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## Roger Bozzetto and Arthur B. Evans

### The Surrealistic Science Fiction of Serge Brussolo

*Portions translated by Vicky Guyon*

The author Serge Brussolo is a special case in French science fiction and his works present a unique approach to the genre. Born in 1951 and a professional writer since 1977, Brussolo has now published some fifty novels and anthologies of pure sf, eight detective novels, and about fifteen “fantastic” or horror novels. This is an average of four to five novels per year. And recently he has also been interested in mainstream literature, especially historical novels.

In short, what we have here is an American-style productivity that could be compared to that of a Robert Silverberg or a Stephen King. In this alone, he can be distinguished from the majority of French sf writers who—apart from those who are under contract with some of the French mass market publishing houses—produce rather little in comparison and are much less diversified. Brussolo has appeared in numerous collections, but most of his sf works have been published in Denoël’s *Présence du futur* series and in Fleuve Noir’s *Anticipation* series—the latter a somewhat less literary collection which specializes in sf space-operas, but one in which Brussolo’s works stand out because of their originality.

It is, however, not only Serge Brussolo’s productivity and multifaceted talents that have captured the attention of sf aficionados in France. If he is enormously successful among French readers—to such an extent that his name has become a sort of byword—it is because his works possess a certain charisma. In fact, he has aroused so much interest among his francophone fans that several special issues have been devoted to him in sf fanzines like *SFère* in France and in semi-professional journals like *Phénix* in Belgium and *Imagine...* in Québec (see WORKS CITED). These special issues—many of which are next to impossible to find today—contain interviews as well as some of Brussolo’s unpublished works.

Why this infatuation with Serge Brussolo among French readers?

In order to understand Brussolo’s success, it is necessary to take a brief look at the evolution of sf in France.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of Jules Verne, the world-renowned popularizer and early model for science fiction, French sf between the two World Wars suddenly began to vegetate and decline, especially during the 1930s.

Then, after World War II, partially as a result of the massive influx of translated English-language sf into the French marketplace and the postwar French public’s fascination with all things American, a “renaissance of the

imaginary” occurred among French writers—which led to renewed speculation about the future and its potentialities. More French authors began to write sf, and a loyal French sf readership began to grow. Despite this promising beginning, however, and the popularity of authors like Gérard Klein, Stefan Wul, and Charles Henneberg during the 50s and 60s and sf writers like Michel Jeury and Dominique Douay during the 70s, the entire genre of French sf during the 1980s seemed to suddenly and inexplicably self-destruct. Extrapolations about the wonders or horrors of the world as it was evolving toward a post-modern society rapidly gave way to works where French sf authors felt they had to write as they imagined fashionable avant-garde mainstream authors wrote. That is, they believed they had to play the role of “the author,” emphasizing their “literary style” rather than grappling with the future and exploring its possibilities. Their works began to exhibit an exasperating self-centeredness, a pretentiousness, and a tendency toward sheer incomprehensibility. These authors seemed to take a suicidal pleasure in no longer presenting themselves as writers of sf and naively convinced themselves that they were making their entry into “real” literature— whereas, in fact, what they were actually producing were clumsy imitations of literary forms that were already obsolete. In the final analysis, these narcissistic games succeeded only in alienating the majority of French sf readers, who began to distance themselves systematically from any sf published by French writers.<sup>2</sup>

Brussolo’s first sf works displayed his excellent writing skill, and he too showed a great virtuosity in wordplay. It is thus easy to understand how he was able to attract the attention of certain publishers who were influenced by the literary aspects of his early trilogy of short stories entitled *Aussi lourd que le vent* (Heavy as the Wind, 1981). However, in retrospect, it is clear that Brussolo’s true originality was not simply due to his innovative style. Were this the case, he would have fallen into obscurity like so many others of the French “new wave” sf school of this period.

Quite early in his career and beginning with his second novel *Sommeil de sang* (Blood Sleep, 1982)—a masterpiece of sf—it became obvious that what made him unique and fascinating was his exploration of an imaginative world so luxuriant that by comparison a jungle would seem as orderly as a chessboard. His flair for the evocative, his ability to invent images and situations which seem to border on hallucination were literally bewitching. For example, consider a few excerpts drawn from *Sommeil de sang*:

La montagne ne commença à saigner qu’à l’aube du troisième jour. (7)  
[It was only at dawn of the third day that the mountain began to bleed.]

