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**Roger Bozzetto**

**Intercultural Interplay: Science Fiction in France and the United States (As Viewed from the French Shore)\***

*Edited and translated by Arthur B. Evans*

In contrast to the Marvellous or the Fantastic, SF is a strictly Western creation. Moreover, it is a recent genre—even if the exact date of its emergence onto the literary scene is still subject to debate.<sup>1</sup> SF has also been known by many different generic labels prior to its current appellation, but they all connoted a certain image of scientific progress.<sup>2</sup> Despite its relative newness, SF has succeeded in generating an important amount of critical discourse: in the US, for instance, even bibliographies of bibliographies on the subject have been produced.<sup>3</sup> This intense critical activity, however, continues to remain fragmentary in nature: there are many lacunae in its findings and a lack of specific models against which to accurately define its perspectives.<sup>4</sup> Thematic issues, technological conjecture, and sociological implications have all drawn (albeit in rather chaotic fashion) their fair share of critical attention. But two concerns have generally been overlooked: (1) the position of SF with respect to other literary forms and to the canonical literary “establishment” and (2) the interrelationship of the SF produced in various countries— especially with reference to the American SF model, which occupies a key position in any such generic comparison.<sup>5</sup> One would find much to investigate in such a study: patterns from the simplest to the most complex of textual borrowings, imitation, and literary colonization, as well as a number of innovations. For example, an exemplary case of imitation is illustrated by Chinese SF. Having no SF tradition of its own, it adopted the Vernian model and modified it to address new and different ideological needs.<sup>6</sup> More complicated are the evolutions of SF in Italy and Germany.<sup>7</sup> But, excepting the UK (which presents unique problems because of its common language with the US), the most fascinating case is that of France. Throughout the history of French and American SF, the reciprocal and repeated imitation and/or recycling of certain SF models is highly visible; and this often occurred in quite unusual and original

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\*This article is a considerably revised and expanded version of “SF française, SF américaine, des relations ambiguës,” published in *Science-fiction et fiction spéculative*, ed. G. Hottois (Bruxelles: Ed. Univ. de Bruxelles, 1985), pp. 11-25.

ways. It is this sometimes ambiguous historical interplay of SF forms between France and the US that is the topic of the following essay—an essay which is intended only as a preliminary sketch of this subject-matter, given both the practical and theoretical difficulties inherent in any cross-cultural literary study of this sort.

One practical difficulty, for example, is the lack of any credible and/or comprehensive analysis of the various modes by which French and American cultures tend to interact. How, then, does one go about defining the specific position of SF? Another is the wide disparity in the number of available reference materials. American SF critics have produced a vast assortment of indexes, bibliographies, and lists of secondary materials—even though their contents are sometimes subject to debate<sup>8</sup> and do not take into account the full breadth of the SF corpus.<sup>9</sup> French SF criticism, by contrast, is extremely meager. For example, there is no equivalent of a Donald H. Tuck or an Everett F. Bleiler for French SF, or even an authoritative index of works.<sup>10</sup>

As for theoretical difficulties, there exists no serious analysis of the interface between the (ideal) history of SF as a genre and the institutional framework within which it has developed—at least as concerns the rise of popular literature [*littérature de masse*] of which SF is a part.

Nevertheless, these fundamental lacunae in scholarship have not deterred critics from elaborating at length on the history and national traditions of SF. Both the French and the Americans have written their own versions,<sup>11</sup> and the results range from the whimsical to the contradictory. As the title of this essay indicates, I hope to clarify certain parameters of the historical interplay that has existed between these two SF literatures. Obviously, my perspective is that of a French reader. For most American readers, there is probably no doubt that SF has always been American (like the western); that, before its birth in the US during the 1920s, a few texts by foreign authors foreshadowed its arrival; and that, since the 1920s, there have been various foreign imitations of it (some better, some worse). In contrast, the French, in seeking to justify their notion of what constitutes SF, invariably tend to refer back to the rich literary heritage of the genre (before the 1920s)—i.e., to what some might call SF's "prehistory."

Each of these two national perspectives on the SF genre seems coherent, but both are equally simplistic—and the one is as myth-ridden as the other. Neither version takes into account the circumstances, impact, reception, and effects of reversal that occur when a literary form travels from one cultural setting to another. In literature, what is borrowed is rarely exactly what is given back. And furthermore, such perspectives do not explain the importance of the "creative treason" [*trahison créatrice*] which is the by-product of imitative adaptation—and which carries with it a particular meaning and a future of its own.

I will therefore begin this preliminary study with a generic detour in order to show how a specific—and commonly shared—domain came

to be constituted in Western fiction. I will then attempt to describe the various SF models that derived from it during certain historical periods from Jules Verne to the present. So as to avoid both factual tunnel-vision and excessive abstraction, these models will be identified according to their respective relationship to the literature, the publishing industry, the media, and the scientific ideology of their time.

**1. The Emergence of SF as “Ideal Genesis.”** The historical background of the SF genre needs to be clarified in order to underscore the essential unity of the fictional field in question. Between the end of the 17th and the 19th centuries, what would later be called SF begins to take shape as an *autonomous fictional domain* as concerns its materials, themes, and narrative formats derived from varying sorts of *merveilleux*, utopias, imaginary voyages, and texts of scientific popularization.<sup>12</sup> This unique brand of fiction provided a new and original dynamic for the merging of utopian speculation and geographical exploration; and this occurred during a time when the development of technology and scientific inquiry was introducing (as a corollary to the nascent myth of “Progress”) the notion of alternate futures—what Bertrand de Jouvenel will name the “futurible.”<sup>13</sup> From a formalist point of view, a kind of creative contamination took place: this new genre was the direct result of a large dose of the novelistic [romanesque] being injected into a somewhat ossified utopian discursive model.<sup>14</sup> From a more narratological point of view, it provided the fantasy-based imaginary voyage format with a sufficient amount of scientific verisimilitude to create a new level of “suspension of disbelief.”

From this vantage point, one can discern a number of works marking the transition between utopian fiction and SF—leaving aside Kepler’s *Somnium* (which had no immediate posterity—or even an English translation until the 1960s, more than 300 years after it was originally published) and the fantasies of Cyrano de Bergerac.<sup>15</sup> In France, for example, Restif de la Bretonne’s *La Découverte australe* (“The Discovery of the Southern Hemisphere,” 1781) and *Les Posthumes* (“The Posthumous,” 1796, 1802) as well as Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s *L’An 2440 (Memoirs of the Year 2500, 1771)* come to mind.\*\* For the UK, one thinks of Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627), Francis Godwin’s *The Man in the Moone* (1638), and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Throughout the Age of Enlightenment, these two countries produced many fictional voyages of this sort—through the air, to the planets, to the center of the Earth, even through time—but these texts failed to link such philosophical voyages with developing science and technology. For this, one must await what some consider to be the first novel of modern SF: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818).

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\*\*Quotation marks around the equivalents of French titles signify that the text in question has never been Englished. For information about available translations (i.e., the italicized English titles), see note 29 below.

