmodern.⁷⁴ Yates does point out that beginning in 1960, the hard-boiled style began to catch on. Reactions to this tough style are varied. Julio Cortázar, in his essay, "Situación de la novela" which traces the development of the contemporary novel, finds the tough novel deserves mention, but not necessarily favorable mention:

La rama más significativa (no hago cuestión de calidad sino de peculiaridad) me parece ser la de los "tough writers" de Estados Unidos, los escritores "duros" criados en la escuela de Hemingway (alguien podría decir que, más que escuela, eso fué un reformatorio), novelistas como James Cain, Dashiell Hammett y Raymond Chandler. Parto de la advertencia de que ninguno de estos novelistas es un gran escritor; ¿cómo serlo, si todos ellos representan una forma extrema y violentísima de ese repudio consciente o inconsciente de la literatura [poética] que señalábamos antes? En ellos se hace intensa la necesidad siempre postergada de tirar el lenguaje por la borda. La abundancia del insulto, de la obscenidad verbal, del uso creciente del slang, son manifestaciones de este desprecio a la palabra en cuanto eufemismo del pensamiento y el sentimiento. Todo sufre aquí un proceso de envilecimiento deliberado; este escritor hace con el idioma lo que sus héroes con las mujeres; es que ambos tienen la sospecha de su traición. No se puede matar al lenguaje, pero cabe reducirlo a la peor de las esclavitudes. Y entonces el tough writer se niega a describir

(porque eso da ventaja al lenguaje) y usa apenas lo necesario para presentar las situaciones.⁷⁵

Manuel Puig, in his parody of the hard-boiled novel, shows to what extent tough content and creative language can be used to advantage. The subject of Puig's novel is violence, especially that of repressed and guilty sexuality. The plot is simple: neurotic, libidinous, one-eyed Gladys meets neurotic, libidinous but impotent Leo and they both masterbate in their respective apartments. Even the detective element of the novel revolves around this repressed sexuality: Leo, as a youth, gets involved in a homosexual encounter and ends up smashing his partner in the head with a brick. His victim is found badly injured in a vacant lot. No death notice ever appears in the newspapers. Leo soon associates satisfactory sex with violence and death. Later, he imagines that he has killed his ex-wife by smashing her in the head, and this same repetitive dream of sex and murder is extended to a prostitute, Leo's psychiatrist, Gladys, and Leo's confidant María Esther Vila. This explosion of repressed sexuality into violence is much like what we find in Spillane's novels--except Puig recognizes the perversion of love and treats it as an indication of the ills of the twentieth century. Spillane, on the other hand, seems totally unaware that his strip-tease violence is twisted or perverse.

Though Puig's subject is serious, his style is a collage of parodies of both popular art and avant-garde art. Each chapter begins with a bit of dialogue from a film in which the major character is usually a tough but lonely woman. The excerpt which introduces Gladys (who is absent having disappeared mysteriously in the night) is taken from La dama de las camelias in which Greta Garbo says to a young and ardent admirer: "¿Pero por qué habría usted de reparar en una mujer como yo? Estoy siempre

nerviosa o enferma . . . triste . . . o demasiado alegre" (Why should you care for a woman like me, I'm always nervous or sick. . . sad. . .or too gay).⁷⁶ The film excerpt at the beginning of any chapter does not serve as an epigraph or a mise en abyme, rather it serves as a counterpoint (nostalgia, solitude, strength) to the content of each chapter (violence, solitary eroticism, dreams of murder). The chapters themselves are written in diverse styles. The unhappy childhoods of Gladys and Leo are presented in the form of curriculum vitae. The poetic reveries that lonely Gladys has during nights of insomnia are footnoted to tell the reader what Gladys' hand movements are during the concomitant act of masturbation. The one happy night of the affair between Gladys and Leo is reported as an imagined interview between Gladys and a movie magazine gossip columnist who asks questions such as: "¿Su encuentro sexual de hoy fue menos o más intenso que el de ayer?" (p. 129; "Was your sexual encounter today more or less intense than yesterday's?") and "¿En qué pensó en ese momento culminante?" (p. 131; "What did you think of in that climactic moment?"). Gladys' less pleasant dreams include the thought that a tuna fish sandwich bought at an automat is easy enough to eat if you chew slowly, but could become a murder weapon if inserted whole with criminal ferocity down the victim's throat (p. 61). Gladys, of course, imagines herself as victim.

The ellipsis of the tough novel is also parodied by Puig. When María Esther, Leo's confidant, phones the police to anonymously denounce Leo-- because he has alluded to the idea that he is a murderer--the conversation is as follows:

Oficial: Por lo menos una cosa ¿hace años qué es lo que pasó exactamente?

Voz:

Oficial: Pero explíqueme que es eso que Ud. le nota a veces.

Voz:
 Oficial: ¿Cómo es una mirada de asesino?⁷⁷

María Esther's informing becomes even more elliptical the second time she calls the police because their tape recorder won't work. An assistant takes down the conversation in his own brand of shorthand:

--No, tiempo perder, vida persona juego, hombre peligroso,
 yo no más responsabilidades, vida peligro correr
 --Decir nombre hombre, ya
 --Yo contar sucedido, no imaginado, Ud. encontrar
 nombre, no delatar sangre fría, ser amigo enemigo después
 --Hablar
 --Hombre ya otro crimen, hace años
 --Seguir⁷⁸

The ellipsis of the tough novel twisted into the context of a badly recorded conversation makes the whole idea of behavioristic description by means of ellipsis look a bit silly on the one hand, and it overtly announces to the reader that there is a possible mystery here on the other hand, which the official forces will be unable to deal with.

Puig, while undermining the popular hard-boiled novel, also overtly parodies Robbe-Grillet's style. For example in chapter two, we read a description of Leo's apartment where Gladys is being held captive:

La piel de la mujer inmóvil es muy blanca, la mordaza de la boca ha sido improvisada con un pañuelo de hombre de seda multicolor pero sobria, las manos están atadas por detrás con una corbata de luto. El color de los ojos de la mujer no se alcanza a percibir porque están cerrados, además debajo del párpado izquierdo falta el globo ocular correspondiente. En el resto del cuerpo no se vislumbran huellas de violencia, tales como hematomas violáceos o heridas con sangre coagulada roja oscura. Tampoco hay rastro alguno de violencia sexual. Las seis collidas de tabaco que se reparten entre el cenicero de cristal y otro de bronce no presentan huellas de lápiz labial. El cenicero de bronce labrado en la India contiene el único cigarrillo encendido, el humo describe una línea recta vertical.⁷⁹

In this passage we see a mathematical description of surfaces similar to the descriptions given in Robbe-Grillet's Le Voyeur. The scene of bondage

is reminiscent of Projet. The creation of content by noting an absence also occurs here with the suggestions of violence. We expect a scene of rape to occur, or at least torture. The scene is not played out until the end of the novel. Here we find out that Leo has abducted Gladys in order to kill her in the presence of María Esther. His reasoning is:

si María Esther Vila llegaba al lugar en que el crimen estaba por cometerse--era él quien iba a matar a una mujer--y lo desbarataba--aparentemente--con su presencia imprevista, ella no dudaría más de la intención que él tenía de matar a una mujer; impidiendo de ese modo el asesinato de una mujer a manos de él, María Esther Vila terminaría de convencerse de que el crimen del baldío había sido de la misma índole.⁸⁰

When the scene finally does occur, it is reported in pseudo-objective, telegraphic statements followed by intermittent dream sequences:

Sensaciones experimentadas por Gladys al oír que Leo responde a María Esther "La voy a matar"--
 /Followed by a dream of filings rushing to a magnet/

Sensaciones experimentadas por María Esther cuando pregunta a Leo "¿Por qué?" y él vira sin contestarle, mostrándole la espalda ancha y desnuda--
 /Followed by the dream of a geometric figure which becomes a canvas, then a screen for thousands of spectators because there is no obstacle due to a bloody automobile accident/ ⁸¹

Gladys is not killed, rather she ends up borrowing Leo's apartment for a few days. María Esther goes home with her son. Leo is killed in a freak automobile accident--perhaps due to María Esther's dream.

Puig's characters, like those of Hawkes', are caught in the nightmare of a world gone to seed, a world too late for knights. Their repressed sexuality which surfaces violently in dreams of destructive love is the indication of a sick society. The nihilism of this view of the twentieth century in which all men are part criminal and part victim is balanced by the "saving comic spirit and beauties of language" evident in both the works

of Hawkes and Puig. Both Robbe-Grillet and Queneau limit their attention more specifically to the use of language and its abuse--by the characters in Queneau's novel, and by the readers in Robbe-Grillet's. The tough novel because of the contrast between its violent content and its facile solutions lends itself to parody. Furthermore, the tough novelists experiment with a style that does violence to the conventions of traditional narrative in order that their prose might reflect the violence of their world in a more "realistic" manner. Their use of ellipsis, colloquial language and repetition-variation-juxtaposition is adopted by the postmodern writers in their parodies. In the hands of the postmodernists, however, the violence of this style becomes a tool to attack the ideas of "realism" and "solution."

CHAPTER FOUR: SUSPENSE AND SUSPICION

Popular suspense detective fiction tends to combine the elements of the classical structure and the hard-boiled structure. It often maintains the double narrative structure of the puzzle novel (days of the crime; days of the inquiry) and also the initial mystery, but, as in the hard-boiled detective story, the crime narrative has a central place. Our interest is based on both curiosity and suspense here: we are interested in past actions and in present action. The division between this type of novel and the classical, on the one hand, the hard-boiled, on the other hand, is not clear-cut. For example, the novels of Chandler and of Hammett (i.e. The Long Goodbye or The Maltese Falcon) often maintain the mystery element and could be classified as suspense novels, but they are not, because of their use of milieu and language. The origins of the suspense story are found in the works of the French feuilletonists such as Gaboriau and du Boisgobey. The tradition was picked up by Gaston Leroux in his Joseph Rouletabille stories. Leroux was followed by Maurice Leblanc who wrote the Arsène Lupin: Gentleman-Cambrioleur stories. What we have here is a type of detective story which is more sensational, more episodic, more fantastic than the classical story and which began by casting the criminal (the rogue) in the hero's role. When Jean-Pierre Richard finds Balzac's L'Histoire des Treize an archetypal detective story, he is, I think, referring to the tradition of the suspense detective story. Here, the fantastic and the fearsome play a much larger role than in the classical story or the hard-boiled story, but all three end by giving rational explanations.

The suspense type of detective story, in short, is one which stems from a Romantic world view rather than a positivistic one; it recognizes the existence of shadow as well as light: "dans la profondeur va régner le

surhomme: bandit ou policier, peu importe, car ils sont ici étrangement frères, et souvent même, comme le montre le cas de Vautrin-Vidocq, ils existent à la fois dans la même personne," Jean-Pierre Richard tells us.¹ Richard sees the surhomme as a man of energy and clairvoyance who seems to have fantastic power. He moves between the world of high society and the underworld with ease. He can gain entrance to any of the closed societies which make up the world of Balzac's Comédie Humaine, can slip into any salon or boudoir. In the author's preface to L'Histoire des Treize, Balzac sums up the power of these mythical men: "ayant les pieds dans tous les salons, les mains dans tous les coffres-forts, les coudes dans la rue, leurs têtes sur tous les oreillers et, sans scruples, faisant tout servir à leur fantaisie," these men were both judges and executioners.² In his essay "Structures du roman policier: une parodie de rapports équivoques" René Ballet traces the development of the "criminal as judge" theme. The theme occurs as far back as the fifteenth century in popular songs and narratives when serfs and brigands alike were united against the yoke of feudalism. Both within and outside of the feudal society, the rule of the day was to steal from the oppressive Seigneur. In short, the serfs understood and approved of the thievery of the brigands. On the other hand, the secret society of the brigands maintained in great part the structures of the larger society which it rejected; the thief instead of pledging allegiance to the Seigneur pledged allegiance to the band's chief. The power of this outlaw hierarchy and the fact that it was a secret society made the large mass of people apprehensive. They both feared and respected the brigands. By the 19th century, the criminal-hero appears as a popular theme in the roman-feuilleton: justice is seen merely as the injustice of

the rich, for example, and thus it is the criminal who acts as judge. When the judge is a bandit; the bandit may become a judge.³

The works of Gaboriau, du Boisgobey, Balzac, Dumas, Leroux and Leblanc attest to the development of the suspense detective novel before World War I. They dealt with "la férocité de l'argent, l'incertitude de la justice des hommes, la lutte contre les injustices, etc. . . . Devançant la littérature tout court, le roman populaire s'est incorporé d'emblée les cadres et les problèmes de la vie nouvelle, et au gré de la grisaille des villes modernes, a déplacé et multiplié les occasions de mystère, dont le sentiment reste ancré au plus profond de l'homme."⁴ The romantic view allows the genre the fantastic events which are denied in the more strait-laced, positivistic type of detective fiction. Like the tough detective, the romantic criminal sees the injustices of society and acts on the margin of society or outside it to put justice back on the track. He differs from the avant-garde criminal who becomes criminal either by virtue of a larger conspiracy in which he is unwittingly caught up, or because he misunderstands language, or finally because his revolt is not against the corruption of an otherwise workable society but rather against a society operating according to false conventions, beginning with the worn out conventions of language.

The postwar years saw not only the birth of the hard-boiled novel, but also of the horrifying, fantastic, ubiquitous, criminal's criminal--Fantômas. The French Fantômas, because he incorporated the marvelous, because he was the embodiment of the épater les bourgeois sentiment, was beloved of the Surrealists. Robert Desnos in "La Grande complainte de Fantômas," captures this power of mystification. In the stanza "le pendu de Londres," we see Fantômas outsmart Scotland Yard:

La police d'Angleterre
 Par lui fut mystifiée,
 Mais, à la fin arrêté,
 Fut pendu et mis en terre.
 Devinez ce qui arriva:
 Le bandit en réchappa.⁵

In the final stanza, we see Fantômas back in Paris:

Allongeant son ombre immense
 Sur le monde et sur Paris,
 Quel est ce spectre aux yeux gris
 Qui surgit dans le silence?
 Fantômas, serait-ce toi,
 Qui te dresse sur les toits?⁶

The fantasy and surrealism evident in the criminal Fantômas also were captured in the suspense detective fiction of Boileau and Narcejac, but criminality as such was not celebrated as in the Fantômas stories. These authors believe that the fantastic is a hidden part of everyday life; Boileau states: "Nous avons l'un et l'autre en commun le gout de l'étrange, l'amour d'un certain fantastique quotidien."⁷ Often the main character of their works is neither the detective nor the criminal but a witness or victim. This major character unwittingly comes into conflict with inimical forces which he must overcome to survive. The hero becomes disoriented and confused when his everyday world suddenly becomes opaque and mysterious. The hero is vulnerable to danger. The suspense here is created by the character's suspicions, by unexpected events, and by the decisions the hero makes in order to survive. At the end of the novel, the mystery is explained and the world regains its everyday appearance. The suspense novel incorporates the ambiguity of event from fantastic literature and the problem-solving ratiocination of the classical detective novel.

In the suspense story, then, things and events appear fantastic because they mask the unknown. The given of this genre, however, is that the unknown

will eventually become the known, the "final solution" of detective fiction will be given. Once the unknown does become the known, the fantasy will dissipate and things will sink back into the normal, everyday order of the familiar world. The super-human power and knowledge of the criminal heroes--of Fantômas or Balzac's Treize--their ubiquitous appearance in all milieus from the highest salon to the lowest robbers' den, their seeming omniscience, all these traits which make them appear to belong to the order of the fantastic are deflated when we discover that their abilities stem from a talent for disguise or from a wide network of connections (as in the secret society where all members work in concert). In short, the person we feared was a magus of the fantastic turns out to be simply an able magician. The inanimate objects which suddenly took on a life of their own are returned to the status of average, inanimate things when we discover that either some sinister enemy was working them from behind the scenes, or that it was our own mistaken suspicions which made us unusually aware of these objects and endowed them for a time with acute unsuspected life (for example, the ghost in the night turns out to be a curtain blown by the wind in the light of day).

The avant-garde parody of the suspense detective novel maintains the suspense created when the known becomes the unknown and the acute atmosphere of suspicion, of mistrust of self and other, but refuses to give us the last step, the return to the familiar. Postmodern suspense fiction, like the parodies of the classical detective story, set up all the hypotheses and then refuse to give a final solution. In the avant-garde suspense narrative, the criminal and detective, witness and victim, are often one in the same because the crimes to be investigated are ontological rather than

social.

In the popular suspense narrative, then, suspicion and suspense are temporary states of being, caused when the familiar world, for a short time, seems strange; in the avant-garde suspense narrative, however, suspicion and suspense are an integral part of the human condition, recognized when we realize that our familiar world, which we had taken for real, is a relative construct created by the language we use to describe it. Suspicion, then, is no longer distrust of a villain but rather a far-reaching distrust of our own use of language--of our use of all systems of signification which mold reality rather than translate it directly. Suspense, here, is no longer based on plot--a chain of events about which we ask, and then? and then?--but rather on the recognition of a gap, a necessary suspension of meaning, as we try to relate the self to the world. Robbe-Grillet describes this sort of avant-garde fiction in Pour un nouveau roman:

Les pièces à conviction du drame policier nous donnent, paradoxalement, une assez juste image de cette situation. Les éléments recueillis par les inspecteurs--objet abandonné sur les lieux du crime, mouvement fixé sur une photographie, phrase entendue par un témoin--semblent surtout, d'abord, appeler une explication, n'exister qu'en fonction de leur rôle dans une affaire qui les dépasse. Voilà déjà que les théories commencent à s'échafauder: le juge d'instruction essaie d'établir un lien logique et nécessaire entre les choses; on croit que tout va se résoudre en un faisceau banal de causes et de conséquences, d'intentions et de hasards . . .

Mais l'histoire se met à foisonner de façon inquiétante: les témoins se contredisent, l'accusé multiplie les alibis, de nouveaux éléments surgissent dont on n'avait pas tenu compte. . . Et toujours il faut en revenir aux indices enregistrés: la position exacte d'un meuble, la forme et le fréquence d'une empreinte, le mot inscrit dans un message. On a l'impression, de plus en plus, qu'il n'y a rien d'autre de vrai. Ils peuvent bien cacher un mystère, ou le trahir, ces éléments qui se jouent des systèmes n'ont qu'une qualité sérieuse, évidente, c'est d'être là.

Ainsi en va-t-il du monde qui nous entoure. On avait cru en venir à bout en lui assignant un sens, et tout l'art du roman, en

particulier, semblait voué à cette tâche. Mais ce n'était là que simplification illusoire; et loin de s'en trouver plus clair, plus proche, le monde y a seulement perdu peu à peu toute vie. Puisque c'est avant tout dans sa présence que réside sa réalité, il s'agit donc, maintenant, de bâtir une littérature qui en rende compte.⁸

Once one becomes aware of the "illusory simplification" of our systems of assigning meaning to the world, suspicion becomes a permanent state. Assigning meaning to the world, however, is not a matter of choice: one cannot choose not to assign meaning. Thus, that we do assign meaning is not in question, but how we assign meaning is under scrutiny. Suspense is born from this relativity of meaning. Clearly this suspense is not that of the adventure story (and then? and then?) which might be compared to wandering through the labyrinth which contains the minotaur. The avant-garde narrative captures the suspense of the labyrinth where no minotaur roams, where causality does not plot the narrative; in this labyrinth, constantly varied perspectives cause us to ask and now? and now? Here we get to the root of suspense: suspension of meaning when meaning matters the most and when the unknown (the world) insists upon its own opacity.

The novel which seems to employ the most conventions of the traditional suspense story but extends them beyond their traditional limits is Marco Denevi's Rosaura a las diez. This novel, like Bernanos' Un Crime or Greene's Brighton Rock, reveals the solution to a particular crime, and also begins a larger investigation into the nature of reality. From the opening of the novel, we know that one Señora Milagros Ramoneda, the proprietress of a boarding house called La Madrileña, is giving a statement to Inspector Baigorri about one of her boarders, Camilo Canegato. The alleged crime--that Camilo has murdered his wife on their wedding night--is not revealed, however, until almost halfway through the novel. As in the traditional

suspense novel, our attention is shifted to the recital of the events leading up to the crime, and the function of Señora Milagros' statement is to give us a version of those events, but we notice that the what (the facts) are quickly undermined by how the story is being told.

Señora Milagros begins her tale with the arrival of Camilo at her "honrada casa," her fair and honest boarding house, twelve years previous to the crime. Her description of Camilo--interspersed with her own views on running a boarding house, her views on the apparel of French kings and reminiscences of childhood--warns us that although we may be getting some facts, they have been biased by the subjectivity of the Señora. She says her first impression of Camilo was "favorable" although she isn't sure why:

Quizá de aquel enorme sobretodo negro que la caía, sin mentirle, como un cajón de muerto. O del anticuado sombrerito en forma de galera que, cuando salí a atenderlo, se quitó respetuosamente, descubriendo un cráneo en forma de huevo de Pascua, rosado y lustroso y adornado con una pelusilla rubia. . . . Calzaba unos tremendos zapatos, los zapatos más estrambóticos que he visto yo en mi vida, color ladrillo, con aplicaciones de gamuza negra, y unas suelas de goma tan altas, que parecía que el hombrecito había andado sobre cemento fresco y que el cemento se le había quedado pegado a los zapatonos. Así quería él aumentarse la estatura, pero lo que conseguía era tomar ese aspecto ridículo del hombre calzado con tacos altos, como dicen que iban los duques y los marqueses en otros tiempos, cuando entre tanto lazo y tanta peluca y tanta media de seda y encajes y plumas, todos parecían mujeres, y, como yo digo, para saber quién era hombre, harían como hacían en mi pueblo con los chiquillos que por los carnavales se disfrazaban de mujer.⁹

Señora Milagros takes Camilo in despite the fact that he is a "painter"--specifically a restorer of paintings--and takes over his life as well. She takes away his sleeping pills, checks his bank balance and advises him about his life. Her three daughters, Matilda, Enilda and Clotilda, take over Camilo as they would a new pet. For the Señora, Camilo is alternately a martyred saint, a poor Christ, and finally, a man with no character.

Camilo doesn't become an individual for her until, after twelve years as a boarder, he suddenly begins receiving letters in pink envelopes doused with violet perfume.

After a great deal of snooping and prying on the part of Señora Milagros, her daughters and a spinster lodger named--quite fittingly--Señorita Eufrasia Morales, the story of Camilo's secret love affair with Rosa, only daughter of a rich client of Camilo's, comes out into the open. The tale of Camilo's love affair is a sentimental love story in miniature dropped into the larger text of Rosaura. It involves all the conventions: a beautiful sequestered girl, a maiden aunt who acts as a duenna, a taciturn and domineering father, an unattractive, unwanted fiancé, a small portrait of the girl, secret meetings, whispered conversations, fear of discovery and, of course, passionate love letters. The fact that Camilo's love affair is so very literary undercuts the reader's belief in the reality of that tale; the fact that Señora Milagros believes the story totally undermines any idea that her statement is reliable. It is at this point that Denevi introduces Rosaura, who appears one night at the boarding house door, having apparently run away from home. Señora Milagros, taking the situation in hand as usual, shuffles a reluctant, dazed Camilo and a strangely silent Rosaura into marriage. On their wedding night, David Réguel, a law student who boards at La Madrileña, and who has been suspicious of the whole story, rushes in to announce that Camilo has murdered Rosaura in a downtown hotel.

Réguel's statement to the Inspector is, in both style and content, the contrary of Señora Milagros'. He sees Camilo Canegato as the arch-criminal, a psychopath, a wolf in sheep's clothing, in short a modern day Fantômas. If Señora Milagros' version of events is biased by emotion and subjectivity,

Réguel's voice and his characterization of Camilo are undercut by the pedantry of his pseudo-scientific approach:

Físicamente ustedes lo conocen. Un gurrumino. Las piernas, el cuerpo, los brazos, todo lo tiene hecho a escala reducida. No es un hombre. Es la maquette de un hombre, la muestra gratis. Un es-estudiante [Sic] de medicina lo ve y siente la tentación de viviseccionarlo para estudiar anatomía sin necesidad de recurrir a un cadáver. . . . Desconfíen de ese hombrecito al parecer tímido y linfático, y desconfíen precisamente a causa de su vulnerabilidad física. Una minusvalía orgánica, o para decirlo más claramente, una minderwertigkeit von organen produce hondos complejos espirituales, produce resentimientos, rencores, fobias. Odio, en una palabra. Y un odio de la peor especie, porque su causa está en el sujeto que odia, está en el propio tipo que odia. . . . Y para esta clase de odio no hay remedio. Acuérdesse de Nietzsche: no hay redención para el que sufre de sí mismo, a no ser una muerte súbita. Also sprach Zarathustra.¹⁰

Whereas Señora Milagros' biases are embedded in homilies, those of Réguel are camouflaged by Freudian jargon and literary allusion. Réguel sees Camilo as the cruel seducer of an innocent Rosaura, as a corrupter of youth who has his hand forced when Rosaura shows up at the door with nowhere else to go. Réguel's scientific hauteur is completely undermined by his own overblown romanticizing of Rosaura, a girl who listened to him quote poetry, listened to his life story--those small incidents which he had never told anyone--and then, just happened to ask him for advice about the legality of getting married under a false name. Réguel is enchanted:

¡Qué ojos! Viéndoselos de cerca, usted sentía como si sumergiera la cabeza en un reflector azul, o en agua azul, como si algo azul lo rodeara por todas partes. Parece mentira que haya miradas así, que no son como dos flechas, como dos líneas que van de un punto a otro, sino que tienen largo y ancho, y hasta espesor, miradas que son como un chorro espeso, como una, en fin no sé cómo decirle. Yo, metido adentro de aquella ola azul, me sentía otro. Le hablaba dulcemente.¹¹

Suspicious about Camilo's motives, and infatuated by Rosaura, Réguel shadows them to a cheap hotel after the wedding. Upon arriving, Réguel discovers Camilo in a daze at the entrance to the hotel and Rosaura

strangled in an upstairs room.

As readers, we are now contending with two versions of the relationship between Camilo and Rosaura and two views of Camilo; none of the information seems reliable. At this point, Denevi records a conversation between Camilo and Inspector Baigorri. Camilo's statement, which should clear up the loose ends--Rosaura's appearance, the events of the murder--not only leaves them dangling, but shifts the emphasis of the story from the investigation of a social crime to the investigation of ontological uncertainty. The statement begins with a discussion of art, a subject which Inspector Baigorri has brought up to put Camilo at his ease, and in giving his answers, Camilo realizes for the first time that he hates painting, that he is not an artist but a technician who paints over photographs, that he has been accepting whatever role in life people hand him. Being arrested has freed him from his previous fear of life. He admits also that he wrote the letters to himself and that Rosaura was a dream made up so that the people at the Madrileña--especially Matilda Milagros--would notice him, would no longer be absolutely indifferent to his existence. When asked about the appearance of the living Rosaura and her false identification card, Camilo explains to Baigorri:

Desde su punto de vista, la cédula es falsa.
 Pero ello quizá se deba a que usted cree cierta a
 Rosaura. Lo falso no reside en esa pobre cédula, sino
 en la persona. La adulteración no está en el documento,
 sino en la vida que el documento quiere probar.¹²

Throughout his life, Camilo has been beset by a recurrent dream world. The narratives of the dreams change, but the people, places and particulars of the setting remain the same. He is no longer sure whether waking or dreaming is reality: "Y entonces los dos mundos se entremezclan, en mí,

como dos realidades distintas, distintas, pero igualmente poderosas. Soñar, vivir, ¿donde está la diferencia? Yo no percibo la diferencia. Para mí es todo lo mismo."¹³ When Rosaura suddenly appears out of his dreams, he becomes disoriented, dazed. He allows Señora Milagros to have her way with the wedding. At the hotel, he tries to destroy the dream which has become, as in Hawkes' The Lime Twig, a reality. Rosaura laughs at him, taunts him, tells him that she is there to take his money. He begins to strangle her when he comes to his senses and rushes out of the hotel only to be grabbed by the waiting Réguel. Camilo's answers tell us little about the solution to the crime. Rather they point to an investigation much more widespread than that of Rosaura's death. They indicate that "reality" is a tenuous construct created by the language we use to describe it. Camilo is aware of this fact; Señora Milagros and Réguel are not.

The initial crime is cleared up to a great extent at the end of the novel, but our attention remains focused on the identity between dream and reality which Camilo has brought to the fore. A brief statement by Señorita Morales, the spinster, begins to clear up the first crime. Eufrosia Morales, like a comic version of a character out of Balzac's Les Treize, manages to have her head on every pillow, her eye to every key-hole, her ear to every door. She sees the household maid Elsa, secretly in love with Camilo, steal a letter which Rosaura herself is writing. In the final chapter, Baigorri recovers the half-written letter. María Correa, alias Marta Córrega (Rosaura), had been a prostitute, the only woman Camilo had ever known and whom he believed to be dead. In truth, she had been in prison and upon release had fallen in with a vicious gang headed by "The Turk." Fearing for her life, she escaped the gang and in desperation went

to Camilo in order to hide from them. Her sudden arrival at the boarding house, and her warm welcome as Rosaura, allows her to play the part of Camilo's secret fiancée, and to turn his dreams into nightmare. Unfortunately, the hotel they are taken to on the honeymoon night is run by "The Turk," and he, we assume, kills Rosaura.

Denevi's novel uses the conventions of the suspense novel but undercuts them when it shifts the emphasis from the investigation of a particular crime--Rosaura's death--to the larger investigation of the nature of reality itself. The different speakers interrogated paint conflicting pictures of reality, and rather than being resolved, these pictures remain superimposed--much like the painting Nabokov's *Sebastian Knight* describes which would present not a landscape but different ways of painting a particular landscape. In constructing reality, Señora Milagros, Réguel, Camilo, Señorita Morales and "Rosaura," all show us different methods of composition. As the central figure in the novel, Camilo represents the angst that an uncertain, oscillating reality can produce. On the outside of the novel, however, Denevi attests to the delight in playing the game of uncertain "reality." The fact that Denevi's narrative sticks relatively close to the traditional suspense story while focusing on the fantastic, the shadowy areas of experience, makes Rosaura a las diez a literary suspense story. On the one hand, the novel does satisfy the traditional demand of the popular suspense story by giving us a solution to Rosaura's murder; "the Turk" is the captured criminal as are Bernanos' false curate of Megère and Greene's Pinky. On the other hand, just as Bernanos and Greene question the nature of good and evil, Denevi asks questions about the nature of the imagination and reality which remain unanswered and which extend the

boundaries of the popular genre far beyond its traditional limits. Through the examples of the conflicting character sketches we are given of Camilo and Rosaura, Denevi undercuts the idea of "truth" by showing that it is always based on insufficient evidence, is always a product of ignorance.

Perhaps the two most noted avant-garde masters of the suspense story are Borges and Julio Cortázar--both Argentine writers, both associated with literatura fantástica--a genre in which supernatural transpositions occur: the self and the other become identical, the familiar is absorbed by the uncanny, the causal order is enveloped by the magical order. Most of the fiction written by these authors has strong affinities with the detective story because it is based on investigation, albeit ontological. A few of the fictions are actual parodies of the detective genre: "La muerte y la brújula" is a classical parody and "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" is a spy parody, in the case of Borges; "Continuidad de los parques," and "Las babas del diablo" are suspense parodies, in the work of Cortázar. In a review, "Cortázar's Hopscotch and Other Games," James E. Irby links Cortázar to the French new novelists in the following way: "Like the French anti-novelists [new novelists], Cortázar wants to involve his readers creatively in [Hopscotch's combinational] rearrangement so as to renew fiction as an instrument of perception. He differs from these writers, however, in his attempt to give his story metaphysical dimensions and to use language for visceral, symbolic or incantatory effects."¹⁴ We may disagree with Irby's general assessment of the new novelists--certainly Butor's Revel uses language for visceral, symbolic and incantatory effect--nevertheless, Irby's view of Cortázar's work is both accurate and useful. He extends his view by noting: "Dominant themes or situations, dealt with

as much on the level of style as on more conceptualized levels of plot and event, center on the narrator's more or less lucid encounter with some disturbing dimension of 'otherness' which constitutes a challenge to the normal limits of thought and language."¹⁵ In Cortázar's stories, we see the two poles of the victimization in suspense fiction: first, the naïve who are not aware of the illusory nature of systems of signification; and second, the suspicious who upon seeing the distance between the word and the thing, find that in trying to tell about this gap, their own tools--words, photographs--turn against them.

The naïve victim of systems of signification assumes that the language he uses gives him a privileged point-of-view. He does not see the gap between words and the world they translate except in the vaguest, most traditional way: for example, he knows that novels are "fiction." One such victim is the principle character of "Continuidad de los parques." This man, having attended to various business conferences in the city, returns to his estate. Once there, he writes a final letter giving power of attorney and suggesting joint ownership to the manager of the estate. Free of the business of the real world, he sinks into his favorite green armchair and escapes without interruption into the world of a cheap suspense novel. The hero and heroine are involved in an adulterous love affair, an affair which has led to the plotting of a murder. The reader is entranced:

Palabra a palabra, absorbido por la sórdida disyuntiva de los héroes, dejándose ir hacia las imágenes que se concertaban y adquirían color y movimiento, fue testigo del último encuentro en la cabaña del monte. Primero entraba la mujer, recelosa; ahora llegaba el amante Un diálogo anhelante corría por las páginas como un arroyo de serpientes, y se sentía que todo estaba decidido desde siempre. . . . Nada había sido olvidado:

coartadas, azares, posibles errores. A partir de esa hora cada instante tenía su empleo minuciosamente atribuido. El doble repaso despiadado se interrumpía apenas para que una mano acariciara una mejilla.¹⁶

Unlike the readers of Robbe-Grillet's Projet, Cortázar's hero is allowed to sink fully into the enjoyment of this sordid narrative. The woman leaves the cabin and follows a trail north. The lover, dagger beneath his shirt, follows the trail in the opposite direction. At the estate, the manager is gone and the dogs have been silenced. The lover enters the house and follows the directions the woman has given him, winding through various halls and rooms until he reaches the study. Knife drawn, he comes up behind his victim who is sitting in a green velvet armchair with his back to the door, absorbed in a cheap suspense novel. This ending, it is clear, has superficially the opposite effect of the ending of Queneau's Vol d'Icare. In Queneau's book, the last line shows us that everything we have read is part of the fiction written by Hubert who is himself a fictional character. In Cortázar's short story, the movement seems to be in the opposite direction--the fictional character appears in the "real" man's house. In the end, the result of both stories is the same; everything is part of the fiction, but this time the reader is included in that fictionality. The business letters, the estate and the novel are all created by language. These separate zones, or parks, overlap because they are all constructed by language. The reader in the story had considered his estate real and the suspense novel fiction; he was mistaken. The most destructive aspect of this overlapping of zones reaches us, however, when we realize that we, too, are sitting in our armchairs escaping into the tale Cortázar has created. We consider our lives real, the tale fiction: that is where the danger lies.

