

instance, when A... is "stretched across the wide bed," with "her face... turned upward toward the ceiling," the narrator observes that "her eyes are made still larger by the darkness" (p. 92). Finally, during one of the dining scenes when, as usual, Franck is the only visitor, surely a reference to "the guests" (p. 63; "les convives," p. 35) is an error rather than a subtlety.

Even tiny inaccuracies are surprising and jarring when they appear in the work of a master of minutiae, a novelist whose "concern for precision... sometimes borders on the delirious."⁴

DANIEL P. DENEAU
Mobile, Alabama

NOTES

¹Richard Howard's translation (New York: Grove Press, 1965) is responsible for several flaws not present in the French text, *La Jalousie*, ed. Germaine Brée and Eric Schoenfeld (New York: Macmillan, 1963). (Quotations are from these eds.) For instance, a description of A... 's photograph is introduced with "on the corner of the dressing-table" (p. 72) — a notation which perplexes the attentive reader, for it suggests that the narrator has moved from his office to A... 's bedroom. The French text reads: "Sur le coin du bureau se dresse un petit cadre..." (p. 43). Careful reading allows one to dismiss other apparent difficulties. For instance, when in A... 's bedroom after his anxious night of waiting, the narrator refers to "the chest to the left of the bed" (p. 117). Viewed from the narrator's usual position on the veranda, the chest is to the right of the bed; in this case the "left" (and it is the clearest clue) indicates that the narrator is in A... 's bed.

²Apparently the narrator presents the first description when seated at his usual place at the dining room table; from this position he should have difficulty seeing the truck at all. His position is less certain when he describes the distorted oil spot.

³On p. 116 in Howard's trans. the narrator refers to the "chevrons of the floor tiles" in A... 's bedroom; the French text reads: "les raies du plancher" (p. 88).

⁴Robbe-Grillet, "Time and Description in Fiction Today," in *For a New Novel*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 148.

MICHEL BUTOR

Où, le Génie du lieu, 2

Paris: Gallimard, 1971. Pp. 392.

Où, written with a slash through the *accent grave* over the letter "u," expounds the idea of the *génie* or the soul of a locale, an idea that Butor put forward in 1958 in *le Génie du lieu*. That work described Egypt and cities located in the Mediterranean area, while *Où* (where? when? or?) describes Korea and Cambodia, the western United States, and Paris. The form of the poetic verset, interspersed with one-word lines and prose paragraphs, might recall the technique of his *Mobile* (1962). Actually, however, *Où* differs widely from *Mobile*, proof that Butor is constantly seeking innovations in terms of literary expression. A few pages of *Où* evoke the *génie* of Seoul in Korea, and of cities in Cambodia, primarily by means of descriptions of their people, their tombs, and to some extent, their myths. Another section of the work deals with an actual incident at the University of Santa Barbara in California, that of the explosion of a time bomb. These pages come closest to the "new

novel" technique of investigating a mystery, but they are far too few in number to assume a major importance in the work as a whole. Another section describes a trip to Provo, Utah, where the author delivered the keynote address at a meeting at Brigham Young University. There are pages on Mormon origins and customs, but it would seem that for Butor the *génie* of the Utah region resides in the place names (Lehi, Nephi, Moroni, etc.), which perpetuate Mormon history and culture.

A major portion of *Où* recounts Butor's visit to the Zuñi Indian ceremonies, or the Shalako dances. Page after page describes colorful costumes and the dances, both of which are symbolic of Zuñi origins and history. His rendering into French of some of the Indian names leads to an example such as the following: "Dans la maison de Corne-longue, entre Houtoutouuu [sic] et le Guerrier jaune, le second Porte-bâton chante avec eux" (p. 297). Butor has also translated from the English versions of ethnologists, who had in turn translated the words of the Indian chants. Hence, the continual interest in myth and culture on the part of Butor is evident. *Où*, we hasten to add, is dedicated by the author to all of the Indians of New Mexico.

A leitmotif that permeates the work is the changing perspective of Mount Sandia at Albuquerque, where Butor was visiting professor at the University of New Mexico. Although he states that "toute montagne est indescriptible" (pp. 19, 110, 124), he nevertheless attempts to describe the mountain in winter, in the warm sunlight, at night, etc. In these pages Butor's preoccupation with time and distance is apparent, and there is a parallel here to some of his linear descriptions of the Nile valley in *le Génie du lieu*.

Singularly absent from the work which treats the American West is any account of cowboys and of cattle raising. Perhaps, Butor feels that this aspect is not the true *génie* of the West.

Butor's statements on Paris appear enigmatic. What we conclude is that he feels from time to time the necessity of leaving Paris in order to free himself from the danger of becoming a typical suburbanite, a "banlieusard" (p. 103). He will return to Paris with an appreciation of the *génie* of other places, and he will infuse this spirit into Parisian culture ("C'est pour te faire boire que je reviendrai" p. 392). This process reveals the *génie* of Paris, the cultural center of the world according to *La Modification* (1957), wherein Butor expressed the hope that Paris would assume cultural superiority over both pagan and christian Rome.

FRANCIS S. HECK
University of Wyoming