During this historical period, while American literature was in its infancy with the works of Washington Irving (who proclaimed himself to be the first “American writer”), the social imagination in both Europe and America was discovering a myriad of new worlds to explore by correlating certain prevalent themes—of “elsewheres,” alternate futures, and alien nova—with the potential developments made possible by technological progress. Their initial expression took the form of hybridized myth, elaborating on Genesis, the Apocalypse, or whatever so as to transform them into variations of basically evolutionary themes (uchronias, lost peoples, hollow-Earth tales, etc.). From its earliest years, this young American literature assimilated and developed these themes. George Fowler proposed *A Flight to the Moon* in 1813, Captain Adam Seaborn chronicled his supposed exploration of the interior of the Earth in *Symzonia* (1820), and James Fenimore Cooper imagined an alternative society in *The Minikins* (1815). But it was Edgar Allan Poe who was the first to treat these themes as a self-contained series of related subject-matters. Linking them one to the other for the first time, Poe portrayed both a voyage to the Moon and the techniques of balloon travel, gateways to the Earth’s interior and maelstroms, etc. That is to say, while his French counterparts treated them separately and in more or less piecemeal fashion,<sup>16</sup> Poe succeeded in *integrating* science with spectacle, technology with travel, and mathematics with mythology. The strategic importance of Poe in this regard must not be underestimated; his powerful influence on Jules Verne is readily apparent from the latter’s well-known article on Poe, not to mention the various novels of the “Voyages Extraordinaires” which are either partially “recycled” from Poe or admitted continuations of that predecessor’s works.<sup>17</sup>

These few examples illustrate to what extent the use of certain fictional themes relating to the future—conceived both as a locus of social production [*lieu de production sociale*] and a derivation of scientific advancement—was not simply an isolated activity by a few eccentric authors. It was, rather, a recognized and viable node of fiction—to the same extent as the one commonly called “realist.” And, as H. Bruce Franklin has pointed out, almost all American writers of the 19th century dabbled, at one time or another, in this new literary domain.<sup>18</sup> As for the French, Marc Angenot has catalogued no less than 120 fictional texts appearing between 1800 and 1900 which reflect this new thematic format—*not* including those of Jules Verne!

This new fictional dimension, taking shape around an image of science as an effective mediator in humankind’s relationship to the world, was important and one which was not relegated to the margins of the literary institution.<sup>19</sup> But it generated no specific scientific label for itself because it developed, both in France and in the US, within the movement of literature per se, parallelling the expansion of the reading public and the resulting proliferation of popular journals and new publisher collections.

**2. From a Domain to a Genre: A Prehistory.** It may be said that SF constituted itself as a *genre* around the works of Jules Verne, who became a necessary point of reference for a wide variety of fiction of this sort produced on both sides of the Atlantic. Why Jules Verne? Marc Angenot offers this explanation:<sup>20</sup> Jules Verne did not invent anything new, but he did give a coherent form to the fictional vehicles used by his predecessors. He borrowed their themes and organized them into an internally consistent mythos built upon an ideology of scientific order and social progress—something that Poe did not do. Verne thus achieved an equilibrium between the “realistic” aesthetic ambitions of the 19th-century bourgeoisie and the many “new worlds” of a rapidly expanding social imagination. He delineated, for the bourgeois society of this period (and particularly for its youth), the limits of acceptability within this new realm of the imaginary. And his success in doing so was enhanced by the economic and publishing milieu through which he worked: a high-quality, well-respected, and “serious” family journal devoted to a clearly-defined educational project. Accordingly, Verne’s novels benefitted from this image of good taste and quality [*une bonne image de marque*] within the French marketplace of the time—a circumstance which facilitated his “Voyages Extraordinaires” becoming the standard of reference for whatever was to follow.<sup>21</sup>

American SF, according to the most reliable historians of the genre, began to take form around the end of the 19th century.<sup>22</sup> And in spite of contributions already made by certain American writers in this domain, its emergence was strongly influenced by the Vernian model. Verne had been widely translated in the US: eight novels between 1873 and 1891, not to mention their prepublication in popular periodicals. Moreover, he was highly regarded in the States: from 1878 onward, he was described as “a new kind of science teacher” and “a fascinating story teller,” and his originality was praised as having “made the science live as the elder Dumas gave life to history.”<sup>23</sup> Verne thus became the standard of reference for the genre; even Wells was perceived as “the English Jules Verne.” And it was principally via the works of Verne (and the marketing strategies of his editor, Hetzel) that this SF *à la française*—by André Laurie, Louis Boussenard, *et al.*—found itself widely valorized among the American reading public of the time.

In contrast, American SF was almost unknown in France during this period. Of course, Irving’s *Rip Van Winkle* had been familiar to the French since 1822 and Poe since 1856.<sup>24</sup> But it was not until Edward Bellamy’s “scandalous” *Looking Backward* appeared in 1889 that an American SF text gained widespread European recognition. John Jacob Astor’s *A Journey in Other Worlds* (1894) got a similar reception; but neither he nor Bellamy substantially influenced the dominant Vernian model.<sup>25</sup>

The relative success of the Vernian model was proportionate to the extent that it provided a fixed structural and ideological matrix [*moule*] for the imaginary as it related to science. It must not be overlooked,

however, that during this same historical period innovative SF works by other authors were being published—those of Rosny the Elder in France, H.G. Wells in England, Jack London, Garrett P. Serviss, and George Allan England in the US—most of which reflected a very different tonality and represented a visible attempt to break out of the Verne mold.

As during the previous era, SF still remained a part of the traditional Franco-American literary circuit. But the rapport was one of “unequal exchange,” since American literature (in American eyes as well as from the European viewpoint) had not yet fully established its autonomy in this area. It continued to take the basic Vernian *savoir-faire* format, repackage it with a certain number of semi-refined additions, and ship it back to the Continent as an American product. This fundamental structure for literary exchange between France and the US persisted (in regard to SF) until 1914. And it was a rapport which no doubt resembled that existing in other economics-dependent areas of interchange between the two countries during this period.

Between the World Wars, however, SF (by whatever label it was called; see note 2 below) evolved quite differently in France and in the US. This divergence, amounting to what might be called “a double history of the genre,” arose from the suddenly very different relationship between SF and the national literature within each country. In France, SF continued to develop along three separate “mainstream” paths, literature for youth, the canonical literary establishment, and popular culture; and this ultimately had the effect of diffusing its force as well as its generic identity. In the US, on the other hand, a radical schism occurred between SF (and, indeed, “pulp” fiction generally) and the American literary establishment; and the (somewhat self-imposed) “ghettoization” of the former ultimately resulted in an American SF genre that was both more vibrant and self-directed.

**3. A History of SF in France Between the World Wars.** The Vernian model in France was reserved principally for stories addressed to adolescents. One finds in this literature a wide variety of authors, of which two in particular will serve as representative examples: Henri de la Vaux and Max André Dazergues. De la Vaux, a noted aeronaut of the era, published in 1920 a novel titled *100,000 Lieues dans les airs* (“100,000 Leagues in the Air”). The author, a viscount and laureate of the Académie Française, introduced his text by saying: “Some will find this scientific fiction incredulous, but where does the dream begin and the reality end?” The principal aim of his novel was *scientific vulgarisation*: to teach the basics of aerial navigation in balloon travel. The characters of the novel, in De la Vaux’s prefatory words, were “the anonymous heroes of an idea.” Similarly, Max André Dazergues’ *L’Ile aérienne* (“Island in the Sky,” 1931) was embellished with a letter from Professor Auguste Piccard, a “specialist in the study of atmospheric ascensions.” It must be noted that such efforts to reserve the Vernian model for literature oriented exclusively to the young indicates, to a certain extent, its literary discredit at the

time—a fact that appears to be substantiated by Eduardo Marcucci's observation, for example, that "[t]he novel as epic of science did not survive its illustrious creator."<sup>26</sup>

Another SF variant during this period was also sporadically evident. Although anterior to the above and more philosophical and poetic in nature, it was nevertheless eclipsed by the pre-eminence of the Vernian model. It centered around the works of Rosny the Elder and a number of other authors recognized by the literary establishment—Maurice Renard (who dedicated his *Le Docteur Lerne, sous-dieu* ["Doctor Lerne, Sub-Deity," 1908] to H.G. Wells), Claude Farrère, Ernest Pérochon, Jean-Baptiste Nau (the first SF Goncourt Award winner in 1903 with his unusual and Haitian voodoo-inspired novel called *La Force ennemie* ["Enemy Force"]), André Maurois, Alexandre Arnoux, Léon Daudet, Théo Varlet, Régis Messac, and Jacques Spitz, to name but a few. In their SF, all reference to the Jules Verne narrative formula was abandoned in a desire to relate their fiction to a more "noble" literary heritage: that of the imaginary voyage, the *conte philosophique*, and the *roman d'hypothèse*. Accordingly, their SF works do not give a great deal of importance to technological inventions, which, quite often, become mere pretexts;<sup>27</sup> the science therein conforms to a more "humanist" perspective, a kind of "disenchantment with the world."