We see in this story the sort of involution which Borges had suggested in "Magias parciales del Quijote" when he noted that Hamlet was a spectator of Hamlet and Don Quijote a reader of Don Quijote: Cortázar's fiction refuses to remain self-contained; when fiction becomes reality, then reality becomes fiction. The failure to recognize that language differs from reality, that we tend to create fictional realities, can be destructive as we have witnessed in both the works of Queneau and Cortázar. Once we become aware of the gap between language and reality, we become suspicious of our means of translating the world and of the world itself. In a recent interview, Cortázar stated:

A writer can never meditate enough on what he is doing or on how he is doing it; that is how he will discover that his weapons tend to turn against him, that his words betray him; that, precisely because in the end nothing can be said, one must keep on looking for the entrance way, the opening through which one might be able to utter it.¹⁷

This struggle to express a world, and the subsequent failure to do so, is the subject of "Las babas del diablo," ("The Devil's Spittle" or, in Antonioni's movie version, Blow-Up).

Roberto Michel, the narrator of "Las babas," is a French-Chilean living in Paris. His occupation is translation and his avocation is photography. One Sunday, he goes for a walk along the Seine to take photographs. In a small park on the Ile St. Louis he sees a couple, a young boy and an older woman. Michel, sitting on a railing, watches the woman seducing the boy and imagines what the boy must be feeling, the facts and fantasies of the boy's existence. He takes a picture of the couple but is displeased with the shot because a car parked on the quai has gotten into the frame of the picture on one side. The woman approaches Michel and demands the film, and the young boy flees. It is then that an older man, his pale powdered face

twisted in anger, emerges from the parked car and also approaches the photographer. Resolute in his decision not to give up the film, Michel laughs at this oddly matched team and walks away, fleeing as the boy did. After several days, Michel develops the film and, being curious, enlarges the shot of the boy and the woman to life size. He hangs the blow-up on his wall in such a way that when he is sitting in front of his typewriter, his eyes accidentally reproduce the exact position and vision of the camera lens. Each time Michel glances at the photograph, he remembers other scenes which surrounded the one caught in the snapshot, in either space or time. He congratulates himself on having allowed the boy to flee the woman's embraces. While Michel is back at work translating, he hears the trees in the park rustle, glimpses the movement of the woman's hand. The scene in the park is replayed, but this time the seduction is being done for the old man who remains just outside Michel's frame of vision as he sits before the typewriter staring at the blow-up. Michel, caught in the camera's eye, can only watch, can do little to alter the chain of events now already past: the homosexual seduction of the boy. With great effort, Michel caught in the camera, approaches the scene, turns the lens slightly so that it focuses on the man who becomes the large blurred image of a face on the far side of the lens and finally a yawning, black mouth about to consume Michel. Michel's scream allows the boy to flee out of the picture once again. The game being played out, Michel finds himself in his room again where occasional clouds and birds are the only objects which cross his frame of vision.

The narrative, of course, is much more complex than the summary of its content because the major difficulty is not to tell "what happened" but rather how to tell what happened without falsifying the experience: an

experience which cannot be translated because--like the camera's eye, like the stiff snapshot--words frame the experience and important details, even major events, are left outside the frame each time. In an essay, "Blow-Up: The Forms of an Esthetic Itinerary," David I. Grossvogel defines the tension of this story:

It is primarily a tale about the impossibility of telling and about the frustration of seeing--twin expressions of the ontological dilemma that defines man, for Cortázar, as an irreducible separateness that recognizes similarly hermetic presences, without ever being able to establish more than a surface contact with them, without being able to assimilate them through either perception (sight) or definition(telling). The dramatic tension of Cortázar's stories derives from the exacerbation of their people's attempts to cancel and transcend their ontological sentence. They fail, but their efforts are sometimes of such magnitude as to alter forever the natural world in which they previously dwelled.¹⁸

Grossvogel goes on to point out that the paradox of describing reality in which Roberto Michel is caught is the same as the paradox of understanding noted by Camus in The Myth of Sisyphus: to understand a tree would require that one be both himself and the tree in order to know the tree. This very Sartrean awareness of "otherness," and the recognition of the mendacity of all our descriptions is everywhere apparent in "Las babas." In the opening pages, Michel says of the telling:

Va a ser difícil porque nadie sabe bien quién es el que verdaderamente está contando, si soy yo o eso que ha ocurrido, o lo que estoy viendo (nubes, y a veces una paloma) o si sencillamente cuento una verdad que es solamente mi verdad, y entonces no es la verdad salvo para mi estómago, para estas ganas de salir corriendo y acabar de alguna manera con esto, sea lo que fuere.¹⁹

Like the photograph in Robbe-Grillet's list of exhibits for a criminal trial, the photograph in "Las babas" leads Michel to tell many versions of the crime, all contradictory, all dependent on what is just outside the frame of the picture whether in time or space. In the same way, Michel realizes that

even in his actual witnessing of the event, some important details remained outside the frame of his thought, other details sprang not from the scene witnessed but from the mind witnessing the scene.

As a photographer, Michel is suspicious of his machine; he knows that it falsifies the scene. At the beginning of his experience, however, he is only aware that the frame of his camera lies:

Michel sabía que el fotógrafo opera siempre como una permutación de su manera personal de ver el mundo por otra que la cámara le impone insidiosa (ahora pasa una gran nube casi negra), pero no desconfiaba, sabedor de que le bastaba salir sin la Cón-tax para recuperar el tono distraído, la visión sin encuadre, la luz sin diágrama ni 1/250.²⁰

Yet, because the experience is told in retrospect, the parenthetical remarks--caught in their frame of parentheses--superimpose on this relatively innocent personal vision the knowledge that at the end of his experience he sees all his personal vision as framed vision. Shortly after the above naïve affirmation of his ability to see, he begins to question that ability:

Creo que sé mirar, si es que algo sé, y que todo mirar rezuma falsedad, porque es lo que nos arroja más afuera de nosotros mismos, sin la menor garantía De todas maneras, si de antemano se prevé la probable falsedad, mirar se vuelve posible; basta quizá elegir bien entre el mirar y lo mirado, desnudar a las cosas de tanta ropa ajena. Y, claro, todo esto es más bien difícil.²¹

Michel's vision becomes the camera eye when he realizes that there is no neutral or privileged point-of-view, that the scene can never be translated unmediated, that choosing between the viewer and the view is as impossible as choosing between the dancer and the dance. He is constantly suspended in the gap between viewer and view.

As a translator, Michel recognizes the same mendacity in his language. Working with languages, Michel's task is to find the closest possible approximation of one language in another: "to say in good French what José

Norberto Allende was saying in very good Spanish." The slight margin of error which he is aware of when translating from one language to another increases prodigiously when he tries to translate reality into words. From the opening paragraph of "Las babas," the issue is how to tell the story:

Nunca se sabrá cómo hay que contar esto, si en primera persona o en segunda, usando la tercera del plural o inventando continuamente formas que no servirán de nada. Si se pudiera decir: yo vieron subir la luna, o nos me duele el fondo de los ojos, y sobre todo así: tú la mujer rubia eran las nubes que siguen corriendo delante de mis tus sus nuestros vuestros sus rostros. Qué diablos.²²

Cortázar suggests that our stance of suspicion and our intuition of parallel worlds to the world we can see or speak stem from the fact that language is based on metaphor. Suspicion of the metaphorical aspect of language is explained in an original way by Paul de Man in his essay, "Theory of Metaphor in Rousseau's Second Discourse." In this essay, de Man explains that linguistic conceptualization is a double process: the first step in the process is the naming of something which differentiates it from all other things. This naming often involves an unintentional error because it stems from a mixture of perceiver and perceived. Thus primitive man upon seeing another of his species might call this creature "giant," a word which translates both the idea of "human" and of "I am afraid." The second stage results when man realizes that the creature is neither larger nor stronger than the perceiver. The creature is then named man--a conceptualized similarity based on comparison--and the original sentiment of fear is erroneously repressed in this more anodine, infinitely more suspect naming:

The concept of man is thus doubly metaphorical: it first consists of the blind moment of passionate error that leads to the word "giant," then of the moment of deliberate error that uses number in order to tame the original wild metaphor into harmlessness. . . . Conceptual language, the foundation of civil society, is also, it appears, a lie superimposed upon an error.²³

In short, then, the act of language does not directly translate the world but rather first captures our attitude toward that world and then becomes a mendacious attempt to order that world according to our desires.

Whether we agree with de Man that language is metaphorical or not, Cortázar's own writing, both creative and critical, indicates that he believes in the metaphorical base of language. We see this metaphorical base in the attempts to describe the scene in the park in "Las babas." Roberto Michel, in describing the woman, first describes her from his own perspective and then expresses his own desires:

Era delgada y esbelta, dos palabras injustas para decir lo que era, y vestía un abrigo de piel casi negro, casi largo, casi hermoso. Todo el viento de esa mañana (ahora soplaba apenas, y no hacía frío) le había pasado por el pelo rubio que recortaba su cara blanca y sombría--dos palabras injustas--y dejaba al mundo de pie y horriblemente solo delante de sus ojos negros, sus ojos que caían sobre las cosas como dos águilas, dos saltos al vacío, dos ráfagas de fango verde. No describo nada, trato más bien de entender. Y he dicho dos ráfagas de fango verde.²⁴

Michel clearly recognizes when he describes the woman, using "unfair words," that he is not describing an actuality but an attitude. He knows that there is a life and a world out there "other" than himself but he can only capture it by appropriating it, by making it a part of his own story, which gives him not what is there but only what he sees as being there. His use of time underscores this gap ("ahora soplaba apenas;" "Now it was hardly a breeze") because the now throws everything into question since it is used with the past tense was. If Michel allows himself to appropriate the scene by his language, he changes the scene; if he allows the scene to be master, he loses himself. It is against the horror of the latter possibility that he is fighting at the end of the passage when he notes that the woman's eyes

are two eagles, two leaps into nothingness, two puffs of green slime. For Cortázar's characters, this intuition of the other becomes falsified through their attempts to appropriate it or destructive because they give in to it. Yet, it is this intuition which is the poetic base of the world, a base which exists despite our rational attempts to explain it away or order it.

In his 1954 article, "Para una poética," Cortázar notes that the poetic--an intuition of the other--may emerge anywhere, in the most ordinary places, and that from time to time this poetry is so powerful that its own ground is the ground of the real, a ground which denies our rational ordering:

The facts are simple: in a certain sense language itself is metaphoric, repeating the human tendency to suspect the existence of an analogic conception of the world with the entrance (poetic or not) of analogies into linguistic formulas. This will to comprehend through analogy, this pre-scientific connection, which is born in man beginning with his earliest sensorial and intellectual activities, is what brings us to suspect the existence of a force, a movement within human beings toward a sympathetic concept which would be more important and transcendent than rationalism would care to admit. This will to analogy has been conquered by the rationalist concept of the world, which in the West now determines history and culture, and yet it survives at varying levels and intensities in everyone.²⁵

That poetic parallel world is poetic as long as it is intuited and not explained because explanation leads to either falsification of that world or absorption by it. In many of Cortázar's stories, we are given a world which we assume is the "real" world but which is actually a world that our rational system of signification teaches us to see. That world, subsequently, comes into conflict with a second, fantastic world which totally absorbs the first and which is totally other. This is what happens in "Continuidad de los parques" when the "real" world of the reader is destructively absorbed by the fantastic parallel world of the suspense novel. This absorption also

nearly happens in "Las babas" when Michel, caught in his camera's eye, feels himself being absorbed into the blow-up of the photograph at the end of the story. He manages to cling to his immobile self, and because of this the boy once again escapes, but Michel's world is forever changed. He becomes aware that, with or without the camera, every scene he perceives is framed by his mind's eye.

Suspicion is the only means Michel has to avoid either total solipsism or complete "absorption by the other." This suspicion surfaces chiefly in the attempt to tell what one has experienced when he intuits the "other." This suspension of the teller between two worlds is best described by Juan, the hero of Cortázar's novel 62: modelo para armar. Like Michel, Juan works as a translator and has felt the sudden gap in commonplace reality when the poetic, the parallel world of the other, is intuited. Juan too tries to explain what this experience is after it has happened, but he is more explicit about the difficulties of the telling than Michel is in "Las babas":

Pero en el fondo sé que todo es falso, que estoy ya lejos de lo que acaba de ocurrirme y que como tantas otras veces se resuelve en este inútil deseo de comprender, desatendiendo quizá el llamado o el signo oscuro de la cosa misma, el desasosiego en que me deja, la instantánea mostración de otro orden en el que irrumpen recuerdos, potencias y señales para formar una fulgurante unidad que se deshace en el mismo instante en que me arrasa y me arranca de mí mismo. Ahora todo eso no me ha dejado más que la curiosidad, el viejo tópico humano: descifrar. Y lo otro, la crispación en la boca del estómago, la oscura certidumbre de que por allí, no por esta simplificación dialéctica, empieza y sigue un camino.

Claro que no basta, finalmente hay que pensar y entonces el análisis, la distinción entre lo que forma verdaderamente parte de ese instante fuera del tiempo y lo que las asociaciones le incorporan para atraerlo, para hacerlo más tuyo, ponerlo más de este lado. Y lo peor será cuando trates de contarle a otras26

The difficulties of telling the experience to oneself are evident in "Las babas del diablo." These difficulties proliferate incredibly, however, when the deciphering becomes an interrogation as it does in Robert Pinget's L'Inquisitoire. In this novel, we have several people--the witness and the interrogators--trying to pin down a reality which perhaps in itself is falacious, is merely based on and created by the mutual suspicions of the witness and the judges who suspect one another of hiding a crime which is never directly named. L'Inquisitoire is a novel in which we find Robbe-Grillet's projected detective novel realized: a novel in which the witness contradicts himself, offers a number of alibis, suddenly reveals new evidence at the end of his testimony. Here we get pages of testimony about the exact position of furniture, the content of paintings, the words scribbled in messages.

The major voice of Pinget's L'Inquisitoire is that of a partially deaf servant who is being questioned by at least two examining magistrates. As the portmanteau title suggests, the novel is an interrogation (interrogatoire), an index (répertoire)²⁷ and an inquisition (inquisition). All three meanings of the word apply to the novel, depending on the point of view the reader takes, which is perhaps the point of the work: that naming is a point of view, and that all points of view are suspect. The more facts we are given, the larger our index, the more questions arise. L'Inquisitoire is as void of solutions as it is full of information. This paradox sets the novel in direct opposition to the traditional novel, especially the well-made novel of Mrs. Oliver.

As was stated earlier, Mrs. Oliver's well-constructed detective story assure us of aesthetic balance (beginning-middle-end), geographical realism

(London or Bath), mental comfort (cause and effect linkings), and moral vindication (capture of the real criminal). Pinget undermines the well-made narrative of the suspense novel by allowing suspicion and suspended meaning to proliferate throughout his novel. The beginning and the end of the novel are much the same because they echo one another, but rather than suggesting closure, or even circularity, this structure suggests only and forever a "middleness"; it is as if at the end of the work we have returned to a landmark in the labyrinth--a familiar turn for example--but have returned to it from a different perspective. When we open the novel, the first words we read are "Oui ou non repondez"(yes or no answer). The effect of this beginning is that it is not a beginning at all but rather a continuation of something we have missed. Like the person who arrives in the middle of a conversation, we are constantly outside the circuit of the dialogue, questioning the dialogue itself: who? what? what are you talking about? why are you talking about it? As anyone who has come upon a conversation from the outside knows, if the participants don't break out of the dialogue to answer these questions, we ourselves construct the purpose behind the dialogue, the meaning of the facts we pick up. We also often find by means of later clues that we have misconstrued some of the information, so we adjust our explanations accordingly. Of course, if the participants never do clarify the purpose behind their conversation, we may never find out the true orientation of the dialogue. This is precisely the position the reader is in when he reads L'Inquisitoire. The final question (oui ou non repondez) is answered by the servant by "I'm tired," an answer which he has tried a number of times toward the end of the investigation and which has never been deemed acceptable by the magistrates. We are sent back to the opening

question of the novel to find a full answer to the last question, but we are not completing a circle--rather it is as if we have been caught in the middle of a spiral because we possess a different point of view upon re-reading the novel.

Although the experience of reading L'Inquisitoire is analogous to entering a conversation in progress, we soon realize that it involves more complexities than simply waiting for the context to be explained. The questions and answers in the novel soon indicate to the reader that the participants in the dialogue do not know the context themselves. In short, we have a situation which takes place in various contexts depending on one's point of view. The novel consists entirely of the judges' written questions and orders to the deaf witness and the witness's often extensive, vocal answers. Because the purpose of the questions is unclear to the witness, he either rambles along giving subjective answers to the questions, or he omits and slants information suspecting some devious purpose is behind the investigation. An example of the difficulty we have in stating just what is the context for the investigation can be seen in Vivian Mercier's attempt to define that context:

The ostensible cause for the interrogation is the disappearance of a male secretary who worked for the old man's former employers, whom he usually calls ces messieurs ("those gentlemen"). We have not been reading very long, however, before we conclude that the interrogators are engaged in what is popularly called "a fishing expedition," and that they are primarily interested in the habits and associates of "those gentlemen" who are plainly a homosexual couple, though the old man refuses to say so.²⁸

It is true that the interrogation begins with questions about the secretary's departure, and does allude strongly to the possibility that homosexuality is being investigated. We cannot say, however, that homosexuality

is the primary "transgression" which is being investigated. Possible homosexuality is rather the first of a whole series of matters which might be the purpose of the investigation. Mercier notes that in a letter Pinget's comment to him on this point was: "The homosexuality of those gentlemen is altogether a side issue. The word 'homosexuality,' furthermore, is never used by the servant. Consequently, your drawing attention to it at the start seems to me to mislead your readers."²⁹ What Mercier has done is to create an alledged "crime"--not without some basis--because the novel is an interrogation: the arena of suspicion per se. Just as suspicion created by language has caused Mercier's idea of a crime, so too language creates suspicion in the witness and the interrogators. For instance, after being questioned about the relations between a Monsieur d'Eterville and a Madame Flammard, the witness is asked why he is willing to answer questions about the affair of these two people but unwilling to answer questions about "those gentlemen." He replies:

Je répète vous m'avez forcé la main et je répète que si les gens ne se comprennent pas c'est à cause de ceux comme vous qui ne veulent pas comprendre et qui fourrent leur morale à l'endroit où il ne faut pas.³⁰

The problem is, of course, that all of us let our morality get mixed up where it has no business to be; more generally stated, we all find that what we say describes the speaker more than it does the scene. The interrogators, because they seem to have no fixed purpose, let suspicion run rampant and follow up all leads--likely and unlikely--in their search for crimes. The witness and the reader do the same. Thus, numerous crimes are suggested in the course of the novel: not only homosexuality, but tax evasion, swindles, prostitution both male and female, enchantment and spiritualism, drug addiction, necrophilia. A few of these crimes do have a clear basis in fact;

others remain only groundless possibilities. In short, most of the novel revolves around hearsay, and hearsay is the very speech of "middleness."

In a talk which Pinget gave at C erisy-la-salle, "Pseudo-principes d'esth etique," he states that his composing of novels usually starts with the isolation of a voice which begins to speak. From this discourse, which cannot unfold in a void, intrigue is born. In fact, he states that when he began L'Inquisiteur, he had nothing to say but felt a desire to express himself at length. Thus the novel began "oui ou non repondez" and the rest of the novel developed from the voice of the witness. Pinget explains the aesthetic base of this sort of writing and the role it demands from the reader:

Voil a ce que je trouve dans mes livres: un amalgame d'histoires qui s'enchev trent et dont   premiere vue ressort une mani re de v rit  moyenne que le lecteur localise mal mais qui ne le d route pas trop car elle s' nonce en termes simples . . . L'Esprit s'accroche involontairement   quelques mots-clefs tels for t, maison, larcin, meurtre, viol, fuite, promenade et caetera, ne se doutant pas que je le m ne ailleurs par le truchement justement de cette simplicit  qui normalement conduit   reconnaître des situations d j  connues de lui. Ce lecteur peut donc tr s bien "marcher," pourvu qu'il ne soit pas trop exigeant sur la vraisemblance. Sa premiere lecture lui laissera l'impression soit d'une fantaisie d sordonn e mais excusable, soit d'un drame inexpliqu  mais r el Il restera sur le terrain d'une psychologie moyenne, celle de tout le monde. Je tiens beaucoup   cette apparence qui me permet d'insinuer entre les lignes, au d tour d'une phrase, des choses que je pr f re ne pas formuler clairement, soit qu'elles demandent trop d'attention pour  tre formul es, ce qui romprait le rythme g n ral, soit que je les consid re plus efficaces sugg r es que dites. Et je tiens aussi   l'impression de myst re ou du moins   celle d'incertitude. . . . Cette fa on nouvelle de proposer au lecteur un chantier de construction--ou de d molition--est d j  profond ment enracin e dans l'art d'aujourd'hui. Elle n'a pas  t  un choix de ma part, elle s'est impos e comme ma v rit  la plus personnelle. C'est r p ter que l'artiste qu'il le veuille ou non est engag  dans son  poque Le texte qu'a donc sous les yeux le lecteur est celui d'une aventure en train de s'accomplir, de se tenter, et non d j  v cue puis retranscrite.³¹

Clearly this sort of suspense novel is not that of the startling action, the fantastic event, the tightly woven intrigue, which we find in the popular form. The form of the novel itself--the slow question and answer of the interrogation--undercuts that sort of suspense. Rather, the suspense is suspended meaning, incertitude, springing up everywhere in what was most familiar--language. When we begin to suspect language, suspended meaning is everywhere apparent.

L'Inquisiteur is, then, a universe of undifferentiated material which we enter by means of the detective story tone, by the first line of questioning about what became of the secretary. The investigatory tone remains constant throughout the novel, but the questions keep changing. The more information we are given, the less we know what to do with it. As Jean-Claude Lieber points out in "Structure du récit dans L'Inquisiteur," description as it is used to shore up the plot in the traditional novel or to heighten suspense in the popular novel is undercut:

Ce qui dans le roman réaliste était accessoire est devenu l'essentiel, non sans une intention parodique. Le lecteur paresseux ne peut plus "sauter" la description puisque celle-ci n'a plus de clôture et envahit tout le roman aux dépens des éléments narratifs. Lecture immobile, qu'aucun suspens n'invite à accélérer.³²

The parodic intent can be seen in the shift of the meaning of suspense from a word which indicates accelerating action to a word which suggests constant deferment and doubt. In avant-garde suspense fiction meaning constantly shifts to create lacunae just when we thought we had solidly grounded that meaning. Our understanding is always thrown into question by subsequent information. This continual displacement of meaning is not gathered at the end of the novel as it is in the popular, classical story of detection, nor is it exploded so that we are left firmly based in the familiar reality

which we always find at the end of the suspense novel. The last page of L'Inquisiteur leaves us with the feeling that "meaning" is still just on the other side of the text we are reading. The secretary is brought into the questioning again at the end of the novel, but he guards his secret.

The avant-garde suspense story also undercuts the traditional novel in other ways. The landmarks of "reality" in the conventional novel are thrown into question. The geographical landmarks in Mrs. Oliver's well-made novel locate us in a recognizable London or Bath. Pinget locates us in a totally imaginary château in an imaginary French province. The atmosphere of this province becomes more "real" and more "French" than any existing French province, just as Faulkner's Yoknapatapha County is more "real" than any existing southern county in the United States. Pinget's witness locates all the towns in the province geographically; we know the relations of the towns within the province (for example, Fantoine is about a dozen kilometers from Sirancy in the direction of Veriville), and we know the location of the province in relation to existing cities like Amsterdam or Vienna. The geographical map which the servant carefully traces is thrown into question when we realize that his point of view is suspect. For example, when the servant is asked whether his employers' friends, Mlle Sylvie and Mlle Babette, ever visit the man Rivière when they are in Holland, we find the following exchange:

Sont-elles reçues là-bas chez Rivière

Elles ne vont pas à Amsterdam elles vont en Hollande,
Amsterdam c'est les Pays-Bas³³

The servant's ignorance of geography may be amusing to us here, but we also have to be aware that it is the servant who is our guide to the province. His misconceptions are bound to be transferred to us. We soon realize

that the map of the province which the servant outlines for us is not like the map of Bleston which Butor places at the beginning of L'Emploi du temps, but rather like the map of Bleston as Revel knows it: a space "lived-in" rather than a homogenous Euclidian space. Some sites bulge and grow because they are filled with signification; others shrink and almost disappear because they do not "mean" anything to the witness. The relationships between places on the map are given from a subjective point of view not an objective overview.

The long descriptions which the servant gives of the Château de Broy are also patently subjective. His description of the main spiral staircase, for example, includes the information that the carpet is red and is held in place by horrid little rods which are always coming loose. Clearly his view of the château is biased by his function there. He is the person who has to tighten those stairway rods. The witness completes his description of the stairway by describing and commenting on the pictures which line its walls:

ensuite donc le palier ensuite toujours en montant si ça vous intéresse une bonne femme sans rien qu'un petit voile avec un cygne qui a son bec sur la joue et sa queue à moitié entre ses jambes c'est assez dégoûtant, elle le tient d'un bras passé sous une aile et de l'autre main elle lui caresse la tête, une patte du cygne est posée sur sa cuisse on se demande comme il tient et ensuite le dernier tableau maintenant que le portrait est loin

Décrivez le dernier tableau

Sauf votre respect j'aimerais mieux pas

Décrivez

C'est des hommes tout nus pour vous dire, dix ou douze dans une salle avec une piscine qui prennent leur bain ou se reposent et les invités rigolaient toujours devant ils regardaient en détail que j'avais honte pour eux, ça vient d'Allemagne les boches vous savez.³⁴

This brief guided tour complete with anecdotes shows us that the servant is incapable of describing anything impartially. His suggestion that Leda and the Swan is pornographic is a point of view which tells us more about the person doing the seeing than about what is seen. We are able to pin down his bias because we can check it against external fact. In the case of the servant's intimations about the guests who look at the picture of the baths, and in the case of his opinions about the people he works and lives with, we lack enough external fact to check him. Just as the servant's partial deafness allows him to pretend that he doesn't hear things that he wants to ignore and causes him to misunderstand the things that he does hear, so too his sight--like everyone's--is suspect: he pretends not to see what he doesn't care to see and misconstrues, often without cunning, what he does admit seeing. The limits of his perspective are obvious to the reader, but rather than making our task of understanding easier, his subjectivity tends to double the possibilities of meaning. This doubling effect is underlined by the oddities of the witness's speech, by his tendency to create malapropisms. For example, he tells his interrogators that the cook, Marthe, has a book of criminal physiognomy and that: "moi elle me trouvait l'oeil droit d'un clergyman c'est ces gens qui volent tout ce qu'ils trouvent et l'oeil gauche d'un nymphatique".³⁵ Indeed, the witness's character is contradictory enough to let us see that he could suggest both "clergyman" and "kleptomane" at one time. The servant is alternately naïve and full of ruses, sincere and devious, talkative and taciturn, eager and reticent, perceptive and ignorant.

The interrogators are entirely dependent upon the witness's testimony, it appears. He seems to be their only source of information, and the

witness continually underlines this fact by asking them why they don't question his employers if they want to know about their doings, why they don't look at a map if they want to know the lay of the land. Like the readers, the investigators are curiously limited in their access to factual information and in their ability to decide what the purpose of the investigation is, although they assure the witness that they are not questioning him for fun, that this is serious business. We find the universe that the interrogators are dealing with is much more complicated than that of Mrs. Oliver or Sherlock Holmes. Cause and effect linkings can be made, but they mean little unless one knows what he is looking for ahead of time. Holmes states: "It is not so impossible . . . that a man should possess all knowledge which is likely to be useful to him in his work, and this I have endeavored in my case to do."³⁶ Poe's dictum-by-inference also suggests the same sort of intelligible universe: "when you have eliminated all the impossibilities, then, whatever remains, however impossible, must be the truth."³⁷ The investigators in Pinget's novel cannot eliminate information which is irrelevant because they don't seem to know what they are looking for in the first place. They have little outside information which they can use to check the truth of the witness's testimony. This gives the servant a curious power over them. He occasionally lies to see what will happen. At the same time, the investigators treat the witness as a criminal because their only means of checking his story is to make him talk, to trap him in contradictions, to find places where his earlier testimony is thrown into question by his later statements. It is in this way that, at the end of the novel, they discover first, the entire story of the witness's married life when he led them to believe, by omitting facts, that he was a bachelor,

and second, that the servant, who has described the Château de Broy and its contents and occupants in minute detail, has purposely neglected to mention an entire section of the house (the original château) and its occupant Monsieur Pierre. Those subjects which most intimately concern the servant are the last to be wormed out of him.

The wide range of information given in the novel and the narrow range of perception of each character allows Pinget to undercut the cardinal rule of the popular genre: moral vindication. We can only be sure that the real criminal is caught (that is, the one who actually committed the crime) if we have some idea of what the crime is and which characters are cast in the major roles: criminal, detective, victim, witness. In L'Inquisitoire, the crime remains hidden and the servant and his interrogators play in turn all four roles. The situation we found in Cortázar's "Las babas"--the confusion of the subject and the world--has doubled itself because we are now dealing with an interrogation, with more than one subject and the world as "other." Paul de Man indicates the infinite regression which is inherent in this situation in his essay, "Criticism and Crisis":

Every change of the observed subject requires a subsequent change in the observer, and the oscillating process seems to be endless. Worse, as the oscillation gains in intensity and in truth, it becomes less and less clear who is in fact doing the observing and who is being observed. Both parties tend to fuse into a single subject as the original distance between them disappears.³⁸

Toward the end of the interrogation, the roles of the interrogators and the witness begin to blend. The servant becomes upset toward the end of the questioning as he begins to realize how little a person can know and how slippery the few truths he though he knew are. He tells his examiners that they are all caught in the human condition, that that condition is

irremédiable subjectivity, that none of them can ever know what is true:

.....
 on pourrait inventer d'autres personnes n'importe lesquelles
 ouï leur faire dire n'importe quoi ça serait pareil à ce qui
 s'est passé entre les vraies tous dans notre tête ils sont
 morts, j'ai l'impression avec vos questions on les force à
 parler mais les erreurs n'ont pas d'importance ils parleraient
 pareil vrais ou faux et nous serons logés à la même enseigne
 quand d'autres poseront des questions sur nous . . . alors
 qu'on leur réponde oui ou non le résultat sera le même ils
 confondront vous et moi je serai celui qui pose les questions
 et vous répondrez vrai ou faux qu'est-ce que ça peut faire

Vous voulez dire que vous ne faites aucun effort d'objectivité

Qu'est-ce que c'est

Aucun effort pour dire vrai

Si au contraire je fais l'effort je le fais même trop et le
 vrai se trouve à côté, ce que je ne sais plus ou que je ne
 sais pas encore ou que vous oubliez de me demander . . .³⁹

The feeling of moral vindication which Mrs. Oliver gives us is an
 impossibility in the universe of L'Inquisiteur. Either there are no
 criminals or the criminal is found in all of us. The servant plays the
 role of witness when he answers questions; criminal when he lies, omits
 information, or purposely slants his descriptions; detective when he
 questions the questioners or acts according to his suspicions about what
 they are after; victim when he is trapped and brow-beaten into confessing
 his most secret passions, shames and loves so that the stenographer can
 type them on her machine. The judges, too, play all roles. They are
 witnesses when the servant questions them about the judicial process;
 criminals when they expose the old servant's most secret dreams; detectives
 when they interrogate him; victims when their lack of external knowledge
 allows the servant to outwit them, send them on false scents.

The question and answer form makes the novel an interrogation, and the
 wealth of material it lists--names, dates, domiciles, family trees--makes it

an index. What makes it an inquisition is the fact that it questions systems of belief: it is an ontological investigation. In the popular suspense story, the criminal and the detective were often united in the fantastic surhomme; in the avant-garde novel, the criminal and the detective, the witness and the victim are the poles of being in all men; their metaphoric system of language--its power and its failures--is the ground of the fantastique quotidien. In L'Inquisiteur, we discover that in attempting to describe his universe, man creates his own portrait rather than that of the universe. Man's inability to find a neutral point of view, to discover solutions, and to describe objectively what is "other" does not lead to despair, however. Pinget's ability to capture a speech act with all its idiosyncratic traits, and a personality with all its ruses, blindnesses and fantasies seems to redeem the fact that we can never discover an objective point of view. Humor and invention are the ground of his fiction. On the other side of angst, we find gratuitous delight in playing the game.

CHAPTER FIVE: WRITING DEGREE 007

Ian Fleming's spy, James Bond, is the upstart descendent of a long line of somewhat honorable British spies; he is the young pup among these men who live life on the margin. Like a classical detective hero such as Sherlock Holmes, the spy works for an established, conservative authority--his government--and works to maintain the valued, esteemed national traditions of which that authority is the stronghold. It is the business of a Bond to hold off anarchy by insuring that the status quo, the balance of power among nations, is preserved just as it is the business of Holmes to see that order is restored when fissures caused by crime appear in the bedrock of British society. But unlike the certified, revered detective, the spy has something slightly unsavory about him because he must work undercover prying and slinking around on the fringes of decent society in order to accomplish his task. The spy is an odd sort of sanctioned criminal: sanctioned because he is on the side of "good" while the counterspy works always for the forces of "evil"; criminal because he is "licensed to kill" as the degree 00 indicates. The spy, who is his nation personified, is a member of a secret society whose byword is deception, whose membership is unknown, and whose standards are double. It is this double standard which shelves the moral problem of spying because a spy is only criminal when he is on the "other side." In fact, he is never wholly criminal no matter what he does, as Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac point out. He kills because he is ordered to kill or because he himself will be killed if he doesn't. The laws of war, even cold war, purify the spy of personal guilt. In his world, which is the margin or underside of the everyday world, all punches are fair, all lies are authorized.¹ The spy only becomes criminal when he engages in espionage for the "wrong" side.

