

the written text of *La Chevelure de Bérénice* inspired by Barthe's *S/Z* that I often found tedious. The last chapter devoted to *L'Acacia*, in addition to an analysis of the novel, contains a twenty-five-page list of textual echoes of Simon's earlier works that seems overly detailed. The result is a certain imbalance and a sense of reading five separate essays written at different times and for different purposes.

There is also a jargonistic side to Sarkonak's book that at times proves irritating. No less than eighteen prefixed versions of "text" appear, including such varieties as "auto-texte," "photo-texte," "inter(photo)-texte," "intra-intertexte," etc. The result of this proliferation, and even at times abuse, of theoretical terms can be seen in awkward and off-putting sentences such as the following: "Si l'intertexte général se fait texte par un ensemble de procédés scripturaux que l'on pourrait désigner par le terme 'simonisation,' l'intertexte restreint se (re)fait par un processus que l'on peut appeler 're-simonisation'" (16-17); "À preuve le rapport, la relation et même le va-et-vient rythmé de l'intratexte et de l'intertexte, d'autre part, sans parler pour le moment des rapports (plus pervers!) entre le texte et l'avant-texte que seule une approche génétique pourrait dépister et articuler" (67).

Finally, despite or perhaps because of Sarkonak's praiseworthy enthusiasm for Claude Simon, he seems insufficiently lucid about who Simon's readers really are. Thus he takes it for granted that *Les Géorgiques* is one of the most important books of the twentieth century (16), that the publication of *L'Acacia* is a major event in the history of the twentieth-century novel (169), that there is a need for a concordance of Simonian leitmotifs (66), or that the reader of *L'Acacia* experiences euphoria in recognizing intertextual echoes of Simon's earlier novels (184). A well-written and valuable book, *Les Trajets de l'écriture* would be an even better book if it provided us with a more modest or realistic assessment of Simon's importance for readers of modern French literature today. My reservations notwithstanding, those scholars who are familiar with and sympathetic to Simon's writing will unquestionably learn a great deal from Sarkonak's book.

Alain Robbe-Grillet and René Magritte

La Belle Captive

Trans. with an Essay by Ben Stoltzfus

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Pp. xv+230. \$30.00

Reviewed by Lynne Diamond-Nigh

I sit in front of the book, a text on one side of the page, a photograph of a painting on the other. Which do I look at first? It is this, and subsequent related questions, that form the core of the theoretical inquiry implicit in the photo-novel *La Belle Captive* as well as the introduction and interarts essay that enclose it. The

genealogy of illustrated novels is long and prestigious, but this work does not fit the established pattern; if it did, the preceding question would be interesting but not problematic or essential. As it is, however, the “illustrations” do more to unravel and knot the web of the narrative than they do to corroborate or explain it. Magritte himself stated in his *Écrits Complètes*: “A picture and a written text may be joined, and the picture serve as an ‘illustration,’ whenever, in such fortunate encounters, it is conceived independently without the intention of using it as an illustration” (448). Already the shadow of Lautréamont’s fortuitous encounter plays around the edges.

Some years after Magritte’s death, the French New Novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet selected seventy-seven of his paintings and, in a reciprocal exercise of ordering and reading and writing the text and the paintings, generated a narrative that also happened to be the name of one of Magritte’s most important and well-known series, *La Belle Captive*. With its variants known as *The Human Condition*, these paintings consist primarily of an easel set against a backdrop, for example the sea or a window. What characterizes all of them, however, is that the painting on the easel bleeds into the background, so that the viewer can not ascertain whether it is really a painting or simply part of that very backdrop, whether it is “real,” that is the land/seascape, or “fictitious,” a painting of it. Reality and illusion are simply mirror images of one another. Those who know the New Novelists are, of course, familiar with their aesthetics, with the de-hierarchization of the Cartesian world and the worlds of the unconscious and the oneiric that allow for the eruption of mystery and eroticism in our midst; with the rupture of linguistic and visual representation that perhaps saw its apogee in Magritte’s most famous work, *The Treachery of Images*, known popularly as *This is Not a Pipe*. They also know the primordial importance of reader collaboration in New Novel aesthetics, and so we return to the question that opens this review. As an interwoven narrative of many threads and many genres—murder mystery, self-reflexive commentary on art and literature, myth in and of creation, erotic theater, allegory of fascist repression—with its fissures, contradictions, truncations, metamorphoses, and voids, *La Belle Captive* without its illustrations would take a phenomenal effort on the part of any reader to “actualize.” With paintings whose interpretation requires the same skills set as decoding counterpoint, the reader is in a liminal world where the rules of the game are yet to be made.

I have been looking forward to this translation since 1989, when I had to abandon my desire to teach the book in a comparative arts seminar because it was not available in English. Ben Stoltzfus, himself a novelist, professor emeritus, and internationally admired Robbe-Grillet and New Novel scholar, has done a remarkable job of translating and analyzing the novel and its many theoretical intricacies and possibilities, as well as discussing the literature/visual arts relationship from both an historical and current perspective. His translation is flawless and fluid and manages to maintain the peculiar quality of Robbe-

Grillet's writing, at the same time toneless, parodic, and imbued with play. From a scholar's viewpoint, the documentation is all that could be wished for: in addition to the already mentioned introduction and interarts essay, there is a list of the paintings used with their date and venue; a résumé of the plot of the novel; Robbe-Grillet's note on the French edition; and an extensive list of works cited. Stoltzfus presents an additional twenty-one Magritte paintings, similarly documented, within his essay. From the point of view of Robbe-Grillet scholarship, New Novel work, Magritte study, and the interarts field, this is a very valuable book.

David Lodge

Therapy

London: Secker and Warburg, 1995. Pp. 321. £15.00

Reviewed by Nora Foster Stovel

What do academics read for recreation when our taste is too refined for trash? The answer is David Lodge, academic satirist par excellence. The problem is that we can read his novels much faster than Lodge can write them. That is why the announcement of a new novel by Lodge, if not exactly *Paradise News* (the title of his preceding novel), is at least very good news indeed.

Therapy is Lodge's latest fiction. Why therapy? Because, as the (anti-) hero, balding and bulging, middle-aging Laurence Passmore, nicknamed Tubby, says, "I have a lot of therapy. On Mondays I see Roland for Physiotherapy, on Tuesdays I see Alexandra for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, and on Fridays I have either aromatherapy or acupuncture. Wednesdays and Thursdays I'm usually in London, but then I see Amy, which is a sort of therapy too, I suppose" (14-15). Amy is Tubby's platonic mistress, a necessary counterbalance to his sexy wife Sally, Principal Lecturer in the Education Department at Rummidge Poly, where she sits on a committee called "F-QUAC (Faculty Quality Assurance Committee)" (71). Tubby allows, "I have a sexy wife at home and a platonic mistress in London. What have I got to complain about? I don't know" (31). Why does Tubby require all this therapy? The ostensible reason is his knee, which occasionally inspires him to shriek "Fuuuuckinell!" (4)—his Achilles heel, as it were, or what Sally terms his "thorn in the flesh" (33). His orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Nizar, diagnoses the problem as "idiopathic patella chondromalacia" (12) or "Internal Derangement of the Knee. I.D.K. I Don't Know" (13). Nevertheless, Tubby's I.D.K. of the knee provides him with a focus for his anxieties because his problem is that he *does not know* what is his problem: "What's the matter with me. I don't mean my knee. I mean my head. My mind. My soul" (4-5). That's why he needs therapy.