The type of critical analysis proposed by Gérard Klein in discussing the anti-scientific ideology of the "intellectual left" could be profitably applied to the texts of these authors.<sup>28</sup> A study of Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future (America the Menace: Scenes from the Life of the Future, 1930)*,<sup>29</sup> for example, would reveal an implicit fear of the future similar to that expressed by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* (1932). And this anti-scientific ideology also harbored a continuing and persistent anti-Americanism—a literary tradition that dates at least from Baudelaire, if not earlier. According to this perspective, science could lead humanity to only two possible end-results: the final apocalypse (i.e., the end of the world) or the "ant hill" (i.e., social functionalism, the end of individual liberties).

The third path by which SF developed in France during this period was that of popular literature. In a wide variety of what might be called "pulp" collections, SF titles appeared in pell-mell fashion along with a jumble of other assorted genres. Eclectic by nature, they mixed every conceivable theme and format in a bewildering composite of adventure, exoticism, supernatural powers, magic, scientific fantasy, and so forth. Most often first appearing as episodic *feuilletons* in popular periodicals, then later republished in volumes by publishers like Hachette, Larousse, Ferenczi, or Tallandier, these SF texts were generally of a literary quality similar to those being printed in the US around this time.<sup>30</sup>

How does one characterize the status of French SF as a whole between the wars? Its production was dispersed, sporadic, and varied, primarily because there existed no specialized journal or publisher series devoted specifically to it—i.e., no cultural vehicle to monitor its



progress and/or provide it with any generic continuity. Was it therefore marginalized? No. Such SF texts were not completely cut off from the literary “mainstream”—certain authors and critics discussed it,<sup>31</sup> certain literary journals regularly carried articles on it, and certain periodicals featuring SF texts did attempt to briefly sketch its evolution.<sup>32</sup> And the quantity alone of SF narratives published during this period is quite impressive: 600 French texts between 1915 and 1945 (the majority between 1920 and 1933). As for their overall quality, a sizeable number of these texts—especially those produced within the literary establishment—were later reprinted after 1950 (perhaps for lack of anything better).

Contrary to what one might think, French SF during this period was more receptive to its foreign counterparts than during the Verne era. More translations became available: H.G. Wells, Arthur Conan Doyle, M.P. Shiel, H. Rider Haggard, and Edgar Wallace from the UK; Thea Von Harbou, Bernhard Kellermann, and Van Helsten from Germany; Emilio Salgari and Luigi Motta from Italy; Vladimir Obruchev and Evgenii Zamiatin from the USSR; and Jack London, Mark Twain, David H. Keller, and Edgar Rice Burroughs from the US. Actually, translations of American SF were relatively small in number if one compares them with all those published in the US at that time, but there were nevertheless more of them in the French marketplace than during the pre-World War I period. It is also interesting to note that E.R. Burroughs was known in France primarily via the medium of comic strips (*Robinson*, the *Journal de Mickey*), and David H. Keller via his appearance in the journal *Les Primaires* (which also was responsible for the first critical article in France on American SF).<sup>33</sup>

Despite this relative lack of available translations, French SF authors between the wars seemed to be very cognizant of what their American counterparts were doing. Some, like Théo Varlet, even complained of being plagiarized. When informed by Régis Messac of the similarity between his *La Grande Panne* (“The Great Collapse,” 1930) and A. Rowley Hilliard’s *The Death from the Stars* (1931), Varlet reacted: “If it is indeed from my work, its lack of polish is typically yankee.”<sup>34</sup> Others, conversely, tended to borrow liberally from the Americans—e.g., Jean d’Agraives (among others). One can therefore conclude that, in addition to the “official” SF relationship between the US and France during this historical period, there also existed a widespread “underground” network of influences that was highly reciprocal in nature.

Finally, French SF texts were also being translated and read in the US during this time: Jean d’Esme’s *Dieux rouges* (*Red Gods*), for example, and Claude Farrère’s *Les Condamnés à mort* (*Useless Hands*), seven novels by Gaston Leroux, three each by Maurice Leblanc and Maurice Renard, as well as SF works by Guy de Theramond and Jacques Spitz. In addition, certain specialized journals in America published the translated SF texts of Serge Simon Held,

Eugène Thebault, and Charles de Richter. But it is important to note that, in contrast to what occurred during the Vernian era, these French SF texts were not generally regarded in America as models worth emulating: American SF had already begun to take shape as an independent and autonomous entity. Unique and highly self-referential, modern American SF was rapidly developing its own national identity.

**4. A Brief History of Modern American SF.** American SF's prehistory, insofar as it connects with the genre's modern development in the US, dates from the beginning of this century, when it began as a generic hybrid largely modelled after its European predecessors (Jules Verne, H.G. Wells). Reflecting its own indigenous perspective (Poe, Seaborn, Astor, Bellamy), its early relationship with the literary establishment and the publishing industry was, by and large, "mainstream." At this stage, it was similar to European SF in that, although targeting new fictional domains, it remained integrated into the American literary tradition. American SF texts, for example, were printed both in non-specialized periodicals and in, say, the Munsey pulps as well as in a number of non-specialized publisher collections (e.g., from Victor Appleton et al.) and in Hugo Gernsback's technical journals dealing with radio and electricity (like *Modern Electrics*, wherein his *Ralph 124C41* appeared in 1911, and *Electrical Experimenter*, which printed his *Baron Munchhausen's New Scientific Adventures* in 1915-17). Similar to France's *Journal des Voyages* and *Je Sais Tout*, these periodical publications offered a bit of everything: exotic fantasy, tales of adventure, sports narratives, and a variety of fictions by authors such as Serviss, England, E.R. Burroughs, and A. Merritt.

Subsequently, however, American SF began to emerge as a genre distinct from any other. This development was the result of two factors. The first was primarily thematic in nature; the second had to do with the progressive specialization of the journals in which it appeared.

Prior to E.R. Burroughs, American SF tended to opt for one of three thematic models: technological (*à la* Verne), sociological (*à la* Wells), or prophetic (*à la* Bellamy). But with the publication and success of Burroughs's *Under the Moons of Mars* (1912), another American SF recipe suddenly gained popularity: one of pure exoticism—devoid of any pedagogical and/or philosophical intent—resembling what would much later be called "heroic fantasy." This new narratological approach, more fantasmagoric than empirical, permitted a host of non-scientific or (at least) para-scientific elements to penetrate and pervade the developing SF genre. In these texts, science became a vague support-structure for fictional verisimilitude, enhanced human powers became commonplace, and universal physical laws were called into question or simply bypassed.<sup>35</sup> In the wake of Burroughs, a growing number of American SF authors turned to this new SF variant: Charles B. Stilson with *Polaris of the Snows* (1915-16), Ray Cummings with *The Girl in the Golden Atom* (1919),

and Murray Leinster with *The Mad Planet* (1920), not to mention the works of Merritt and H.P. Lovecraft. But as original as it was, this new “heroic fantasy” brand of SF would probably have not been sufficient to establish SF as a major literary force in America if another development had not presently occurred: the specialization of SF periodicals.

The segmentation and specialization of the US magazine market began in 1915 with the creation of *Detective Story*, but became pronounced only in the 1920s. In 1923, a new (and subsequently successful) periodical called *Weird Tales*—devoted to “fantasy fiction” and narratives by authors such as Lovecraft, Merritt, and Robert Howard—decided to publish a number of SF works.<sup>36</sup> The same year, Gernsback initiated a special issue of *Science and Invention* composed of six SF narratives and some articles on scientific extrapolation. He then went on to launch the first true American SF magazine, *Amazing Stories*, and to invent the generic label “science fiction.”