Remote descendent of the traditional British spy family, Bond with his fantastic weapons and sexual prowess belongs to the fortunate branch of the spy family. Although the world Bond operates in is very different from that of the first gentlemen-secret agents, he is still a hero, is still admired. In "Whodunit and Other Questions: Detective Stories in Post-War Fiction," Michael Holquist briefly traces the history of Bond's branch of the family:

It is clear that much recent spy fiction is aimed at allaying fears aroused by two human activities which seem to have got out of human control, science on the one hand and diplomacy on the other. The pattern of spy thrillers changes quite markedly after Hiroshima. Instead of the elegant, patriotic heroes of E. Phillips Oppenheim, who merely prevent one or two countries from going to war (by stealing naval secrets, or something equally innocuous), we now have amoral supermen who save the entire planet from atomic destruction--the suggestion being that while the world may be full of mad scientists and bumbling statesmen, a lone hero can still keep us all from being blown up.²

Bond, if amoral, is still a superman, is still recognized behind the walls of the Defense Ministry. There is a less sanctioned, less pampered branch of the spy family, however. That branch is represented, for example, by John Le Carré's The Spy Who Came in from the Cold or The Looking Glass War. If Bond bears some resemblance to Holmes, Le Carré's heroes are closer to Chandler's Phillip Marlowe; they are vulnerable people living in a nightmare world which seems much more "realistic" than the jet set world of Bond. Just as the private eye is a common man who fights with familiar street weapons, is distrusted by police and criminals alike, and sometimes makes mistakes, the spy from the impoverished branch of the family is an average man who fights with the familiar weapons, may find he is being used by his own people as well as by the enemy, and sometimes makes mistakes. The world for both of these anti-heroes is a chaotic, anarchic place where history and geography are limited to a net of conspiracy theories, domino theories,

patterns of cyclical recurrence. The spy does his best to keep the net from falling on his head or that of his nation. When an either/or crisis is reached, the spy discovers he is a dispensable commodity. They type of spy often suffers psychological and moral crises because he is forced to be a loner, because he can trust no one and is trusted by no one: anyone might be a counterspy, a double agent, and any situation could be a trap.

In the spy thriller, no matter what type of spy hero we are dealing with, we find the episodic fused narrative where one sort of crime (i.e. stolen state secrets) leads to another (i.e. the murder of the counterspy). The major action is based on flight-pursuit patterns and techniques of entrapment. The world of the spy is the territory where deception, suspicion and violence are at home. Action within this world is almost always traced in extended time-space patterns because the spy usually has a deadline to meet or his work is useless, and he must cover a certain amount of space in order to transmit information to his contacts. This time-space pattern often involves crossing international borders with the attendant intrigue of passports, visas, double identities, and disguise. For the spy living a life of deception in a world of deceit, each choice he makes, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is of great moment; he must be always on his guard because nothing is what it seems to be in his world. The only elements he is sure of are his own identity under his chameleon skin, the worth of the nation he represents and the fact that he plays a significant part in creating and controlling historical pattern; in the novels of Le Carré, even the first two elements may be denied. The avant-garde parody of the spy novel undermines all three elements with a vengeance.

The parody of the spy story is the epitome of the avant-garde thriller because it subsumes most of the elements of the other avant-garde thrillers in its world of deception. We may find the magic causality of The Lime Twig, the suddenly self-referential language of Projet, the suspended meaning and framed vision of "Las babas," or the increasing suspicion of L'Inquisiteur. The difference is that all these things appear on a universal scale. The avant-garde spy parodies differ greatly in their style and scope: there is Borges' "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," Pynchon's V., Robbe-Grillet's La Maison de Rendez-vous, Ricardou's Les Lieux-dits, Nabokov's Pale Fire. Yet, all these very different works seem to explore, by means of the espionage narrative, the fictionality of traditional time-space assumptions and of concepts of historical continuity, as well as the fictionality of their own explorations. Self-parody, then, as well as parody of the popular spy thriller is a mainstay in these works because the postmodern novelist is acutely aware of this fictionalizing. The spy's work is to amass information and then to establish contact to transmit it; the novelist's job is much the same as Geoffrey Hartman points out in his essay, "The Aesthetics of Complicity." Hartman, in discussing L'Ere du soupçon and postmodern literature in general, points out that Nathalie Sarraute finds the basic overriding motive of Dostoyevski's characters to be "the terrible desire to establish contact" and that she views this banal desire with ambivalence and fear "for the Age of Suspicion is especially suspicious of complicity, particularly those small, sly, rodent kinds which result from any strong desire for intimacy and contact."³ If metaphor is no longer innocent, neither are traditional fictional techniques, and the postmodernist is well aware of this fact. As Hartman states in the case of Sarraute:

We are always aware that the novelist's eye is on the novelist: it is her own engagement which is being clarified. She knows that spying is complicity raised to an art, and that the novelist is a socially tolerated spy in league with many of our cruder instincts.⁴

Like the spy, the novelist leads the chameleon life of doubling identities, taking on the lives, names and histories of different characters. The post-modern novelist spies not only on his various characters, but on his own fiction-making as well. We could say, it would seem, that in the avant-garde spy parody, we have a novelist spying on a novelist spying on a spy who is spying: a sort of bottomless espionage. All this espionage, according to Hartman, is an obvious trait of both French and American post-modern fiction, although their respective novelistic forms are radically different and despite the fact that American authors often don't realize how bottomless this complicity is:

Most novels by Mailer, Bellow, or Pynchon remain grotesquely limbed Hercules when compared to the Dior silhouette of a nouveau roman. And the difference between the two traditions is all the more clear and demonstrable because that banal theme, "the terrible desire to establish contact," is central in both. . . . The American novel honors technique and takes pleasure in craft. Yet the relation of craft to craftiness, of technique to fictional infighting which pits the artist against art, is rarely felt.⁵

Hartman's generalizations about the difference between American and French novelists don't always hold true--Butor and Pinget would have to be ranged with the Americans, Nabokov perhaps with the French--but the fact that some of these authors undercut their desire to establish contact less than others is a point well-taken. For example, Pynchon in V. seems to reach rock bottom with McClintock Sphere's "keep cool but care" while Robbe-Grillet or Ricardou would manage somehow to make "keep cool but care" an example of self-referential language. The same split might be seen between Cortázar's

psychologically frustrated heroes and Borges' extremely abstract, two-dimensional characters.

The earliest example of an avant-garde spy parody is probably Borges' "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," ("The Garden of the Forking Paths") published in 1941. In the story we read the fictional confession--or rather the partial confession since the first two pages are missing--of one Yu Tsun, a German spy captured in England. This confession is placed in context by reference in the opening paragraph to an existing book, Liddel Hart's History of World War I. If Hart's book legitimizes the fictional manuscript, however, the fictional manuscript suggests that Hart's work too is a fiction. Borges undercuts the moral validity of the traditional espionage story--the brave agent working to uphold and protect the values of his nation--in the first lines we read of the confession. Because we see the events through the eyes of Yu Tsun, who having been captured in England in an ostensibly pro-English story is the 'evil' counterspy, we sympathize with him. Beyond this, a strange identity is created between Yu Tsun and Richard Madden, the British spy who makes the capture: Yu Tsun is determined to succeed not because he loves Germany, the country who has forced upon him the ignomy of being a spy, but rather to prove to Germany that "a yellow man, an oriental," could save her armies; likewise, Madden is determined to succeed, is obliged to succeed because he is an Irishman, liable to be accused of laziness or treason, in the service of England. This early undercutting of "national honor" is brought further into relief by the footnote of the anonymous editor of the confession. After Yu Tsun's statement that his contact, one Viktor Runeberg, had been arrested or murdered

by Madden, the editor notes:

Hipótesis odiosa y estrafalaria. El espía prusiano Hans Rabner alias Viktor Runeberg agredió con una pistola automática al portador de la orden de arresto, capitán Richard Madden. Éste, en defensa propia, le causó heridas que determinaron se muerte.⁶

The virulent nationalism of the fictional editor shows his political bias. We wonder at this point what he may have "edited out" of the confession, but then we realize to what extent we are caught in a labyrinth of fictions: the editor is suspect, the contact Runeberg is really Rabner, the German spy is Chinese, the English spy is Irish, the confession is fictional and suggests that the real book cited, Hart's History which occurs in a fiction written by Borges, "the novelist," is itself fiction in the guise of history. Yet this bottomless fraudulence is only one of the labyrinths Borges has created in his story, which takes its title from a fictional book at its center called El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan. This central book is also a labyrinth and has been written by Ts'ui Pên, Yu Tsun's ancestor.

Once Yu Tsun discovers that Madden has eliminated his contact, Runeberg, he realizes that Madden will come after him next. The flight-pursuit pattern begins as Yu Tsun tries to find a way to make contact with his people before Madden catches up with him. He must transmit the exact location of the new British artillery park in France. To this end, Yu Tsun seizes his pistol and rushes to the train station. He catches the 8:50 train to Ashgrove, and as the train pulls out of the station, he sees Madden run out to the end of the platform, in vain. Yu Tsun knows now that he has approximately an hour before Madden catches up to him since the next train does not leave London until 9:30 and it will take some time for Madden to discover Tsun's exact destination since he has bought a ticket for a more

distant destination.

As soon as Yu Tsun steps off the train at Ashgrove, a group of young boys tells him how to get to Dr. Stephen Albert's house, an uncanny event since he has not had time to name his destination or request directions. His meditations as he walks to Dr. Albert's house indicate to the reader not only that the entire universe has become a labyrinth, but also that labyrinths deny both time and particular historical event, the two main elements of any spy intrigue:

El consejo de siempre doblar a la izquierda me recordó que tal era el procedimiento común para descubrir el patio central de ciertos laberintos. Algo entiendo de laberintos: no en vano soy bisnieto de aquel Ts'ui Pên, que fué gobernador de Yunnan y que renunció al poder temporal para escribir una novela que fuera todavía más populosa que el Hung Lu Meng y para edificar un laberinto en el que se perdieran todos los hombres. Trece años dedicó a esas heterogéneas fatigas, pero la mano de un forastero lo asesinó y su novela era insensata y nadie encontró el laberinto. Bajo árboles ingleses medité en ese laberinto perdido lo imaginé infinito, no ya de quioscos ochavados y de sendas que vuelven, sino de ríos y provincias y reinos . . . Pensé en un laberinto de laberintos, en un sinuoso laberinto creciente que abarcara el pasado y el porvenir y que implicara de algún modo los astros. Absorto en esas ilusorias imágenes, olvidé mi destino de perseguido. Me sentí, por un tiempo indeterminado, percibidor abstracto del mundo. El vago y vivo campo, la luna, los restos de la tarde, obraron en mí; asimismo el declive que eliminaba cualquier posibilidad de cansancio. La tarde era íntima, infinita. El camino bajaba y se bifurcaba, entre las ya confusas praderas. Una música aguada y como silábica se aproximaba y se alejaba en el vaivén del viento, empañada de hojas y de distancia. Pensé que un hombre puede ser enemigo de otros hombres, de otros momentos de otros hombres pero no de un país: no de luciérnagas, palabras, jardines, cursos de agua, ponientes. Llegué, así, a un alto portón herrumbrado.⁷

Here Borges undermines the major elements of the spy intrigue: nationalism, the importance of individual historical acts, the hatred of the enemy be it a country or another man. At most, one only hates particular moments of

other men. The way in which historical event is shown to be an archetypal event reiterated and the manner in which time is refuted becomes clearer later in the story when Ts'ui Pên's labyrinth is discovered.

As Yu Tsun reaches the gate, he is met by Dr. Albert, a Sinologist (which explains the unrequested directions the young boys had given) who mistakes Yu Tsun for Hsi P'êng, a Chinese counsul who was to visit Albert to see El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan. They walk through the garden to the house, a geography similar to that of the estate of the ancestor, Hs'ui Pên, where he had withdrawn to create his labyrinth in the quiet of the Pavilion of the Limpid Solitude which stood in the center of his garden. Upon entering Albert's library, Yu Tsun sees a record of Chinese music revolving next to a bronze phoenix, the bird of the eternal return. Albert explains to Yu Tsun how he discovered Hs'ui Pên's lost labyrinth:

Ts'ui Pên diría una vez: "Me retiro a escribir un libro."
Y otra: "Me retiro a construir un laberinto." Todos
imaginaron dos obras; nadie pensó que libro y laberinto
eran un solo objeto.⁶

Albert's research reveals to him that the chaotic novel is a labyrinth in which, at every forking in a character's life, all possible outcomes occur. Beyond this, sometimes the paths converge, as Albert explains: "por ejemplo, usted llega a esta casa, pero en uno de los pasados posibles usted es mi enemigo, en otro mi amigo."⁹ Albert goes on to explain that the novel is an enormous riddle whose answer, of course, cannot appear in the novel itself: time. In Albert's opinion, the novel is an incomplete, though not false, image of the universe. At this point, Yu Tsun sees Madden coming up the path and is forced to shoot Albert in order to achieve his mission. Madden captures Yu Tsun and the newspapers report the assassination. In

Berlin, Yu Tsun's chief reads of the assassination and knows that the French town he must attack is Albert.

The ironies in this story are, quite obviously, many. On the level of the espionage narrative, we find that only in trusting that Madden will carry out his mission can Yu Tsun be assured of accomplishing his own. It is Yu Tsun's capture which makes the assassination of Albert public. The convention of capturing the counterspy to prevent him from transmitting information has been reversed. In fact, all futures of the two spies are played out: Yu Tsun is a failure because he is captured, a success because he transmits the information; Madden is a success because he captures Yu Tsun, a failure because he allows the message to be transmitted. Beyond that, Albert and Yu Tsun both play out all futures: in one they are friends; in another, they are enemies; in one Albert dies; in another, Yu Tsun dies (he is hanged for espionage). The killing of Albert which seemed a historical event taking place in a modern context becomes instead the re-enactment of an archetypal event: the discoverer of the labyrinth is killed by a foreigner with a gun in the middle of a labyrinthine garden. Yu Tsun is identified with his ancestor and with the stranger who assassinated him; Albert is identified with the discoverer of the labyrinth and he is also a foreigner, an English sinologist. Borges denies the continuity of history by giving it the one pattern which by definition is patternless and timeless: that of the infinite labyrinth.

Needless to say, the metaphysics beneath Borges' story are complex and confusing, but he does explain two keys to this epistemological labyrinth in other works. The labyrinth of Ts'ui Pên is incomplete, but not false, because various futures are constantly proliferating. A quotation from Olaf

Stapledon's Star Maker (1937) cited in Borges' Antología de la literatura fantástica, explains this proliferation:

En un cosmos inconcebiblemente complejo, cada vez que una criatura se enfrentaba con diversas alternativas, no elegía una sino todas, creando de este modo muchas historias universales del cosmos. Ya que en ese mundo había muchas criaturas y que cada una de ellas estaba continuamente ante muchas alternativas, las combinaciones de esos procesos eran innumerables y cada instante ese universo se ramificaba infinitamente en otros universos, y estos, en otros a su vez.¹⁰

Despite the fact that these futures are continually proliferating, all time is present time, and present moments when they reiterate past events become eternal, according to Borges in "Nueva refutación del tiempo":

Chuang Tzu soñó que era una mariposa y durante aquel sueño no era Chuang Tzu, era una mariposa. ¿Como, abolidos el espacio y el yo, vincularemos esos instantes a los del despertar y a la época feudal de la historia china? Ello no quiere decir que nunca sabremos, siquiera de manera aproximativa, la fecha de aquel sueño; quiere decir que la fijación cronológica de un suceso, de cualquier suceso del orbe, es ajena a él, y exterior. En la China, el sueño de Chuang Tzu es proverbial; imaginemos que de sus casi infinitos lectores, uno sueña que es una mariposa y luego que es Chuang Tzu. Imaginemos que, por un azar no imposible, este sueño repite puntualmente el que soñó el maestro. Postulada esa igualdad, cabe preguntar: Estos instantes que coinciden ¿no son el mismo? ¿No basta un solo término repetido para desbaratar y confundir la historia del mundo, para denunciar que no hay tal historia?¹¹

Borges reasons through Berkeleyan idealism that all men may be one man and that some moments may be eternal moments, thus denying the very continuity of time, and the supposed importance of historical event. Madden's hunting down Yu Tsun not only allows the message to be sent to Berlin during the First World War, but more importantly causes the eternal moment of murder in the garden of the forking paths to recur.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from Borges' economical, symmetric short story is Thomas Pynchon's encyclopedic collage of songs, historical fictions, love stories, romances and jokes, the parody of a spy novel, V.

The novel V. "is still that loose and baggy monster Henry James wished to reform."¹² In "The Politics of Self-Parody," Richard Poirier suggests at least one reason why Pynchon's unruly novel is so "loose and baggy," so full of stray ends and coincidental weavings of various narratives:

For some of these [novelists], the escape from the notion of a special status for literature has involved at least one kind of political stimulation: their occupational preferences for fictional plots has been broadened by a Hegelian suspicion that the world itself is governed by self-generating political plots and conspiracies more intricate than any they could devise. Such is the logic of the "plotting" in Pynchon's V.¹³

Poirier's reasoning is born out to some extent in V., but the "Hegelian suspicion that the world itself is governed by self-generating political plots and conspiracies" is only one half of a larger anti-Hegelian dialectic which refuses synthesis. On the one hand, all attempts to see pattern in history, be it cyclical, circular, or conspiratorial, are undercut; on the other hand, V. (the unknown) does occur in many guises, seems to have a logic behind it. From the first pages of the novel, we see that V. is made up of parallel concepts which we cannot synthesize and that V. itself is largely an optical illusion. Benny Profane is the first to see V. as he looks down a street at night toward the horizon: "overhead turning everybody's face green and ugly, shone mercury-vapor lamps, receding in an asymmetric V to the east where it's dark and there are no more bars."¹⁴ As Raymond Olderman points out in Beyond the Waste Land, V. is the mystery of Fate itself and understanding V. is to understand how and why we rush helter-skelter down the street of the twentieth century toward a "dream of annihilation" (p. 193), toward the place where "there are no more bars":

As always with Fate, V. leads us to wonder if we take that plunge [down the street of our century] because of mysterious

forces guiding us, or if the plunge as well as Fate, V., and everything else is the way it is because we are the way we are Thus, we have the two poles of Fate, and the essential mystery of V.--either there is some ominous logic to the direction of man's life or life is a series of random accidents defined only by the impulses of the living.¹⁵
[my emphasis]

Whatever V. is, it is a general principle of the twentieth century, a principle which perhaps always existed but which up until the turn of the century had remained beyond the pale of positivistic thought. During the positivist trend, the world and its history were thought to be patterned and intelligible; it was only a matter of time before the universe would be explained. A particularly concise formulation of this well-known attitude is found in the report of Acton, editor of the Cambridge Modern History, to the Syndics of Cambridge University Press in October 1896. He says of the Cambridge Modern History:

It is a unique opportunity of recording, in the way most useful to the greatest number, the fullness of the knowledge which the nineteenth century is about to bequeath. . . . By the judicious division of labor we should be able to do it, and to bring home to every man the last document, and the ripest conclusions of international research.

Ultimate history we cannot have this generation; but we can dispose of conventional history, and show the point we have reached on the road from one to the other, now that all information is within reach, and every problem has become capable of solution.¹⁶

This is a world in which espionage makes a difference; a world in which the balance of power can be maintained; a world in which the secret agent is an influence on and maker of history. The novel V. begins, chronologically, shortly after Acton's speech with the Egyptian crisis of 1898 and takes us up through the McCarthy Era. The members of the older generation in the novel, the British spy Sidney Stencil and the British explorer Hugh Godolphin, are faced with the knowledge of V.--"the dream of annihilation"--and realize

slowly that V. is everywhere, that V. flowers in a state of siege. V. denies Acton's dream of History.

The very idea of an "ultimate history" has become impossible for the children of the twentieth century like Herbert Stencil and Evan Godolphin. The modern idea of history appears in the newer Cambridge edition published in 1957:

Historians of a later generation do not look forward to any such prospect ultimate history. They expect their work to be superceded again and again. They consider that knowledge of the past has come down through one or more human minds, has been "processed" by them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter. . . . The exploration seems to be endless, and some impatient scholars take refuge in scepticism, or at least in the doctrine that since all historical judgments involve persons and points of view, one is as good as another and there is no "objective" historical truth.¹⁷

It is little wonder that Herbert Stencil, product of the twentieth century, is "a bad detective and a worse spy" (p. 139). Spies cannot carry on their trade caught in a history which either is dictated by a mysterious force which is incomprehensible to human beings or is a collage of accidents and personal fancies: that is, history dictated by V. V. itself appears as a woman, who once was Venus but now is V-ness, a female with a clock in her eye who slowly becomes less human and more inanimate. She is Victoria, V., Vera, Veronica, and Mme Viola, for example. V. also appears in connection with place names and conspiracies: Venezuela, Vheissu, Vesuvius, the Vernichtungs Befehl (Annihilation Order), the V-Note bar and Valletta, to name a few. Her movement seems to be from *décadence* to inanimation to annihilation. She drags the human population along with her. As Olderman points out, she appears wherever crisis and upheaval occur:

- 1898--Egypt; Fashoda; Victoria Wren
 1899--Florence; Venezuelan uprising; Plot to steal the Birth of Venus; Intimations of World War I; The Vheissu Plot involving Vesuvius, M. Vogt, his spy school, and Victoria Wren
 1901--Herbert Stencil's birth; Queen Victoria's death
 1904--Von Trotha's Vernichtungs Befehl, putting down Black uprisings in South West Africa by introducing brutalities surpassed only in World War II
 1913--Paris; Intimations of Russian Revolution; Stirrings of World War I; The Lady V. nameless and in love with Melanie l'Heuremaudit; Russia and the Orient linked in a suspected "movement to overthrow Western Civilization"
 1918--Evan Godolphin's face ruined; World War I; Inspiration of young Schoenmaker
 1919--Death of Sidney Stencil; Malta's June Disturbances; Intimations of World War II and Mussolini; Veronica Manganese
 1922--Uprising in South West Africa; Foppl's decadent siege party; intimations of Hitler; Vera Meroving; Hedwig Vogelsang
 1934--Fairing's Parish in New York sewers, with Veronica the rat; Intimations of World War II and possible apocalypse; American Depression
 1943--Bombing of Malta in World War II; In Valletta, Malta, the death and dismantling of the Lady V. disguised as the transvestite "Bad Priest"
 1945--Beginning of Herbert Stencil's quest; Atomic Bomb
 1956--Stencil's abandonment of Malta in pursuit of Mme Viola, an oneiromancer, a diviner of dreams, who might finally reveal the dream of annihilation that Stencil pursues¹⁸

Olderman's chronologizing does help us to see how V. appears on the under-
 side of every crisis and to see how it is Stencil's quest for V., the infor-
 mation he gathers, which is the thread that holds this encyclopedic work
 together. Yet, righting the chronology of V. is like straightening out the
 calendar year which Butor's Jacques Revel spends in Bleston in L'Emploi du
temps: it suggests continuity--historical and geographical--where there is
 none; it takes us back to the ultimate history of the nineteenth century,
 but renames that history "ultimate doom." It sees V. as only the inversion
 of love and life, not as mystery--a possible life-giving force. It was this
 sort of urge to catalogue everything, this sort of sterility, "the nineteenth

century's, which turned the potentialities of our experience upside down by writing history with the A B C's of Alice, Baedeker and Colonialism (and Dentistry, Englishmen, Fashoda . . .)."19 Stencil's form of espionage, his hodge-podge reporting of events, indicates that V. is ageless not aging, that Sidney Stencil's death in 1919 (the Epilogue to V.) can only be understood in the light of later rather than earlier events, that V. is a principle of animation if tracked and spied on, a principle of annihilation if caught. The form of V., like that of Pinget's L'Inquisiteur, is loose and baggy to demonstrate that the more information we have, the less we know because wealth of material prohibits believable generalization.

The clearest way to see how V. parodies the popular spy novel, and what this parody suggests, is to follow the investigations of Herbert Stencil. Stencil, son of Sidney Stencil who worked for the British Foreign Office as an agent and who "died under unknown circumstances in 1919 while investigating the June disturbances in Malta," was born in 1901, "the century's child" (p. 42). Stencil Jr., after knocking about Europe for awhile, tries working for the Foreign Office in 1939:

He was sent to North Africa, in some fuzzily defined spy/interpreter/liaison capacity and seesawed with the rest from Tobruk to El Agheila, back through Tobruk to El Alamein, back again to Tunisia. At the end of it he had seen more dead than he cared to again. (p. 43)

Stencil promptly drops out of the espionage business and hibernates for six years in the homes of his father's various contacts, fellow spies, or those of their descendents. In 1945, however, he is rudely awakened from his slumber by the appearance of V. in his father's journals under the heading, "Florence, April, 1899." The elder Stencil writes: "There is more behind and inside V. than any of us had suspected. Not who, but what: what is she.

God grant that I may never be called upon to write the answer, either here or in any official report" (p. 43). Young Stencil begins his pursuit of V. because he needs "mystery, any sense of pursuit to keep active a borderline metabolism"; Stencil "feeds on mystery" (p. 362). He hunts V. to keep himself from becoming inanimate, because she is there to track down. Finding V., however, means a return to the inanimate, so Stencil's plan of action is to "approach and avoid" (p. 44). Thus, throughout Pynchon's novel we chase V., a "clownish Stencil capering along behind her, bells ajingle, waving a wooden, toy oxgoad. For no one's amusement but his own" (p. 50).

Stencil, himself, is perhaps the born spy for the twentieth century. Stencil is a stencil of the previous century for it is he who brings the past--its events and perceptions--to life. As Eigenvalue, the soul dentist, notices however, Stencil makes additions to his historical documents. For example, in the story of Mondaugen, Stencil relates in minute detail a conversation between old Godolphin and Vera Meroving which Mondaugen has overheard--"a conversation meaning nothing to Mondaugen but everything to Stencil" (p. 231). Suspicion causes Eigenvalue to spy on Stencil who is spying on the past. In short, spying is a state of mind. Stencil is also the perfect candidate for espionage because disguise and multiple identities are his natural state of being:

Herbert Stencil . . . always referred to himself in the third person. This helped "Stencil" appear as only one among a repertoire of identities. "Forcible dislocation of personality" was what he called the general technique, which is not the same as "seeing the other fellow's point of view"; for it involved, say, wearing clothes that Stencil wouldn't be caught dead in, eating foods that would have made Stencil gag, living in unfamiliar digs, frequenting bars or cafes of a non-Stencilian character; all this for weeks on end; and why? To keep Stencil in his place: that is, in the third person.

Around each seed of a dossier, therefore, had developed a nacreous mass of inference, poetic license, forcible dislocation of personality into a past he didn't remember and had no right in, save the right of imaginative anxiety or historical care, which is recognized by no one (p. 51).

Stencil models his life on the gentlemen-spies of the past, of "a past he didn't remember and had no right in." As Richard Wasson points out, this use of masks "leads to what Pynchon calls 'forcible dislocation of personality.'"²⁰ Stencil, who begins his quest in 1945 after the dropping of the bomb, is not only too late for the positivism of the nineteenth century's "ultimate history," but also too late for the Modernist's nostalgia, the myth-making from the ruins. The Modernist's method of Mythotherapy is unwittingly set out by T. S. Eliot in "Ulysses, Order and Myth":

In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. . . . It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. It is a method first adumbrated by Mr. Yeats.²¹ [my emphasis]

Stencil is involved in the sort of bottomless espionage where every motive is suspect, especially the "terrible desire to establish contact." For Stencil, capering after V. is both a way of playing in the ruins and of avoiding the sterility of the century. As he tells Eigenvalue: "'It isn't espionage . . . but the Situation is intolerable.' A term he'd learned from his father" (p. 139).

Stencil would prefer to see V. as an inhuman conspiracy, something to chase after and, with any luck, never come close enough to recognize. At the same time, Stencil is aware of the other pole of V., the idea that history is a series of accidents, not a master plan:

Truthfully he didn't know what sex V. might be, nor even what genus and species. To go along assuming that Victoria the girl tourist and Veronica the sewer rat were one and the same V. was not at all to bring up any metempsychosis: only to affirm that his quarry fitted in with The Big One, the century's master cabal, in the same way Victoria had with the Vheissu plot and Veronica with the new rat-order. If she was a historical fact then she continued active today and at the moment, because the ultimate Plot Which Has No Name was as yet unrealized, though V. might be no more a she than a sailing vessel or a nation (p. 211).

The fact is, of course, that V. might not be at all, and Stencil needs V. to give his life mystery. Eigenvalue spies out Stencil's ruses:

Perhaps history this century, thought Eigenvalue, is rippled with gathers in its fabric such that if we are situated as Stencil seemed to be, at the bottom of a fold, it's impossible to determine warp, woof or pattern anywhere else. By virtue, however, of existing in one gather it is assumed there are others, compartmented off into sinuous cycles each of which come to assume greater importance than the weave itself and destroy any continuity. Thus it is that we are charmed by the funny-looking automobiles of the '30's and the curious fashions of the '20's, the peculiar moral habits of our grandparents. We produce and attend musical comedies about them and are conned into a false memory, a phony nostalgia about what they were. We are accordingly lost to any sense of a continuous tradition. Perhaps if we lived on a crest, things would be different. We could at least see (p. 141).

Eigenvalue recognizes the subjective frame which Stencil, despite his chameleon identities, looks through. "The Big One" and the ultimate "Plot Which Has No Name" are in Stencil's fold, just as Vheissu is in old Godolphin's and old Stencil's, just as racial supremacy is in Von Trotha's and Hitler's, just as mechanical yo-yoing and tourism (or espionage--the yo-yo on a grand international scale) is in Profane's style of history:

If you look from the side at a planet swinging around its orbit, split the sun with a mirror and imagine a string, it all looks like a yo-yo. The point furthest from the sun is called aphelion. The point furthest from the yo-yo hand is called, by analogy, apocheir (p. 26).

Eigenvalue's own fold is based on permutations of arrangements of tooth and soul. Yet Eigenvalue, like Profane and Stencil, is suspicious of his own motives: living on the crest would likely be no better; perhaps the only warp and woof in the pattern are those each individual weaves himself.

This vicious trap of solipsistic patterns is broken by Fausto Majistral, the Maltese poet and one time double agent, who goes through a number of identities, and acquires an exact knowledge of fictional devices and an acute awareness of their limitations by doing so. It is Fausto who makes us realize that while fictions are all we have, we must keep their fictionality in mind, spy on our own fiction-making. The myth of Vheissu is as false as the metaphor of the yo-yo. Fiction-making loses its value when we forget it is artifice. Like Eliot's myth which will "give shape and significance" to history, metaphor reconciles opposites, abolishes or balances paradox. Fausto is wary of metaphor and distrustful of all the analogies created in the confining gathers of history. V., the metaphor, is constantly shown to be artifice by V., the novel. Richard Wasson explains how central Fausto's confessions are to this process:

"While others may look on the laws of physics as legislation and God as a human form . . . poets are alone with the task of living in a universe of things which simply are, and cloaking that innate mindlessness with comfortable and pious metaphor so that the 'practical' half of humanity may continue in the Great Lie, confident that their machines, dwellings, streets and weather share the same human motives, personal traits and fits of contrariness as they." Where Robbe-Grillet sees in metaphor a tragic distortion of reality, Pynchon sees it transforming the human into the inanimate, and in V. "alignment with the inanimate is the mark of a Bad Guy." The metaphor-making poet is always in danger of becoming one of the supreme bad guys.²³

The undermining of metaphor carried out by Fausto in his confessions is paralleled by the undercutting of traditional espionage and theories of

conspiracy. In the Florence section, there are so many spies, so many conspiracies, all mixed together, that they destroy the possibility of the belief that espionage is of any use whatsoever.

The Florence crisis of 1899 began when "young Evan Godolphin, daft with the spring and sporting a costume too Esthetic for such a fat boy, pranced into Florence" (p. 141). Evan has received a telegram from old Hugh Godolphin, mentioning Vheissu and telling him to come. The tone of the telegram excited the spy in Evan:

And this had a je ne sais quoi de sinistre about it which sent pleasurable chills racing along his spinal column. His imagination ran riot. Unwise to say too much combined with that appeal to their only common possession [Vheissu]. Either itself would have made Evan feel ashamed: ashamed at hallucinations belonging in a spy thriller, even more painfully ashamed for an attempt at something which should have existed but did not, based only on a sharing long ago of a bedside story. But both together, were like a parlay of horses, capable of a whole arrived at by some operation more alien than simple addition of parts (p. 143).

On the way into the city, Evan sees Victoria who has already, by chance, met old Godolphin. Old Godolphin in a moment of weakness has told Victoria of Vheissu, the Shangri-la complete with iridescent spider monkeys. He stops short of telling her what he wants to tell Evan--that he has seen the spider monkeys of Vheissu under the Antarctic ice, that Vheissu is a conspiracy of annihilation with tunnels everywhere under the earth. Victoria, determined to help, reports old Godolphin to the Foreign Office. Here we see Godolphin has broken the traditional isolation of a man who knows too much. That "terrible desire to communicate," the desire to trust someone, can only harm the spy (even an accidental spy) if he gives in to it. While Victoria is spilling the beans at the F.O., Signor Mantissa and his accomplice Cesare are on the Ponte Vecchio plotting to steal the Birth of

Venus in the Uffizi and is taken to the English embassy where Sidney Stencil questions him about V.--Vheissu. The Gaucho is confused. He figures they must be using code names for Venezuela. While the interrogation is taking place, old Godolphin escapes from the room where Victoria had locked him up for safe keeping. He emerges just in time to elude the authorities by sprinting across the Florentine roof-tops. Meanwhile young Godolphin, alias Gadrulfi in Italian eyes, has been arrested and is questioned for an hour by the Italians before he is brought to the English embassy where he meets the Gaucho. Evan Godolphin knows little about Vheissu, but knows he is to meet old Godolphin that night at Scheissvogel's beer hall. The Gaucho by this time figures something big is in the wind and that as a revolutionary he should act.

