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Introduction

- 1 Edmond Cros, the cofounder of sociocriticism along with Claude Duchet, claims that this realm of study is “essentially concerned with that which the text transcribes, which is to say, the modalities of incorporation of history at the level of forms¹” (Cros, 2003, p. 13). With regard to science fiction, Roger Bozzetto, literary critic and specialist in the field, proposes an idea that is not far from that of Cros: “(...) science fiction texts also offer the subtle reader, in addition to the pleasure of discovery, the opportunity to question the potentialities and limits of the social imaginary of his time, and to question the ideological unthought underpinning this imaginary²” (Bozzetto, 2007, p. 14). Although, to some, the genre is stereotypically classified as *paraliterature*, intended merely to entertain, science fiction has proven itself a genre capable of transmitting depth and nuance. In fact, as made evident by certain novels, this form of literature has often sought to reflect and comment on social phenomena rather than simply providing a means of diversion for the public. This article will exhibit the approach of sociocriticism to the novel *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0*, written by the French Canadian writer Maurice G. Dantec. More specifically, this study will demonstrate that the world representation put forth by the author of this novel relies upon

a catastrophic and apocalyptic “ideological unthought” (Bozzetto) which aims to criticize, if not warn, contemporary occidental society. Additionally, this investigation will establish the particularities offered by and specific to the science fiction genre within the context of sociocriticism. In order to carry out the proposed analysis, this essay will explore the notion of the social imaginary (*imaginaire social*), as defined by Pierre Popovic, which in the novel is characterized by the events of September 11th, 2001. This concept shall serve as a framework with which the protagonist in the first part of the novel will be studied; in order to do so, this study will explore how the plot appropriates and exacerbates the idea of an imminent social and global apocalypse. Moreover, the concept of cultural subject (*sujet culturel*), as developed by Edmond Cros, will be utilized to emphasize the “ideological unthought” in Dantec's novel, which seems to indicate that, with the idea of social imaginary in mind, the murderer at the end of the novel is a metaphor for the *malaise* present in a culture that fosters nihilism.

- 2 Before analyzing the text in question, a brief summary of the plot is necessary: *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0* is a work of science fiction literature, where philosophical ruminations and characteristics of dark thrillers come together and redefine the limits of the genre. Separated into three parts, the book tells three different stories which appear seemingly disconnected at first glance. The first story, entitled *Towards the North Sky* (“*Vers le nord du ciel*”), recounts first-hand the attacks from September 11th, 2001 against the World Trade Center, from the eyes of a humanoid alien character, who is entrapped in the South tower and ends up saving a young girl during his escape. This character is portrayed as a sort of post-human; he describes himself as being the future of an improved human race. Chased by “men in black”, the protagonist is followed from New York to Northern Quebec where his civilization's mothership awaits him. In the end, only the girl, whom he saved at the beginning, survives, while the alien is caught in the crossfires of his assailants (the “men in black”). The alien protagonist's subsequent resuscitation in a hospital room, and not in a galaxy far, far away, is indicative of his failure. The second part of the book, *Artefact*, ambiguously describes the thoughts of a writer and amnesiac who wakes up in a white room, located in Italy, reminiscent of the hospitalized extra-terrestrial in

the previous story. In fact, the latter represents the body into which the present amnesiac character is reborn. A strange typewriter that types out the life of this writer character, a stranger to himself, serves as a pretext which present the reader with reflections, bringing to mind the works of Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot. These contemplations conclude with certain theological considerations originally developed by Grégoire de Nysse. The intertextual reference to *The Naked Lunch* by William Burroughs – through the image of the typewriter among other indications – constitutes another point of interrogation, characteristic of this part of the book, and distances the story from traditional plot structures by breaking the more conventional, continuous narrative form. The third and final part of the book is called *This Prince's World* (“*Le Monde de ce Prince*”). This title recalls the words of Jesus Christ concerning the devil: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John, 12, 31). This story describes the actions of a Satanist serial killer who refers to the devil as “his brother”. A sort of modern-day Nero who sets fire to a section of the city of Montreal, this character makes the world a macabre playground for his ghastly schemes by letting loose a bacterial pandemic. He does this on camera, for millions to see, including fanatical Internet users who visit his website: welcometohell.world. The novelistic form challenges its content: it is difficult to determine if this psychopath is indeed an avatar of the protagonists of the first two stories in the novel or if he is simply another character who illustrates the anxieties and threats of our contemporary society. One thing is certain: the final apocalypse in the book, whether real or fantasized (the text leaves the reader with doubt as to its legitimacy), is evocative of the one described in the first story (September 11th, 2001).

The social imaginary of a certain September 11th

- 3 As indicated by Francesca Lovece, the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 have since resonated in works of various authors by way of “historization mechanisms of the present”. This concept surfaces through/for the construction of a specific social imaginary:

Le 11 septembre 2001 est un nœud narratif particulièrement significatif et témoigne d'une spécificité de la narration policière. (...). Le 11 septembre devient alors un sujet d'élection pour révéler et reproduire les mécanismes d'historisation du présent et leur rapport aux moyens de communication. (...). Dans *Villa Vortex* les paysages présentistes sont intégrés et absorbés à l'intérieur d'un système fictionnel aux limites de la science fiction [sic], qui répond à la fictionnalité du présent par une surcharge de fictionnalité³ (Lovece, 2011, p. 13).