The consequences of this specialization in American periodical marketing were to some extent immediate: the financial success of Gernsback’s SF magazine spawned a veritable plethora of journals specializing in SF material which, in turn, resulted in thousands of new SF narratives written by hundreds of SF authors. This publishing phenomenon contributed to SF’s being viewed no longer as just another branch of literature but as a “new category within the literary publishing industry.”<sup>37</sup>

The advantages created by this marketplace transformation included a hospitable publishing conduit for SF, an outlet for specialized writers, and a growing reading public for the genre. Furthermore, Gernsback’s *Amazing*, with its policy of personalized author-reader contact, helped to meld that readership into an organized “SF fandom.” Via his editorials, he also proselytized a specific ideology for SF—the necessary rise of technocrats in American society—during a historical period when the politics of the New Deal were nourishing the emergence of America as a modern technocracy.<sup>38</sup> Although he did occasionally publish works by E.R. Burroughs and similar narratives, Gernsback actively promoted a more critical SF, a “hard” SF built upon scientific referents but also open to the sociological approach popularized by Wells (a number of whose works he reprinted in *Amazing*’s pages). In short, Gernsback invented a personality and charted a direction for SF different from *Argosy-Allstory Weekly*’s; he articulated a new ideology for it; and he succeeded in generating a loyal consumership for it within the American reading public. All this contributed to making SF in the US a separate and self-referential entity, a closed world. And Gernsback’s successors, like John Campbell, continued this policy of maintaining American SF’s generic insularity.

On the negative side of the ledger, Gernsback circumscribed SF into a kind of “ghetto,” with its own rites, its own myths, and its own hierarchy of values.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, his label “science fiction” not only

stuck to the genre; it became synonymous with any highly speculative and non-canonical type of fiction—an association perpetrated by *Amazing Stories* itself, albeit for reasons quite foreign to the genre. Accordingly, SF found itself cut off— institutionally as well as thematically—from the main body of American literature. Practically no American “literary” author was published in SF—or, indeed, in any pulp—magazines. And none sought to be. Even those writing in the prophetic vein of a Wells or a Bellamy (although rare) would have viscerally and categorically refused to be associated with SF. Wells himself had serious reservations about being connected with what Gernsback represented, and Aldous Huxley’s reaction was downright hostile.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, this passage of American SF through the literary “ghetto” was far from being an unproductive trek through the desert. On the contrary, it permitted the development of a certain unity within diversity by injecting a certain coherence into the genre’s thematic richness—the coherence concomitant with articulating the difficulties encountered by scientific thought in its efforts to “mediate” [*médialiser*] the relationship between humankind and the external world. In its various ways of elaborating on that theme and through its fabulative resources, American SF of this period offered innovative paradigms for the human imagination. And since it was the entire corpus of SF works rather than those of any individual author which served as an internal frame of reference, it also projected an impression of remarkable depth and plasticity—all within a “closed” literary system.

It was no wonder that the French, during the early 1950s, viewed American SF as a “new literary genre.”<sup>41</sup> They found themselves faced with a veritable avalanche of American SF texts of varying quality and originating from varying periods: Edmond Hamilton along with Theodore Sturgeon, John Campbell along with Ray Bradbury, etc. They had not witnessed first-hand the genesis of this new (post-Vernian) SF format of integrating of “hard” science into fast-paced and appealing fictions (e.g., those of Robert Heinlein). This “new” school of American writers had obviously learned how—through attention to realistic detail and the creative use of “absent paradigms”<sup>42</sup> and other reality-effects [*effets de réel*]<sup>42</sup>—to evoke very believable contexts for their plot-structures without impairing the reader’s involvement in the story. They had established a new way of writing about the “real” that produced the same capacity for “suspension of disbelief” as earlier, more mimetic novelists had done. American SF had proven itself capable of going beyond the traditional limits of the novel, venturing far into the “other side of realism,” as Thomas D. Clareson once expressed it.<sup>43</sup>

**5. Fascination and Repulsion.** By 1939, the production of French SF had withered dramatically (only about 16 texts in all were published that year) whereas in the US, SF continued to flourish, appearing in over 20 different specialized magazines. The numerical disproportion

is revealing. Moreover, French SF was sporadic, uncentered, and without its own specific identity. Typical of this general malaise were recurring lamentations by French critics over the lack of a credible literary posterity to the works of Jules Verne.

On the US side, then, there was both an organized social structure in place—linked to a rising technocracy benefitting from an ideology of progress and democratic ideals—and a new and revolutionary narrative practice for portraying “realistically” certain themes that were very hypothetical in nature. On the French side, by contrast, there was a dying branch of literature, an inadequate genre that tended to focus more often on idyllic utopias than on the real world: a “humanist” culture that, in order to somehow exorcise the growing threat of technological change, chose simply to eclipse its presence—preferring to wistfully gaze at the past rather than to contemplate the future.<sup>44</sup>

One case in point is René Barjavel’s *Ravage* (*Ashes, Ashes*, 1943). By an unexplained aberration in the weather (a lapse in verisimilitude which, from the outset, aptly illustrates the moral rather than scientific orientation of the novel) somehow the world’s electricity disappears. The teeming metropolises of Earth, all of them dependent on this energy to drive the machines which maintain their complex artificial environments, begin suddenly to crumble and decay. Their panic-stricken populations flee into the surrounding wilderness or revert to urban barbarism. Only the hero of the novel, a young man whose peasant roots are still strong and who has not been perverted by the easy life furnished by the city’s machines, is capable of reacting constructively to the cataclysm. He gathers up his lady-love and, with a solid group of companions, some tools, and a few weapons, ventures out into the dangerous No Man’s Land which separates Paris from his natal province near the Mediterranean coast. After surviving many adventures during his trek across the wasteland, he finally arrives at his destination and succeeds in establishing a small agrarian utopia in this fertile southern land. He ultimately becomes a wise old patriarch and a respected law-giver for his and other surviving clans in the region—and he slays the first citizen who manages to (re)invent the steam engine.

*Ravage*’s lesson is clear: progress is harmful. The simple agrarian life is extolled: its traditions, its culture, its celebrations, and the extent to which it permits humanity to keep in touch with its own roots. Working the soil is the natural definition of labor, and thus of society. And such labor entails pain, but also joy.

This highly atavistic “return to the earth” novel, consistent as it was with the ideology of the Petain government, caused some difficulties for its author during the years immediately following the Liberation. Barjavel’s novel remains noteworthy, however, not because it is well written (albeit in a somewhat dated style), but principally because it mirrors—in exemplary fashion—the views on science held by a majority of the French during this period and shows how they themselves tended to define this literature “of scientific imagination”

[*littérature d'imagination scientifique*]. A comparison between this text and the enthusiastic positivism evident in some of Jules Verne's novels a generation earlier, for example, is very striking indeed.