Later that evening a riot breaks out in the square midway between Scheissvogel's, the Uffizi and the Venezuelan Consulate while old Godolphin and Signor Mantissa (old friends) are having a beer. As events get more chaotic, the plan to steal the Birth of Venus is dropped when she is halfway out of her frame, and Evan, Old Godolphin, Signor Mantissa and Cesare escape down the Arno on a barge. The Gaucho goes back to the square to join the Venezuelan rebels (the "Figli di Machiavelli") who have incited to riot because of all the mysterious rumblings about V., Vheissu--obvious code names for Venezuela. Young Victoria Wren is a spectator of the riot: "Inviolable and calm, she watched the spasms of wounded bodies, the fair of violent death, framed and staged, it seemed, for her alone in that tiny square" (pp. 192-93).

Later in the novel, the same people who were in Florence discover V. in their own ways. In the 1922 conversation which Mondaugen overhears

between Vera Meroving and old Godolphin (and which Stencil has re-reported to Eigenvalue in 1956), we find that Godolphin sees V. as the fiasco of Florence on a universal scale:

Godolphin laughed at her. "There's been a war, Fraulein. Vheissu was a luxury, an indulgence. We can no longer afford the likes of Vheissu."

"But the need," she protested, "its void. What can fill that?"

He cocked his head and grinned at her. "What is already filling it. The real thing. Unfortunately. . . . Whether we like it or not that war destroyed a kind of privacy, perhaps the privacy of dream. Committed us . . . to work out three-o'clock anxieties, excesses of character, political hallucinations on a live mass, a real human population. The discretion, the sense of comedy about the Vheissu affair are with us no more, our Vheissus are no longer our own or even confined to a circle of friends; they're public property. God knows how much of it the world will see, or what lengths it will be taken to (p. 230).

Godolphin has discovered that the gentlemanly arts of exploring and spying, of trying to make the world safe for coming generations, are futile in the twentieth century. History is each man's nightmare and each man's dream blown all out of proportion. Likewise, in Malta in 1919, Sidney Stencil in dialogue with himself discovers why espionage is no longer a useful trade, why his usefulness as an agent of the Foreign Office is as hallucinatory as Godolphin's Vheissu:

Don't act as if it were a conscious plot against you. Who knows how many thousand accidents--a variation in the weather, the availability of a ship, the failure of a crop--brought all these people . . . here to this island and arranged them into this alignment? Any Situation takes shape from events much lower than the merely human.

Oh, of course: look at Florence. A random pattern of cold-air currents, some shifting of the pack ice, the deaths of a few ponies, these helped produce one Hugh Godolphin, as we saw him. Only by the merest happenstance did he escape the private logic of that ice-world.

The inert universe may have a quality we can call logic. But logic is a human attribute after all; so even at that its a misnomer. What are real are the cross-purposes. We've dignified them with the words "profession" and "occupation" (p. 455).

Sidney Stencil has discovered that V. is what underlies the Situation, and that V. is either pure accident or unintelligible logic. What he is sure of is that men make up patterns, myths, metaphors, and analogies to control V. and this earnest, unconscious fiction-making compounds the Situation. The "profession," all of traditional espionage, is part of this suspect belief in patterns. The elder Stencil, product of nineteenth-century positivism now transplanted to Malta to spy, finds that he is caught between two equally implausible world views: the universal myth which denies all time and the determinist metaphor of history as progress:

Nostalgia and melancholy . . . Hadn't he bridged two worlds? The changes couldn't have been all in him. It must be an alien passion in Malta where all history seemed simultaneously present, where all streets were strait with ghosts, where in a sea whose uneasy floor made and unmade islands every year this stone fish and Ghaudex and the rocks called Cumin-seed and Peppercorn had remained fixed realities since time out of mind. In London were too many distractions. History there was the record of an evolution. One-way and ongoing. Monuments, buildings, plaques were remembrances only; but in Valletta remembrances seemed almost to live (p. 452).

Like Yu Tsun in Borges' story, Sidney Stencil finds that the trajectory he has made as an international spy has taken him to a place where the universe seems timeless. Two systems of myth contest one another here on Malta; they are two faces of the logical pole of V. Yet the other pole, the force of pure accident is at work, too. The "unknown circumstances" under which Sidney Stencil dies turn out to be those of pure, unpredictable accident: a water spout, shooting up out of a calm sea, destroys the boat in which Sidney Stencil is leaving Malta.

The century's child, Herbert Stencil, takes on the spy trade unwittingly and unwillingly. He realizes that espionage is a matter of spying on his

own desires and the motives of others. In chasing after V., Stencil brings together enough information to show us to what extent history is a matter of "cross-purposes." Stencil has an intuition that only the chase for V., whatever it is, matters: that is, that fictionalizing, not absolute truth, is the only human element in history, next that the non-human world often operates despite human orderings, and finally that it is the free-play of historical event which is history:

A phrase kept cycling round and round, preconsciously, just under the threshold of lip and tongue movement: "Events seem to be ordered into an ominous logic." It repeated itself automatically and Stencil improved on it each time, placing the emphasis on different words--"events seem"; "seem to be ordered"; "ominous logic"--pronouncing them differently, changing the "tone of voice" from sepulchral to jaunty: round and round and round. Events seem to be ordered into an ominous logic. He found paper and pencil and began to write the sentence in varying hands and type faces (p. 423).

Stencil's free play with polarities ("seem to be ordered" versus "seem to be ordered") and with possibilities ("sepulchral to jaunty") in Malta is the same sort of free play Pynchon creates in the novel V. Myth and metaphor no longer reconcile opposites, no longer give shape and significance, to the world of fact or the world of men. Pynchon's V. is just loose and just baggy enough to absorb and then deny both Acton's ultimate history and Eliot's mythotherapy. Espionage as a state of mind is the best check on a language which is inescapably metaphorical. At the end of his essay, "Notes on a New Sensibility," Richard Wasson reiterates the question which the postmodern sensibility brings to the fore: "How modern poets can come to grips with the metaphorical nature of language in spite of their openly declared dislike of metaphor."²⁴ One possibility is that, as Pynchon and Cortázar have done, they will create metaphor and then

undercut it by showing to what great extent the subjective mind is incapable of accurately patterning a world which is "other." Another possibility is that they will follow Borges' lead in "La muerte y la brújula" by assuming an analogical relationship between the mind and the world, by continually "deciphering a more precise equation for an unbelievable world . . . that mathematically exact world in which geometrical but terrible lives are constructed for men to live."²⁵ As Ernesto Sábato shows in "Geometrización de la novela," stories like Borges' "La muerte" begin with the rational metaphors of the detective story--chronology and causality--but soon this mathematical analogy between mind and world is undermined by a geometrical system which is a precise, exacting, eternal scheme in which the concrete reality is subjected to the ideal, abstract reality of the geometrical figure:

Es claro que los objetos ideales pertenecen a un universo sin tiempo y sin causalidad. Un círculo no nació algún día y no morirá jamás: es incorruptible. Los centauros, la Blancura, las figuras matemáticas, pertenecen a un mundo incorruptible como el cielo platónico, donde el movimiento y el tiempo no existen, donde todo es eterno e invariable.²⁶

Borges, in pitting the mathematical metaphor against the geometric metaphor, demonstrates the nightmare in which rational analogies trap us. A third possibility is that the postmodern writer will continue to undercut the traditional metaphor which reconciles the paradoxical split between the mind and the world, but at the same time will emphasize a new sort of metaphor which is strictly artifice. The structural metaphor is the new sort of metaphor which works to generate fiction rather than to define the world, and we have seen it at work in Robbe-Grillet's Projet. It works in much the same way in his spy novel La Maison de rendez-vous. This struc-

tural use of metaphor is clear in technical devices such as the mise en abyme or the mirror image. Structural metaphor is used as a generator and pushed to its most theoretical extreme in Jean Ricardou's avant-garde spy novel, Les Lieux-dits.²⁷

In V. Pynchon undermines metaphor because it is an artificial means of reconciling the mind and reality by the use of a suspiciously metaphorical language, while in Les Lieux-dits, Ricardou emphasizes structural metaphor as an artifice, as a means of bringing out the distinctly linguistic domain of all literature. The secret agent heroes of Les Lieux-dits are Atta and Olivier who represent different modes of dealing with the metaphorical nature of language--the literal and the poetic. On Olivier's side is the clan of poetry: "Il est illusoire, prétendent-ils, de chercher l'origine des mots parce que les mots sont la provenance des choses"; on Atta's side is the clan of reality: "pour complexe que soit la généalogie d'un mot, de savantes recherches étymologiques, remontant les embranchements, permettent toujours d'accéder à son origine."²⁸ This same division occurs in earlier works by Ricardou, and in many ways, Les Lieux-dits is a demonstration of his critical theories about literature. For example, he discusses this rupture in the prologue to his critical study, Problèmes du nouveau roman (1967). Here, he makes a major distinction between the vertical moments of poetry which are created by language (fabriquer) and the narration of vertical moments in language which is essentially horizontal and explanatory (dire). The first process creates a literature of doing while the second is simply a literature of "chattering." The first is fiction, the creation of new content; the second is narration, the recreation of a pre-existent content. Ricardou gives as a demonstration of

this rupture the example of the story of the birth of Aphrodite (once again we are back to V-ness). According to Hesiod, Plato and Mallarmé, the goddess of beauty was born from the foam of the ocean waves, thus she is called Aphrodite, aphros meaning foam. By tracing the origin of her name, we can discover the particulars of her birth. On the other hand, Bailly in his Dictionnaire and Marouzeau in Aspects du français point out that the word Aphrodite is of unknown origin, probably Phoenician, and that the Greeks created the myth of the goddess' birth from the foam to explain the word Aphrodite.²⁹ Which came first, the word or the thing, becomes the battlefield of the two opposing clans of Les Lieux-dits.

The battle we are seeing here is, in effect, an old one: does art imitate life or does life imitate art. Ricardou seems to emphasize, by means of artifice, the idea that life imitates art, but this emphasis is due to the fact that the traditional novel has for so long followed the premise that art holds the mirror up to life. Actually Ricardou refuses to opt for either side; rather, by refusing to synthesize the antinomies, he generates art out of the ambiguity which they create. In his 1971 essay, "Esquisse d'une théorie des generateurs," he presents a theory of artistic production based on this ambiguity, and his theory is particularly applicable to the way in which he constructs Les Lieux-dits:

Le concept de production élimine deux illusions inverse: la création, l'expression. Seule une étrange mystique se risque à assimiler la production d'un texte à une prétendue création ex-nihilo; seul un dogme romantique se risque à la réduire à l'expression d'une substance antécédente. Avec la création, le départ n'est rien; avec l'expression, le départ est tout. Avec la création, l'invention est tout; avec l'expression la transformation doit se résoudre à rien. Avec production on reconnaît deux grandeurs: d'une part une base de départ, d'autre part le travail transformateur d'une certaine opération. On appellera générateur le couple formé d'une base et d'une opération.³⁰

Ricardou goes on to point out that the base may be a word, like Aphrodite for example, or a text. The operations which continually transform the base to other bases are many: for instance, identity, similarity, inversion, contiguity, repetition, amplification, reduction, exclusion, etc. In Les Lieux-dits, Ricardou creates the text by means of auto-generation. Again, Ricardou's own description of this process is very useful because his novel is, in the end, the working out of his own critical formulations:

L'autogénération met le texte en rapport avec lui-même.
Elle est déjà liée au répétitif. Le phénomène est
particulièrement sensible avec l'opération analogique.
Formé de rapports de similitude interne, le texte tend à
devenir miroir de lui-même, lieu d'un dédoublement.³¹

In short, Les Lieux-dits starts with a base word which the text amplifies, reverses, extends, mirrors; the text criticizes its own operations.

At the beginning of Les Lieux-dits, Ricardou's use of a base word to generate fiction is immediately evident in the word damier (checkerboard). A landscape is described: a river runs between alternating acres of field and forest. The river is called le Damier. Immediately the question arises as to whether the landscape was created after the river was named, or whether the river was named because of the checkered landscape. Those who inhabit the region are divided into two camps: the realists who say the name can be traced to the land itself, and the poets who say the land can be traced to the name. The checkerboard, of course, suggests two opposing teams, the red and the black (sometimes seen as deep blue in the novel). The red and the black suggest the military and the clergy, and soon these two ideas are brought together in the symbol of the crusades. On the bank of the river is the town of Bannière (Banner; which again suggests the siding with a particular faction: se ranger sous la bannière

de means to "side with"). The realists say the town got its name when eight crusaders passed through it in the middle ages. The poets of the region say the story of the eight crusaders was created to explain why the town was called Bannière. Ricardou's narrator writes of the recruiting crusaders:

Peut-être leur orateur composa-t-il de prégnantes descriptions où s'opposaient, aux infernales rougeurs, les délicats bleutés du paradis. Sans doute évoqua-t-il la rivalité primordiale entre les biens et les maux, et comment cette lutte souterraine accède parfois à la surface en batailles intenses, à chaque fois semble-t-il décisives³²

This idea of a grand analogical scheme of oppositions is the text of Les Lieux-dits. We find battles between the earth and sky, red ants and black ants, sun and shadow, fire and water, realists and poets, Atta (who dresses always in red and whose name refers to a sort of red ant) and Olivier (who dresses always in blue and whose name refers to a species of black ant).

The entire text of Les Lieux-dits concerns a province containing eight towns. The alphabetical index of the text and the frequent addresses to the "traveler" indicate that the text is a tour guide in which words are transparent tools used to describe the region. The use of words as generators, the repetition of passages in the text, the characterizations, indicate that the text is a novel which uses words to create the region. The symmetry of the work reinforces the idea that we are dealing with a fiction rather than a tour guide here: we are given eight chapters, each chapter is the name of a town composed of eight letters, each chapter is also divided into eight sections, the index of towns spells out the name of the central town diagonally, creating an abstract Maltese cross:

~~B A N N I E R E~~
~~B E A U F O R T~~
~~B E L A R B R E~~
B E L C R O I X
~~C E N D R I E R~~
~~C H A U M O N T~~
~~H A U T B O I S~~
~~M O N T E A U X~~

The Maltese cross is associated not only with the crusades and with the idea of secret societies (made up of eight nations and eight languages) but also with the painter Albert Crucis, who lived in the region, incited many stories about his being a spy and a revolutionary, and then mysteriously disappeared. Both Atta and Olivier are ostensibly tracing the meaning of the life, work, and disappearance of Crucis during their tour of the province. At the end of the text, we find they are both spies from opposing camps, and the tour guide becomes a murder novel when Olivier kills Atta.

The analogical structure of Les Lieux-dits demonstrates a new use of metaphor. Ricardou calls the traditional use of metaphor, métaphore expressive (expressive or explanatory metaphor). The traditional metaphor, according to Ricardou, is made up of three elements: comparé, point commun, comparant; that is, the first term, the common understood term, the second term. For example, in the metaphor "he is a lion," he is the first term--the major term being defined; bravery is the common understood term; and lion is the second term which simply exists to describe the first term. Ricardou refers to the first term as the ici (here) and the second term as the ailleur (there). His idea of a structural metaphor is of a metaphor

which would give both terms equal status, and which would replace the idea of comparison (definition and limitation) with the idea of a voyage from one ici to a second ici, and that ici would generate a third etc.³³ This theory explains to some extent the constant addresses to the voyager in the text. It also explains the way in which metaphors become constellations of metaphors. Thus, in Les Lieux-dits, we see the landscape yield to the checkerboard, the checkerboard to the crusades, the crusades to analogical oppositions of numerous sorts. The mise en abyme is a form of extended and concentrated structural metaphor, as Pierre and Madeleine Caminade describe it in their essay, "Métaphore et le nouveau roman," which concentrates on the example of Les Lieux-dits.³⁴ The small convex mirrors which Gide called the mise en abyme in the paintings of Memling and Quentin Metzys could both give a resumé of the entire painting, reverse it in the mirror image, and contest it by showing the other side of the structure. Les Lieux-dits contains many versions of the mise en abyme-- paintings, engravings, cigarette packages, a magnifying glass opuscles--all of which carry out the self-critical mirroring function.

In the first chapter of the work, "Bannière," both Atta and Olivier visit the museum where the works of Albert Crucis are exhibited. In one room are eight paintings of landscapes--one for each town--surrounding a large central canvas. The large painting has in its center a small hill with a cross standing on it against a stormy sky. It stands in the shade of an oak tree which is just to its left. In the upper left is a distant fortified château and in the lower left is a soldier wearing chain mail and holding a standard from which the banner of the Maltese cross blows out to the right of the painting. On the righthand side of the cross is an area

ravaged by fire. To the far right are three hills covered with trees and brush which the fire is ascending. At the top right, the heavy smoke is being blown toward the left. Thus the large canvas represents all the towns of the province symbolically: Belcroix is in the center, with Belarbre, Bannière and Beaufort on its left and with Cendrier, Chaumont, Hautbois and Monteaux on its right. The directions which the wind is blowing the banner and the smoke are contradictory; they suggest that the two sides of the painting mirror one another. The Crucis painting is one of the sensitized points of compression and dissemination of which Butor speaks in "L'Espace du roman," and which he demonstrated in L'Emploi du temps in the case of the Harrey tapestries (see page 93 of this text). By Ricardou's treatment of the large painting, we see why and how his writing differs from Butor's, why Ricardou chooses the spy and Butor the detective. Butor is using artifice to investigate the experience of man dealing with reality; Ricardou is using artifice to discuss man dealing with language alone. Butor's tapestries lead Revel to other cities of men in other times, to their basic myths--Cain, Theseus--and the contradictions in the mythic narratives. Ricardou's description of the large painting leads Atta and Olivier to other works which image this painting with variation: at Cendrier we see a picture postcard of the square of Belcroix which repeats the same symbols of the painting, and we also see a series of funeral urns at the ceramic museum which again repeat these base elements of the text. All three works tend to lead us to explore the process of generating fiction rather than the world imaged by man in his fiction. Les Lieux-dits mirrors itself.

The idea of the mirror image is central to both the traditional novel and the nouveau roman. Pierre and Madeleine Caminade show how the idea of mirroring is joined to the text of Les Lieux-dits:

Or, le miroir est relié, d'une part, à la théorie du roman conventionnel qu'il qualifie métaphoriquement dans l'expression roman-miroir et, d'autre part, à la théorie du Nouveau Roman, plus spécialement à la définition même de la mise en abyme. . . . Cette conjonction, explosive, incendiaire, va se trouver métaphorisée par la loupe, instrument qui a une double capacité optique; elle grossit et permet d'y voir; elle fait voir petit et à l'envers; enfin, concentrant les rayons du soleil, elle permet . . . de faire du feu et d'allumer un incendie. En outre, cette conjonction est à son tour mise en abyme, à la fois, dans Réflexion et la mise en scène d'Epsilon l'antiquaire, l'une et l'autre contenant, outre un miroir bleu et or, une tapisserie d'Aubusson et une gravure de XVII^e siècle représentant la même scène galante, qui, nous le verrons, est elle aussi une mise en abyme complexe: des rapports Olivier-Atta, vus par le roman conventionnel et par le Nouveau Roman.³⁵

In the second chapter, "Beaufort," Olivier visits the antique dealer, Epsilon. There he sees in a store window a display of the stages of a love scene in an engraving, a tapestry and repeated by the mannequins in the window. The art works are a mise en abyme of the relations between Atta and Olivier because they reflect the various stages which form the story of the two spies: uncertainty, passion, danger. Later in the chapter "Chaumont," Olivier and Atta talk with the book dealer, Epsilon, who is the brother of the antique dealer. The name of these brothers is, as Olivier points out, an anagram for l'espion (spy). The brothers belong to different camps: the antique dealer works with things; the book dealer works with literature. Epsilon the book dealer shows Olivier and Atta a painting by Crucis called Réflexion. The picture is of an antique dealer's store window in which a display, a tapestry and an engraving all are versions of the same love scene. In front of the store window are a young

man dressed in blue and a young woman dressed in red. Their reflections in the window are superimposed on the window display. When asked how Crucis, who supposedly disappeared and died eight years earlier, could have painted the recent window display in Beaufort, Epsilon explains that the painting doesn't imitate the things in the window, rather the window imitates the painting. The figures of the two young people (Olivier and Atta?) who are looking in the window have the effect of contesting the entire chronology of the text. Epsilon only confuses matters more by explaining that the title Réflexion "outre ses sens psychologique et optique, désigne un retour" (p. 127; "aside from its psychological and optical sense, it indicates a return").

After viewing the painting Réflexion, Epsilon describes his own manner of creating literary works. Here, the method of production operating in all of Les Lieux-dits is explained quite well:

Nulle tentative, en mes oeuvres, de rapporter une histoire. Il importe plutôt de déduire la fiction de règles strictes établies dans l'abstrait. Pour cela d'abord fallait-il découvrir deux genres antagonistes. Or, en leur développements respectifs, guide touristique et texte romanesque s'opposent foncièrement. L'un s'efface tout entier derrière ce monde qu'il invite à voir; l'autre, avec ses descriptions et aventures, invente en les réseaux de son langage, à chaque fois, un univers particulier. Il suffisait alors de définir le livre comme lieu et enjeu du réciproque litige des deux adversaires. . . .

Soit, mais comment dans la pratique, demande Olivier, articuler les manoeuvres des deux ennemis, éviter les certitudes d'une stratégie élémentaire? . . .

Les deux adversaires révèlent en eux-mêmes, chacun, leur propre contestation. Il n'est pas de guide qui ne succombe au désir du langage Quant au roman, pour occupé qu'il soit à inventer l'autonomie de son espace, il ne laisse d'utiliser en revanche, à chaque instant, des éléments du monde Ainsi, loin de figurer un indice assuré, chaque phrase reste le plus souvent tissu d'incertitude.³⁶

Epsilon's description of the text contains Les Lieux-dits just as Les Lieux-dits contains the description given by Epsilon. Ricardou's novel is a fabric of various mise en abyme which mirror, contain and contradict one another. The paintings by Crucis, the Epsilon-l'espion brothers, the miniature literary critique are only a few of the complex metaphors which make up the constellation of metaphors which is Les Lieux-dits. As Epsilon indicates, the battle which is the content of Les Lieux-dits takes place even on the level of the phrase: the same phrase may recur in different contexts, the same series of phrases may be repeated verbatim several times in the course of the text, the repetition of the word "aujourd'hui" makes the entire text one present moment and therefore in one way chronology is destroyed in the text. At the end of the novel, after Olivier has tied Atta in the form of a Maltese cross and set fire to her, Crucis returns (as his painting Réflexion indicated he would) to have the last word: "Tout cela, une fois de plus, aujourd'hui, est une métaphore."³⁷

Albert Crucis' final statement--that everything that occurred was metaphor--points to the close relation between craft and craftiness in Ricardou's fiction. Ricardou opts for the adventure of a narration rather than the conventional narration of an adventure. Although both strands are to be woven in his novel, as Epsilon's critical text indicates, the emphasis falls greatly on the former. As was mentioned earlier, part of this emphasis is due to the fact that the traditional novel has for so long emphasized mainly the narration of adventures. Ricardou's text constantly brings us back to the other side of the coin: the way in which words generate fictions. Although Ricardou's experiments with fiction are theoretically valuable and are necessary experiments, even Robbe-Grillet--

who tends to defend the experiments of the new novel rather blindly--has remarked that Ricardou's fiction tends to be perhaps too formulaic, too limited. Fiction limited to anagrammatic play and chance generation of ideas involves two possible pitfalls: first, it risks becoming mechanical; second, it risks becoming associated with a sort of regained innocence which separates itself from the lives of men.³⁸ Despite these pitfalls, Ricardou's work is interesting in its own right and useful in helping to develop theory about the role language plays in postmodern literature.

The weaving of artifice and reality which Ricardou fails to accomplish completely in his Les Lieux-dits is accomplished, I think, by Nabokov in both Lolita and Pale Fire. These two novels are narrated by men who are unreliable, intelligent, and perhaps mad, and both novels are recapitulations of crimes, after the fact. Humbert Humbert in Lolita is part detective, part spy, and completely criminal as far as the authorities are concerned--be they legal or psychiatric. The detective talent of Humbert comes out when he is led on a paper chase by Clare Quilty and Lolita across the United States. He manages to hold his own with Sherlock Holmes in his ability to decipher clues: for example, Quilty signs various hotel registers with names such as Arthur Rainbow (Arthur Rimbaud); Morris Schmetterling (Maurice Maeterlinck); Dr. Kitzler, Eryx, Miss. (Dr. Clitoris, Venus, Miss.); Harold Haze, Tombstone, Ariz.; and Ted Hunter, Cane, NH. (an anagram for Enchanted Hunter). Humbert Humbert unravels all these clues and many more. Yet, Humbert's descriptions of himself reveal that he is also a spy, and it is this aspect of his personality which foreshadows the creation of Kinbote and the full-fledged parody of spy fiction, Pale Fire.³⁹

In Lolita, Humbert thinks:

I am like one of those inflated spiders you see in old gardens. Sitting in the middle of a luminous web and giving little jerks to this or that strand. My web is spread out all over the house as I listen from my chair where I sit like a wily wizard. Is Lo in her room? I tug the silk. She is not. . . .⁴⁰

Kinbote, the narrator of Pale Fire, spreads his web all over the life of the poet John Shade: he spies from his house next door while Shade is alive; he spies as a critic when Shade is dead. Kinbote is obsessed by spying and he believes that a real spy, one Gradus, is on his way to assassinate King Charles the Beloved, alias Kinbote himself. We readers are spying on Kinbote, as well, because his motives both personal and literary are patently suspect. Finally, we are spying on Nabokov too because of his self-admitted use of "delusive opening moves, false scents, and specious lines of play."⁴¹

Like Ricardou's novel, Nabokov's Pale Fire is a game of mirrors: reflections of spies spying on spies. The entire structure of the novel is a series of mirrors which reflect one another obliquely: the Foreward reflects Shade's poem and Kinbote's Commentary, the Index reflects them also but from a different angle, the Commentary reflects the poem and itself, the poem "Pale Fire" is a meditation on reflections both figurative and literal. The problem the reader or critic has with this series of mirrors is that while involved in all this spying, he is often lured into a position where he is suddenly faced with his own reflection in the mirror. Like the traditional novelist, Nabokov does hold the mirror up to reality, but his idea of reality is that it is fiction. Reality is to Nabokov "an infinite succession of levels, levels of perception, false bottoms and hence unquenchable, unattainable."⁴² In Pale Fire, reality has been

removed to the level of literary criticism. Literary criticism has become the spy story, and inescapably the literary critic is himself the spy whose antagonist is literature itself. Kinbote's Pale Fire is a story told in footnotes; Nabokov's Pale Fire, like the new novel, uses artifice--mirror images, mirror writing, intertextuality--to reveal the "false bottoms" of our own perceptions as both reader and critic. Nabokov reveals his artifice by leaving his own fingerprints all over the mirror he holds up to what we call reality.

The nature of these fingerprints--rather than nature per se--is what interested the first critics who reviewed Pale Fire, and the nature of their critical responses is what interests us here, since the subject is spying, after all. The various critical responses to Pale Fire show in what ways the novel is postmodern and in what ways the critics--often still traditionalists--rebel at being forced into a world of free play. Nabokov is a clever adversary and often out-traps the critics, out-spies them. The critics' reactions to the deceptions in Pale Fire, especially in the early book reviews, indicate confusion, boredom, betrayal, indignance, and in the more tolerant and usually the more perceptive cases, amusement followed by explanation and exploration of the game. Some critics find that Nabokov's fingerprints are all thumb prints, and that that thumb is placed firmly against Nabokov's nose, fingers fanned and wagging. Thus Dwight MacDonald comments on the parody of academic method in Pale Fire: "Dr. Kinbote's line-by-line commentary, which is more than five times as long as the poem, uses the most far-fetched interpretation to wrench everything into a Zemblan context. High jinx--but how elaborate can a joke be? Two hundred and twenty-eight pages is just too much. I am no foe of parody,

but this parody seemed to me almost as boring as its object."⁴³ Other critics see the fingerprint of the little pinky raised in aristocratic, and "distinctly European," amusement at artifice. Saul Maloff writes of Pale Fire: "the style, needing nothing but its own resources in order to create its world, can become--has become!--its own object and purpose, with the result that it will in the end create not a world . . . but a constellation of elegant and marvelous bibelots, an art which is minor by definition."⁴⁴ Those who find the novel insulting, morally reprehensible, find the print of the middle finger saluting them in singular and sadistic derision. "Nowadays we think it cruel to laugh at deformity and lunacy," Gilbert Highet reminds us. "Nabokov tries to make us do so. Meanwhile he watches us with a pale stare in which there is more contempt than pity."⁴⁵ An extension of this reaction is Alfred Chester's view:

Nabokov's sense of humor is on the same level--though not with the same object--as German scatological humor: excrement is funny simply because it is excrement. To Nabokov a thing is a riot by virtue of being itself, with the sous-entendu that he hates it. If you find, as he does and I don't, that it is a scream to write a literary commentary, to be an academician, to be a homosexual, to be insane, to be paranoid, to be unaware of how other people feel about you--and all these things in themselves--then you will roar with the sickly laughter of Nabokov. It takes a lot more to make me laugh; it takes the revelation of some truth to make me laugh⁴⁶

A final group of early reviewers and later critics do laugh with Nabokov--critics like Mary McCarthy, L. S. Dembo, Frank Kermode, Carol Williams, John Barth.⁴⁷ They see the mirror covered with the print of the index finger which constantly points to literature as literature, to literary discourse as a game different from, but thoroughly implicated in reality as we see it.

Nabokov's novels elicit vitriolic reviews because they challenge our literary competence: our understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells us what to look for.⁴⁸ When these operations or literary conventions are employed by an author only to be undercut, the conventions themselves are brought into relief. Our reaction at first may be confusion, betrayal or even boredom because the "story" is not developing as we expect it should. We are drawn willy-nilly into the game, and we have to recognize the rules, the purpose. As Page Stegner points out in Escape into Aesthetics, the clash between composer and solver is everywhere evident in Nabokov's novels: in Lolita Humbert Humbert is the solver led on a paper chase by composer Clare Quilty and in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, Sebastian's brother V. tries to solve the mystery of Sebastian's life, to give us the "real" life.⁴⁹ In Pale Fire, Kinbote tries desperately to explain Shade's poem while Shade tries to explain death and we try to explain both Shade and Kinbote. Solvers are spying on composers everywhere. In all cases, it is clear that the point is not finding a definitive solution, but rather recognizing the specious play, seeing how we are taken in by the delusive opening moves, and discovering that subjective versions of reality are hidden beneath any solver's quest for objective fact. The reader and critic as solver must deal with Nabokov's composition--all its puns, allusions, neologisms, reflecting structures, intertextualities, its false resemblances and equally false dissimilarities.⁵⁰

As Shade tells us in his poem:

. . . the sense behind
 The scene was not our sense. In life, the mind
 Of any man is quick to recognize
 Natural shams, and then before his eyes

The reed becomes a bird, the knobby twig
 An inch worm, the cobra head, a big
 Wickedly folding moth.⁵¹

This art of reflection, this insistence on the fingerprints found on the mirror held up to nature, to reality, this insistence on artifice seems to be not a refusal to deal with life, but rather an effort to deal with literature. Just as Kant gave philosophy the central key when he asked not "What is reality?" but rather "What can I know?" so too the postmodern writers give us a necessary key in asking not "How can I hold the mirror up to nature?" but rather "What fingerprints are we leaving on that mirror?"

This switch from an emphasis on reality as the concern of literature to literature as the concern of literature has caused, understandably, a good deal of strife, sneers of "art for art's sake." For example, Dwight MacDonald notes that in Pale Fire we become aware that Kinbote is a lunatic, that Shade merely tolerates him, that Shade's poem has little to do with Zembla and that Gradus, the spy, is an invention. He continues: "The skill with which the author, speaking always through Kinbote, manages to let these cats out of the bag without ever damaging the structure of Kinbote's paranoid fantasy, this must be admired. But not, I think, applauded. For the technical exertions he expends on the project are so obtrusive as to destroy any esthetic pleasure on the reader's part."⁵² The phrase, "so obtrusive as to destroy any esthetic pleasure on the reader's part" is a telling one. Artifice need not destroy our aesthetic pleasure, but it may indeed destroy the mimetic convention we are used to, the idea that literature is life rather than simply literature--possible versions of the way we express reality. MacDonald seems to be looking for that kind of fiction which allows the reader to sit back and be a spectator, the type of fiction

Butor has called "bromide fiction." Here is a critic who ends up seeing his own reflection in Nabokov's booby-trapped mirrors, his own desire for a mimetic story.

That MacDonald has been implicated in the game, both unwittingly and unwillingly, is also clear in his comments on the delusive opening moves of Pale Fire: "Dr. Kinbote," he says, "advises the reader to read his commentary before reading the poem. High jinx. I did so, was bored, shifted to the poem, was bored etc. like an insomniac restlessly seeking a more comfortable position."⁵³ Clearly MacDonald--like many of the rest of us when first reading Pale Fire--has been out-trapped by both Kinbote and Nabokov. Kinbote's trap is set out of solipsism; Nabokov's out of delight in the game. The point is, of course, that MacDonald, in acquiescing unwittingly to Kinbote's lunatic point of view, is led to break a cardinal rule of most critics: he reads the secondary source first, and the primary source second-hand. This is like reading criticism on Shakespeare and then reading Shakespeare's plays as an adjunct to that criticism. Yet, this is the sort of trap we fall into in Pale Fire, if we follow Kinbote's advice.

Kinbote's critical views lead us into other traps as well. For example, John Shade's poem in the novel is written in Pope's heroic measure. Mary McCarthy mentions that the poem opens with a beautiful image which introduces the idea of reflections--"I was the shadow of the waxwing slain/By the false azure in the window pane"--and that this image is followed by another still more beautiful and more poignant one, an image of a room at night, the curtains open, which is reflected in the dark landscape outside so that the "chair and bed exactly stand/Upon that snow, out in that crystal land!"⁵⁴ In his Commentary, Kinbote directs our

attention to these lines, and they do present the important idea of mirroring, yet I think that we are, perhaps, again out-trapped if we don't judge the poem as it stands, alone. The first four lines of the poem read:

I was the shadow of the waxwing slain
 By the false azure in the windowpane;
 I was the smudge of ashen fluff--and I
 Lived on, flew on, in the reflected sky.