C’est le sable cannibale... Certains disent d’ailleurs que ce n’était pas vraiment du sable, mais que chaque “grain” était en réalité un minuscule insecte carnivore. (12)

[It’s cannibal sand... Some people claim that it wasn’t truly sand at all, but rather that each “grain” was in reality a minuscule carnivorous insect.]

Les animaux-montagnes, planètes vivantes flottant dans l’espace, pattes rentrées, soufflant par leurs événements une atmosphère artificielle, et qu’avaient

durant des siècles, occupés en toute innocence les hommes, persuadés de vivre sur de véritables astéroïdes. (193)  
 [Animal-mountains, living planets floating in space, with claws drawn in and breathing in and out an artificial atmosphere. Men had dwelt innocently on its surface for centuries, persuaded that they were living on simple asteroids.]

In its innovative qualities, Brussolo's fictional universe is often reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's. Such a comparison, as unlikely as it might seem, is not arbitrary. Like Alice's father, Brussolo's primary interest is to explore dreamlands. He deciphers the rules, then constructs his novels by breaking them. Lewis Carroll inserts his dreamlike stories into the medium of adventure or children's tales—full of nursery rhymes and limericks—and then he plays with the various levels of signified meaning. Brussolo inserts his fantasies into the framework of classic sf, which he then blithely subverts for our reading pleasure.<sup>3</sup> In some respects, Brussolo's narratives resemble those of Douglas Adams' *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but where Adams amuses us as he glides along the iridescent surface of "distanced" words and images, Brussolo transports us to a deeper level of concretized dreamscapes.

In *Sommeil de sang*, for example, all the ingredients of classic sf are present: on a planet lost in the immensity of space, one witnesses an epic struggle between sedentary urban mine operators and bands of desert nomads. But then Brussolo twists the traditional sf patterns of verisimilitude: here the mines are made of fossilized meat, managed by a corporation of butchers, and the workers therein are vegetarians. As for the nomads, they cross the deadly acid sands and live on skins which serve as portable oases. Where do these meat mines come from, what are the nomads looking for, which routes are avoided, what happens when these "animal mountains" suddenly begin to move? These are some of the questions around which the story-line is built, and which leave the reader hesitating between shock and wonder. While resembling, on the surface, pure fantasy rather than classic sf, it is nevertheless an alien sf world that is being described, and the sf references in the story are continually used to advance the plot toward new and surprising encounters.

The similarity suggested above between Brussolo and Lewis Carroll is even more evident in *Portrait du diable en chapeau melon* (Portrait of the Devil in a Derby Hat, 1982). The basic premise of this novel is as follows: a number of babies have been left and forgotten in a nursery under the care of cybernetic nursemaids. But the years go by and the latter are unaware that the children have now grown up. These robot nannies continue to treat them like babies, transforming their lives into a veritable nightmare. Since these nannies are the sole source of knowledge for these now-grown children, the latter must struggle to interpret the various legends and stories the nannies tell them. The relationships between language, truth, logic, and illusion are explored in this novel, but in a manner quite different from the fantasy narratives of a Lewis Carroll. Allusions to sf literature and the sf universe are omnipresent, but they are not necessarily articulated in a context of technologically extrapolative or scientific speculation. Brussolo develops them, rather, as part of a poetic

process which, far from breaking with the world of traditional sf, serves to regenerate and renew it.

A l'instant où il posait le pied sur le trottoir, l'ombre de la nourrice le recouvrit, énorme.... La femme était gigantesque. Cinq mètres, peut-être six. Contre sa jambe, il se sentait petit, désarmé. Elle correspondait en tout point à l'image caricaturale qu'on peut se faire d'une nurse, avec son tablier blanc, immaculé, retenu par des épingles; les seins gonflés tendant la soie de la blouse comme deux mappemondes à suspension instable. Quand elle se pencha vers lui, Nath vit ces globes monstrueux se décoller du torse de la femme, attirés par l'attraction terrestre. Il n'osa plus bouger, et pourtant les deux mamelles le surplombaient, astéroïdes de chair rose, prêts à l'écraser, creusant le trottoir à leur point d'impact.