At the conclusion of World War II, France's fascination with America knew no bounds. All things American were viewed with almost religious adoration (and some deservedly so): jazz, cinema, detective novels, science, life-style, etc. The impression was that, while we French had been long asleep, somewhat like Rip Van Winkle, an entire new world had sprung up beyond the sea: a new society with new technologies, new human relations, and even a new literature called "Science Fiction." Soon, within the framework of the Marshall Plan, hundreds of American advisors streamed into our country to help initiate us into these mysteries of the New World—initiation rites which were even further valorized by their extensive coverage in the French media.<sup>45</sup>

The main question on the French mind during this time was this: Exactly what did we need to copy from America in order to have the same power, the same efficiency, and the same standard of living? Part of the answer was that it was necessary to create a new industrial ideology to replace that of our traditionally patronal society [*société patronale*]. Such a move would go hand in hand with the development and promotion of a modern economic technostructure—corporate executives as a new breed of professionals, management as a new economic policy—in an attempt to supplant the "divine right" of the property owners. Magazines like *L'Express*, for example, were active representatives of this new "leftist-liberal" ideology. This fascination with the US techno-economic model was most dominant among the French Left, not only by reason of the perceived accomplishments of the American New Deal, but also because the French Right of this period was viewed as being tainted by its collaboration with the Vichy government's policies. Moreover, French authors on the Right had traditionally shown themselves to be ferociously anti-American.<sup>46</sup>

These American role-models also filled a particular need. As Jean Fourastier expressed it: "Man has the greatest difficulty in perceiving the elements of his future stability while in the middle of the ruins of his traditional civilization."<sup>47</sup> To a certain extent, American SF functioned as one of these stabilizing elements: it rehabilitated the image of science itself, showing that it was not something which would automatically lead to either an apocalypse or a social "ant-hill," as French SF writers between the Wars had consistently portrayed it. American SF provided a new, positive, and distinctly alternative vision of the future, and did so at a time when France needed it most.

This brief overview of the socio-political fabric of French society after World War II is also necessary in order to understand how a number of forward-looking Leftist intellectuals—like Boris Vian, Raymond Queneau, and Michel Pilotin—could have become involved in promoting what would later be condemned by some modern French SF authors as overt "cultural colonization" by the US.<sup>48</sup>

From a strictly chronological standpoint, it took approximately eight years for this change to occur in the SF marketplace in France. In 1945, about ten older SF titles were reprinted as the French publishing firms persisted in their pre-war policies; even the *Journal des Voyages* reappeared on the market (unchanged in format; it lasted until 1949). But soon new strategies were given priority, and certain publishers began to gamble on specialized series—first in Belgium with Pierre Very’s “Collection Edgar Allan Poe” (four titles), then in France with Pierre Devaux’s “Science et aventures” (Magnard, 1946-62) and the publisher Chardon’s “Incroyable.” Though not exactly revolutionary, these new collections nevertheless featured only French SF authors: Pierre Very, Max André Dazergues, Henri Viot, Paul Berato (Paul Mystere), *et al.*

Soon afterwards, in 1949, the first American SF appeared in a French series devoted to adolescents.<sup>49</sup> And the same year, the adult collection “Horizons du Fantastique” (Le Sillage, 1949-54) published *Paradis atomiques* by the would-be American R. Teldy-Naïm<sup>50</sup> and *Cette sacrée planète* (translated from *The World Below*, 1929) by the Englishman S. Fowler Wright. The label “science-fiction” was first used in 1950, on the jacket-cover of Jack Williamson’s *Les Humanoïdes* (Stock publishers’ translation of *The Humanoids* [1949]). Finally, in 1951, Gallimard and Hachette joined to launch the first substantial post-war collection of SF titles, the “Rayon Fantastique,” directed by Pilotin and Georges Henri Gallet. Its goal was to present to the French public a cross-section of the most important American SF masterpieces. Although the series did include some rather low-quality SF works—which detractors of the genre promptly seized upon as proof for their contentions—these were not typical of the collection as a whole, which became very successful.

Other French publishing houses immediately responded with SF imprints of their own. For the French public, the SF label soon came to be associated with the new literature of modern America. This SF *à l’américaine* quickly became a “media-event” as respected French periodicals like *France Dimanche*, *Critique*, *France Observateur*, and *Les Temps Modernes*—along with recognized writers and literary critics like Vian, Pilotin, Queneau, and France Roche—discussed and promoted it. The latter, acting as translators, directors of collections, and literary advisors for this “new” genre, frequently met with journalists, writers, and magazine editors like Jacques Bergier, Claude Elsen, Igor B. Maslowski, and Maurice Renault. And in 1953, these various promotional activities (designed perhaps to realign the SF consumer market in France to the US model) culminated in the emergence of two SF periodicals patterned on their American counterparts: *Fiction* and *Galaxie*.

Did this implantation (or renewal) of SF in France offer anything really new? Wasn’t it just a local variant of a more widespread “cultural colonization” by the US? The question is not so simple as that wording of it suggests, especially if one takes into account the pre-existing French SF tradition. The advent of *Fiction* in particular

had a substantial impact, due primarily to the editorial policies of its directors.<sup>51</sup> Unlike *Galaxie*, it was not devoted exclusively to translations of American SF: for the first time in French SF history, *Fiction* offered SF aficionados and young SF writers an official forum for exchanging their opinions, reviewing and discussing new SF works, seeing their own manuscripts published, and developing a critical corpus for the French SF genre as a whole.

Although admittedly a spinoff of a successful American SF magazine, *Fiction* deliberately sought to introduce, or reintroduce, works by French SF authors (though these were far outnumbered by translations of American SF). Appearing in its pages were both reprints of French SF from the '20s and '30s (Maurois, Renard, Rosny the Elder, and Octave Béliard) and new SF stories by previously unpublished modern French writers (Alain Dorémieux, Gérard Klein, Philippe Curval, *et al.*). It also served as an important vehicle for the social "acculturation" and legitimation of SF in French society. Any mention of SF that appeared in the French media, for example, was immediately analyzed, discussed, countered, or otherwise elaborated upon within the pages of *Fiction*—a phenomenon often resulting in polemical debates among various sectors of the French media industry itself.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, *Fiction* provided a nurturing milieu for the first stirrings of a French SF criticism that was truly diachronic in nature—which, it seems, was not the case either in Italy or in West Germany during this period.

It would therefore be erroneous to view the impact of American SF on France during the 1950s as a simple "implantation" of a foreign prototype. It would be more accurate to see the process as a two-fold "integration": American SF presented itself as the model for an indigenous SF serving to mediate and purvey science and modernity throughout French society, but it also acted as a catalyst for the resurrection and reanimation of a particular literary tradition in France—a tradition which, once revived, retained many of its original critical and literary characteristics.

To be sure, the progressive legitimation of SF did encounter a number of obstacles during this period (and later). One reproach, for example, was purely political and extended from American SF to SF in general: in view of the Cold War, some critics saw SF in a very perjorative light—as nothing more than a tool for spreading imperialist ideology.<sup>53</sup> Another objection came from the ranks of the literary establishment, which refused to look upon SF as anything but "a branch of the Fantastic."<sup>54</sup> And others considered the "new" brand of SF as a sacrilegious deviation from the European model which predated it. Reactions of the "clerks" before an imaginary barbarian? Cultural chauvinism? Resurgence of anti-scientific sentiments as the negative response to a developing industrial state?

However that may be, not all the reactions from the literary establishment were negative. Authors and critics as diverse as Queneau, Michel Butor, Michel Carrouges, Georges Mounin, Georges Perec, and Maurice Blanchot commented upon various thematic,



ideological, and stylistic aspects of this new (and sometimes maladroit) example of literary “modernism.” Even the detractions were ultimately beneficial to the genre. Requiring both writers of SF and theoreticians to be more articulate in their thematic conceptualizations, they also occasionally prompted contributors to *Fiction* to target contemporary non-SF authors in their critical discussions. Thus a kind of wide-ranging and transgeneric dialogue was begun among literary critics during the late ‘50s and early ‘60s—which perhaps prevented the isolation of French SF from the other branches of French literature.

Reintegrated into a tradition and offering a new perspective on the future, the SF genre encouraged French writers—after some trial-and-error (and very imitative) experimentation—to break out of the “colonial” American SF mold.<sup>55</sup> Their output during this period was high, and the reading public continued to purchase a substantial amount of the SF they produced. But with very few exceptions, French readers favored the numerous translations available to them over “home-grown” SF. This prejudice is very evident, for example, in the sales figures for the most prestigious publisher during the 1970s: original French titles in the “Ailleurs et demain” series (supervised by Klein for Laffont) consistently outsold translations by a margin of two-to-one.