That "smudge of ashen fluff" should bother us. It is like Twain's spoof of the romantic style in "A Double-Barreled Detective Story"; his spoof almost passes unnoticed until we reach the line: "far in the empty sky a solitary esophagus slept on motionless wings."⁵⁵ That "solitary esophagus" makes us stop and look again at the style, the discourse: "empty sky"? "motionless wings"? In Pale Fire, if we can accept the poet as "the shadow of the waxwing slain," isn't his lyric presence undercut if we consider him as a "smudge" dirtying the window? Other parts of Shade's poem, I think, have the same effect; we are prevented from being pulled along by its narrative content and are forced to examine and to question the material of which the poem is made--the words. For example, Shade writes:

I was an infant when my parents died.
 They both were ornithologists. I've tried
 So often to evoke them that today
 I have a thousand parents. Sadly they
 Dissolve in their own virtues and recede,
 But certain words, chance words I hear or read
 Such as "bad heart" always to him refer,
 And "cancer of the pancreas" to her. (ll. 71-78)

Chance words like "ornithologists" make us stop to wonder if that is why Shade is the "shadow of the waxwing." The lines "Such as 'bad heart' always to him refer/And 'cancer of the pancreas' to her," and the way they rhyme, cause us to re-examine the poem as art, and the idea of self-parody.

Just as Shade's parents multiply as he tries to put them on paper, so too the whole structure of Pale Fire seems to be based on this sort of multiplication of distorted resemblances. Even Kinbote is forced to admit in a moment of pure frustration that he has made "some awful mistake in [his] incantations" and he has visions of "an endless sequence of green-shorted Kinbotes meeting an anthology of poets and a brocken of their wives" (p. 131). We have moved from mimetic content to a discussion of structure when we realize that in Shade's poem, we are not only dealing with heroic couplets but also with something like anti-heroic dupelets: not only with poetry, but with parody.

Nabokov has said that for him "Satire is a lesson, parody is a game."⁵⁶ He means, I believe, that his fiction is not an effort to proselytize--not an effort at pat and prescriptive didacticism. The game he refers to is at base a serious game, one in which we are all implicated since it revolves around our manner of presenting reality to ourselves and others. It demands that we spy on ourselves and on literary creations of reality in order to discover the subjective bias. Parody is one way of bringing the subjective bias into relief; spying is another. When asked why he called parody the "last resort of wit" in Pale Fire, Nabokov replied: "This is Kinbote speaking. There are people whom parody upsets."⁵⁷ From looking at what critics have said about the novel, Kinbote isn't alone in his opinion.

Parody and punning, both established literary devices during the Renaissance, began to take on the pejorative connotations Kinbote ascribes to them in the discussions on "false wit" in the writings of Locke, Addison, and Dr. Johnson, for example. In The Spectator, we read that true wit

generally consists in resemblance and congruity of ideas, while false wit consists in the resemblance and congruity of sometimes single letters (i.e. anagrams), sometimes syllables (i.e. echoes), sometimes words (i.e. puns), and sometimes even external mimicry (i.e. a man who can resemble another in tone, posture and face).⁵⁸ At present, parody and punning still have this pejorative sense, perhaps in part because they tend to destroy the mimetic contract which readers of novels have come to depend on. Yet, self-referential writing has become more and more prevalent in the novel. In Ricardou's Les Lieux-dits, we saw the extreme of a self-referential writing which continually broke the mimetic contract, continually criticizing itself and talked about its own operations. In Pale Fire, the mimetic contract is more subtly broken--broken by Kinbote's misleading Foreward, by the uneven style of Shade's poem, by Kinbote's direct addresses to the reader, by his sudden rages and obvious misinterpretations, by all the word-play and structural mirroring Nabokov has worked into the text,⁵⁹ and of course, by the over-riding parody of the scholarly commentary. It is useful to look at Nabokov's advice to the critic here since Pale Fire is about the critic:

Learn to distinguish banality. Remember that mediocrity thrives on "ideas." Beware the modish message. Ask yourself if the footprint you have detected is not your own footprint. Ignore allegories. By all means place the "how" above the "what" but do not let it be confused with the "so what."⁶⁰

The postmodern writers parody not only worn out forms--those bloated, malodorous corpses--to bring our attention to the "how"; they also parody themselves. It is this self-parody which divides the game from the lesson, the exploration of possible worlds from the explanation of a deterministic world. Self-parody occurs when one fiction is constantly displaced by

another, and none of them can be termed "the real story." Pale Fire is such a hall of mirrors. In fact, it is not only difficult but impossible to distinguish the "real" characters and the "real" story from the make-believe. As both Mary McCarthy and Page Stegner agree, the story in Pale Fire is at least triple. We learn first that Kinbote, a new professor at Wordsmith University in New Wye, Appalachia, has rented a house from Judge Goldsworth and moved in next door to John Shade, the famous poet who also teaches at the university. Upon learning that Shade is planning to write a long poem, Kinbote stretches out his web to capture the poet. On long "sunset rambles" Kinbote tells Shade about his native land, Zembla, and about its king, Charles the Beloved, forced into exile. Kinbote is sure that Shade's poem concerns the subject matter which he has been kind enough to give him, and that "John Shade valued [Kinbote's] society above that of all other people" (p. 15). So anxious about the poem and so lonely in his personal life is Kinbote that he constantly spies on Shade: "From the second story of my house the Shades' living-room window remained clearly visible . . . and almost every evening I could see the poet's slippered foot gently rocking" (p. 15). We learn next that the "real story" is that Kinbote himself is the escaped King Charles the Beloved and that he is being tracked across the globe by a spy and assassin named Gradus, a man "with a sordid purpose in his heart and a loaded gun in his pocket" (p. 56). Gradus does manage to get to New Wye, and once there, he attempts to shoot Charles the Beloved. He misses his aim and kills the poet John Shade instead. We learn finally, from our own active spying, that Kinbote is simply a lonely, homosexual, vegetarian, Russian professor who is insanely jealous of John Shade's wife and friends and who longs to be a hero. Gradus exists but is

not exactly a spy; he is an escapee from an insane asylum who has come to shoot Judge Goldsworth for putting him away. Kinbote himself runs across a picture of the escaped lunatic, Jack Grey, in one of Judge Goldsworth's photo albums: "the close-set merciless eyes of a homicidal maniac (somewhat resembling, I admit, the late Jacques d'Argus [alias Gradus])" (p. 60).

From these various layers of fiction, critics have tried to separate out the "real" characters from the "fictional" ones. Dwight MacDonald has stated that Gradus is obviously a figment of Kinbote's imagination. Stegner states: "It is even possible, perhaps probable, that Gradus and Shade are as much figments of Kinbote's imagination as Charles the Beloved and the far-distant land of Zembla."⁶¹ That leaves us only with the problem of deciding where Shade's poem came from. Finally, Julia Bader in her study, Crystal Land, makes a virtuoso attempt at a close reading of Pale Fire and discovers the "true" solution: "The final summary of the entire plot of the novel also suggests that Shade is 'real' while the other characters (Kinbote and Gradus) are fictional."⁶² That leaves us with the simple task of deciding where the Foreword, Commentary, and Index came from. As John Stark emphasizes in his study of the literature of exhaustion, critics who argue about what is real in Pale Fire have "swallowed Nabokov's bait. That is, they argue about what is most 'real' in a work of art. Actually, Nabokov and Pale Fire (in a sense) are real; any layer inside them (actually in the novel) is imagined, and none of those inside layers is more real than any other."⁶³ Kinbote, and the critics he parodies, tend to find their own footprints in the text when they concentrate on the "what" and forget the "how."

As for the "so what" it would appear that in Nabokov's novels it is a double one: on the one hand to destroy the belief that literature is or should be reality by undercutting the mimetic contract, and on the other hand, to demonstrate man's marvelous ability to evoke worlds with words. Shade, after a vision of "Life Everlasting"--a fountain beyond the veil--sees in a newspaper that one Mrs. Z has had this vision, too. The "reality" of the vision is undercut, however, by a misprint; Mrs. Z saw a mountain, not a fountain:

Life Everlasting--based on a misprint!

But all at once it dawned on me that this
 Was the real point, the countrapuntal theme;
 Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream
 But topsy-turvical coincidence,
 Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense.
 Yes! It sufficed that I in life could find
 Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind
 Of correlated pattern in the game,
 Plexed artistry, and something of the same
 Pleasure in it as they who played it found. (ll. 803, 806-15).

The game which Shade discovers is a game in which we are all implicated, whether we wish to be or not. It is the game of trying to understand the world from a necessarily subjective point of view. And perhaps here we find part of the meaning of the title Pale Fire. In Shakespeare's Timon of Athens we read: "the moon's an arrant thief/And her pale fire she snatches from the sun," (Act 4, scene 3). Perhaps the pale fire of language is stolen both from the self and from the world, or perhaps it is the other way round. What is important is that Shakespeare tells us that not only the moon, but the sun, earth, sea--"each thing's a thief." Language, self, world--each steals from the other; none can be termed the ground of all things, the real. In the same way, it is impossible to say who--Shade,

Gradus, Kinbote--is the "real" character. We find ourselves implicated in the game--a game in which there is no basic ground on which to stand; there is only the playing of the game, the creation of a correlated pattern, a web of sense.

Kinbote's wild vision of the spy Gradus on his mission to kill the Zemblan King is the "countrapuntal theme" to John Shade's poem, "Pale Fire." Kinbote's Commentary is not so much about Shade's poem as about himself as Zemblan king; it is "countrapuntal." As Kinbote himself admits: "In many cases I have caught myself borrowing a kind of opalescent light from my poet's fiery orb" (p. 59); it is clear that in making a correlated pattern "each thing's a thief." It is in juxtaposing the movements of Gradus with the movement of Shade's poem that Kinbote creates his personal "correlated pattern," his "web of sense." Yet Kinbote's "web of sense" is undermined by Nabokov--we see Kinbote's critical footprints all over Shade's poem because we see Nabokov's authorial fingerprints all over Kinbote himself. For example, early in his Commentary, Kinbote draws our attention to a passage in Canto I of "Pale Fire"; "And then the gradual and dual blue/As night unites the viewer and the view/. . . All colors make me happy: even gray" (ll. 18-19, 29). Shade in the poem sees himself reflected in a window and beyond that the colors of the winter landscape. In his "countrapuntal" Commentary, however, Kinbote discovers Gradus reflected in the words "gradual" and "gray" which is, as he says, "an extraordinary coincidence" (p. 55) since Shade "could not have known" Gradus (p. 56). We are then given a run down of Gradus' background, his "police records," his work "organizing strikes at glass factories," and his connection with the Extremist Party of Zembla from the time of "its

first ugly writhings" (p. 56). If the tenuous connection between "gray" and "Gradus," the mention of the "viewer and the view," and the link between Shade's window and the "glass factories" haven't already made us conscious of the extent to which Nabokov is playing with Kinbote's sincere, if unbelievable, Commentary, the final paragraph of commentary to Shade's lines does:

We shall accompany Gradus in constant thought, as he makes his way from the distant dim Zembla to green Appalachia, through the entire length of the poem, following the road of its rhythm, riding past in a rhyme, skidding around the corner of a run-on, breathing with the caesura, swinging down to the foot of the page from line to line as from branch to branch, hiding between two words (see note to line 596), reappearing on the horizon of a new canto, steadily marching nearer in iambic motion, crossing streets, moving up with his valise on the escalator of the pentameter, stepping off, boarding a new train of thought, entering the hall of a hotel, putting out the bedlight, while Shade blots out a word, and falling asleep as the poet lays down his pen for the night (pp. 56-57).

While Kinbote sees what to him is the very "real" spy Gradus peeking out from between the lines of Shade's poem, despite the fact that Shade has no knowledge of Gradus, we see Kinbote's wild imagination creating a patently fictional spy to peek out of Shade's very real poem which we can read for ourselves at the beginning of Nabokov's Pale Fire. Kinbote's manipulation of the "reality" of Shade's poem is emphasized when we step back and accept Nabokov as the creator of Kinbote's Commentary: "the road of its rhythm," "riding past in a rhyme," "breathing with the caesura," "the escalator of the pentameter" are all absurd. Kinbote's choice of words is innocent, but Nabokov's choice of the same words condemns Kinbote's innocence. Everywhere the concrete and the figurative, life and literature, are juxtaposed like facing mirrors between which Kinbote stands without realizing it, for the most part. It is Nabokov's use of artifice, in this case his play with

language, which allows us to spy on the obsessions of Kinbote himself.

Kinbote's Gradus is the parody of an evil counterspy working for the forces of chaos and disruption. As in the traditional spy novel, history and inexorable fate guide the spy on his trajectory across the globe as he carries out his assigned mission. In his Commentary, however, Kinbote takes care to show how both the travels of Gradus and the construction of a poem by Shade are two lines destined to intersect. Kinbote even believes, at one point, that Shade's poem is guiding Gradus in his pursuit:

Although Gradus availed himself of all varieties of locomotion--rented cars, local trains, escalators, airplanes--somehow the eye of the mind sees him, and the muscles of the mind feel him, as always streaking across the sky with black traveling bag in one hand and loosely folded umbrella in the other, in a sustained glide high over sea and land. The force propelling him is the magic action of Shade's poem itself, the very mechanism and sweep of verse, the powerful iambic motor. Never before has the inexorable advance of fate received such a sensuous form (for other images of that transcendental tramp's approach see note to line 17) (p. 98).

What undercuts Kinbote's dramatic view of Gradus' fateful mission is a certain amount of suspect detail, such as listing under various means of locomotion, the escalator. Can it fail to take us back to the "escalator of the pentameter?" Beyond this, the description of Gradus tends to liken him to Mary Poppins, a fantastic personage in a fantasy world. All this is supposedly driven by the iambic motor of Shade's poem.

Kinbote's later close-up descriptions of Gradus and the extremist faction whom he represents usually are undermined in two ways. On the one hand, Kinbote's grotesque and romantic imagination--coupled with his narrative voice, ranging from hauteur, to horror, to hysteria--causes him to create a being who would be too fantastic, too overblown for even the loosest popular spy novel. On the other hand, the descriptions of Gradus'

activities often fit not only the context for which Kinbote uses them, but also the larger context which is Nabokov's Pale Fire. Kinbote's story is undermined in his first long discussion of Gradus, presented in connection with Shade's lines, "I alone/Knew nothing, and a great conspiracy/Of books and people hid the truth from me" (ll. 170-72). Inspired by Shade's mention of some "great conspiracy," Kinbote glosses these lines by describing the "great conspirator" himself, Gradus, who looks like "a cross between bat and crab" (p. 108). Gradus, this subhuman counterspy, has been tricked into being chosen for the infamous task of regicide, killing Kinbote, and then is stupid enough to bask in the "treacherous congratulations" bestowed upon him by the Extremists. In some sense, Gradus is the logical choice, Kinbote feels, for the mission because from his earliest childhood he has been prone to ganging up on innocent people. On the other hand, Gradus has been a failure in everything he has done. As a glass-maker all he produced were "Cartesian devils" and the "remarkably ugly red-and-amber windows of the great public lavatory" of Zembla (p. 109). In his essential dislike of injustice and deception, Gradus is a Puritan. However, his "hopeless stupidity" makes him call "unjust and deceitful everything that [surpasses] his understanding" (p. 110).

In Kinbote's view, Gradus is a tool who will always be used by others but will be incapable to success himself:

The huddled fates engage in a great conspiracy against Gradus. One notes with pardonable glee that his likes are never granted the ultimate thrill of dispatching their victim themselves. Oh surely, Gradus is active, capable, helpful, often indispensable. At the foot of the scaffold, on a raw and gray morning, it is Gradus who sweeps the night's powder snow off the narrow steps; but his long leathery face will not be the last one that the man who must mount those steps is to see in this world. It is Gradus who buys the cheap fiber valise that

a luckier guy will plant, with a time bomb inside, under the bed of a former henchman. (p. 111).

Doomed as he is to be a bungler, Gradus fails every step of the way on his mission to kill Charles the Beloved (Kinbote). When he meets, under false pretenses, with Oswin Bretwit, a Karlist supporter living in Paris, Gradus fails to find out the information he needs because he is too stupid, too uncoordinated to duplicate the secret hand sign which Bretwit has accidentally revealed to him. Next in Geneva, disguised most clumsily as an art dealer, Gradus manages to obtain fraudulent information as to the whereabouts of the King. This information sends him on a wild goose chase to Nice where he spies on the deserted villa of Queen Disa, and where the Extremists decide to drop him from the mission altogether, only to reassign him to it the next day when other secret agents finally succeed in unearthing the King's incognito and his university address. Gradus goes to New York where he stays in a third-class hotel and eats a three day old French ham sandwich because he is too cheap to buy anything. Next he tours New York for the day and finishes off his stay by eating pork, sauerkraut and French fries. Finally Gradus boards a plane to New Wye and suffers all the way there from acute gastrointestinal distress. At last in New Wye, Gradus discharges, simultaneously, his bowels and his gun in one final colossal blunder. This then, is Kinbote's dangerous and unsavory counter-spy, whose absurdity Kinbote does not ever recognize.

The farfetched account which Kinbote gives of Gradus' personality and his failures is not only suspect because of Kinbote's failure to understand the shallowness of the terrible threat he thinks he has created. The other side of the coin is the way in which Gradus is continually linked with

Nabokov's artifice. Kinbote's "great conspiracy," the plot to kill the king, is linked ironically to what Shade means by the words "great conspiracy," the inevitability of death itself, because Gradus is, of course, the accidental agent of Shade's death. For Kinbote, there is a "cause," represented by Gradus, and an effect, Shade's assassination. But this level of perception is undercut by Nabokov's own "great conspiracy"--Pale Fire--a great conspiracy of a book whose characters hide the "truth" from us because there is no "truth." And we can "know nothing" except Pale Fire itself. The anti-Karlist extremist group which counts Gradus among its members is called the Shadows, men who have sworn to follow the King, shadow him so to speak, and kill him. The Shadows are also distorted and evil mirror images, "Gothic and nasty," of the Karlists: "They were, in a sense, the shadow twins of the Karlists and indeed several had cousins or even brothers among the followers of the King" (p. 108), Kinbote informs us, totally unaware of the pun Nabokov has made on "followers." Thus, Gradus' brother is Sudarg, the maker of fantastic mirrors; together they make a palindrome--Gradus/Sudarg. Nodo, the card-cheater, is the epileptic half-brother of the brave actor Odon who helps the King escape from Zembla in his bright red ski outfit; they also create a palindrome--Nodo/Odon. The description of the Shadows brings us back to the entire hall of mirrors which is Pale Fire. As John Shade (another play of shadows) points out: "Resemblances are the shadows of differences. Different people see different similarities and similar differences" (p. 187). These layers of perception are what made up Pale Fire, and different people see different layers. Kinbote, for example, thinks that in tracing Gradus' trajectory he will make Gradus more real, but his mode of doing this only succeeds in

making Gradus more fictional for the reader. Kinbote tells us that he has carefully staggered his notes concerning Gradus throughout the Commentary so that "the first . . . is the vaguest while those that follow become gradually clearer as gradual Gradus approaches in space and time" (p. 109). Later Kinbote notes that Gradus enters a clothing store in Copenhagen "in order to conform to his description in later notes." Numerous clues such as these--obtrusive alliteration, subtle reversals of causal links--make us aware that behind Kinbote's words is the authorial presence of Nabokov who spies on and undermines Kinbote's text. And we must keep our eyes on Nabokov as well as Kinbote. Chance words like "gradual decay" meant for one context in Shade's poem, are forced into a spy context in Kinbote's Commentary; he writes: "Spacetime itself is decay [Gradus] has sped through this verse and is gone--presently to darken our pages again" (p. 118). And Gradus does appear again, peeking out between two words in a variant verse of "Pale Fire" which Shade has rejected:

Should the dead murderer try to embrace
 His outraged victim who he now must face?
 Do objects have a soul? Or perish must
 Alike great temples and Tangra dust? (p. 164)
[my emphasis]

Kinbote tells us that a "chill . . . ran down [his] long and supple spine" when close reading allowed him to discover "Gradus" in this variant: "This variant is so prodigious that only scholarly discipline and a scrupulous regard for the truth prevented me from inserting it here, and deleting four lines elsewhere . . . so as to preserve the length of the poem" (p. 164). This appearance of Gradus in a most unlikely place, and Kinbote's desire to tamper with the poem remind us that Kinbote is an obsessed spy whose impulses must be spied on by the reader.

Kinbote, generally, is unaware of his obsessions. He tells us in his Commentary "I have no desire to twist and batter an unambiguous apparatus criticus into the monstrous semblance of a novel" (p. 62). He then proceeds to do exactly that. On rare occasions only does Kinbote acknowledge his external spy activity and, on even rarer occasions, does he engage in introspective spying on his own motives. He admits to spying on Shade when he comments on Shade's reference to his own house, "the frame house/Between Goldsworth and Wordsmith" (ll. 47-48). Having learned that Shade had "begun a really big poem," Kinbote says he was afire to know how Shade had used the wonderful stories about Zembla:

The urge to find out what he was doing with all the live, glamorous, palpitating, shimmering material I had lavished upon him, the itching desire to see him at work . . . proved to be utterly agonizing and uncontrollable and led me to indulge in an orgy of spying which no considerations of pride could stop (p. 63).

Kinbote then goes on to describe how his web totally surrounds the poet's house. From his second story window he can see into the poet's study window, from the ivied corner of his veranda he has an ample view of the front of Shade's house, peeking out from behind his garage beneath the cover of a tulip tree he can see the south side of the house, and from behind the junipers at the top of his garden Kinbote can see the north side. As Kinbote points out, this orgy of spying is only carried out at great expense to the well-being of Kinbote himself; he has had to surmount his own "special and very private fears" (p. 63). Those fears, of course, are based on his own horror that he is being spied on by "phantom thugs" and "jittery revolutionists" (p. 70). Kinbote spies in his own right out of fear of regicide--he must be constantly on the alert: "Stealthy rustles, the footsteps of yesteryear leaves, an idle breeze, a dog touring

the garbage cans---everything sounded to me like a blood thirsty prowler" (p. 69). Yet most often Kinbote is so obsessed with his Zemblan story, so sure that Shade's poem is about Zembla, that he doesn't recognize himself when Shade calls him a spy. In dealing with the year in which Kinbote lives next door, Shade states, "gloomy Russians spied" (l. 41). Kinbote's commentary to this line is all about Russians spying in Zembla, not about Kinbote himself spying on Shade. Nabokov, however, is once again just beyond Kinbote, spying on Kinbote as spy. This authorial presence is indicated by the use of a distancing intertextuality in the lines preceding "gloomy Russians spied," where Shade notes that the year in which he is writing the poem, 1958-59, "was a year of Tempests: Hurricane/Lolita swept from Florida to Maine." Nabokov's own Lolita was published in the United States in 1958-59. The moment "Shade" mentions Lolita, we are no longer in Shade's poem. We are conscious we are in Nabokov's world. Russians is plural in Shade's poem because there are at least two people of Russian descent spying: Kinbote and Nabokov.

Occasionally Kinbote is aware enough of his own motives to admit that his Commentary is less than reliable. We see this introspective spying occur, for example, when Kinbote cites an earlier draft of Shade's poem which refers to a "certain king." In his commentary to line 12 of the poem, "that crystal land," Kinbote writes: "After this [line], in the disjointed, half-obliterated draft which I am not at all sure I have deciphered properly: 'Ah, I must not forget to say something/That my friend told me of a certain king'" (p. 54). Then, over one hundred pages later in his note to line 550 of Shade's poem, Kinbote admits that the earlier note has been tainted by his own wistful thinking: "It is the only time in the course of

the writing of these difficult comments, that I have tarried, in my distress and disappointment, on the brink of falsification" (p. 162). Kinbote tells us to ignore the early note which has not influenced our reading throughout most of the Commentary. This constant substitution of one fiction for another, one oblique mirror for another, is not a self-defeating exercise on the part of Nabokov aimed at proving that nothing means anything, rather it is a demonstration of our ability to create fictions and to learn from them the tentative, hypothetical nature of the way we see our world. It is, perhaps, only natural that the postmodern novelists should choose to parody a genre of fiction which involves two alteregos: the detective and the spy. The detective investigates events and forms endless hypotheses; the spy checks on those hypotheses. Delight in detection and bottomless espionage are the rules of the game in the twentieth century. Characters spy on characters, novelists spy on characters and readers, critics spy on novelists, readers spy on novelists and critics: all form hypotheses open to change. In all this mirroring, we discover something of what we call reality while discovering something of what we call literature. Parody is important to this process, but self-parody is even more central. It is the way in which the fiction-maker checks on his fiction and on his world. We see self-parody in Borges' and Nabokov's "flaunting of artifice," in Pynchon's optical illusion called *V.*, and in Ricardou's self-generating, self-reflexive fictions. In a 1945 poem which anticipates the meeting of critic and spy in the novel Pale Fire, Nabokov suggests that introspective spying, with all its horrors and possibilities, is the ground process of postmodern fiction:

My back is Argus-eyed. I live in danger. False shadows
turn to track me as I pass and, wearing beards, disguised
as secret agents, creep in to blot the freshly written
page and read the blotter in the looking-glass. And in
the dark, under my bedroom window, until, with a chill whirr
and shiver, day presses its starter, warily they linger or
silently approach the door and ring the bell of memory and
run away.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

In his "Préface" to Les Mots et les choses, Michel Foucault states that his attempt to formulate an archaeology of the human sciences was inspired by a passage in Borges. This passage quotes a certain Chinese encyclopedia which divided the world of animals into the following groups:

a) appartenant à l'Empereur, b) embaumés, c) apprivoisés, d) cochons de lait, e) sirènes, f) fabuleux, g) chiens en liberté, h) inclus dans la présente classification, i) qui s'agitent comme des fous, j) innombrables, k) dessinés avec un pinceau très fin en poils de chameau, l) et caetera, m) qui viennent de casser la cruche, n) qui de loin semblent des mouches.¹

Foucault's analysis of this passage is useful because he shows how this fantastic taxonomy brings into relief and forces us to recognize the pattern of our thought in several ways: first, it shatters the mode of thought characteristic of our age and geography--breaking up all the classifications with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of things in our world; next, it threatens to collapse our traditional distinction between the similar and the dissimilar; third, it demonstrates the exotic charm of systems of thought different from our own; and finally, it also demonstrates the limitations of our own system of thought, the stark impossibility of our creating the divisions in Borges' taxonomy.² The issues which the Borges passage brings into relief threaten the foundations of traditional Western thought, and the postmodern parody of the detective genre, in its own way, does this also. The postmodern project is, finally, by detection to expose the limitations of codified systems of thought, by criminal activity to create new possible systems and by espionage and suspicion to keep any one limiting system from putting itself forward as the "final solution" or as "ultimate history."

It the classical tale of ratiocination is the chief target of parody, it is because it stands as the bastion of positivistic thought: it assures that we can be secure in an ordered world. Thus, in the first detective tale, Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Dupin's ratiocination allows him to solve the crime and to eradicate the criminal from civilized society: "The Ourang-Outang was subsequently caught by the owner himself, who obtained for it a very large sum at the Jardin des Plantes."³ In postmodern parodies, the criminal, the detective and the victim are most often one in the same. The distinction between Dupin's world and that of the postmodernists is illustrated by Nabokov in his essay, "On a Book Entitled Lolita":

As far as I can recall, the initial shiver of inspiration for Lolita was somehow prompted by a newspaper story about an ape in the Jardin des Plantes, who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: this sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage.⁴

Humbert Humbert creates in this way the story of his love for Lolita, and his work is prefaced by the words of the scientist, John Ray, Jr.--psychiatrist. The bars of the cage no longer separate the criminal from civilized society but rather separate man from his world. Those bars are made up of the "ordered surfaces" and "the planes" with which we order and tame our world. We see these bars not only in the limited, rational thought of Dupin but also, for example, in the systematized thought of a Lönnrot, the hypotheses of Revel and Wallas, the dreams of destructive love created by Hencher, Michael and Margaret Banks, the framed vision of Michel the photographer, the biased testimony of the old servant in L'Inquisiteiro and the "apparatus criticus" of Kinbote. In postmodern fiction, however,

the bars are exposed, set against the background of other series of bars, other ordering systems. The fiction concerns itself with revealing the bars of our own particular zoological garden.

If this parodic fiction points out the starkness, the limitations of our systems of thought, it also reveals, as Foucault notes, the charm of exotic systems of thought--a charm we see in Kinbote and Humbert Humbert, for instance--and by juxtaposing incongruous epistemological patterns, gives rise to laughter. Delight in the game is a mainstay of popular detective fiction, and in the postmodern parody that delight is maintained, only the rules of the game and the field it is played on have been changed. For the popular detective, be he the classical Dupin, the hard-boiled Marlowe, the Vautrin-Vidocq of the suspense tale or the super-spy Bond, the fun of the game is the detecting, not the solution although solution follows as a given. It is ratiocination or action which makes the game worth playing. The reader of the popular detective tale also often reads for the game of formulating hypotheses; he generally regrets it when the solution is given and the architecture of clues finally collapses into one straight line. Even that finely tuned piece of machinery, Sherlock Holmes, resorts on rare occasions to uncharacteristic glee when he realizes that the game he is involved in has gone into an overtime. Thus, in The Hound of the Baskervilles, Holmes goes through a "dark night of the soul" when he believes that Henry Baskerville has been killed and the game played out long before its projected term. His discovery that the body he finds is not that of Baskerville and that the game goes on is his salvation.

Watson reports:

We stood with bitter hearts on either side of the mangled body, overwhelmed by this sudden and irrevocable disaster which had brought all our long and weary labours to so piteous an end. Then, as the moon rose, we climbed to the top of the rocks over which our poor friend had fallen, and from the summit we gazed out over the shadowy moor, half silver and half gloom. Far away, miles off, in the direction of the Grimpen, a single steady yellow light was shining Together we made our way down the precipitous slope and approached the body, black and clear against the silvered stones. The agony of those contorted limbs struck me with a spasm of pain and blurred my eyes with tears. . . . [Holmes] had uttered a cry and bent over the body. Now he was dancing and laughing and wringing my hand. Could this be my stern, self-contained friend? These were hidden fires, indeed!⁵

The popular detective story writer knows that it is the playing of the game which supports the genre. In "Aristotle on Detective Fiction," Dorothy Sayers emphasizes this point when she states that the cornerstone of detective fiction "is the art of framing lies in the right way." The secret is to hide the clues in frameworks of lies--false clues, false hypotheses--created by the author, so that when the final solution is presented, all the clues will emerge from these frameworks to point to the "truth." The postmodern writer changes the rules of the game by creating texts in which all hypotheses, all points of view, are continually denied, supported and contradicted so that the "texture not the text" becomes a "web of sense" which indicates to the reader to what extent he is implicated in the game of ordering his universe. The popular detective stories, like Chesterton's Father Brown tales, replace false and almost demonic mystery with "true" solutions; the postmodern parodies, like those of Borges, replace false solutions with somewhat demonic mysteries by showing us we have no ground to stand on, no origin to depend on, no choice but to play the game.

The centerless field of play and the change in the rules have resulted in basic reversals of the roles of the detective and the criminal. The detective who discovers patterns and maintains established order in the popular genre now becomes criminal because of that activity. What Stephan Heath says of Wallas, the detective in Les Gommés, is true of all postmodern detectives:

Sent to solve a crime, to survey the scene and make meanings, Wallas finds meaning everywhere and nowhere; nowhere but in himself as man, the final criminal, always and everywhere eagerly seeking signs and symbols, constantly attempting to rape objects 7

The postmodern criminal, in turn, has become a hero because he makes the tracks, creates the patterns and leaves the clues. If popular detective stories like Chesterton's "remind us that we live in an armed camp, making war with a chaotic world, and . . . the criminals, the children of chaos, are nothing but the traitors within our gates,"⁸ in the parody of the detective story, it is the criminal within the gates who is the creative artist. He is the constructor and "plotter" of numerous possible labyrinths, the man who demonstrates that his labyrinth is centerless. The criminal hero, by his creative activity, shows us that the labyrinth without a minotaur, seen as a centerless universe, is something to be affirmed. It is precisely this affirmation that Hawkes points to when he states: "To me the act of writing is criminal. If the act of the revolutionary is one of supreme idealism, it's also criminal. Obviously, I think that the criminal act is essential to our survival."⁹ The criminal and the revolutionary both act outside the established system and attempt to destroy it by undermining its walls, by bringing chaos within its gates. Yet, they carry out this function in order to affirm a different architecture. In

the same way, the postmodern writer undermines the conventions of traditional literature, breaks its laws, in order to replace it with a new architecture. The only center in this new architecture is the activity--ironic, diabolic, good-natured or comic--of the writer/criminal himself. As in Borges' "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," the book and the maze are one, the criminal and the creator are one, all futures are possible.

As criminals bringing chaos inside the gates and spies "licensed to kill," the postmodern writers focus their attention on language itself, on literature as literature. They see that "the simple art of murder" is an art which the popular detective story writer has been engaged in for a long time, using language as a weapon to beat "reality" into submission. Robbe-Grillet brings this hidden crime into the light when he says:

Ainsi en va-t-il du monde qui nous entoure. On avait cru en venir à bout en lui assignant un sens, et tout l'art du roman, en particulier, semblait voué à cette tâche. Mais ce n'était là que simplification illusoire; et loin de s'en trouver plus clair, plus proche, le monde y a seulement perdu peu à peu toute vie.¹⁰

The postmodern project is to rescue language and thereby our treatment of "reality" from this simple art of murder. As a literary spy involved in bottomless espionage, the contemporary writer is licensed to kill not only the secure world view of the positivist school, but all limiting, life-destroying perspectives.

In discussing the disconcerting and laughter-provoking taxonomy of Borges' "Chinese encyclopedia," Foucault shows how language itself is both the weapon and the site of the attack:

La monstruosité que Borges fait circuler dans son énumération consiste . . . en ceci que l'espace commun des rencontres s'y trouve lui-même ruiné. Ce qui est impossible, ce n'est pas le voisinage des choses, c'est le site lui-même où elles pourraient

voisiner. Les animaux 'i) qui s'agitent comme des fous, j) innombrables, k) dessinés avec un très fin pinceau de poils de chameau, '--où pourraient-ils jamais se rencontrer, sauf dans la voix immatérielle qui prononce leur énumération, sauf sur la page qui la transcrit? Où peuvent-ils se juxtaposer sinon dans le non-lieu du langage? Mais celui-ci, en les déployant, n'ouvre jamais qu'un espace impensable. La catégorie centrale des animaux 'inclus dans la présente classification' indique assez, par l'explicite référence à des paradoxes connus, qu'on ne parviendra jamais à définir entre chacun de ces ensembles et celui qui les réunit tous un rapport stable de contenu à contenant: si tous les animaux répartis se logent sans exception dans une des cases de la distribution, est-ce que toutes les autres ne sont pas en celle-ci? Et celle-ci à son tour, en quel espace réside-t-elle? L'Absurde ruine le et de l'énumération en frappant d'impossibilité le en où se répartiraient les choses énumérées. . . .