Au moment où elle pliait la taille et tendait la main vers lui, Nath crut entendre toute une série de chuintements hydrauliques.... (45-46)

[The instant he put his foot onto the sidewalk, the shadow of the nursemaid rose up and covered him, enormous... The woman was gigantic. Five meters, maybe six. Against her leg he felt tiny, vulnerable. She corresponded in every way to the stereotypical image that one might have of a nurse, with her immaculate white apron pinned to her. Her huge breasts strained against the silk of her blouse, like two world globes in precarious suspension. When she leaned over to him, Nath saw these two spheres shift down from the torso of her body, pulled by gravitational attraction. He didn't dare move, and yet these two monstrous mammary glands were hovering over him, giant asteroids of pink flesh ready to crush him, digging craters into the sidewalk at their point of impact...

When she bent over and stretched out her hand to him, Nath thought he heard a series of hydraulic-sounding hisses...]

Recognizable in this novel is the typical Asimovian theme of the robot-nursemaid. But here their original mission and programming prevent them from realizing that their wards are now adults—which leads to a series of events which are alternately humorous, ironic, or tragic. These robots are neither the tame robots of an Asimov nor the comic robots of a Sheckley. In some ways, they resemble the computer-robot Hal of *2001* in that their basic dysfunctionality continually creates the unexpected.

Another of Brussolo's early sf novels, *Carnaval de fer* (Iron Carnival, 1983), can be read as a simple quest narrative in the form of a forgotten or forbidden pilgrimage. But the stages of this hero's search do not involve ordinary obstacles: the quest quickly tumbles into a kind of orchestrated hallucination. Consider, for example, the following portrayal of an unusual "dance of Death" witnessed along the pilgrim's route:

"La farandole est un piège. Deux danseurs sur trois sont des androïdes. Des robots. A la faveur de fêtes ils capturent leurs proies humaines en leur tendant la main. Leurs doigts secrètent une sève dont le pouvoir adhésif est tel qu'un simple shake-hand suffit à opérer une soudure dermique définitive! Une véritable greffe! ... A partir de cet instant, écartelés entre deux robots infatigables, les prisonniers se changent en crucifiés, dansant sans relâche jusqu'à l'épuisement, jusqu'à la mort. Car les androïdes se nourrissent de leur

énergie, digérant leurs atomes de carbone jour après jour comme des sangsues cybernétique.” (87)

[“The farandole dance is a trap. Two out of three dancers are robots. During festivals they capture their prey by holding out their hands to them. Their fingers secrete a sap of such adhesive power that a simple handshake is sufficient to create a permanent dermatological bond! A veritable skin graft!... From that moment on, spread-eagled between two indefatigable robots, the prisoners are crucified, dancing endlessly until they are exhausted and die. The androids feed off their energy, digesting their carbon atoms day after day like cybernetic bloodsuckers.”]

Throughout his journey, the hero of this tale has many other Fellini-like encounters: cities of deaf mutes, pearl-dwarves, carcinogenic confetti, fireworks-fish, balloon-orchestras, a human beehive, etc. His quest, the realization of a prophecy he had found written on the parchment skin of a cadaver, is ultimately successful: the hero finally rediscovers his lost youth. But he quickly loses it again. And the reader soon learns that the entire story was only a kind of elaborate *mise-en-scène*—a mental experiment.

Brussolo’s poetic treatment of the sf “other” is infused with several recurring obsessions. As is obvious from the above excerpts, there is a marked tendency toward *organic* types of images. One critic, Pierre Stolze, has noted that “L’immense majorité des comparaisons brussoliennes porte sur le corps humain et les avanies qu’il peut subir” [“the immense majority of Brussolo’s comparisons concern the human body and the abuses which it undergoes”] (9): amputations, tearing of flesh, scars, skin diseases, etc. This preoccupation with the organic often takes the form of a kind of medicalized universe: e.g., in his novel *Territoire de fièvre* (Land of Fever, 1983), an entire planet is depicted as a sick body and the rescue expeditions sent from Earth as disease-fighting antibodies. Images mixing the organic with the inorganic are also very frequent in Brussolo’s prose: e.g., mountains that bleed, metamorphosed shark-cars with hoods that bite like the jaws of crocodiles, sofas like jelly fish, living tatoos that creep slowly across the body, among many others.<sup>4</sup> In his novel *Les Lutteurs immobiles* (The Immobile Fighters, 1984), for example, the “Society for the Protection of Objects” melds individuals to their physical surroundings—through the use of high-tech implants—to protect the Earth’s environment:

le couplage avec des objets domestiques ne constitue qu’une première phase.... Nous voulons coupler l’homme avec la nature. Coupler des populations entières avec leur site de résidence... Casser une branche d’arbre, c’est se casser un bras; écrire des graffiti obscène sur un mur, c’est se retrouver tatoué de ces mêmes graffiti... Le pollueur crèvera de sa pollution.... (66)

[this coupling to their household objects constitutes only the first phase.... We want to fuse Man with Nature, to link entire populations to the locale where they live... To break the branch of a tree would be like breaking one’s arm, scribbling obscene graffiti on a wall would be like being tatoosed with this same graffiti... The polluter would die of his own pollution....]