In terms of originality, the indigenous efforts were often less than convincing. Although French SF was able to revive by successively modelling itself after American “space operas,” the “poetry” of Ray Bradbury, and the themes of Philip K. Dick,<sup>56</sup> it rarely produced works of comparable quality.

Michel Jeury is a significant exception to this rule. Both in his first novel, *Le Temps incertain* (*Chronolysis*, 1973), and subsequently in works like *Les Singes du temps* (“The Apes [or Imitators] of Time,” 1974) and *Soleil chaud: poisson des profondeurs* (“Hot Sun: Fish of the Deeps,” 1976), he has offered a uniquely original vision, inspiring other French SF authors by his masterful handling of the genre’s capabilities. In point of influence, Jeury’s works are important because they maintain high literary quality in dealing with SF themes not directly imitative of American models, but at the same time are not so cut off from those models as to call into question the texts’ basic SF identity. The themes themselves concern mastering the temporal universe—“chronolysis”—and the uses of political power by those who control this universe. Having access to the population’s thought-patterns, the controllers deliberately alter (via simulations) the former’s perceptions of reality, thereby permitting themselves to manipulate an entire world’s people and products more efficiently. Revolt is possible only through the intervention of an outside race (the Nomads), or by “leaks” in the time-continuum into other realities (from which the revolutionary struggle may be carried on), or by a state of permanent insanity (whence there is no escape).

The influence of both Daniel Galouye's *Simulacron III* (1968) and the works of Philip K. Dick can be discerned in Jeury's SF. Nevertheless, his treatment of "their" themes is highly original. The reason in large measure has to do with the fact that Jeury writes from a post-1968 perspective, according to which the political power of the State appears as being secretly manipulated by multinational (often American-headquartered) corporations—an idea that comes out of the reality of the US intervention in Vietnam, *inter alia*. This French SF, in other words, reflects an ideology that is purposely anti-American in flavor, even as it leans heavily on the work of American authors who have been critical of US society.

Such novels can be seen as French SF's attempt to end its "guardian-ward" relationship with American SF—indeed, to sever the strings attaching it to any such model over-representing imperialistic ideology or presenting it as orthodox. But Jeury—and with him, the writers of what has been labelled the "new" French SF of the 1970s—also instances the fundamental malaise of a genre that has not yet succeeded in taking its destiny into its own hands—a situation perhaps analogous to that of modern science itself as it continues to be held captive to national political agendas.

**6. "The Two Cultures."** Extremely few French SF works were rendered into English prior to 1961; and only in 1965 did the first translated French SF short-story collection appear on the American market.<sup>57</sup> Since that time, only a very small sampling of French SF's most prominent authors have been made available to anglophone readers, usually on the basis of a single title. Besides Klein and Jeury, the names of Jacques Sternberg, Pierre Barbet, Stephan Wul, Philippe Curval, Daniel Walther, and Charles Henneberg constitute a virtually exhaustive list. Even Serge Brussolo—a writer whose works, collectively considered, span the full gamut of specialized series, from popular to highly literary, without losing their capacity to evoke his distinctive brand of fantasmagoria—has not yet been translated. Curiously enough, the majority of Americans for whom the existence of French SF is slightly more than a vague rumor know of it only through the occasional SF ventures of primarily "mainstream" writers—chiefly, Pierre Boule, Marcel Aymé, "Vercors" (Jean Bruller), Jean-Louis Curtis, or Robert Merle—and usually via the Hollywood versions of same.

The paucity of translations of post-World War II French SF provides an accurate index of the extent to which it is unknown to American writers and readers. Small wonder, then, that it has not exerted any appreciable influence on the evolution of American SF, which continues to develop according to its own internal parameters.<sup>58</sup>

French SF, meanwhile, is preserving in its evolution the polyvalent personality it acquired by not undergoing a Gernsbackian process of "ghettoization." The intergeneric boundaries separating it from other literary forms remain highly porous—indeed, are becoming more so as this SF continues to successfully diversify its models. A wide variety

of French writers have tried their hand at the genre: some are established novelists (Robert Escarpit, Jean Hougron, René Alberes), others are writing fiction for the first time (Volkoff); some have chosen the SF genre as a kind of fictional laboratory wherein they experiment with post-modern literary discourse (Brussolo, Dominique Douay), others—better known for their *nouveaux romans*—cite the parallels between the latter and their SF in terms of the “modernity” of both (Jean Ricardou, Claude Ollier).

Contemporary French SF authors, though willingly acknowledging the debt they owe their American counterparts, are no longer satisfied with simply imitating them (despite the fact that the majority of French readers of SF still prefer the Anglo-American version). Those French SF authors who continue to pattern themselves after certain Anglo-American SF writers are no longer indiscriminate in their choices—witness their preference for Ballard and Dick—and they no longer seek to mechanically reproduce a foreign SF product. Furthermore, and for the first time in its comparatively young history, modern French SF has matured to the point of being an important literary crossroads where diverse traditions meet and interact. As such, it is perhaps also in the process of becoming the preferred fictional locus of a new symbiosis between human values and techno-scientific culture.

We thus find ourselves confronting a very new configuration in the relationship between SF in France and SF in the US. On the one hand, only American SF of the best quality is being translated and published in the more serious SF lines in France. On the other, the “new” French SF of the past two decades—reinvigorated, dynamic, and at the intersection of a number of literary practices—has yet to achieve recognition in the US. While American SF continues to play a role in shaping the mythos of our modern technological world, French SF has become a generic center for the interplay of literary awareness and the humanistic tradition. Future interchanges between these two SF cultures should therefore prove to be mutually beneficial.

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, the articles by Pierre Versins, Jean Gattégno, and Jacques Van Herp appearing under the rubric “La Date de naissance de la SF,” *Europe*, nos. 580-81 (Aug.-Sept. 1977), pp. 34-48.

2. Such generic tags include “scientific romance,” “scientification,” “speculative fiction,” *roman de science*, *roman d’hypothèse*, *fiction scientifique*, *roman d’anticipation*, etc.

3. For example, Darko Suvin and I. Zantovská-Murray’s “Bibliography of General Bibliographies of SF Literature,” *SFS*, 5 (1978):271-86. Note, too, that more reviews of SF titles have appeared in the last 15 years than during the previous 50 (1923-73)—see Charles Elkins, “An Index of SF Criticism and Book Reviews,” *SFS*, 9 (1982):101.

4. This is true despite the many studies appearing in journals such as *SFS*, *Extrapolation*, and *Foundation* (for the Anglo-American sector) and (for the

French) the various colloquia or conferences devoted to the genre, such as the SAES or the SFLGC .

5. See, however, Carlo Pagetti's *Il Senso del futuro* (Rome, 1970) and Charles Nicol's "J.G. Ballard and the SF Mainstream," SFS, 3 (1976):150-57.

6. See Roger Bozzetto, "La Science-fiction en Chine Populaire," *Orbites*, no. 1 (1982), pp. 164-68.

7. See Vittorio Curtoni, *Le Limite dell'ignoto* (Milan, 1977), and Bernt Kling, "Perry Rhodan," SFS, 4 (1977):159-61.

8. See Suvin, "On What Is and Is Not an SF Narration...", SFS, 5 (1978): 45-57.

9. See Sam Moskowitz's *Under the Moons of Mars: A History and Anthology of the 'Scientific Romance' in the Munsey Magazines* (NY, 1970). SF's realm, moreover, is almost impossible to ascertain prior to the 20th century; see on this point Robert M. Philmus's "Science Fiction: From Its Beginning to 1870," in *Anatomy of Wonder*, ed. Neil Barron (NY, 1976), pp. 3-16—note that the essay in question does not appear in later editions of AW.