Borges esquive seulement la plus discrète mais la plus insistante des nécessités; il soustrait l'emplacement, le sol muet où les êtres peuvent se juxtaposer. Disparition masquée ou plutôt dérisoirement indiquée par la série abécédaire de notre alphabet, qui est censée servir de fil directeur . . . aux énumérationsli

In Borges' "Chinese encyclopedia," we see the magic causality (that precise game of vigilances, echoes and affinities) and the uncanny qualities which make up Hawkes' The Lime Twig. Both Borges and Hawkes use language to evoke, simultaneously, the monstrous and the comic. Borges' taxonomy, like Robbe-Grillet's Projet, puts forth a contradictory system based on the power of language in which container and contained co-exist and oscillate. The alphabetical order and the content of the list are antagonistic just as the tour guide and the novel are in Ricardou's Les Lieux-dits. As the book-seller Epsilon (l'espion) states, each phrase is composed of uncertainty.

Foucault notes that after thinking about this taxonomy, "dans son sillage naissait le soupçon qu'il y a pire désordre que celui de l'incongru et du rapprochement de ce qui ne convient pas; ce serait le désordre qui fait scintiller les fragments d'un grand nombre d'ordres possibles dans la dimension, sans loi ni géométrie, de l'hétéroclite."¹² It is the order of

the heteroclitite which allows Butor's *Revel* to unify, in a "harmonics of time," the narratives of Theseus and Cain and the disposition of those myths in the Harrey tapestries and the Murderer's Window. Within the order of the heteroclitite, Pynchon's *Stencil* can play with polarities ("Events seem to be ordered with an ominous logic" versus "Events seem to be ordered with an ominous logic" versus "Events seem to be ordered with an ominous logic") in tones "sepulchral to jaunty." Out of the order of the heteroclitite, Pinget's inquisitors expect the old servant to give a straight answer, and Cortázar's Michel tries to produce a picture which would not be framed.

Foucault writes: "Les hétérotopies inquiètent, sans doute parce qu'elles minent secrètement le langage . . . parce qu'elles ruinent d'avance la 'syntaxe,' et pas seulement celle qui construit les phrases,--celle moins manifeste qui fait 'tenir ensemble' . . . les mots et les choses. . . . les hétérotopies . . . dessèchent le propos, arrêtent les mots sur eux-mêmes, contestent, dès sa racine, toute possibilité de grammaire; elles dénouent les mythes et frappent de stérilité le lyricisme des phrases."¹³ Borges' taxonomy, then, brings us to the very site of language and begins to shatter that site into its constituent parts. It shows us, as de Man noted, that conceptual language is "a lie based upon an error."¹⁴ Yet I would agree with Poirier that Foucault is mistaken in finding this action negative in general. This taxonomy does have a distinctly positive side:

While the division of animals in "a certain Chinese encyclopedia" does indeed make currently accepted divisions seem tiresomely arbitrary, the effect of its utterly zany yet precise enumeration is to momentarily collapse our faith in taxonomy altogether, to free us from assumptions that govern the making of classifications, including those of an encyclopedia of no verifiable existence. Self-parody in Borges, as in Joyce and Nabokov,

goes beyond the mere questioning of the validity of any given invention by proposing the unimpeded opportunity for making new ones.¹⁵

In bringing the site of language into the foreground, the postmodern writers change the rules of the game by showing us that the very use of language is the "art of framing lies." These lies are exposed by the writer--criminal, detective, and spy--who breaks the laws of convention in order to reveal "mimetic deception." Self-referential writing is juxtaposed to and often co-exists in the same phrase with mimetic prose. This artistic creativity reveals "plexed artistry," the "correlated pattern of the game" and also the "pleasure" to be found in playing it. The postmodern parody, juxtaposing heterogeneous systems and tentative fictions, creates not only the "unthinkable space" which Foucault discovered in Borges' taxonomy but also clears a space for what was previously unthinkable. In exposing the bars of our cage, it allows us to bend those bars into fantastic, contradictory, and finally liberating shapes.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹(New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962), p. 30.

²"The Detective and the Boundary: Some Notes on the Postmodern Literary Imagination," boundary 2, 1 (Fall 1972), 148.

³The Massachusetts Review, 12 (Winter 1971), 298.

⁴New Literary History, 3 (Autumn 1971), 136.

⁵boundary 2, 1 (Fall 1972), 106.

⁶Histoire du roman français depuis 1918 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1950), p. 252. "The pure novel of which Edouard dreams is at base one which would be the history of a soul only, considered outside of all the historical avatars which constitute its temporal becoming. 'A type of tragedy has until now, it seems to be almost escaped literature. The novel occupied itself with the afflictions of fate, with good or bad fortune, with social relations, with the conflict of passions, of characters; but not at all with the essence of being'. . . ." Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

⁷"The Detective and the Boundary," p. 148.

⁸See not only the articles by Spanos and Holquist listed above, but also Hanna Charney, "Pourquoi le 'Nouveau Roman' policier?" The French Review, 46 (October 1972), 17-23; Ludovic Janvier, Une Parole exigeante: le nouveau roman (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1964); Alain Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1963), pp. 24-25; Patricia Merivale, "The Flaunting of Artifice in Vladimir Nabokov and Jorge Luis Borges," in Nabokov: The Man and his Work, ed. L.S. Dembo (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), pp. 209-224; and Jean-Jacques Tourteau, D'Arsène Lupin à San-Antonio: le roman policier de 1900 à 1970 (Tours: Maison Mame, 1970), p. 244 ff.

⁹"An Interview with Jorge Luis Borges," Contemporary Literature, 11 (Summer 1970), 318.

¹⁰How Writing is Written, Volume II of the previously uncollected writings, ed. Robert Bartlett Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974), p. 103.

¹¹"The Detective Story as a Historical Source," The Popular Arts: A Critical Reader (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), pp. 133-34.

¹²(Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941), pp. 91-92.

¹³Escape into Aesthetics: the Art of Vladimir Nabokov (New York: Apollo Editions, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 35.

¹⁴Alfred Appel, Jr., "Introduction" to Vladimir Nabokov's The Annotated Lolita (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), p. xxvii.

¹⁵Mise en abyme: the practice of putting a work within a novel which is reflected and/or contested by the structure of the novel. This technique is first discussed by Andre Gide in 1893, Journal 1889-1939 (Paris: Pleiade, NRF, 1939), p. 41. "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 Meniñes de Velasquez (mais un peu différemment). Enfin, en littérature, dans Hamlet, la scène de la comédie; et ailleurs dans bien d'autres pièces. Dans Wilhelm Meister, les scènes de marionnettes ou de fête au château. Dans la Chute de la maison Usher, la lecture que l'on fait à Roderick, etc. 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 en mettre un second 'en abyme.'"

"In a work of art I rather like to find transposed, on the scale of the characters, the very subject of that work. Nothing throws a clearer light upon it or more surely establishes the proportions of the whole. Thus, in certain paintings of Memling or Quentin Metzys a small convex and dark mirror reflects the interior of the room in which the scene of the painting is taking place. Likewise in Velazquez's painting of the Meninas (but somewhat differently). Finally, in literature, in the play scene in Hamlet, and elsewhere in many other plays. In Wilhelm Meister the scenes of the puppets or the celebration at the castle. In The Fall of the House of Usher the story that is read to Roderick, etc. None of these examples is altogether exact. What would be much more so, and would explain much better what I strove for in my Cahiers, in my Narcisse, and in the Tentative, is a comparison with the device of heraldry that consists in setting in the escutcheon a smaller one 'en abyme,' at the heart-point. Justin O'Brien's translation, The Journals of Andre Gide: Vol. I: 1889-1913 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 29-30. For an extended discussion of mise en abyme, see Jean Ricardou, "L'Histoire dans l'histoire," Problèmes du nouveau roman (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1967), pp. 171-190. For a discussion of mise en abyme in the popular detective novel, see Jean-Jacques Tourteau, D'Arsène Lupin à San-Antonio: le roman policier français de 1900 à 1970 (Tours: Maison Mame, 1970), pp. 54-65. Finally, for a discussion of the mise en abyme in a historical context, see Bruce Morri-ssette, "Un Héritage d'André Gide: La Duplication intérieure," Comparative Literature Studies, 8 (June 1971), 125-42.

¹⁶Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, p. 95.

¹⁷Otras Inquisiciones (1937-1952) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sur, 1952), p. 58. "Why does it disturb us that the map be included in the map and the thousand and one nights in the book of the Thousand and One Nights? Why does it disturb us that Don Quixote be a reader of the Quixote and Hamlet a spectator of Hamlet? I believe I have found the reason: these inversions suggest that if the characters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious. In 1833, Carlyle observed that the history of the universe is an infinite sacred book that all men write and read and try to understand, and in which they are also written." James E. Irby's translation, "Partial Magic in the Quixote," Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings (New York: New Directions, 1962), p. 196.

¹⁸The Development of the Detective Novel (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1958), p. 11.

¹⁹Novel, 4 (Fall 1970), 30.

²⁰(Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 8. Jean-Paul Sartre states that it is "an anti-novel which reads like a detective novel" into which Sarraute has put "a sort of passionate, amateur detective who is fascinated by a banal couple . . . and spies on them and tracks them . . . but without ever knowing very well either what he is seeking or who they are. He finds nothing, moreover, or almost nothing. He will give up the investigation due to a metamorphosis: just as though Agatha Christie's detective, on the verge of discovering the villain, had himself suddenly turned into a criminal."

²¹(Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 12. The interior quotation is taken by White from Erich Auerbach's "Figura in the Phenomenal Prophecy of the Church Fathers," Scenes from the Drama of European Literature (New York: n.p., 1959), p. 30.

²²White, Mythology, p. 16.

²³(Paris: Gallimard, 1948), pp. 175-76. "In this magician who frees himself from history and life by understanding them and who is raised above his audience by his knowledge and experience we recognize the lofty aristocrat [the omniscient narrator] The internal narrator is always present. He may reduce himself to an abstraction; often he is not even explicitly designated; but, at any rate, it is through his subjectivity that we [become aware of] the event. When he does not appear at all, it is not that he has been suppressed like a useless device; it is that he has become the alter ego of the author. The latter, with his blank sheet of paper in front of him, sees his imagination transmuted into experiences. He no longer writes in his own name but at the dictation of a mature and sober man who has witnessed the circumstances which are being related." Bernard Frechtman's translation, What is Literature? (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 136.

²⁴Sartre, Qu'est-ce que la littérature?, pp. 270-72.

"In the stable world of the pre-war French novel, the author, placed at a gamma point which represented absolute rest, had fixed guide-marks at his disposal to determine the movements of his characters. But we, involved in a system in full evolution, could only know relative movements. Whereas our predecessors thought that they could keep themselves outside of history and . . . they . . . soared [with one wing stroke] to heights from which they [judged] events as they really were, circumstances [had] plunged us into our time. But since we were in it, how could we see it as a whole? Since we were situatéd, the only novels we could dream were novels of situation, without internal narrators or all-knowing witnesses. In short, if we wished to give an account of our age, we had to make the technique of the novel shift from Newtonian mechanics to generalized relativity; we had to people our books with minds that were half lucid and half overcast, some of which we might consider with more sympathy than others, but none of which would have a privileged point of view either upon the event or upon himself. We had to present creatures whose reality would be the tangled and contradictory tissue of each one's evaluations of all the . . . characters--himself included--and the evaluation by all the others of himself, and who could never decide from within whether the changes of their destinies came from their . . . efforts, from . . . faults, or from the course of the universe.

Finally, we had to leave doubts, expectations, and the unachieved throughout our works, leaving it up to the reader to conjecture for himself by giving him the feeling, that his view of the plot and the characters was merely one among many others." Bernard Frechtman's translation, What is Literature?, pp. 218-19.

²⁵(Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1974), pp. 19-20.

²⁶(Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 20.

²⁷Stegner, Escape into Aesthetics, pp. 22-23.

²⁸Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 300.

²⁹Paragone, 12 (dec. 1966), 3-14.

³⁰Unpublished dissertation, University of Michigan, 1960.

FOOTNOTES

PART ONE: THE CLASSICAL DETECTIVE STORY

¹(New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1941), p. 4 and the chapter on the "Golden Age."

²Cited in Latin Blood: The Best Crime and Detective Stories of South America, ed. Donald A. Yates (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. xiii.

³(Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957), p. 147. "Any detective story is constructed on two murders, of which the first, committed by the criminal, is only the occasion of the second, in which he is the victim of the pure, unpunishable murderer, the detective" Jean Stewart's translation, Passing Time (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), pp. 152-53.

⁴Butor, L'Emploi, p. 171. "in detective fiction the story goes against the stream, or more exactly that it superimposes two temporal sequences, the days of the inquiry which start at the crime, and the days of the drama which lead up to it" Stewart's translation, pp. 178-79. This passage and the above passage are also cited by Todorov in "Typologie," p. 5.

⁵Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (New York: Popular Library, 1960), p. 66.

⁶"Typologie," pp. 5-6. "The characters in this second narrative do not act, they learn. Nothing can happen to them."

⁷Murder for Pleasure (London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1941), p. 12.

⁸The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 37.

⁹Doyle, The Adventures, p. 7.

¹⁰Le Français dans le monde, 50 (juillet-août 1967), 24. "that any event possesses a discoverable cause, in brief that there exists in the world no nook or cranny, no zone of shadow or abstruseness where the intellect cannot put into effect its chain of operations."

¹¹Edgar Allan Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination (New York: Dutton, 1908), p. 392.

¹²Richard, "Petites notes," p. 25.

¹³Doyle, The Adventures, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴Richard, "Petites notes," p. 25. "For the image of a linking, tracking intellect dear to traditional rationalism [*i.e.* Dupin's] is substituted here a scheme of classifying intellect which no longer articulates

reality discursively but which lays siege to reality by covering it little by little, by spreading over it, and finally by absorbing it into itself. The world ends up a museum or a card catalogue."

¹⁵(New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 14.

¹⁶Todorov, "Typologie," p. 6. "The first narrative is totally oblivious to the novel, that is it never admits to being literary. . . . On the other hand, the second narrative is not only supposed to take into account the reality of the novel but it is precisely the narrative of the novel itself."

¹⁷Unpublished Interview, 7 May 1975. "In the detective novel the problem of chronological succession is very important. It is of interest to those who are trying to see what the modes of representation are, what the problems are which arise when one wants to try to describe reality. It is interesting to see a popular genre in which certain aspects of narration are studied in such a precise fashion. You say that there are three temporal series in the novels of Conan Doyle. That is exactly right. There are other, many other detective novels where there is also a narrator present who relates, either after or during the course of the action, what he sees and what the detective is doing. And in some cases, there can even be more temporal series superimposed than that. In Passing Time, there are five series which can be superimposed at the end.

¹⁸Grella, "Murder and Manners," p. 31.

¹⁹Unpopular Opinions (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1947), p. 231.

²⁰Butor, L'Emploi, p. 161. ". . . /Burton/ was speaking in his own name, asserting that in the best of such works the novel acquires, as it were, a new dimension, since not only are the characters and their relations with each other transformed under the eye of the reader, but so, too, is his knowledge of those relations and of the story itself--the final, definitive aspect of that story, ratified, as he showed us the following week, by the destruction of the culprit, by the pure murder through which the detective attains his supreme self-fulfillment, this final aspect is only revealed after, and through, a number of other aspects, so that the narrative is not merely the projection on a flat surface of a series of events, it rebuilds these, as it were, spatially, since they appear differently according to the position occupied by the detective or narrator." Stewart's translation, p. 168.

²¹For more discussion of this aspect of detective fiction, see Charles Grivel, "Observation du roman policier," Entretiens sur la paralittérature, pp. 231-58.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE: EARLY REVERSALS

¹(Paris: Editions le Portulan, 1947), p. 93. "The detective novel resolutely eliminating the supernatural, any novel which allows the supernatural in the final explanation is not a detective novel. Bernanos' novel, A Crime, is, thus, falsely aligned with the detective novel. It uses a supernatural element that reason cannot broach."

²Colette Astier, "La tentation du roman policier dans deux romans: Un Crime de Georges Bernanos, Le Rocher de Brighton, de Graham Greene," Revue de littérature comparée, ⁴⁴(avril-juin 1970), 224.

³Astier, "La tentation," p. 238.

⁴Pseudonym for Jorge Luis Borges and Adolpho Bioy Casares. In an interview with Rita Guibert, Borges states: ". . . we decided to create a third man: 'H.,' because it seemed quite likely that he would have a name no one knew; 'Bustos' because that was my great-grandfather's name, and 'Domecq' from a great-grandfather of Bioy's." Seven Voices: Seven Latin American Writers Talk to Rita Guibert, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 101-02.

⁵p. 174.

⁶Pepe Martínez de la Vega, "El muerto era un vivo" in El cuento policial latinoamericano (Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1964), p. 121. "You were here before you left for the theatre and you drank seven cups of coffee in order not to fall asleep during the boring speech of the great leader of the masses. You were able to stay awake, but the others then fell asleep. You slipped out when they were all in dreamland. You committed the crime . . . and then returned directly to the theatre where everyone was still dead asleep." No trans., "The Dead Man was a Lively One," Latin Blood, p. 182.

⁷Poe, Tales, p. 410.

⁸H. Bustos Domecq, Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sur, 1942), p. 16. "Fourteen years earlier, the butcher Agustín R. Bonorino, who had attended the races at Belgrano disguised as an Italian immigrant, received a mortal head wound from a bottle. It was widely known that the Bilz bottle which struck him down had been wielded by a chap from the Pata Santa district. But since Pata Santa was a highly prized electoral factor, the police had determined that the guilty party was Isidro Parodi, whom some persons declared a nihilist, meaning to say that he was a spiritist. In truth, Isidro Parodi was neither of the two: he was the proprietor of a barbershop on the southside . . ." Donald A. Yates' translation, "The Twelve Figures of the World," Latin Blood, p. 66.

⁹"The Argentine Detective Story," p. 219.

¹⁰Spanos, "The Detective and the Boundary," p. 154.

¹¹Manuel Peyrou, El estruendo de las rosas (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, S.A., 1948), p. 18.

"It consists of a general defense of imagination and fantasy. It says that fantasy does not lead to madness: that what does produce madness is reason." Donald A. Yates' translation, Thunder of the Roses (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 11.

¹²Peyrou, p. 18. "One deduces from it that Hamlet is the dramatic account of an attempt to commit the perfect crime; and among other things, it is suggested that if in 1940 the perfect crime is the one that goes unsolved, in 1600 it was the one which could be morally justified." Yates' translation, p. 12.

¹³Peyrou, p. 191. "'My dear friend,' he said with sarcasm, 'under our regime it is impossible to speak freely because the government itself is based on a lie. That is the lie of efficiency. If you began by admitting inefficiency and the possibility of error, there would then be a place for healthy satire and criticism. The presumption of infallibility is far from constructive; it begins by restricting the horizons and ends up by blinding.'" Yates' translation, p. 162.

¹⁴Peyrou, p. 16. "the order of disorder." Yates' translation, p. 9.

¹⁵How Writing is Written, p. 147.

¹⁶John Malcolm Brinnin, The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and her World (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), p. 312.

¹⁷The Third Rose, pp. 312-13.

¹⁸How Writing is Written, pp. 148-49.

¹⁹How Writing is Written, p. 31.

²⁰How Writing is Written, p. 32.

²¹How Writing is Written, p. 32.

²²How Writing is Written, p. 33.

²³"Why I Like Detective Stories," How Writing is Written, p. 149.

²⁴Sur, 5 (julio 1935), 93-94.

- A. An optional limit of six characters
- B. Declaration of all the terms of the problem.
- C. Avaricious economy of means.
- D. Primacy of how over who.
- E. Decorum in the treatment of death.
- F. Necessity and wonder in the solution.

²⁵Otras inquisiciones, p. 99. ". . . each story in the Father Brown Saga presents a mystery, proposes explanations of a demonic or magical sort, and then replaces them at the end with solutions of this world." Ruth Simms' translation, "On Chesterton," Other Inquisitions 1937-1952 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 82.

²⁶Otras inquisiciones, p. 101. "These examples, which could easily be multiplied, prove that Chesterton restrained himself from being Edgar Allan Poe and Franz Kafka, but something in the makeup of his personality leaned toward the nightmarish, something secret, and blind, and central. . . . That discord, that precarious subjection of a demonical will, defines Chesterton's nature. Simms' translation, p. 84.

²⁷Robert Gillespie, "Detections: Borges and Father Brown," Novel, 7 (Spring 1974), 220-30.

²⁸Ficciones (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956), 143. "Lönnrot thought of himself as a pure thinker, an Auguste Dupin, but there was something of the adventurer in him, and even of the gamester." Anthony Kerrigan's translation, "Death and the Compass," Ficciones (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p. 129.

²⁹Ficciones, pp. 144-45. "It's possible, but not interesting You will reply that reality hasn't the slightest need to be of interest. And I'll answer you that reality may avoid the obligation to be interesting, but that hypotheses may not. In the hypothesis you have postulated, chance intervenes largely. Here lies a dead rabbi; I should prefer a purely rabbinical explanation; not the imaginary mischances of an imaginary robber." Kerrigan's translation, p. 130.

³⁰Ficciones, p. 158. "In your labyrinth there are three lines too many I know of a Greek labyrinth which is a single straight line. Along this line so many philosophers have lost themselves that a mere detective might do so too." Kerrigan's translation, p. 141.

³¹Ficciones, p. 152. "He had virtually deciphered the problem; the mere circumstances, or the reality (names, prison records, faces, judicial and penal proceedings), scarcely interested him now." Kerrigan's translation, p. 136.

³²Heterodoxia (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1953), p. 42. For further discussion of this passage, see Donald A. Yates, "The Argentine Detective Story," pp. 93-97. "According to Leibnitz rude and contingent facts do not exist in the Universe: everything has its raison d'être, and often if we do not see this it is because we are insufficiently made in God's image. In any case, the ideal of human knowledge is that of reducing the chaotic mass of the truth of fact to the divine order of the truth of reason. The physicists who enclose the tumultuous movement of a waterfall in a mathematical formula, achieve on earth this leibnitzian ideal; the day that men are able to calculate hate and deduce crime, Leibnitz will at last breathe easy.

³³El túnel (1948; rpt Toronto: MacMillan Company, 1965), p. 72.
 "Listen: A man has a mother, a wife and a son. One night the mother is mysteriously murdered. The police investigations come to no answer. Some time afterwards, the wife is murdered; the same thing. Finally, the boy is murdered. The man is insane with grief because he loved them all, especially the boy. Desperate, he decides to investigate the crimes on his own account. With the customary inductive, deductive, analytical, synthetic etc. methods of those geniuses in detective stories, he comes to the conclusion that the assassin must commit a fourth assassination on such a day, at such a time, in such a place. His conclusion is that the assassin must now kill him. On the calculated day and hour, the man goes to the place where the fourth crime should be committed and waits for the assassin. But the assassin doesn't come. He reviews his deductions: He could have figured the place wrong; no, the place is right; He could have figured the time wrong; no, the time is correct. The conclusion is horrendous: the assassin must already be at that place. In other words: the assassin is he, himself, who had committed the other crimes in a state of unconsciousness. The detective and the assassin are the same person. . . . The end is obvious . . . the man commits suicide. The doubt remains as to whether he kills himself out of remorse or whether the I assassin kills the I detective, as in any common assassination."

³⁴Poe Studies, 4 (June 1971), 7-8. See also Robert Champigny's discussion of mystery versus secret in his study of Le Grand Meaulnes, entitled Portrait of a Symbolist Hero (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), p. 109.

³⁵Wertz, p. 9.

³⁶(Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1948), p. 22.
 This passage is also cited by Yates in his "The Argentine Detective Story." Yates also gives a reading of and discusses "La muerte y la brújula," pp. 137-56. His discussion differs in emphasis from this discussion and is well worth reading. "Borges enjoys confusing the reader: you think you are reading a detective story and suddenly you confront God or the false Bacílides."

³⁷D.P. Gallagher, Modern Latin American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 101-02.

³⁸"Avatares de la tortuga," pp. 129-30. "Achilles runs ten times faster than the tortoise and gives the animal a headstart of ten meters. Achilles runs those ten meters, the tortoise one; Achilles runs that meter, the tortoise runs a decimeter; Achilles runs that decimeter, the tortoise runs a centimeter; Achilles runs that centimeter, the tortoise, a millimeter; Fleet-footed Achilles, the millimeter, the tortoise, a tenth of a millimeter, and so on to infinity, without the tortoise ever being overtaken. . . Such is the customary version. Wilhelm Capelle . . . translates the original text by Aristotle: 'The second argument of Zeno is the one known by the name of Achilles. He reasons that the slowest will never be overtaken by the swiftest, since the pursuer has to pass through the place

the pursued has just left, so that the slowest will always have a certain advantage.'" James E. Irby's translation, "Avatars of the Tortoise," Labyrinths, pp. 202-03.

³⁹(Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1957), p. 33. "The end of 'Death and the Compass' unites the dramatic form of vengeance and persecution with the simplicity of the geometric design: the plan [of a labyrinth] of Zeno of Elea that Lönnrot proposes so that he can be murdered in a future life is as simple as a straight line but pathetic because of the possibility of losing oneself in it as in a desert."

⁴⁰The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-1969, edited and translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni in collaboration with the author (New York: Bantam, 1971), p. 194.

⁴¹Ficciones, p. 133. "Perhaps Schopenhauer is right: I am all others, any man is all men, Shakespeare is in some way the wretched John Vincent Moon." Kerrigan's translation, "The Form of the Sword," Ficciones, p. 121.

⁴²See Part One, note 2.

⁴³Nabokov: the Man and his Work, p. 212.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER TWO: LATER SUBVERSIONS

¹Unpublished Interview conducted by myself, 7 May 1975.

²Candide (13-20 July, 1961). Cited and translated in Bruce Morrissette, "The New Novel in France," Chicago Review, 15 (Winter-Spring 1962), 1-2.

³Morrissette, "The New Novel," p. 2.

⁴Morrissette, "The New Novel," p. 12.

⁵(Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1964), p. 49.

⁶"Discussion," in Nouveau Roman: hier, aujourd'hui, Pratiques (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1972), pp. 279-80. "Butor's researches, which are almost the negative of our own, will perhaps permit us to state precisely the answers to those questions we are asking ourselves here, and the principle questions, for me, are: what is writing? what is modernity? has modernity changed the function of writing or not? What struck me in Georges Raillard's presentation is that all the formal aspects that he noted seemed to belong to the researches studied up until now by our conference: the ambiguity of the text, literature as play, generative writing, generating words. And yet, Raillard demonstrated well that all these formal operations performed by Butor, and which in a certain perspective could be confused with those of Ollier or Ricardou, are exactly their inverse. I would not say, as Raillard does, that this indicated that Butor does not belong to the New Novel; but it is evident that his absence from the colloquy is not by chance, for ten years ago perhaps he would have come to a similar conference. That fact allows us to underline a progressive change in the New Novel. The change, more or less dated from 1960 Since 1960, and more and more as we advance in research into modernity, we notice the rupture of which we were more or less aware from the beginning. Because, personally, my reading of Butor has always been one of interest and on the defensive."

⁷"Discussion" in Nouveau Roman, p. 281. "One of the differences is discernible on the level of the bringing into play of the totality of culture in the text. With Butor, the bringing into play is ample, but it is less the amplitude which should be underlined than the fact that it does not challenge in any way the cultural domain. On the contrary, it enriches it with new relations within its own framework."

⁸"Discussion" in Nouveau Roman, p. 283. "It seems to me, a propos of Butor, that the personal conflicts registered fit in perfectly with the social conflicts registered. In my opinion there is no dramatic confrontation. Butor's writing seems to operate in the very bosom of the different cultural registrations without laceration, that rupture which . . . is the principle event of writing. It is perhaps there that the profound difference lies: a certain harmony, almost natural in one, and a clash,

a situation relatively catastrophic to be resolved, in the others, in us, to be precise. From that would come perhaps the fact that if all of Butor's projects interest me enormously (he is full of ideas), I am regularly disappointed in reading him, notably in the texture of his prose which I find lacks vigor, brutality, aggressiveness and eroticism."

⁹"Discussion" in Nouveau Roman, p. 283. "[Butor] is always seeking to rediscover a possible harmony between the self and the world, whereas for us that no longer has any meaning."

¹⁰"Discussion" in Nouveau Roman, p. 284. "there is perpetually this notion of a superior truth which judges and dominates."

¹¹Pour un nouveau roman (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1962), p. 58. ". . . if I say, 'The world is man,' I shall always gain absolution; while if I say, 'Things are things, and man is only man,' I am immediately charged with a crime against humanity.

The crime is the assertion that there exists something in the world which is not man, which makes no sign to him, which has nothing in common with him. The crime . . . is to remark this separation, this distance, without attempting to effect the slightest sublimation of it." Richard Howard's translation, "Nature, Humanism, Tragedy," For a New Novel (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 52.

¹²Butor, Unpublished Interview conducted by myself, 7 May 1975. "The detective story technique in novels like The Erasers or Passing Time is not at all something added afterwards. There is not first a novel and then, the author adds a detective intrigue so that it would be easier to read."

¹³Butor, Unpublished Interview. "We can define the detective story by a certain number of rules. . . . We can be interested in the detective story and create something different. Creating something different would be to break a certain number of these rules. . . . But we know that if we twist these rules sufficiently, we are no longer creating detective stories. We are creating something else--for example, a nouveau roman.

¹⁴Essais sur le roman (Paris: Gallimard, n.d.), p. 17. "If it is true that there exists an intimate liaison between content and form, as we were told in our schools, I believe it is good to insist upon this fact that in his thoughts on form, the novelist finds a privileged means of attack, a means to force reality to reveal itself, to conduct its own activity. . . . We are obliged to think carefully about what we are doing, thus to make consciously, under pain of willed stupidity and degradation, of our novels an instrument of newness and, consequently of liberation."

¹⁵See Vivian Mercier, The New Novel: From Queneau to Pinget (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), pp. 247-50, for example.

¹⁶Entretiens avec Michel Butor (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 95. "Is this narrator going to be able to understand what is happening around him or not? If he is able to understand, all right, he is saved and he would be able to leave; if he is not able to understand he will be crushed."

¹⁷Butor, "Intervention à Royaumont," p. 17. "[The novel] is thus a prodigious means to stay on our feet, to continue to live intelligently inside an almost raging world which assails us from every side."

¹⁸Modern Fiction Studies, 16 (Spring 1970), 248.

¹⁹Weinstein, "Order," p. 42. "It is necessary to invent new modes of expression in order to be able to master the mental complexity in which we struggle, those encounters with civilizations in our souls, their oppositions, their mixtures, in order to resolve all these problems, to find beyond them the ground, the truth, a sane society."

²⁰L'Écriture et la différence (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), p. 410. "The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay based on a fundamental ground, a freeplay which is constituted upon a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of the freeplay. With this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game, of being as it were from the very beginning at stake in the game. From the basis of what we therefore call the center (and which, because it can be either inside or outside, is as readily called the origin as the end, as readily archè as telos) the repetitions, the substitutions, the transformations, and the permutations are always taken from a history of meaning [sens] --that is, a history, a period--whose origins may always be revealed or whose end may always be anticipated in the form of presence." No translator listed, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man, Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 248.

²¹"La Structure," p. 411. "This moment was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse . . . that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification ad infinitum." Structuralist Controversy, p. 249.

²²"La Structure," p. 423. "If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infinity of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field . . . excludes totalization. This field is in fact that of freeplay, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble. This field permits these infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field, as in the classical hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and founds the freeplay of substitutions." Structuralist Controversy, p. 260.

²³Georges Charbonnier, Entretiens avec Michel Butor, p. 108. "Thus, in the fifth section of the book we will have five voices which go together. A first voice: memories, a second voice: the journal, a third voice: memories in the inverse sense, a fourth voice: repetition of what has already been told but in a different light and in normal order, and a fifth voice: repetition of what has already been told but in the inverse order."

²⁴Répertoire: études et conférences, 1948-59 (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1960), p. 9. "Exploration of the different forms of the novel reveals what is contingent in the form we are used to, unmask it, releases us from it, allows us to rediscover beyond this fixed narrative everything it camouflages or passes over in silence: that fundamental narrative in which our whole life is steeped." Richard Howard's translation, "Research on the Technique of the Novel," Inventory: Essays by Michel Butor (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. 28.

²⁵See Part One: The Classical Detective Story, note 20.

²⁶p. 187. "The rope of words that uncoils down through the sheaf of papers and connects me directly with that moment on the first of May when I began to braid it, that rope of words is like Ariadne's thread, because I am in a labyrinth, because I am writing in order to find my way about in it, all these lines being the marks with which I blaze the trail: the labyrinth of my days in Bleston, incomparably more bewildering than that of the Cretan palace, since it grows and alters even while I explore it." Stewart's translation, p. 195.

²⁷pp. 294-95. "Thus the sequence of former days is only restored to us through a whole host of other days, constantly changing, and every event calls up an echo from other, earlier events which caused it or explain it, or correspond to it, every monument, every object, every image sending us back to other periods which we must reawaken in order to recover the lost secret of their power for good or evil, other periods both remote and forgotten, whose density and distance are to be measured not by weeks or months but by centuries, standing out against the dark blurred background of our whole history" Stewart's translation, p. 305.

²⁸"La Structure," p. 418. "someone who uses 'the means at hand,' that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogenous. . . . If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one's concepts from the text of heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur." Structuralist Controversy, p. 255.

²⁹Répertoire II: études et conférences, 1959-1963 (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1964), p. 92. "Space, as we experience it, is not at all Euclidian space whose parts are mutually exclusive. Every site is the focal

point of a horizon of other sites, the point of origin of a series of possible routes passing through other more or less determined regions." Howard's translation, "The Space of the Novel," Inventory, p. 37.