This scheme proves to be diabolically effective as the humans begin to metamorphose into the objects to which they are attached:

“Je suis ‘colonisée’ par ma robe! Elle m’assimile à elle! J’en deviens le prolongement...” (162)

[“I am being ‘colonized’ by my dress! It’s assimilating me into itself! I am becoming an extension of it!....”]

David...se passant la main sur la peau, il s’aperçut qu’il avait le corps couvert de verrues ou d’excroissances reproduisant la forme octogonale des boulons pointillant le char. Comme dans son rêve, il devenait le prolongement de son jumeau d’acier. (181)

[David...passing his hand over his body, noticed that it was covered with warts or outgrowths reproducing the octagonal shapes of the bolts which dotted the tank. As in his dream, he was becoming the extension of his steel twin.]

In several of Brussolo’s texts, a more personal side of the author becomes apparent. In *L’Homme aux yeux de napalm* (The Man with Napalm Eyes, 1990), for example, the narrator has become a writer of sf hoping that, through writing his novels, he might exorcise an entity that is pursuing him. This entity is an alien from another planet who haunts him because, as a youth of twelve, the narrator had inadvertently condemned it to remain on Earth. David, the narrator, is now obliged to live his nights in a sort of psychic hell—much like the entity itself who wanders around in a toy factory in the form of a grotesque Santa Claus.<sup>5</sup> Here again one witnesses a reference to a traumatized childhood which Brussolo hinted at earlier in *Portrait du diable en chapeau melon*.

A parallel theme is found in his *Le Syndrome du scaphandrier* (Diver Syndrome, 1992). The hero is a dream chaser. Each night he plunges like a deep-sea diver into the depths of sleep in order to bring back what Borges might call “hronirs” (463)—strange objects “not of this world”—which he then sells to avid collectors.

David Sarella, medium matérialisant des ectoplasmes à durée persistante. (31)  
[David Sarella, specializing in the materialization of long-lasting ectoplasms.]

Il y avait quelque chose d’incroyablement fragile, une architecture organique (?) à la peau plus fine qu’un pétale. Une sorte d’être indéfinissable, roulé en boule et touchant à peine terre...des volumes harmonieusement agencés mais sans fonction vitale précise. Cela évoquait une épaule. Une énorme épaule si douce, si fragile qu’on n’aurait pu l’effleurer du bout des doigts sans la marbrer immédiatement d’hématomes... Dès qu’on commençait à tourner autour de la cage, les images affluaient, corrigeait sans cesse l’impression première... (50)

[There was something unbelievably fragile, a kind of organic (?) architecture to it which was finer than a flower petal. A sort of undefinable entity, rolled up into a ball and barely touching the ground...its volumes harmoniously organized but without any precise vital function. It was like a shoulder. A huge shoulder that was so soft, so fragile that one could not even touch it with the tips of one’s fingers without bruising it... As one began to walk around the cage, the images flowed out, constantly altering one’s first impressions of it...]

Il ne s’agit pas d’un rêve mais d’une production ectoplasmique matérialisée par un medium endormi à partir d’un image onirique hantant son cerveau. (54)

[It's not about a dream, but about the production of ectoplasmic objects from the dream images haunting the brain of a sleeping medium.]

In this richly autobiographical tale, one perceives the true key to Brussolo's creative enterprise. Like a surrealist diver, Brussolo moves about below the surface of a dreamlike universe, retrieving strange objects and bringing them back for public display.<sup>6</sup> But, like the technological landscapes of Ballard, this is not merely a personal world: it is a world created by a mixture of cultural artefacts that are both contemporary and universal. Brussolo intertwines fragments of myths, from the ancient world and a world of the near future—i.e., from the short- or medium-term speculations of earlier sf. His characters encounter mutilated bits of incongruous realities from museums or from cultural composites that inhabit the collective imagination. Unusual comparisons and juxtaposed images thus constitute the essence of Brussolo's work. They offer us the same kind of fortuitous encounters popularized by European surrealists earlier in the century—continually sending us to those “surreal” worlds of flux and metamorphosis portrayed in the paintings of René Magritte, Max Ernst, Maurice Escher, Paul Delvaux, Salvador Dali, *et al.*<sup>7</sup>