10. One must note, however, the work of Norbert Spehner in his *Ecrits sur la Science-Fiction* (Montréal, 1988).

11. For the French SF tradition, see Versins' *Encyclopédie de l'Utopie, des Voyages Extraordinaires et de la Science-Fiction* (Lausanne, 1972; 2nd ed., 1984); Jean-Jacques Bridenne's *La Littérature française d'imagination scientifique* (Paris, 1950); J. Van Herp's *Panorama de la science-fiction* (Verviers, Belgium: 1973, 1975); and also the latter's "Les Romans de Science et Voyages et leur temps," a preface to A. Valérie's "Sur l'autre face du monde" et autres romans scientifiques de "Science et Voyages," ed. Gérard Klein & Jacques Van Herp (Paris, 1973), pp. 29-41.

12. For a comparison with the birth of the fantastic/horror genre, see J. Molino, "Le Fantastique entre l'oral et l'écrit," *Europe*, no. 611 (March 1980), pp. 32-41.

13. This portmanteau term, which combines the meanings of "future" and "possible," appears in De Jouvenel's *L'art de la conjecture* (Paris, 1964), and is cited by Bernard Cazes in his *Histoire du futur* (Paris, 1986), p. 197. See also Alexandre Cioranescu's *L'Avenir du passé* (Paris, 1973).

14. See my article titled "La Subversion du discours utopique," *Autrement dire*, nos. 3-4 (Nancy UP, 1986/87), pp. 155-69.

15. A large number of works existed, however, like Jacques Guttin's *Epigone, histoire du siècle futur* (1659), and several Moon voyages, Last-Man narratives, and uchronias. For more detailed information on the genealogy of the SF genre and its development via these forms, see Philmus's *Into the Unknown: The Evolution of Science Fiction from Francis Godwin to H.G. Wells* (Berkeley, 1970; rpt., with a new Introduction, 1983) and Paul K. Alkon's *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (Athens, GA: 1987).

16. See Angenot, "French SF before Verne," *SFS*, 5 (1978):58-65.

17. The Verne essay in question, "Edgard [*sic*] Poë et ses oeuvres," originally appeared in the April 1863 issue of *Musée des Familles*, pp. 193-208. In addition to his apparent thematic borrowings from Poe (cryptograms, maelstroms, hoaxes, effects of oxygen on the body, prosthetic limbs, maritime cannibalism, etc.), Verne's *Le Sphinx des glaces* (1897) is a continuation of Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838).

18. H.B. Franklin, *Future Perfect: American SF of the Nineteenth Century* (NY, 1966; revised ed., 1978), p. ix.

19. Verne, as well as Rosny the Elder and others after Verne, were published both in literary journals (the *Journal des Débats*, for example) and in collections of children's literature.

20. See pp. 64-66 of the essay by Angenot cited in n. 16 above.

21. See Arthur B. Evans's *Jules Verne Rediscovered: Didacticism and the Scientific Novel* (Westport, CT: 1988).

22. See T. Clareson's "The Emergence of SF, 1870-1926," pp. 35-50 of the edition of *Anatomy of Wonder* cited in n. 9 above.

23. The three quotations here come from three different reviews entitled "Jules Verne" and appearing, respectively, in *Nature*, 17 (1878):198, *Book News*, 8 (1890):380, and *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 31 (1905): 579. On Verne's relationship to the "Frank Reade" books, see Moskowitz, *Explorers of the Infinite* (1963; rpt. Westport, CT: 1983), p. 109.

24. Translations of Irving and Poe (the latter by Baudelaire) were available, but neither was viewed as SF; the works of Poe, for example, continue to be classified as tales of the fantastic and/or horror.

25. Nor do the works of Rosny the Elder or H.G. Wells, for example, have an impact on that Vernian model.

26. See the article by Marcucci in the *Bulletin de la société Jules Verne*, no. 2 (1936), pp. 81-100.

27. The works of Rosny the Elder are somewhat different in this regard. For a more detailed discussion of Rosny's originality, see the special issue of *Europe* on Rosny (and Wells)—nos. 681-82 (1986), esp. pp. 3-43, 90-110.

28. Klein, in *his* preface (pp. 7-23) to the text by A. Valérie cited in n. 11 above, demonstrates that the real concern of these authors was not to develop a fictional setting whereby the imaginary potential of scientific invention can be expressed; rather, in the context of a banal and predictable plot structure, it was to downplay and (ultimately) to obliterate this scientific invention which had brought disorder into the bourgeois universe.

29. The translation of Duhammel's book was published by Houghton-Mifflin in 1931. For details on other available English translations (as per the double-asterisk footnote above), see the "Works Cited" in Arthur B. Evans's "Science Fiction in France: A Brief History," *SFS*, 16 (1989):267-75.

30. See J. Van Herp, *"Je sais tout": le roi des magazines*. (Brussels, 1986) and also his *José Moselli et la SF* (Brussels, 1984). In both of these, he develops an idea first broached in his Preface to Valérie (see n. 11 above): that the harsh judgments pronounced by fans on French SF writers of this period come from an unjust comparison with American SF of the same epoch.

31. Maurice Renard, for example, in his "Du roman merveilleux

scientifique et de son action sur l'intelligence du progrès," *Le Spectateur*, no. 6 (1909), pp. 245-60.

32. Such a sketch appeared, for example, in issue no. 943 (1933) of *Le Petit écho de la mode*. As for ongoing discussions, the journal *Etudes* published 28 articles and book reviews on SF works between its inception in 1922 and 1940.

33. The article in question was Régis Messac's "D.H. Keller et le roman scientifique aux Etats-Unis," *Les Primaires*, no. 110 (May-June 1939), pp. 217-22.

34. T. Varlet, *La Grande Panne* (Paris: Ed. des Portiques, 1930), pp. 9-10.

35. For an interesting analysis of "heroic fantasy" in this regard, see Pierre Giuliani, "Heroic Fantasy et logique de l'empire," *Orbites*, no. 2 (1982), pp. 144-50, and Elisabeth Vonarburg's "La fantasy ou le retour aux sources," *Europe*, no. 707 (March 1988), pp. 105-13.

36. The first issue, for example, included two SF texts out of a total of 24 short stories or installments of novels.

37. Léon Stover, *La Science-fiction américaine* (Paris, 1972), p. 5.

38. See Howard Scott's *Technocracy* (Chicago, 1933), and James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (NY, 1941). Note also that R. Marjolin, in *Les Expériences de Roosevelt* (Paris, 1933), advances certain theses quite contrary to the prevailing beliefs of the period.

39. For an "external" reaction to the phenomenon of SF fandom, and specifically to the first "World" Convention of SF in New York, see Bernard DeVoto, "Doom Beyond Jupiter," *Harper's*, no. 179 (Sept. 1939), pp. 445-48. For an internal critique, see Stanislaw Lem's "SF: A Hopeless Case, With Exceptions," *SF Commentary*, nos. 35-37 (1974), pp. 8-36.

40. For Wells's relations with Gernsback, see Patrick Parrinder, *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching* (London & NY, 1980), p. 11.

41. Stephen Spriel & Boris Vian, "Un nouveau genre littéraire: la science-fiction," *Les Temps modernes*, no. 72 (1951), pp. 618-27. Also see R. Queneau, "Un nouveau genre littéraire: les science-fictions," *Critique*, no. 46 (1951), pp. 195-98.

42. This term is M. Angenot's; see his "Le Paradigme absent: Eléments d'un sémiotique de la science-fiction," *Poétique*, no. 33 (1978), pp. 74-89; rpt. in English as "The Absent Paradigm: An Introduction to the Semiotics of Science Fiction," *SFS*, 6 (1979):9-19.