30L'Emploi, p. 45. "I identified the small pink block representing the spot where I was, in the northeastern quarter, close to the lefthand edge . . . I picked out the few streets I could remember among those I had already seen and this revealed to me the extent of my ignorance, the regions with which I was more or less familiar being microscopic in relation to the whole" Stewart's translation, p. 43.

31L'Emploi, p. 105. "The gray daylight shines on the map of this city which is still so unfamiliar, which conceals itself as the folds of a cloak conceal other folds . . . the map which is, so to speak, the city's ironic response to my efforts to see it whole and to take its census, forcing me at each fresh glance to admit the extent of my ignorance; the map over which in my mind other lines are superimposed, with other points of interest, other references, other networks, other systems of distribution. . . ." Stewart's translation, pp. 108-09.

32Répertoire II, p. 50. "Works of art will be, then, in this realm of space as in so many others, an instrument of thought, a sensitized point through which the author inaugurates his own criticism." Richard Howard's translation, p. 38.

33L'Emploi, p. 211. "not single incidents but actions of some duration, so that a single panel comprises several scenes in succession. . . ." Stewart's translation, p. 220.

34L'Emploi, p. 217. "That was the day on which Burton began to set the stage to bamboozle us still further, Lucien and me--Lucien who is free and happy, and me, Lucien the bride-groom-to-be, the lover, the beloved, and me, Lucien who is in the best of health and spirits, who writes long letters to his Rose, who wants nothing but his Rose, and me." Stewart's translation, p. 225. I am indebted here to Leo Spitzer who has discussed the grammatical structures used in L'Emploi du temps in "Quelques Aspects de la techniques des romans de Michel Butor," Archivum Linguisticum, 13, 2(1961), 171-95.

35L'Emploi, p. 72. ". . . Cain dressed like Theseus in a close-fitting cuirass with ribbons floating over his thighs, almost in the same attitude as Theseus at grips with the Minotaur, bending forward like him, his left foot on the breast of his naked victim who lies wounded, prostrate, but lifting his head a little--and yet is so unlike Theseus, as he brandishes a tree trunk with tangled roots against the red sky." Stewart's translation, p. 71.

36L'Emploi, p. 73. "to see them in their entirety you have to stand as far back as possible, but then some of the detail is invisible." Stewart's translation, p. 73.

37L'Emploi, p. 22. "I followed him into a second-rate café in Tower Street, a windowless basement." Stewart's translation, p. 17.

38L'Emploi, pp. 216-17. "It was that day, Saturday, April 19, just as Lucien and I had . . . drunk our last cup of green tea in the first floor room of the Oriental Bamboo, at the same table close to the window overlooking the front of the Old Cathedral, watched by the same . . . yellow-skinned waiter . . . wearing the same half-smile as on the occasion of that dinner in November with James, when we had talked about The Bleston Murder; or that other dinner in June with Lucien, when we had talked about J. C. Hamilton and the Bailey girls, or that lunchtime in winter, the date of which I shall find if I go on hunting . . . or that lunch last Saturday with Rose . . . it was that day, Saturday, April 19 . . . that this man, George Burton, who has so narrowly escaped death and is not quite recovered, this man whom we had not yet thought of as J. C. Hamilton, George Burton in his full health and spirits, George Burton in all his splendor, came into the room" Stewart's translation, pp. 224-25.

39"La Structure," p. 426. "Freeplay is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Freeplay is always an interplay of absence and presence. . . ." Structuralist Controversy, pp. 263-64.

40"La Structure," p. 427. "As a turning toward presence, lost or impossible, of the origin, this structuralist thematic of broken immediateness is thus the sad, negative, nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauistic facet of thinking of freeplay of which the Nietzschean affirmation--the joyous affirmation of the freeplay of the world and without truth, without origin, offered to an active interpretation--would be the other side. This affirmation then determines the non-center otherwise than as loss of the center There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of freeplay. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology--in other words, through the history of all his history--has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of the game." Structuralist Controversy, pp. 264-65.

41Butor, Unpublished Interview, conducted by myself, May 1975. "I want to prevent people from sleeping, yes. I think that there are people who sleep all through the day. . . . I want to do the contrary of what the detective novel does in its habitual usage. . . . The detective novel is made so that people may sleep. It's a medicine, if you wish. It's a very effective sedative, a very well made one, which functions very well. In studying the way in which it functions, we can try to make drugs which would have another effect. It is for that reason that it is so interesting to study the detective novel."

⁴²L'Emploi, p. 148. "The detective is a true son of the murderer Oedipus, not only because he solves a riddle, but also because he kills the man to whom he owes his title . . ." Stewart's translation, p. 154.

⁴³Cited in Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1963), p. 41. "The subject is a definite, concrete, essential event: a man's death. It is a detective story event--that is, there is a murderer, a detective, a victim. In one sense, their roles are conventional: the murderer shoots the victim, the detective solves the problem, the victim dies. But the ties which bind them only appear clearly once the last chapter ends. For the book is nothing more than the account of the twenty-four hours that ensue between the pistol shot and the death, the time the bullet takes to travel three or four yards--twenty-four hours 'in excess.'" Morrissette's translation in The Novels of Robbe-Grillet, revised, updated and expanded by the author (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴(Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1953), p. 53. "He puts on his glasses and carefully reads the whole text through, shifts his eyes back and forth along the lines from the beginning all the way to the end, steps back a little to consider the whole poster with a shrug, puts his glasses back in their case and the case in his pocket, then goes his way in some perplexity, wondering if he has not missed the point. Among the usual words some suspect term occasionally stands out like a signal, and the sentence it illuminates so equivocally seems for a moment to conceal many things, or nothing at all." Richard Howard's translation, The Erasers (New York: Grove Press, 1964), pp. 48-49.

⁴⁵"The Evolution of Narrative Viewpoint in Robbe-Grillet," Novel, 1 (Fall 1967), p. 25.

⁴⁶Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p. 13.

⁴⁷Les Gcmnes, p. 16. "He glances with weary eyes around the room that calmly awaits the people who will come, the chairs where the murderers and their victims will sit, the tables where the communion will be served to them." Howard's translation, p. 12.

⁴⁸Unpublished Interview, 7 May 1975. "We can easily imagine a novel in which the detective says to us: Go look again at page twenty-five. He asks us to return to page twenty-five. Now there, we have a form which is completely different from that of the classical detective novel because it is not read in the same way. It is that which is important; it is the way in which we use it. Thus we arrive at a genre which is different."

⁴⁹(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1972), p. 81.

⁵⁰See Nouveau Roman: hier, aujourd'hui. Pratiques, pp. 170-71.

⁵¹See for example: Bruce Morrissette, "Oedipe ou le cercle fermé," Les romans de Robbe-Grillet, pp. 37-75; Ben F. Stoltzfus, "The Gum Erasers: Oedipus the detective," Alain Robbe-Grillet and the New French Novel, pp. 67-81; Hazel E. Barnes, "The Ins and Outs of Alain Robbe-Grillet," Chicago Review, 15 (Winter-Spring 1962), 39-40.

⁵²(Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 46. "The Erasers is neither a detective story nor the story of a new Oedipus. It is the novel of a rupture and it is also, of course, a manifesto for the future novels of Robbe-Grillet."

⁵³p. 77.

⁵⁴The Erasers, n.p.

⁵⁵p. 11. "Soon unfortunately time will no longer be master. Wrapped in their aura of doubt and error, this day's events, however insignificant they may be, will in a few seconds begin their task, gradually encroaching upon the ideal order, cunningly introducing an occasional inversion, a discrepancy, a confusion, a warp, in order to accomplish their work: a day in early winter without plan, without direction, incomprehensible and monstrous." Howard's translation, p. 7.

⁵⁶Critique, 7 (Nov. 1951), 1002-03. "As for time--the principle character of any novel, they say--it acquires then a singular acuity, each second becoming, in the hands of the judge, an exhibit capable of proving guilt or innocence."

⁵⁷See Nouveau Roman: hier, aujourd'hui. Pratiques, pp. 333-34.

⁵⁸Pour un nouveau roman (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 38. "Even in Beckett, there is no lack of events, but these are constantly in the process of contesting themselves, jeopardizing themselves, destroying themselves, so that the same sentence may contain an observation and its immediate negation." Richard Howard's translation, For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 33.

FOOTNOTES

PART TWO: THE THRILLER

¹See George Grella, "Murder and the Mean Streets: The Hard-Boiled Detective Novel," in Detective Fiction: Crime and Compromise, Dick Allen and David Chacko eds. (New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1974), p. 411.

²(Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), p. xi.

³"Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?" in Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 152.

⁴p. 8. In short, "prospection substitutes itself for retrospection."

⁵(New York: Schocken Books, 1973), pp. 178-80.

⁶Trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 44.

⁷"John Hawkes: An Interview," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 6 (Summer 1965), 144.

⁸Partisan Review, 35 (Summer 1968), 339.

⁹Pour un nouveau roman, pp. 42-43. "Either art is nothing; and in that case, painting, literature, sculpture, music can be enrolled in the service of the revolutionary cause; they will then no longer be anything but instruments, comparable to motorized armies, to mechanized tools, to agricultural tractors; only their direct and immediate effectiveness will count. Or else art will continue to exist as art; and in that case, for the artist at least, it will remain the most important thing in the world." Richard Howard's translation, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰Pour un nouveau roman, p. 47. "Here, for him, is the only chance of remaining an artist and, doubtless too, by means of obscure and remote consequence, of some day serving something--perhaps even the Revolution." Howard's translation, p. 41.

¹¹Miklós Szabolcsi, "Avant-garde, Neo-avant-garde, Modernism: Questions and Suggestions," New Literary History, 3 (Autumn 1971), 69. See also "Pour une avant-garde révolutionnaire," entretien de Jacques Henric avec Philippe Sollers), Tel Quel, 40 (Winter 1970), 58-66. More recently, Robbe-Grillet has said of Tel Quel: "The Tel Quel movement is extremely hard to define because it has always been in flux. It hasn't shown the sort of revolutionary evolution we find in the work of Simon. It keeps shifting its ground and often for very personal reasons. The latest transformations of Tel Quel vis à vis the French Communist Party are completely mad. For

three years Sollers swore only by the Communist Party and you couldn't say a word against the party without having Sollers accuse you of the worst crimes. And then suddenly, in a fit of pique, he drags the Party in the mud. He says it was never worth anything anyway." "An Interview with Alain Robbe-Grillet," conducted by David Hayman, Contemporary Literature, 16 (Summer 1975), 277-78. Robbe-Grillet's comments on Sollers, it should be mentioned, concern a clash of personalities as well as a clash of politics.

¹²Michael Holquist, "Whodunit and Other Questions," p. 137. See also Poggioli's discussion of "Fashion, avant-garde, and stereotype," The Theory of the Avant-Garde, pp. 79-84.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER THREE: THE PRIVATE EYE IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

¹Atlantic Monthly (December 1944), p. 56. At least two variants of this same essay exist: "Raymond Chandler Introduces 'The Simple Art of Murder'" in The Midnight Raymond Chandler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), pp. 1-4; and "The Simple Art of Murder" in The Art of the Mystery Story, pp. 222-37. The Atlantic Monthly version of the essay will be used here unless otherwise stated.

²"Murder and the Mean Streets," pp. 411-12.

³"Murder and the Mean Streets," p. 412.

⁴(1929; rpt. New York: Dell, 1966), p. 188.

⁵"Murder and the Mean Streets," p. 416.

⁶"Murder and the Mean Streets," p. 422.

⁷(1938; rpt. New York: the Viking Press, 1956), p. 3.

⁸The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 179.

⁹"The Pleasures of John Hawkes," in The Lime Twig (New York: New Directions, 1960), p. x. Subsequent page references to The Lime Twig will refer to this edition and will be noted in the text.

¹⁰For a more extended, if debatable, comparison of Brighton Rock and The Lime Twig see Frederick Busch, Hawkes: A Guide to his Fiction (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1973), pp. 101-04.

¹¹An interesting observation about the similarities between Brighton Rock and Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommès is made by Bruce Morrissette, "New Structures in the Novel: Jealousy, by Alain Robbe-Grillet," Evergreen Review, 10 (Nov.-Dec. 1959), 103-07, 164-90. In a footnote Morrissette states: "'Greene's novels,' Robbe-Grillet said to me once, 'often made me want to rewrite them.' Already Brighton Rock (1938) seems, in retrospect, very 'robbe-grilletien' in its plot and scene, which are close to Robbe-Grillet's Les Gommès. Common elements in the two novels include: a weak hunted character who arrives in a city and follows a more or less predestined pattern of movements; the atmosphere (also reminiscent of Simenon) of a shady bar and its eccentric habitués; the ambiguity of a name and a character; a more or less enigmatic or prophetic verbal formula, repeated often; a gang leader with an Italian name; a professional man (lawyer in Greene's novel, doctor in Robbe-Grillet's) who is a terrified false witness; unexplained allusions to the violent death of a personage in the past (Molly, Pauline) /Here Morrissette's meaning is unclear as both Molly and Pauline are alive in the novels but have had some connection with the murder victims/; advertising signs and posters (idiotic to Greene, formally

interesting to Robbe-Grillet); and even, in Greene's work, an 'object' which functions as a tacit correlative (like the gum eraser or the cube of stone in Les Gommés), but also (perhaps) as an instrument of murder. (This candy stick called Brighton Rock, which when broken always shows the same letters, is however explicitly identified by one of Greene's characters as a symbol of human nature, an idea completely alien to Robbe-Grillet.) Finally, Brighton Rock contains a sadistic crime, the murder of the girl Violet, violated and left by the sea-shore: this might almost seem the actual newspaper clipping carried by Mathias in The Voyeur (and perhaps also that referred to by Sartre in his novel, Nausea).

¹²p. 6.

¹³For an interesting analysis of how social hierarchies in the underworld echo those of quotidian reality, see René Ballet, "Structures du roman policier: une parodie de rapports équivoques," La Pensée, 135 (oct. 1967), 165-74.

¹⁴The World of the Thriller, p. 20.

¹⁵"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 149.

¹⁶"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 151.

¹⁷"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 154.

¹⁸Beyond the Waste Land, p. 173.

¹⁹Discusión (Buenos Aires: M. Gleizer, 1932), pp. 119-22. "Magic is causality's crowning or its nightmare, not its contradiction. Miracles are no less foreign to this universe than to that of the astronomers; all rules govern it, plus some imaginary ones. For the superstitious there is a necessary connection not only between a shot and a corpse, but between the corpse and a mangled wax figure, or the prophetic shattering of a mirror, or spilt salt, or thirteen terrible commensals.

That menacing harmony, that frenzied and precise causality also rules the novel. . . . The suspicion that a terrible event may be precipitated by naming it does not pertain to the luxurious disorder of the real world, but this is not so in the novel, which should be a precise game of vigilances, echoes and affinities. Every episode in a careful story is the projection of a subsequent one. . . . I have distinguished between two causal processes: the natural, which is the ceaseless result of uncontrollable and infinite operations; the magic, lucid, limited, where details are prophetic. In the novel, I believe that the second process is the only honest one. The first shall remain for psychological simulation." Emir Rodriguez Monegal's translation in his essay "Borges and La Nouvelle Critique," Diacritics (Summer 1972), p. 32. I am indebted to Rodriguez Monegal not only for his translation but for his valuable discussion of magic causality in Borges and his concise summary of the way in which many, varied critics have interpreted Borges' work.

²⁰Collected Papers, Volume 4, authorized translation (London: Hogarth, 1934), pp. 368-407.

²¹"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 149.

²²"John Hawkes: An Interview," pp. 150-51.

²³"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 143.

²⁴"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 151.

²⁵Quoted in Robert I. Edenbaum, "John Hawkes: The Lime Twig and Other Tenuous Horrors," Massachusetts Review, 7 (Summer 1966), 467.

²⁶The Fabulators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 90.

²⁷"John Hawkes: An Interview," pp. 142-44.

²⁸This charge is quoted and discussed by Robert Scholes in "Fabulation and the Picaresque," The Fabulators, p. 81. Scholes discussion of violence and comedy in Chapter 6 (Margaret's beating) and Chapter 7 (Michael's night) of The Lime Twig is well worth reading.

²⁹"John Hawkes: An Interview," p. 146.

³⁰In Mass Culture, p. 177.

³¹Quoted in Charles J. Rolo, "Simenon and Spillane: The Metaphysics of Murder for the Millions," in Mass Culture, p. 168.

³²Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 5. Hofstadter connects the "vigilante mind" to the American evangelical tradition as does John G. Cawelti, "The Spillane Phenomenon," Journal of Popular Culture, 3 (Summer 1969), pp. 9-22. Cawelti writes: "It is certainly no accident that this tradition also exemplifies many of Spillane's primary social hostilities: rural suspicion of urban sophistication; nativist hatred of racial and ethnic minorities; the ambiguous hostility toward women on the part of those anxious about their status and concerned about the erosion of masculine dominance. But above all it is the similar intensity of passion, growing out of a bitter, over-powering hatred of the world as a sinful and corrupt place that unites Spillane with the popular evangelical tradition." p. 21.

³³(New York: Signet, 1972), p. 104.

³⁴The Erection Set, p. 105.

³⁵Robert Scholes, "A Conversation on The Blood Oranges Between John Hawkes and Robert Scholes," Novel, 5 (Spring 1972), 204.

36 "The Detective and the Boundary," p. 164.

37 "The Politics of Self-Parody," p. 341.

38 "La Fiction flamboyante," Pour une théorie du nouveau roman (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971), p. 230.

39 It is important to note that American hard-boiled fiction became known in France chiefly through the Série Noire which included all the types of popular fiction mentioned by Ricardou. In D'Arsène Lupin à San-Antonio, Jean-Jacques Tourteau gives an informative list of the type of "American style" books which were published in the Série Noire: "Immédiatement après la deuxième guerre mondiale, le public français a senti qu'il appartenait à un monde de violence. Sachant les lecteurs privés durant quatre ans de littérature d'origine anglo-saxonne et intéressés au plus haut point par ces nations alliées qui avaient fait la preuve de leur efficacité victorieuse, les éditeurs spécialisés dans le roman policier ont puisé dans l'immense fonds de la littérature populaire américaine des années 1930 à 1940. Déjà, la révélation en France vers 1935 d'une littérature en coups de poing telle que Le facteur sonne toujours deux fois de James Cain, puis en 1938 l'histoire tragique Des souris et des hommes de John Steinbeck, indiquait la voie à suivre. La "Série noire" chez Gallimard débutait en 1945 avec les oeuvres de deux romanciers anglais ayant adopté la méthode et la technique américaines: Peter Cheyney (la Môme Vert-de-Gris, n°1 de la collection; Cet homme est dangereux, n°2) et James Hadley Chase (Pas d'orchidées pour Miss Blandish, n°3); venaient ensuite des auteurs authentiquement américains parmi lesquels Horace McCoy (Un linceul n'a pas de poches, n°4), Raymond Chandler (La Dame du lac, n°8) et Dashiell Hammett (la Clé de verre, n°23), ces deux derniers auteurs fort appréciés par Hemingway et par Faulkner dès les années 1930. Il faut attendre le numéro 148 de la "Série noire" pour qu'apparaisse, appuyé par la préface d'un académicien Goncourt, Pierre Mac Orlan, un auteur français, Albert Simonin, avec Touchez pas au grisbi! (1953) "pensé et écrit en argot." Parallèlement, Boris Vian traduisait Chandler et sous le pseudonyme de Vernon Sullivan écrivait, entre autres, un pastiche très réussi J'irai cracher sur vos tombes, histoire d'agression sexuelle et de racisme aux Etats-Unis, aujourd'hui interdite à la vente," (pp. 188-89).

"Immediately after the Second World War, the French public felt it belonged to a world of violence. Knowing readers had been deprived for four years of English literature and were extremely interested in the allied nations which had proved their victorious efficacy, editors specializing in detective novels drew on the immense fund of popular American literature from the years between 1930 and 1940. Already, the revelation in France around 1935 of a tough literature such as The Postman Always Rings Twice by James Cain, and then the tragic story Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, indicated the route to follow. Gallimard's "Série noire" began in 1945 with the works of two English writers who had adopted the American method and technique: Peter Cheyney (Vert-de-Gris Kid [?]) n° 1 in the collection; This Man is Dangerous, n° 2) and James Hadley Chase (No Orchids for Miss Blandish, n°3); then there came authentically American

authors among whom Horace MacCoy (No Pockets in a Shroud, n° 4), Raymond Chandler (The Lady in the Lake, n° 8) and Dashiell Hammett (The Glass Key, n° 23), these last two authors were strongly appreciated by Hemingway and Faulkner from the 1930's. It wasn't until number 148 that would appear, supported by a preface written by a Goncourt Academician, Pierre Mac Orlan, a French author, Albert Simonin, with (Hands off the Dough [?]) (1953) "created and written in slang." Similarly, Boris Vian translated Chandler and under the pseudonym of Vernon Sullivan wrote, among others, a successful pastiche I Spit On Your Grave, a story of sexual aggression and racism in the United States, today banned.

⁴⁰David Hayman, "An Interview with Robbe-Grillet," p. 276.

⁴¹(Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1948), pp. 51-52. Magny's book has been translated into English under the title The Age of the American Novel: The Film Aesthetic of Fiction between the Two Wars, trans. Eleanor Hochman (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972). The history of the ellipse in narrative structure is a long one and by now a well-known one, so rather than attempt to trace it here, I refer the reader to Magny's study, and to Olga Bernal's.

⁴²For more on Camus and the tough style, see David Madden, "James M. Cain's The Postman Always Rings Twice and Albert Camus' L'Etranger," Papers on Language and Literature, 6 (Fall 1970), 407-19; W. M. Frohock's first chapter in The Novel of Violence in America, second edition (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1957); and Leo Bersani's chapter on Camus in Balzac to Beckett: Center and Circumferences in French Fiction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). For a study of L'Etranger and Le Voyeur, as well as Therèse Desqueyroux, see Jack Murray, "Three Murders in the Contemporary French Novel," Texas Studies in Language and Literature, 6 (1964), 361-75.

⁴³(1931; rpt. New York: Vintage, 1972), p. 71.

⁴⁴Essais critiques (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 39. "Robbe-Grillet's endeavor . . . seeks to establish the novel on the surface: interiority is put in parentheses; objects, spaces, and man's circulation among them are promoted to the rank of subjects. The novel becomes a direct experience of man's surroundings, without man's being able to fall back on psychology, a metaphysic, or a psychoanalysis in order to approach the objective milieu he discovers. Richard Howard's translation, Critical Essays (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp. 23-24.

⁴⁵(1959; rpt. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 10/18, n.d.), p. 25.

⁴⁶Critics have interpreted Robbe-Grillet's work in many different ways. For the "objective" view of his work, see Roland Barthes' Essais critiques in which he discusses Les Gommages, Le Voyeur and La Jalousie ("Littérature objective," "Littérature littéraire" and "Il n'y a pas d'école Robbe-Grillet"). For an effort to retrieve the meaning of these same novels, see

the essays written on them by Bruce Morrissette, Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963); translated by the author as The Novels of Robbe-Grillet and in revised form (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). For a comparison of these two lines of critical thought, see Roland Barthes' "Préface" to Morrissette's study. A general outline of various critical views of Robbe-Grillet's works through the appearance of Dans le labyrinthe is given by Gerard Genette in "Vertige fixé" which follows the text of Dans le labyrinthe in the 10/18 edition, pp. 273-310. For interesting discussions of the quality of play in Robbe-Grillet's more recent work, see both Robbe-Grillet's "Prière d'insérer" to Projet and Jean Ricardou's "La Fiction flamboyante," Pour une théorie du nouveau roman.

⁴⁷In Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, ed. David Madden (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), pp. 30-31.

⁴⁸Quoted in Grebstein, pp. 31-32.

⁴⁹The Novels of Robbe-Grillet, p. 85.

⁵⁰"Literature High and Low: The Case of the Mystery Story," The Fate of Reading and Other Essays (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 206. "Pathos" in this quotation is Aristotle's tó pathos which "is a destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds and the like," p. 203.

⁵¹Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, p. 229. "Far from being evoked, the rape of young Jacqueline in The Voyeur is concealed by the blank of a censure; it is from this constrained absence that the novel elaborates its effect: the story is haunted, invaded by it from all sides."

⁵²"The Art of Fiction XXI" (Spring 1958), 73. Cited in Bridgman's Colloquial Style (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 199.

⁵³(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 17. Cited in Colloquial Style, p. 199.

⁵⁴Cited in Strother B. Purdy, "Gertrude Stein at Marienbad," PMLA, 85 (Oct. 1970), 1096.

⁵⁵"Description Without Place," The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 345.

⁵⁶Jean Ricardou, "Esquisse d'une théorie des générateurs," p. 144.

⁵⁷Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 193.

⁵⁸Harper, p. 67.

⁵⁹Projet pour une révolution à New York (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1970), pp. 7-8. My reading of these opening scenes is close to, though

somewhat different from, the reading Jean Ricardou gives in "La Fiction flamboyante," Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, pp. 211-233. Although other scenes could be analyzed in the same manner, it seems to me important to discuss the fact that the "adventure of narrative" begins when we open the book.

"I am closing the door behind me, a heavy wooden door with a tiny narrow oblong window near the top, its pane protected by a cast-iron grille (clumsily imitating wrought iron) which almost entirely covers it. The black interlacing spirals, thickened by successive layers of black paint, are so close together, and there is so little light from the other side of the door, that nothing can be seen of what might or might not be inside.

The wood around the window is coated with a brownish varnish in which thin lines of a lighter color, lines which are the imitation or imaginary veins running through another substance considered more decorative . . ." Richard Howard's translation, Project For A Revolution in New York (New York: Grove Press, 1972), p. 1.

⁶⁰Projet, pp. 8-9. "[The lines] constitute parallel networks of only slightly divergent curves outlining darker knots, round or oval or even triangular, a group of changing signs in which I have discerned human figures for a long time: a young woman lying on her left side and facing me, apparently naked since her nipples and pubic hair are discernible; her legs are bent, the left one more than the right, its knee pointing forward, on the floor; the right foot therefore crosses over the left one, the ankles are evidently bound together, just as the wrists are bound behind her back as usual, it would seem, for both arms disappear from view behind the upper part of the body: the left arm below the elbow and the right one just above it.

The face, tilted back, is framed by curling waves of very dark, luxuriant hair spread loose on the tiles. The features themselves are difficult to make out, as much because of the position of the head as because of a broad hank of hair slanting across the forehead, the line of the eyes, and one cheek: the only indisputable detail is the mouth, open in a long cry of suffering or terror." Howard's translation, pp. 1-2.

⁶¹Projet, p. 9. "Yet it cannot be an interrogation; the mouth, which has been wide open too long, must be distended by some kind of gag: for example, a piece of black lingerie stuffed between the lips. Besides, a scream, if the girl were screaming, would be audible even through the thick pane of the oblong window with its cast-iron grille.

But now a silver-haired man in a white doctor's coat appears in the foreground from the right . . ." Howard's translation, pp. 2-3.

⁶²Projet, p. 11. "a short bald man in workman's clothes with the strap of a toolbox over one shoulder, apparently a plumber, or an electrician, or a locksmith. The whole scene then goes very fast, still without variation.

It has obviously been rehearsed several times: everyone knows his part by heart. The gestures follow each other in a relaxed, continuous manner, the links as imperceptible as the necessary elements of some properly oiled machinery, when suddenly the light goes out. The only thing left in front of me is a dusty pane in which no more than a dim reflection of my own

face can be made out . . ." Howard's translation, p. 4.

⁶³Projet, p. 157. "The reason, you old phony, that you can't tell everything at the same time, so that there always comes a moment when a story breaks in half, turns back or jumps ahead, or begins splitting up; then you say 'retake' so that people can tell where they are." Howard's translation, p. 132.

⁶⁴"Sur le choix des générateurs," Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui. Pratiques, pp. 160-61. In this essay, Robbe-Grillet points out why he thinks Ricardou's theory of generating words is too limited (c.f. "La Fiction flamboyante," Pour une théorie du nouveau roman). That the mythology Robbe-Grillet speaks of does exist is corroborated by the choice of items which Jacqueline Piatier lists as occurring in the new book, U.S.A. 76, by Michel Butor and Jacques Monory. Piatier lists the following items: a bicentennial lighter, a sherrif's badge, a subway token, six colored cardboard masks, a small red hand, and a stained place mat decorated with the heads of thirty-six presidents ("Michel Butor et le bicentenaire des Etats-Unis," Le Monde (12 dec. 1975), pp. 19, 25.).

⁶⁵"Prière d'insérer," Projet. This essay is from an article which appeared in Le Nouvel Observateur (26 juin 1970).

⁶⁶French Review, 45 (Oct. 1971), 214.

⁶⁷Nouvelle revue française, 218 (févr. 1971), pp. 96.

⁶⁸"New York et après," Les lettres modernes, no. 1363 (9-15 déc. 1970), pp. 5-6.

⁶⁹Pour une théorie du nouveau roman, pp. 211-13.

⁷⁰Morrisette, "Topology and the French Nouveau Roman," boundary 2, 1 (fall 1972), 52. The drawings of Klein forms appear on pages 53-54 of this same essay.

⁷¹Bâtons, chiffres et lettres (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), pp. 32-33. "I don't want to say that literature, that poetry should be reduced to a mere shorthand copy of what one contemptuously calls the language of concierges which, after all, is merely that of the academicians with a few minor mistakes added. The task is . . . to give style to the spoken language. In this way we might witness the birth of a new literature. I believe that a dead syntax is such a damper that when we have got rid of it, there will not only arise a new literature but also a new philosophy." Martin Esslin's translation of his essay, "Raymond Queneau," in The Novelist as Philosopher, John Cruickshank ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 99.

⁷²(Paris: Gallimard, 1965), pp. 247-48.

73"Conversation avec Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes," Bâtons, p. 37. "One does not eat the word bread, one does not drink the word wine, but, well said, they have their importance nevertheless. I do not believe in language if it takes itself for what it is not; I do not believe in poetry that is a lie. It is exactness which gives even the least obvious metaphors their value. An Emperor changed the way of life of the Chinese by changing their language. It is this which seems to me quite possible. There is a power in language, but one must know how to use it; there are different kinds of levers and a block of stone cannot be moved with a nutcracker." Esslin's translation, p. 100.

74"The Argentine Detective Story," p. 58.

75Cuandernos americanos, 52 (julio-agosto 1950), 240. "The most significant branch (it is not a question of quality but of peculiarity) seems to me to be that of the "tough writers" of the United States, tough writers bred in the school of Hemingway (one could say that, more than a school, this was a reformatory), novelists like James Cain, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. I begin with the warning that none of these writers is a great writer; how can they be, if all of them represent an extreme and violent form of the conscious or unconscious repudiation of the poetic literature which we noted earlier? In them, the always deferred necessity to put language by the board becomes intense. The abundance of insult, verbal obscenity, and of the increasing use of slang are manifestations of this contempt for the word as a euphemism for thought and sentiment. Everything here undergoes a process of deliberate debasement; the writer does with language what his heroes do with women; this is because both suspect a betrayal. Language cannot be murdered, but it can be reduced to the lowest form of servitude. And then, the "tough writer" refuses to describe also (because this gives the advantage to language) and scarcely uses what is minimal to present his episodes.

76The Buenos Aires Affair (Mexico: Joaquin Mortiz, 1973), p. 9. In English, The Buenos Aires Affair, trans. Suzanne Jill Levine (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), p. 3.

77p. 81. "Officer: At least one thing, what exactly happened years ago?

Voice:

Officer: Only a suspicion, nothing more?

Voice:

Officer: But explain it, what is it that you notice about him sometimes?

Voice:

Officer: What do you mean by a murderer's look?"

Levine's translation, p. 67.

78p. 166.--No, waste time, person life balance, dangerous man, I no more responsibility, life danger
--Say man name finally

--I tell happened, not invented, you find name, don't inform
 cold-blooded, friend be enemy after
 --Talk
 --Man already other crime, years ago
 --Continue"

Levine's translation, p. 148.

⁷⁹p. 22. "The woman's skin is very white, the gag in her mouth has been improvised out of a man's silk handkerchief, multi-colored but sober, her hands fastened behind her with a mourning tie. The color of the woman's eyes cannot be seen because they are closed, besides, under her left eyelid the corresponding eyeball is missing. On the rest of her body there are no signs of violence, such as purple bruises or wounds clotted with dark blood. Neither is there any sign of sexual violence. The six cigarette butts divided between the crystal ashtray and another bronze one show no traces of lipstick. The wrought bronze ashtray from India contains the only lighted cigarette, the smoke draws a straight vertical line."
 Levine's translation, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁰p. 193. "If María Esther Vila came to the place where the crime was about to be committed--it was he who was going to kill a woman--and she prevented it--apparently--with her unexpected presence, she would no longer doubt his intention to kill a woman; thus preventing the murder of a woman at his hands, María Esther Vila would be convinced that the crime in the vacant lot had been of the same sort." Levine's translation, p. 172.

⁸¹pp. 201-02. Sensations experienced by Gladys when she hears Leo answer María Esther 'I'm going to kill her.'

/Followed by a dream of filings rushing to a magnet/

Sensations experienced by María Esther when she asks Leo 'Why?' and he turns around without answering her, showing her his broad, naked back.

/Followed by the dream of a geometric figure which becomes a canvas, then a screen for thousands of spectators because there is no obstacle due to a bloody automobile accident/

Levine's translation, p. 178.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER FOUR: SUSPENSE AND SUSPICION

¹"Petites notes sur le roman policier," p. 23. "in the depths will reign the superman: bandit or policeman, it matters not, because they are strangely brothers here, and often even, as the case of Vautrin-Vidocq shows, they exist at the same time in the same person."

²Cited by Richard, p. 23. "they had their feet in every salon, their hands in every strong box, their elbows in the streets, their heads upon all pillows, they did not scruple to help themselves at their pleasure". Ellen Marriage and Ernest Dawson's translation in The Thirteen (Philadelphia: Avil Publishing Company, 1901), p. 7.

³La Pensée, 135 (oct. 1967), 1-6-67.

⁴Fereydoun Hoyveyda, Petite Histoire du roman policier (Paris: Editions du Pavillon, 1956), pp. 38-39. "the ferocity of money, the incertitude of human justice, the fight against injustices, etc. . . . Fore-shadowing 'literature' in fact, the popular novel incorporated right away the frameworks and problems of modern life, and at the mercy of the grayness of the modern city, shifted and multiplied the occurrence of mystery the desire for which remains anchored in the deepest part of man."