A prolific, multitalented and yet very private author, Brussolo fits no particular classification within the tradition of French sf. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that he claims to know little about sf and supposedly reads very little of it, he takes on a more appropriate stature if we place him within the overall evolution of the field as a whole. Like Jack Vance, he concocts strange planets and animates them with quest stories; but Brussolo's stories don't come to a euphoric conclusion in spite of the complexity of the developments. Like Sheckley, Brussolo has the gift of inventing totally incongruous situations; but he possesses a more quirky sense of humor. Like Van Vogt, he possesses the genius of hyper-complexity and even the “cosmic jerrybuilder” aspect that Damon Knight criticizes in the American author (47-62); but Brussolo does not confine himself to the classical sf recipe. Rather, he attempts to blend the fictionalizing of his personal fantasies—childhood traumas, the fear of madness, the intrusion of the unimaginable—with the exploration of these collective fantasies which science fiction has invented and popularized in the modern culture of the Western world. Much like J.G. Ballard, Brussolo uses the traditional sf tropes as an effective jumping-off-point for a sometimes Kafkaesque exploration of the human subconscious.<sup>8</sup>

As French sf today enters a new phase in its history, it is appropriate that the evocative sf works of Serge Brussolo be examined more closely—especially in the manner by which they cast a new light on the evolution of the genre itself. It might be argued that most sf writers essentially belong to one of three different groups. Some, like Asimov, Heinlein, and Clarke, are inventors of ideas which they then ground in “solid” narratives. Others, like Bradbury or Simak, are stylists by nature: they attempt to touch the sentiments or the emotions of the reader. The final group, like Van Vogt or Philip K. Dick, create sometimes incongruous, highly poetic sf in a postmodernist vein: they derive their visions from contemporary socio-cultural strata.



Brussolo appears to belong to a different category altogether, and his unique departure from classic sf formulae can potentially serve to enrich the genre. As Gérard Klein once pointed out, any sf “culture” presupposes a particular cultural view of the world—often a collective vision based on the outmoded, linear extrapolations of the engineers and scientists of a specific historical period (4-5). But since, as a culture, we have now entered into an era of post-industrialism and post-modernism, such dated visions of the future—e.g., images of space exploration, colonization of planets, and humanity’s “manifest destiny” to spread its civilization to the stars—now seem rather quaint, one-dimensional, and hegemonic. In contrast, Brussolo’s surrealist sf offers the reader an alternative experience to the traditional sf novum—one which, as Nabokov once suggested,<sup>9</sup> must be assimilated with more than just the intellect alone. Strongly reminiscent of the legendary Diaghilev’s advice to the young surrealist Jean Cocteau (“Astonish me!”), Brussolo has described his own craft in the following terms:

“Voilà donc le but que je me fixai: mettre sur pied un merveilleux noir et rouge abolissant les classifications, faisant s’interpénétrer les règnes, amenant la confusion du minéral, du végétal et de l’humain. Organiser une fête sinistre et belle où s’entrechoqueraient des éléments ordinairement étrangers.

J’ai pensé avant tout qu’il fallait étonner le lecteur et, aujourd’hui, vingt romans plus tard, je ne crois pas m’être trompé. ...

Je suis un fabricant de cartouches pour fusil à rêver, un artificier de l’imaginaire. Que mes romans vivent le temps d’une explosion, c’est tout ce que je demande. Mais qu’ils explosent!

La S.F. m’a fourni les allumettes et les mèches nécessaires à la mise à feu de mon carnaval pyrotechnique.... (“Trajets” 7-9)

[“That was the goal I set for myself: present a red and black ‘marvellous’ which defies all classifications, which intermingles all forms of life, which confounds the mineral, the vegetable, and the human. To organize a beautiful yet sinister celebration where elements normally foreign to each other would be jostled together.

I thought that, above all, it was necessary to astound the reader. And today, twenty novels later, I don’t believe that I was mistaken...

I am a builder of dream-gun cannonballs, an artificer of the imagination. Let my works live the duration of an explosion, that’s all I ask. But let them explode!