43. The phrase figures in the title of a collection of essays edited by Clareson (Bowling Green, OH: 1971).

44. See R. Messac's essay on "La Négation du progrès dans la littérature moderne," *Les Primaires*, no. 85 (1936), pp. 692-704; no. 86 (1937), pp. 9-26; no. 87 (1937), pp. 73-84; and no. 88 (1937), pp. 137-45.

45. See Luc Boltanski, "La fascination de l'Amérique," in *Les cadres, la formation d'un groupe social* (Paris, 1982), pp. 155-236.

46. See, for example, C. Romier's *L'Homme nouveau: esquisse des conséquences du progrès* (Paris, 1929), or Robert Aron's *Le Cancer américain* (Paris, 1931), which may be read in conjunction with *Décadence de la nation française* (Paris, 1931), co-authored by Aron and A. Dandieu.

47. Jean Fourastier, *La Civilisation de 1960* (Paris, 1947), p. 5.

48. For one outspoken activist propounding this point of view, see Boris Eizykman's *SF et capitalisme* (Paris, 1979).

49. The series, called "Captain John," was published in Paris by the Presses de la Cité (1949).

50. Teldy-Naïm, whose real name may have been Jacques Papy, tried to pass himself off as an American (though all of the works credited to him bear only French titles): see Henri Delmas & Alain Julian's *Le Rayon SF* (Toulouse, 1983), p. 113.

51. On this and subsequent points about *Fiction*, see George Slusser, "The Beginnings of Fiction," *SFS*, 16 (1989):307-37. Also see my "Littérature et paralittérature: le cas de la SF," *Orientations de la recherche et des méthodes en littérature comparée*, vol. 1 (Montpellier, 1984), pp. 140-51.

52. For example, an article by Robert Escarpit, "La Ghetto de la SF," *Le Monde* (30 Aug. 1954), p. 1, occasioned a reply in *Fiction*, no. 11 (Oct. 1954), p. 119, entitled "Réponse à un jugement téméraire."

53. Pierre Villadier made this case in his "SF et littérature d'anticipation," printed by *Nouvelle critique* in June and July of 1954. For a response, see Alain Dorémieux, "Où la politique va-t-elle se nicher?" *Fiction*, no. 10 (Sept. 1954), p. 118-20.

54. Thus Jacques Sternberg, in his *Une Succursale du fantastique nommée Science-fiction* (Paris, 1958), argued that "SF is the junction point not with modern fairy tales but with stories of demons" (p. 12).

55. There were, occasionally, some premature successes: see, for example, Daniel Drode's *nouveau roman* SF tale called *Surface de la planète* (Paris: Rayon fantastique, 1959).

56. Concerning the influence of Dick on French SF, see Emmanuel Jouanne's "How 'Dickian' is the New French SF?" *SFS*, 15 (1988):226-31, and also Pascal Thomas' "French SF and the Legacy of Philip K. Dick," *Foundation*, no. 34 (1985), pp. 22-35.

57. *Thirteen French Science Fiction Stories*, ed. Damon Knight (NY: Bantam, 1965). This collection, however, contains four texts that are more fantastic than S-F in nature. Also of note is the anthology of French SF edited by Maxim Jakubowski and entitled *Travelling Toward Epsilon* (NY: New English Library, 1977).

58. Of course, American SF evolved substantially during this period, and especially in the 1960s—as a result both of new technologies and of influences from certain British SF writers for the magazine *New Worlds*. But the definitive history of modern American SF remains to be written. Among the more credible attempts at such a synthesis are Joe de Bolt and John R. Pfeiffer's "The Early Modern Period: 1938-1963" and Brian Stableford's "The Modern Period: 1964-1986"—both in the third edition of *Anatomy of Wonder* (NY, 1987).

## RÉSUMÉ

Roger Bozzetto. *Des liaisons équivoques: la science-fiction en France et aux Etats-Unis (une vue des côtes françaises)*.—Le temps n'est plus où l'histoire de la SF relevait pour chaque pays du folklore local. Le développement de la SF, en tant que littérature mondiale, implique une analyse des relations que la SF américaine—qui a porté le genre à son niveau actuel de maturité—entretient à la fois avec l'histoire du genre et avec les littératures nationales.

Cela implique une réflexion sur la préhistoire du genre lui-même, à partir du moment où, vers le 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, il devient un domaine autonome de la fiction et puis sur sa constitution engendrée autour des œuvres de Jules Verne et de H.G. Wells. Avant *Looking Backward* et bien que des textes de science-fiction commencent à être publiés aux Etats-Unis, la science-fiction américaine ne pouvait pas rivaliser avec les modèles européens.

Entre les deux guerres, alors que la SF française se développe dans une atmosphère de méfiance face à la science et dans un cadre éditorial peu dynamique, la SF américaine se constitue non seulement en "nouvelle catégorie de l'édition" mais en univers mythopoiétique original que le passage par le "ghetto", où la peut-être enfermée Gernsback, a permis de rendre solide et puissant.

La fin de la 2<sup>e</sup> guerre mondiale voit un déferlement de la SF américaine sur les ruines de la SF française, cependant, après un certain temps, cette dernière en sort revivifié—au point de choisir ses propres modèles et ses références (R. Bradbury, P.K. Dick) dans cette production américaine afin de s'en inspirer et, dans une certaine mesure, de tenter de s'en détacher. Cette nouvelle production française de SF donne des textes intéressants (Michel Jeury ou Serge Brussolo) mais elle n'a pas encore obtenu le succès auquel elle pourrait aspirer sur le marché américain.

Car si la SF française a eu besoin de la SF des Etats-Unis pour se reconstituer, elle n'a plus à aucun moment depuis la mort de Jules Verne influencé la SF américaine. Celle-ci se développe selon ses propres tendances, ou en relation avec d'autres auteurs anglophones comme à un certain moment l'équipe anglaise qui publiait *New Worlds*. Cela ne signifie pas que la SF demeure à jamais un produit de standard américain: la SF française pourrait en effet se proposer comme un exemple pour hybrider la culture SF et la littérature d'avant-garde. (ABE)

**Abstract.**—The time is long past when the history of a nation's SF was viewed merely as an extension of its local folklore. And the contemporary study of SF as a world literature would seem to call for a more detailed analysis of how the American model—which carried the genre to its current level of maturity—affected both the historical evolution of SF as a whole and that of certain national literatures.

Such an investigation requires a look at the prehistory of the genre (inasmuch as SF, from the 17th century onward, developed as an autonomous



fictional form) and the manner by which it assumed its generic identity around the works of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Although a number of SF-type narratives were indeed published in America during this period, the European SF model tended to dominate the genre, at least until Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

Between the world wars—a period when the publishing industry in France was far from dynamic and French SF itself seemed increasingly to turn toward motifs of anti-science and the fantastic—American SF began to distinguish itself not only as a new category of publishing but also as a cogent and highly original mythos—a “new” SF whose identity was perhaps reinforced and strengthened by its literary “ghettoization” during the Gernsback years.

The end of World War II brought a flood of American SF into France and—despite the initial shock—ultimately served to reawaken and reinvigorate its nearly moribund French cousin. From this imported American SF production, French authors discovered new thematic models and references (R. Bradbury, P.K. Dick, et al.) which, during the subsequent decades, they have consciously imitated, adapted, modified, and—in some measure—attempted to distance themselves from. The resulting new French SF has produced a number of interesting texts like those of Michel Jeury and Serge Brussolo, but it still has not achieved the success to which it aspires, particularly in the American SF marketplace.

The reason for this is that French SF, while it needed American SF to revive and redefine itself, has not really influenced the latter since the era of Jules Verne. American SF has developed according to its own internal dictates and in the context of other English-speaking SF authors (like the British who published *New Worlds*). This does not mean, of course, that SF will forever remain essentially a US-derived literary form: French SF could, for example, stand as an excellent generic model for the hybridizing of SF culture and avant-garde literature. (ABE)