⁵Cited in Antoinette Peské and Pierre Marty, Les Terribles (Paris: Frederick Chambriand, 1951), p. 183. "The police of England/By him were mystified/But, in the end arrested/He was hanged and enterred/Guess what happened:/The bandit re-escaped from them."

⁶Peské and Marty, p. 184. "Casting his immense shadow/On the world and on Paris,/Who is this specter with gray eyes/Who looms up in silence?/Fantômas, could it be you/Rising over the rooves?"

⁷Cited in Serge Radine, Quelques aspects du roman policier psychologique (Geneva: Editions de Mont-Blanc, 1960), 108. "We have, both of us, in common a taste for the strange, a love of the fantastic in everyday life."

⁸pp. 24-25. "Exhibit X in any detective story gives us, paradoxically, a clear image of this situation. The evidence gathered by the inspectors--an object left at the scene of the crime, a movement captured in a photograph, a sentence overheard by a witness--seem chiefly, at first, to require an explanation, to exist only in relation to their role in a context which overpowers them. And already the theories begin to take shape: the presiding magistrate attempts to establish a logical and necessary link between things; it appears that everything will be resolved in a banal bundle of causes and consequences, intentions and coincidences, . . .

But the story begins to proliferate in a disturbing way: the witnesses contradict one another, the defendant offers several alibis, new evidence appears that had not been taken into account. . . . And we keep going back to the recorded evidence: the exact position of a piece of furniture, the

shape and frequency of a fingerprint, the word scribbled in a message. We have the mounting sense that nothing else is true. Though they may conceal a mystery, or betray it, these elements which make a mockery of systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is to be there.

The same is true of the world around us. We had thought to control it by assigning it a meaning, and the entire art of the novel, in particular, seemed dedicated to this enterprise. But this was merely an illusory simplification; and far from becoming clearer and closer because of it, the world has only, little by little, lost all its life. Since it is chiefly in its presence that the world's reality resides, our task is now to create a literature which takes that presence into account." Richard Howard's translation, pp. 22-23.

⁹Marco Denevi, Rosaura a las diez (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guillermo Kraft, 1955), pp. 14-15. "Maybe it was that enormous black overcoat that fitted him, frankly, like a coffin, or that snap-brimmed hat that, when I met him at the door, he took off respectfully, revealing a head shaped like an Easter egg, pink and shiny, and covered with little blond fuzz. . . . He was wearing a pair of huge shoes, the most outlandish shoes I've ever seen in my life, rust-colored, with chamois trim, and rubber soles so thick that it looked as if the little fellow had walked on wet cement and it had stuck to the bottom of his shoes. He wanted to increase his height this way, but all he managed to do was to take on the ridiculous appearance of a man wearing high heels, as they say dukes and marquises used to do in olden times, when, with all those bows and wigs and silk stockings, they all looked like women; in order to find out which was a man, they must have done what they did in my home town with the boys who dressed up as women during carnival time." Donald Yates' translation, Rosa at Ten O'Clock (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 8.

¹⁰Rosaura, pp. 146-47. "Physically, you know him. A little henpecked creature. His legs, his body, his arms, all of him is on a reduced scale. He's not a man. He's the maquette of a man, the free sample. A medical student sees him and experiences the temptation to vivisect him in order to study anatomy without having to use a cadaver. . . . No, siree, don't trust a poor devil like him, seemingly timid and lymphatic; rather distrust him precisely because of his physical vulnerability. An organic shortchange like this, or to say it more clearly, a minderwertigkeit von organen, produces deep psychological complexes; it produces resentments, rancors, phobias. Hate, in other words. And hate of the worst kind, because its cause is in the subject who hates himself. . . . And there's no cure for that kind of hate. Remember Nietzsche: there is no salvation for him who suffers because of himself, unless it is a swift death. Also sprach Zarathustra." Yates' translation, pp. 107-08.

¹¹Rosaura, pp. 177-78. "What eyes, I swear! Being that close to them was like having your head bathed in the beam of a blue searchlight, or in blue water, or like being surrounded by a blue haze, It seems unbelievable that there could be a gaze like hers, that is not made up of two arrows, like two lines that go straight from one point to another, but rather like

something that has width and depth, and even denseness, a gaze that is like a thick, exuding--well, I can't describe it to you. Within the confines of that blue wave I felt like a different person. I spoke tenderly to her." Yates' translation, pp. 131-32.

¹²Rosaura, p. 204. "From your point of view, the identity card is false. But the explanation may lie in the fact that you believe that Rosa is real. What is false does not lie in that card, but rather in the person it represents. The adulteration isn't in the document, but in the life to which that document tries to attest." Yates' translation, p. 153.

¹³Rosaura, pp. 208-09. "And then the two worlds merge within me, like two different realities--different, yes, but equally powerful. To dream, to live, what's the difference? I can't tell you the difference. For me it's all the same." Yates' translation, p. 157.

¹⁴Novel, 1 (Fall 1967), 65.

¹⁵Irby, p. 65.

¹⁶Ceremonias (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1966), pp. 11-12. "Word by word, licked up by the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine, letting himself be absorbed to the point where the images settled down and took on color and movement, he was witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin. The woman arrived first, apprehensive; now the lover came in A lustful panting dialogue raced down the pages like a rivulet of snakes, and one felt it had all been decided from eternity. . . . Nothing had been forgotten: alibis, unforeseen hazards, possible mistakes. From this hour on, each instant had its use minutely assigned. The cold-blooded, twice-gone-over reexamination of the details was barely broken off so that a hand could caress a cheek. . . ." Paul Blackburn's translation "Continuity of Parks" in End of the Game (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), p. 64.

¹⁷"Interview/Julio Cortázar," trans. Jonathan Tittler, Diacritics (Winter 1974), p. 37.

¹⁸Diacritics (Fall, 1972), p. 50.

¹⁹"Las babas," p. 202. "It's going to be difficult because nobody really knows who is telling it, if I am I or what actually occurred or what I'm seeing (clouds, and once in a while a pigeon) or if, simply, I'm telling a truth which is only my truth, and then is only the truth for my stomach, for this impulse to go running out and to finish up in some manner with, this, whatever it is." Blackburn's translation, p. 116.

²⁰"Las babas," p. 204. "Michel knew that the photographer always worked as a permutation of his personal way of seeing the world as other than the camera insidiously imposed upon it (now a large cloud is going by, almost black), but he lacked no confidence in himself, knowing that he had only to go out without the Contax to recover the keynote of distraction, the sight without the frame around it, light without the diaphragm aperture or 1/250 sec." Blackburn's translation, pp. 117-18.

21"Las babas," p. 204. "I think that I know how to look, if it's something I know, and also that every looking oozes with mendacity, because it's that which expels us furthest outside ourselves, without the least guarantee In any case, if the likely inaccuracy can be seen beforehand, it becomes possible again to look; perhaps it suffices to choose between looking and the reality looked at, to strip things of all their unnecessary clothing. And surely all that is difficult besides." Blackburn's translation, p. 119.

22"Las babas," p. 201. "It'll never be known how this has to be told, in the first person or in the second, using the third person plural or continually inventing modes that will serve for nothing. If one might say: I will see the moon rose, or: we hurt me at the back of my eyes, and especially: you the blond woman was the clouds that race before my your his our yours their faces. What the hell." Blackburn's translation, p. 114.

23In Romanticism: vistas, instances, continuities, David Thorburn and Geoffrey Hartman, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 168.

24"Las babas," p. 205. "She was thin and willowy, two unfair words to describe what she was, and was wearing an almost-black fur coat, almost long, almost handsome. All the morning's wind . . . had blown through her blond hair which pared away her white, bleak face--two unfair words--and put the world at her feet and horribly alone in front of her dark eyes, her eyes fell on things like two eagles, two leaps into nothingness, two puffs of green slime. I'm not describing anything, it's more a matter of understanding it. And I said two puffs of green slime." Blackburn's translation, pp. 119-20.

25Cited in Alfred J. MacAdam, "Cortázar on Cortázar: A Literary Chronology," Review 72, (Winter 1972), p. 39.

26(Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1968), pp. 11-12. "But beneath it all I know that everything is false, that I'm already far away from what just happened to me and that, as on so many other occasions, it comes down to this useless desire to understand, missing, perhaps, the obscure call or signal of the thing itself, the uneasiness I'm left with, the instantaneous display of another order where memories, potentials, and signals break out to form a flash of unity which breaks up at the very instant it drags and pulls me out of myself. Now all of this has left me with just one kind of curiosity--the old human topic: deciphering. And the rest of it, a tightening at the mouth of the stomach, the dark certainty that around there somewhere, not with this dialectical simplification, a road begins and goes on.

It's not enough, of course. In the end we have to think, and then analysis comes, the distinction between what really forms a part of that instant outside of time and what associations were put into it so as to attract it, make it more yours, put it more onto this side. And the worst will be when you try to tell other people. . . ." Gregory Rabassa's translation, 62: A Model Kit (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), pp. 7-8.

²⁷Carl-Gustaf Bjustrom, "De Chaminadour a Sirancy-la-Louve: Robert Pinget, L'Inquisitoire," Critique, 19 (mars 1963), 195.

²⁸The New Novel: From Queneau to Pinget, p. 364.

²⁹Letter of July 14, 1965. Mercier's translation, The New Novel, p. 364.

³⁰L'Inquisitoire (1962; rpt. Paris: Union Générale d'Édition, n.d.) p. 291. "I repeat you pushed me into it and I repeat if people can't understand one another it's because of folk like you who don't want to understand and who get their morality all mixed up in things where it's no business to be." Donald Watson's translation, The Inquisitory (New York: Grove Press, 1966), p. 228.

³¹In Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui. Pratiques, pp. 316-17. "Here is what I find in my books: an amalgamation of stories which gets entangled and which brings up, at first sight, a sort of middling truth which the reader has trouble placing but which does not baffle him too much because it is expressed in simple terms The mind involuntarily clings to several key words like forest, house, larceny, murder, rape, flight, walk etc., never suspecting that I am taking him elsewhere by the medium of just this simplicity which normally leads him to recognize already familiar situations. The reader can, then, follow along very well, provided that he doesn't insist too much on verisimilitude. The first reading will leave him either with the impression of a disorderly but excusable fantasy, or an unexplained but real drama He will remain on the level of a middling psychology, that of everyone. I depend a great deal on that appearance which permits me to insinuate between the lines, at the winding of a phrase, things which I prefer not to formulate clearly, either because they take too much time to be formulated which would break the general rhythm, or because I consider them better suggested than stated. I hold also to the impression of mystery or at least that of uncertainty This new way of presenting the reader with a construction site--or demolition site--is already profoundly rooted in the art of today. It is not my own choice, rather it is imposed on me as my innermost personal truth. This is to repeat that an artist, whether he wishes it or not, is engaged in his age. . . . The text which the reader has beneath his eyes is that of an adventure in the process of happening, of achieving itself, not a text already lived and then transcribed."

³²Poétique 4, 14 (1973), p. 251. "What was in the realistic novel, accessory, has become the essential, not without a parodic intention. The lazy reader can no longer "skip" the description since it no longer is closed and invades the entire novel at the expense of narrative elements. An immobile text which no suspense is asked to speed up."

³³p. 68. "When they go there do they visit Rivière"
"They don't go to Amsterdam they go to Holland,
Amsterdam is the Low Countries."

Watson's translation, p. 53.

³⁴p. 35. "then of course the landing and then still going up if you're interested some woman with nothing on but a flimsy little veil with a swan that's got his beak against her cheek and his tail half between her legs it's pretty filthy, she's got one arm under his wing to hold him and with the other hand she's stroking his head, one of the swan's feet is resting on her thigh it's a wonder he can keep his balance and then comes the last picture now the portrait's gone

Describe the last picture

With all due respect I'd rather not

Describe it

Well I mean to say it's men stark naked, ten or twelve of them in a room with a swimming-pool having a bathe or a rest and so on and the guests always used to have a laugh in front of it looking at the details I felt ashamed of them, it comes from Germany those boches you know" Watson's translation, p. 28.

³⁵p. 23. "me she found I'd the right eye of a clergyman the type that'd steal everything in sight and the left eye of a numphatic". Watson's translation, p. 19.

³⁶See Part One, note 12.

³⁷See Part One, note 6.

³⁸Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 10.

³⁹pp. 316-17. "we could invent other people no matter who yes make them say anything we liked it would be just like what happened between the real ones all of them in our heads they're dead, your questions give me the impression we're forcing them to speak but mistakes are not important they'd talk just the same whether its true or false and we'll still be in the same boat when other people ask questions about us . . . whether you answer them yes or no the result will be the same they'll mix you up with me I'll be the one who asks the questions and you'll do the answering true or false what does it matter

You mean you're not making any effort to be objective

What's that

Any effort to tell the truth

Yes I am on the contrary I am making an effort I'm even trying too hard and the truth lies to one side, in what I don't know any more or what I don't know yet or what you forget to ask me . . .". Watson's translation, pp. 247-48.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER FIVE: WRITING DEGREE 007

¹Cited in Jean-Jacques Tourteau, D'Arsène Lupin à San-Antonio, p. 242.

²pp. 137-38.

³The Georgia Review, 28 (Fall 1974), 385.

⁴Hartman, "Aesthetics," p. 385.

⁵Hartman, "Aesthetics," pp. 387-88.

⁶Ficciones, pp. 97-98. "An hypothesis both hateful and odd. The Prussian spy Hans Rabener, alias Viktor Runebert, attacked with drawn automatic the bearer of the warrant for his arrest, Captain Richard Madden. The latter, in self-defense, inflicted the wound which brought about Runeberg's death." Donald A. Yates' translation, "The Garden of the Forking Paths," Labyrinths, p. 19.

⁷pp. 102-03. "The instructions to turn always to the left reminded me that such was the common procedure for some understanding of labyrinths. I have some understanding of labyrinths: not for nothing am I the great grandson of that Ts'ui Pên who was governor of Yunnan and who renounced worldly power in order to write a novel that might be even more populous than the Hung Lu Meng and to construct a labyrinth in which all men would become lost. Thirteen years he dedicated to these heterogenous tasks, but the hand of a stranger murdered him--and his novel was incoherent and no one found the labyrinth. Beneath the English trees I meditated on that lost maze I imagined it infinite, no longer composed of octagonal kiosks and returning paths, but of rivers and provinces and kingdoms I thought of a labyrinth of labyrinths, of one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars. Absorbed in these illusory images, I forgot my destiny of one pursued. I felt myself to be, for an unknown period of time, an abstract perceiver of the world. The vague, living countryside, the moon, the remains of the day worked on me, as well as the slope of the road which eliminated any possibility of weariness. The afternoon was intimate, infinite. The road descended and forked among the now confused meadows. A high-pitched, almost syllabic music approached and receded in the shifting of the wind, dimmed by leaves and distance. I thought that a man can be an enemy of other men, of the moments of other men, but not of a country: not of fireflies, words, gardens, streams of water, sunsets. Thus I arrived before a tall, rusty gate." Yates' translation, pp. 22-23.

⁸p. 105. "Ts'ui Pên must have said once: 'I am withdrawing to write a book.' And another time: 'I am withdrawing to construct a labyrinth.' Everyone imagined two works; to no one did it occur that the book and the maze were one and the same thing." Yates' translation, p. 25.

⁹p. 107. "for example, you arrive at this house, but in one of the possible pasts you are my enemy, in another, my friend." Yates' translation, p. 26.

¹⁰"Historias universales," Antología, ed. Jorge Luis Borges et. al. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1965), p. 397. "In a cosmos inconceivably complete, each time that a creature was confronted with diverse alternatives, he didn't choose one but all, creating in this way many universal cosmic histories. Seeing that in this world there were many creatures and that each one of them was continually confronting many alternatives, the combinations of these processes were innumerable and at each moment this universe branched off infinitely into other universes, and those, into others in their turn."

¹¹Antología personal (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1961), pp. 60-61. "Chuang Tzu dreamt that he was a butterfly and during that dream he was not Chuang Tzu, but a butterfly. How with space and self abolished, shall we link those moments to his waking moments and to the feudal period of Chinese history? This does not mean that we shall never know, even in an approximate fashion, the date of that dream; it means that the chronological fixing of an event, of an event in the universe, is alien and external to it. In China the dream of Chuang Tzu is proverbial; let us imagine that of its almost infinite readers, one dreams that he is a butterfly and then dreams that he is Chuang Tzu. Let us imagine that, by a not impossible stroke of chance, this dream reproduces point for point the master's. Once this identity is postulated, it is fitting to ask: Are not these moments which coincide one and the same? Is not one repeated term sufficient to break down and confuse the history of the world, to denounce that there is no such history?" James E. Irby's translation, "A New Refutation of Time," Labyrinths, p. 231.

¹²Hartman, "Aesthetics," p. 384.

¹³p. 341.

¹⁴Thomas Pynchon, V. (1963; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 2. Subsequent page references will refer to this edition and will be cited in the text.

¹⁵p. 124.

¹⁶The Cambridge Modern History: Its Origin, Authorship and Production (Cambridge University Press, 1097), pp. 10-12. This view of history and this particular passage are discussed by Edward Hallett Carr in "The Historian and His Facts," Chapter I of Carr's What is History? (New York: Knopf, 1961).

¹⁷The New Cambridge Modern History, I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. xxiv-xxv. See also Carr, "The Historian and His Facts" cited above.

¹⁸Beyond the Waste Land, pp. 125-26.

¹⁹Alvin Greenberg, "The Underground Woman; An Excursion into the V-ness of Thomas Pynchon," Chelsea, No. 27 (December 1969), p. 63.

²⁰"Notes on a New Sensibility," Partisan Review, 36 (1969), 473.

²¹Cited in Wasson, "Notes," p. 461.

²²Cited in Wasson, "Notes," p. 461.

²³Wasson, "Notes," p. 471.

²⁴Wasson, "Notes," p. 477.

²⁵See Chapter 1, note 27.

²⁶Uno y el universo, p. 110. "It is clear that ideal objects belong to a universe without time and without causality. A circle was not born on any day nor will it ever die: it is incorruptible. Centaurs, whiteness, mathematical figures belong to an incorruptible world like the Platonic heaven where movement and time do not exist, where everything is eternal and invariable."

²⁷(Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

²⁸p. 12. "It is deceptive, they maintain, to look for the origin of words because words are the origin of things;" and "However complex the etymology of a word may be, learned etymological research, tracing back the embranchments, always allows access to the original source."

²⁹(Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), pp. 11-15.

³⁰Positions et oppositions sur le roman contemporain, p. 144. "The concept of production eliminates two contrary illusions: creation, expression. Only a strange mystical doctrine ventures to liken the production of a text to an alledged creation ex nihilo; only a romantic dogma dares to reduce production to the expression of a pre-existent substance. With creation, the starting point is nothing; with expression, the starting point is everything. With creation, invention is everything; with expression, transformation must be dissolved to nothing. With production, we recognize two dimensions: on the one hand, a base or starting point, on the other hand, the transforming work of certain operations. We call a generator that couple formed of a starting point and an operation."

³¹"Esquisse," p. 145. "Autogeneration puts the text in relation with itself. Augogeneration is already linked with repetition. The phenomenon can be particularly felt in analogical operations. Formed by relations of internal similarity, the text tends to become its own mirror, the space of a duplication."

³²Les Lieux-dits, p. 14. "Perhaps their orator composed pregnant descriptions of the opposition of infernal red versus the delicate blue of paradise. Doubtless he evoked the primordial rivalry between good and evil and how that subterranean battle occurred from time to time on the surface in intense battles, each time appearing decisive"

³³Problèmes du nouveau roman, p. 136.

³⁴In Nouveau roman: hier, aujourd'hui. Problèmes généraux, p. 262.

³⁵"Métaphore et nouveau roman," pp. 269-70. "Now, the mirror is connected, on the one hand, to the theory of the conventional novel which it characterizes metaphorically with the expression mirror-novel and, on the other hand, to the theory of the New Novel, most especially to the very definition of mise en abyme. . . . The explosive, incendiary conjunction finds itself metaphorized by the magnifying glass, an instrument with a double optical capacity; it enlarges and allows us to see things more clearly; it makes us see in miniature and in reverse; finally, concentrating the rays of the sun, it allows us to make a fire and to start a conflagration. Moreover, this conjunction is, in its turn, a mise en abyme, at the same time, in Réflexion and in the window display of Epsilon the antique dealer, each one containing, besides a blue and gold mirror, a tapestry by Aubusson and an eighteenth-century engraving representing the same love scene which, as we will see, is itself a complex mise en abyme: of the relations between Olivier and Atta, seen by the conventional novel and by the new novel."

³⁶Les Lieux-dits, pp. 128-29. "No attempt, in my works, to relate a story. It is important, rather, to deduce the fiction from strict rules established in the abstract. For that, first it is necessary to find two antagonistic genres. Now, in their respective development, the tourist guide and the novel are basically opposed. One hides itself entirely behind the world it invites us to see: the other, with its descriptions and adventures, invents in the wiles of its language at each moment, a particular universe. It sufficed, therefore, to define the novel as the place and stake of the reciprocal litigation of the two adversaries

But how asked Olivier, do you in practice articulate the manoeuvres of the two enemies, avoid the certitude of an elementary strategy?

. . . the two adversaries uncover in themselves their own contestation. There is not a tour guide which does not succumb to the desire for language As for the novel, as busy as it may be in creating the autonomy of its space, it does not stop using at each moment, on the other hand, elements from the world Thus far from being a sure index, each phrase remains made up of incertitude."

³⁷Les Lieux-dits, p. 190. "All that, once more, today, is a metaphor."

³⁸"Sur le choix des générateurs," Nouveau roman, Pratiques, pp. 157-58. See also Chapter 3, note 77, of this study.

³⁹Also a parody of literary criticism.

⁴⁰Vladimir Nabokov, The Annotated Lolita, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p. 51.

⁴¹See Introduction to this study, p. 26.

⁴²Cited in Poirier, "The Politics of Self-Parody," p. 349.

⁴³Dwight MacDonald, "Virtuosity Rewarded or Dr. Kinbote's Revenge," Partisan Review, 29 (Summer 1962), 440-41.

⁴⁴"The World of Rococo," The Nation, 194 (June 16, 1962), 542.

⁴⁵"To the Sound of Hollow Laughter," Horizon, 4 (July 1962), 91.

⁴⁶"Nabokov's Anti-Novel," Commentary, 34 (November 1962), 451.

⁴⁷See Mary McCarthy, "A Bolt from the Blue," New Republic, 146 (4 June 1962), 21-27; L. S. Dembo, "Vladimir Nabokov, An Introduction" in Nabokov: The Man and His Work, ed. L. S. Dembo, (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), pp. 3-18; Frank Kermode, "Zemblances," New Statesman, 44 (9 November 1962), pp. 671-72; Carol Williams, "'Web of Sense': Pale Fire in the Nabokov Canon," Critique, 6 (Winter 1963), 29-45; John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," in The American Novel Since World War II, ed. Marcus Klein, (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1969), pp. 267-79.

⁴⁸Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p. 114.

⁴⁹Stegner, pp. 23-25.

⁵⁰See Timothy F. Flower, "The Scientific Art of Nabokov's Pale Fire," Criticism, 17 (Summer 1975), 230.

⁵¹Pale Fire (New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1962), p. 42, 11. 109-15. All subsequent page references to Pale Fire will be given in the text and will refer to this edition.

⁵²p. 440.

⁵³p. 439.

⁵⁴"A Bolt from the Blue," p. 22.

⁵⁵The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain (New York: Bantam, 1971), p. 441.

⁵⁶Stegner, p. 35.

⁵⁷Alfred Appel, Jr., "An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," in Nabokov: The Man and His Work, p. 31.

⁵⁸The Spectator, Vol. I, Donald F. Bond, ed. (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 265.

⁵⁹For an excellent study of Nabokov's style, see Jessie Thomas Lokrantz, The Underside of the Weave: Some Stylistic Devices used by Vladimir Nabokov (Stockholm, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1973).

⁶⁰Appel, "An Interview," pp. 22-23.

⁶¹Stegner, p. 129.

⁶²Crystal Land: Artifice in Nabokov's English Novels (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 40.

⁶³"Borges' 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' and Nabokov's Pale Fire: Literature of Exhaustion," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 14 (Spring 1972), 141-42.

⁶⁴Annotated Lolita, pp. 322-23.

FOOTNOTES

CONCLUSION

¹Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les choses (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 7. "(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies" No translator listed, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Pantheon, 1970), p. xv.

²Foucault, p. 7.

³Tales of Mystery and Imagination, p. 409.

⁴The Annotated Lolita, p. 313.

⁵(New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1901), pp. 192-93.

⁶Unpopular Opinions, p. 231.

⁷The Nouveau Roman, p. 81.

⁸Cited in Gillespie, "Detections: Borges and Father Brown," p. 226.

⁹"A Conversation on The Blood Oranges Between John Hawkes and Robert Scholes," p. 204.

¹⁰Pour un nouveau roman, p. 25. "The same is true of the world around us. We had thought to control it by assigning it a meaning, and the entire art of the novel, in particular, seemed dedicated to this enterprise. But this was merely an illusory simplification; and far from becoming clearer and closer because of it, the world has only, little by little, lost all its life." Howard's translation, p. 23.

¹¹Foucault, pp. 8-9. "The monstrous quality that runs through Borges' enumeration consists . . . in the fact that the common ground on which such meetings are possible has itself been destroyed. What is impossible is not the propinquity of the things listed, but the very site on which their propinquity would be possible. The animals '(i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush'--where could they ever meet, except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration, or on the page transcribing it? Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language? Yet, though language can spread them before us, it can only do so in an unthinkable space. The category of animals 'included in the present classification,' with its explicit reference to paradoxes we are familiar with, is indication enough that we shall never succeed in defining a stable relation of contained to container between each of these categories and that which includes them all: if all the animals divided up here can be placed without exception in one of the

divisions of this list, then aren't all the other divisions to be found in that one division too? And then again, in what space would that single, inclusive division have its existence? Absurdity destroys the and of the enumeration by making impossible the in where the things enumerated would be divided up. . . . [Borges] simply dispenses with the least obvious, but most compelling, of necessities; he does away with the site, the mute ground upon which it is possible for entities to be juxtaposed. A vanishing trick that is masked or, rather, laughably indicated by our alphabetical order, which is to be taken as the clue . . . to the enumerations" The Order of Things, p. xvii.

¹²Foucault, p. 9. "there arose in its wake the suspicion that there is a worse kind of disorder than that of the incongruous, the linking together of things that are inappropriate; I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension without law or geometry, of the heteroclitite." The Order of Things, p. xvii.

¹³Foucault, pp. 9-10. "Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language . . . because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, not only the syntax with which we construct our sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things . . . to 'hold together.' . . . Heterotopias . . . desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences." The Order of Things, p. xviii.

¹⁴"Theory of Metaphor," p. 168.

¹⁵"The Politics of Self-Parody," pp. 352-53.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS
WITH DETECTIVE STORY AFFINITIES

The following list includes works not discussed at length in the dissertation but which either parody the detective story or have detective story rhythms. Works which have been discussed sufficiently to give an indication of their affinities with the popular genre are annotated by page reference to my own text.

Bioy Casares, Adolfo. "En memoria de Paulina." La trama celeste. Buenos Aires: Sur, 1970. A study of jealousy in which the narrator undergoes a recreation of the emotions of a murderer. Detective story atmosphere.

_____. and Silvina Ocampo. Los que aman, odian. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1946. A murder is committed at a seaside resort and various guests offer their conflicting hypotheses as to the identity of the murderer.

_____. "El otro laberinto." La trama celeste (see above). A detective story which takes place in Hungary and involves a missing person, a manuscript, several revolutionaries and a time warp.

_____. "El perjurio de la nieve." La trama celeste (see above). The story of a murder in which the events of a crime are related in a manuscript and then reinterpreted in an afterword to reveal the real criminal behind the scenes.

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Abenjacán el Bojarí, muerto en su laberinto." El Aleph. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1971. See page 71 of this text.

_____. "El acercamiento a Almotásim." Ficciones. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956. See page 71 of this text.

_____. "Emma Zunz." El Aleph (see above). See page 71 of this text.

_____. "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain." Ficciones (see above). See page 71 of this text.

_____. "El Sur." Ficciones (see above). See page 71 of this text.

_____. "Tema del traidor y del héroe." Ficciones (see above). See page 71 of this text.

Burgess, Anthony. Tremor of Intent. New York: Ballantine, 1961. Called by Burgess an "eschatological spy novel," this work is concerned with ultimate realities--freewill, salvation. An extension of the form rather than a parody.

- Butor, Michel. Passage de Milan. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1954. A young girl is killed by accident in a Paris apartment house. Detective story atmosphere.
- Camus, Albert. La Chute. Paris: Gallimard, 1956. Jean-Baptiste Clamence, a retired Paris lawyer, confesses the story of his life to an unnamed listener. The confession becomes a sort of interrogation. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. "L'Etranger." New York: Pantheon Books, c. 1942. The hero, Meursault, murders an Arab for no reason. During Meursault's trial, the detective story mentality of the judge, jury and spectators is undercut by Camus.
- Cortázar, Julio. Los premios. Fourth ed. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1966. Passengers on an ocean liner are restricted to only one part of the ship. Some of the passengers investigate the mysterious captain and crew, and this leads to murder. Detective story atmosphere.
- Duras, Marguerite. L'Amante anglaise. Paris: Gallimard, 1967. The novel is a police interrogation. The murderess is discovered, but the head of the victim is never found.
- _____. Dix heures et demie du soir en été. Paris: Gallimard, 1960. Maria, the heroine, finds the murderer, Rodrigo Paestro and then becomes his accomplice when she helps him escape from the police.
- _____. Le Marin de Gibraltar. Paris: Gallimard, 1952. Anne, the heroine, tracks a sailor from Gibraltar who may have committed a murder which she has witnessed, or who may be Anne's future assassin. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. Moderato cantabile. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1958. Anne Desbaresdes and the man Chauvin re-enact symbolically a crime of passion which occurs as the story opens. Detective story atmosphere.
- Fowles, John. "The Enigma." The Ebony Tower. London: Jonathan Cape, 1974. The story of the investigation of a missing person, John Marcus Fielding. The mystery remains unsolved.
- _____. The Magus. New York: Dell, 1965. The hero, Nicholas Urfe, becomes a detective in order to investigate a mystery of a Greek island. He discovers the criminal is himself.
- _____. "Poor Koko." The Ebony Tower (see above). A first person narrative by the victim of the crime. The narrator, a writer, remains unharmed but his irreplaceable literary study is destroyed.

- Gardner, John. The Sunlight Dialogues. New York: Ballantine, 1972. Police chief, Fred Clumly, arrests a professional disturber of the peace called the Sunlight Man. The novel is a gradual investigation of the Sunlight Man's mission and his identity.
- Leñero, Vicente. Los albañiles. Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1964. An old man is murdered on a construction site in Mexico City. The various construction workers who knew him and the people who surrounded him are questioned about the murder.
- _____. El garabato. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967. A novelist creates a novelist who has created a novelist who reads a detective story written by a young novelist.
- Mauriac, Claude. L'Oubli. Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1966. A double parody of the ciné-roman and the suspense crime stories of Maurice Leblanc about Arsène Lupin.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. The Annotated Lolita. Preface, introduction and notes by Alfred Appel, Jr.. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970. See page 253 of this text.
- _____. Despair. New York: Capricorn Books, 1965. The hero, Hermann, tries to commit the perfect crime--his own murder. As is customary in detective novels, the criminal overlooks one tell-tale clue.
- _____. The Eye. New York: Phaedra, 1965. Although this book is about a voyeur, Nabokov says that the texture of the tale mimics that of detective fiction. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. The Real Life of Sebastian Knight. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941. See pages 12-14 of this text.
- Ollier, Claude. Le Maintien de l'ordre. Paris: Gallimard, 1961. A man who believes he is being followed and is in great danger of being killed takes refuge in his room. Flashbacks explain his fear. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. La Mise en scène. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1958. A story of murder and detection which takes place in colonial Africa. The murder is part of an archetypal series.
- Pinget, Robert. Le Libera. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1968. The unidentified voices of various village gossips report varying versions of alleged crimes. Detective story atmosphere.
- Puig, Manuel. La traición de Rita Hayworth. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1968. Sometimes seen as a detective story because the different points of view of the characters create mystery like that found in Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone. Detective story atmosphere.

- Pynchon, Thomas. The Crying of Lot 49. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966. Oedipa Maas gets involved in investigating the world-wide conspiracy known as the Tristero system which is intent on undermining the Postal system.
- Queneau, Raymond. Le Chiendent. Paris: Gallimard, 1933. This novel involves a murder and a character with a detective story mentality, Sidonie Cloche. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. Les Fleurs bleues. Paris: Gallimard, 1965. A crime is committed--someone paints obscene words on a fence--and some detecting is done. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. Pierrot mon ami. Paris: Gallimard, 1942. The main character discovers at the end of the novel that the events of his life could have been a detective story but instead were so lacking in artifice that he ends up being unsure as to whether there is even a riddle involved. Detective story atmosphere.
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain. Dans le labyrinthe. Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 10/18, n.d. Story of a soldier who tries to return the belongings of a dead comrade to the boy's family. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. La Jalousie. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1957. A jealous husband spies on his wife A. and the man Franck who is perhaps her lover. Detective story atmosphere.
- _____. La Maison de Rendez-vous. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1965. A spy story of sorts which takes place in Hong Kong and involves prostitution, drug smuggling and murder.
- _____. Le Voyeur. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1955. A story of rape and murder in which we are never sure the crime has been committed. Although the narration is omniscient, the point of view is often identical with that of the criminal, Mathias.
- Sarrate, Nathalie. Portrait d'un inconnu. Paris: Gallimard, 1956. See page 18 of this text.
- Simon, Claude. Le Vent: Tentative de restitution d'un retable baroque. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1957. The professor-narrator, an observer, attempts to reconstruct a story of blackmail and murder from partial and contradictory testimony and evidence.
- Stein, Gertrude. Blood on the Dining-Room Floor. Pawlet, Vermont: Banyan Press, 1948. See pages 52-53 of this text.
- Suarez, Lynch, B. [Pseud. for Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares]. Un modelo para la muerte. Buenos Aires: Oportet y Haerses, 1946. A burlesque of the classical detective novel.

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