Science fiction has provided me with the matches and the wick necessary for my pyrotechnic carnival...”]

It is this explosive “sense of wonder” which seems to best characterize the sf works of the French writer Serge Brussolo. But his oeuvre also raises some interesting critical questions about the palpable links between surrealism and science fiction—questions which, at least to date, continue to remain largely unexplored in sf scholarship.<sup>10</sup>

#### NOTES

1. For more information in English on the history of sf in France, see Arthur B. Evans, “Science Fiction in France: A Brief History,” *SFS* 16:254-76, #49, Nov 1989; Maxim Jakubowski, “French SF,” *Anatomy of Wonder*, ed. Neil Barron, 3rd ed. (NY: Bowker, 1987), 405-40; and David Langford and Jacques Chambon, “France,” *The*

*Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, eds. John Clute and Peter Nichols (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 444-47.

2. To be fair, the French authors of this period should not all be placed in the same category. Certain works by Michel Jeury, Dominique Douay, Jean-Claude Dunyach, Raymond Milesi and Jacques Barberi were quite good. Today, after a long period of inactivity, it is possible that a revival of French sf is now taking place. Currently, there are not only three new sf magazines on the market—*Cyberdream*, *Galaxie*, and *Bifrost*—but also several new and successful francophone sf writers like Serge Lehman, Ayerdahl, and Québec's very popular Elizabeth Vonarburg (many of whose sf works are now available in English).

3. As Gérard Klein has described this difference: "[Sf] authors, in general, take an idea that is more or less scientific and they transform it into image and metaphor. Brussolo, in contrast, takes a metaphor, develops from it a series of images, and then surrounds them with a kind of pseudo-scientific sf verisimilitude" (letter to Evans, Aug. 28, 1995).

4. Here, and elsewhere in Brussolo's work, one is continually reminded of certain avant-garde New Wave novels of the 60s and 70s such as J.G. Ballard's *Crash*, *The Atrocity Exhibition*, and *The Drowned World* as well as works like *The Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine* by William Burroughs.

5. Here, a comparison with Stephen King would be quite appropriate.

6. In autographing Roger Bozzetto's own copy of this novel, Brussolo described it as "these fragments of a dreamed autobiography (?)."

7. Brussolo's works have earlier been described as "a kind of modern SF cross-pollination of the 'convulsive beauty' esthetics of André Breton, the hallucinatory dreamscapes of Dali, and the richly obsessive phantasms of Ballard." Evans, op.cit. in Note 1, 265.

8. The charm of Proust's or Faulkner's stories cannot be appreciated through a rapid reading: all of the richness of their subtlety would be lost. On the other hand, a work which plays on suspense can not be read too slowly. This is also true of Brussolo. He can be criticized for a multitude of faults which would appear in any sober and learned reading, but this is not how his works should be read: they should be cannibalized, swallowed, devoured voraciously. If not, they lose all of their flavor.

9. See John Wain, "Nabokov's Beheading," *New Republic* 141:18, Dec. 21, 1959.

10. To our knowledge, there currently exists no in-depth study of sf and surrealism. The listing for "Surrealism" in the Clute-Nicholls *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, for example, simply refers readers to their entries under "Absurdist Sf" and "New Wave" (1187) wherein surrealism is only mentioned in passing as a generic precursor to these two movements (2-3). And Barron's *Anatomy of Wonder 4* does not even include the term "Surrealism" in its Author/Subject index. The best critical work so far on this topic is Scott Bukatman's *Terminal Identity* (Duke UP, 1993), where, among other very perceptive discussions on the origins and nature of postmodern sf, he characterizes cyberpunk as a kind of "Techno-Surrealism" (295-98). See also Roger Bozzetto, "Science-fiction et surréalisme: le cas de J.G. Ballard," *Métaphore* #18:61-77, 1990.

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NB: To date, not a single sf work by Serge Brussolo has been translated and published in English.

