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A New SF Study from France. [Review of Roger Bozzetto's *L'Obscur objet d'un savoir*, Provence UP, 1992]

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New SF Study from France.

Roger Bozzetto. *L'Obscur objet d'un savoir: Fantastique et science-fiction--deux littératures de l'imaginaire.* Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, Aix-Marseille I, 1992. 279p. 170FF paper.

Professor Bozzetto's 1988 doctoral thesis has finally found its way into print, and the resulting publication is both unique and impressive. I say unique because it stands as one of those rare books which target both the Fantastic (horror) and SF (science and/or speculative fiction). It seeks not only to trace the emergence and evolution of these two genres as parallel examples of Western non-mimetic literature but also to investigate the thematic, stylistic, and socio-historical links between them. I say impressive because of Bozzetto's meticulous and up-to-date scholarship in both realms. Copious notes at the end of each chapter, continual cross-referencing, and an extensive bibliography and index serve to provide a strong critical backbone to his arguments. The study is divided into five parts: 1) Emergence and origins, 2) Historical evolution, 3) Myth and representation, 4) Critical receptions, and 5) Modern mutations. Selected portions of the first two chapters have previously appeared in the pages of *SFS* ("Intercultural Interplay: SF in France and the US," #50, March 1990, and "Kepler's *Somnium*, or SF's Missing Link," #52, Nov 1990).

As a wide-ranging yet penetrating literary history of both SF and the Fantastic, I recommend Bozzetto's study. Simultaneously reminiscent of Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* and Rabkin's *The Fantastic in Literature*, it charts new critical territory in its attempt to "bridge the gap" between these two (increasingly) disparate areas of literary criticism. One minor complaint, however: as a university press publication, this book is

brimming with editorial oversights, typos, and misprints. The author has included an *erratasheet*, but it doesn't begin to rectify the unusually sloppy copy-editing of the publisher. A real shame: Bozzetto's fine treatise deserved better.

--**ABE.**