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- . *Le Syndrome du scaphandrier* (The Diver Syndrome). Denoël, 1992.
- . "Trajets et itinéraires d'un gommeur de frontières," *Sfère* #16:7-9, June 1984. This text gives an interesting overview of the writing career of Brussolo, including the way in which he conceives his texts.
- Imagine...* #44, June 1988. Special Brussolo issue of the Québec magazine. Includes a reprint of the Brussolo article published in *Sfère* mentioned above as well as an article by Roger Bozzetto, "Brussolo, l'homme-roman du fleuve" (20-29).
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- Phénix* #24, October 1990. Brussels. Contains five interviews with Serge Brussolo, four unpublished short stories by the author, an article by Genefort called "la mythologie fantôme" and a bibliography by Richard Combailot.
- Sfère* #16. June, 1984. Special Brussolo issue with the article by Brussolo cited above and several of the articles listed below.
- Stolze, Pierre. "Le syndrome Brussolo, Portrait d'un écrivain en pachyderme hyperbolique." *Nous les Martiens* #23:3-34, October 1993. A very critical examination of Brussolo's style, which is often reproached for its accumulation of images and abuse of comparisons.

## SOME CRITICAL WORKS ON OR BY SERGE BRUSSOLO

- Barets, Stan. "Brussolo, Serge." *Le Science-fictionnaire* #1 (Paris: Denoël, 1994), 103-06.
- Bergal, Gilles. "Entretien avec Serge Brussolo," *Ere comprimée* #25:65-68, April 1983.
- Bozzetto, Roger. "La SF comme sujet d'une métamorphose: le cas de Serge Brussolo." *Cahiers du Cerli* #13 (Presse Universitaire de Reims, 1987), 45-60. This article attempts to show how the themes of sf are used in an original way by an author who is carried away by a sort of automatic writing. These themes give a coherence and limits to what would otherwise be mere delirium. The analyzed texts are those which Brussolo produced for the Fleuve Noir *Anticipation* series.
- Brussolo, Serge. "Enquête et secret chez Alain Robbe-Grillet." 1975. Unpublished Master's thesis.
- Combailot, Richard. "Rencontre avec Serge Brussolo." *L'Ecran fantastique* #68:74-75, May 1986.
- Le Crime est notre affaire*. #22, November 1993, "Dossier Brussolo, 4." Interview with S. Brussolo and a few articles, among which: "Comme un voyage au pays des pièges" (J. Baudou), "Brussolo: tout dire dans le neutre" (F. Derivery).
- Douvres, Michel. "Entretien avec Serge Brussolo," *Fiction* #347:173-76, Jan. 1984.
- Guiot, Denis. "Brussolo, Serge." *La Science-fiction*. Ed. Denis Guiot, J.P. Andrevon, and G.W. Barlow. Paris: MA Editions, 1987. 39-40.
- . "Trajets et itinéraires de l'oubli du héros brussolien." *Démons et merveilles* #1 (Reims, May 1985). 3-6.
- Labbé, A. "Tête à plume: Serge Brussolo." *Espace-Temps* #11 (Levallois-Perret, Summer 1979), 29.
- LeBellec, Jean-Luc. "Voyage en Brussoland: entretien." *Sfère* #16 (q.v. in WORKS CITED). 13-22.
- . "Panorama: Brussolo au Fleuve." *Sfère* #16 (q.v. in WORKS CITED). 27-33.
- Planque, Jean-Pierre. "Brussolo, l'alchimiste." *Sfère* #16 (q.v. in WORKS CITED). 23-26.
- Sadoul, Jacques. *Histoire de la science-fiction moderne (1911-1984)*. Paris: Laffont, 1984. 457-58.

Sprauel, Alain. *Bibliographie de Serge Brussolo*. March 1994. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources, including the pre-originals and some very useful indexes. A complete bibliography of Brussolo's works—updated through March 1997—is available for 46FF from Alain Sprauel, 25 route de Garges, 95200 Sarcelles, France.

Stolze, Pierre. "Rhétorique de la science-fiction." Doctoral thesis defended at the University of Nancy II, 1994. Contains a chapter on Serge Brussolo (Tome II, pp. 591-641) which takes up and develops the commentary of the essay listed in WORKS CITED.

ABSTRACT. The sf works of French author Serge Brussolo have been, since the early 1980s, hugely popular in France. Although still untranslated into English, Brussolo's 50+ sf novels and anthologies present a unique approach to the genre. By infusing into classical sf *topoi* wildly hallucinatory imagery and dreamscape encounters of all sorts, Brussolo offers the reader an alternative experience to the traditional sf novum. Much like J.G. Ballard, Brussolo uses the protocols of sf as an effective jumping-off-point for a sometimes Kafkaesque exploration of the human subconscious. Recalling the "convulsive beauty" esthetics of André Breton, Brussolo's works exemplify the palpable link between surrealism and science fiction—a kinship which remains largely unexplored in modern sf scholarship.