- 4 Prior to the publication of *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0* in 2007, Dantec had already explored themes related to the 11th of September in his book *Villa Vortex* (2003). To quote Lovece, September 11th, 2001 as “a significant narrative knot” serves as a way of linking fiction with reality, thus creating a social imaginary characteristic/representative of the 21st century. Furthermore, this notion of the social imaginary, important in sociocriticism, is developed by Pierre Popovic in his book *Imaginaire social et folie littéraire. Le second Empire de Paulin Gagne*:

L'imaginaire social est composé d'ensembles interactifs de représentations corrélées, organisées en fictions latentes, sans cesse recomposées par des propos, des textes, des chromos et des images, des discours ou des œuvres d'art. Par exemple, le bonapartisme et le positivisme forment deux de ces ensembles dans l'imaginaire social du second Empire, et les deux fictions qui les structurent ont plus d'un point commun⁴ (Popovic, 2008, p. 24).

- 5 With this perspective in mind, literature itself appears inevitably attached to this imaginary and to its formation process. Popovic explains: “Ce qui est appelé par convention ‘littérature’ est ce qui résulte d'une formalisation problématique de l'imaginaire social, aussi bien sur le plan du système générique que sur le plan des textes⁵” (Popovic, 2008, p. 28). The occidental social imaginary, especially that of America, is inseparable from the events of September 11th, 2001. The terrorist attacks that took place on this day demonstrate, “les cinq modes majeurs de sémiotisation de la réalité⁶” (Popovic, 2008, p. 26), which Popovic defines as being at the source of any social imaginary. He would understand this as a narrative mode/*une narrativité*

(for example, stories of heroes who saved innocent lives in burning buildings, like the firefighters who were present on the day of the attacks): a poetic mode/*une poéticité* (the good versus evil metaphor, used by George W. Bush, the American president in power at the time); cognitive analysis/*des régimes cognitifs* (the plethora of essays written in the fields of sociology, psychology, etc., in an effort to scientifically understand the events in question and their aftermath); an iconicity/*une iconicité* (all heroic symbols and icons created in films and comic books *post* September 11th); a theatricality/*une théâtralité* (for example, images of planes hitting the two towers, replaying on television screens all over the world). Throughout the years, this traumatic event has inspired the apparition of several literary texts, some of which proclaim the end of a world (of an era) and some of which proclaim the end of the world itself, as is the case with certain alarmists like Dantec and his novel *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0*. In this way, Dantec writes, in one of his polemic publications: “Ce qui surgit des décombres du World Trade Center n’est plus tout à fait l’histoire telle que nous l’avions connue avant, jusqu’à son apoxie⁷” (Dantec, 2009, p. 128). He adds that: “Il y aura bien un affrontement décisif et cataclysmique entre civilisations⁸” (Dantec, 2009, p. 129), a statement with which, conceptually, someone like Edward W. Saïd would obviously not agree with⁹.

- 6 The first part of *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0* displays certain elements of Popovic’s idea of “reality-semiotization”, already introduced, which, according to him, form the basis of any social imaginary. These elements are played with and extrapolated in a hyperbolic, even distorted, manner, as a result of the novel’s science fictional context. This reciprocity between the social imaginary substance and its literary portrayal depends on a particular technique which introduces a third dimension to the second, in other words a literary *estrangement*, characteristic of the science fiction genre. Darko Suvin suggests: “Science fiction is (...) a literary genre whose most necessary and sufficient conditions include the interaction between *estrangement* and knowledge, and whose main structure is contained within an imaginary different from the authors’ empirical world” (Suvin, 1977, p. 15). The science fictional representation of reality does not, meanwhile, distance itself from reality nor does it stray away from its social imaginary, like some may be tempted to think. This is

because the *strange elements* which characterize the genre (aliens, advanced technology, etc.) often serve in criticizing the world, society, thus playing a role in the construction of the resulting social imaginary. In this light, when it comes to science fictional representation, one must be wary in categorizing strange gadgets or monsters as insignificant; it is usually through these subtle objects and characters that the novel will underline and bring into question certain aspects of society or humanity.

- 7 Through the “narrative mode” mentioned by Popovic, and in illustration of the mentioned concepts, the hero from the first part of the novel who saves the young girl who is prisoner in the South tower on the 91st floor can be directly compared to the New York firefighters who risked their lives on September 11th. Yet, through use of estrangement in this example and as defined by Suvin, this hero is an alien and not a human. This choice in representation reverses the archetype constructed by H.G. Wells in *War of the Worlds*, in which Wells portrays the invader and not the hero as being an extraterrestrial, and thus framing our social imaginary differently. Furthermore, while science fiction from the 1950s, marked by McCarthyism, aimed at representing communism through reference to alien invasions – both symbolically associated with the colour red – Dantec uses a different technique, one in which the alien character is good and, most important, acts as the main narrator, giving to his voice authority and veracity. This is done in order to emphasize a growing and important aspect of the 21st century social imaginary, marked by the attacks on September 11th, namely a historical paradigm shift tinged by an apocalyptic vision of the world. As such, and as mentioned before, Dantec's idea (opposed to Saïd's view), which predicts a “decisive and cataclysmic confrontation between civilizations”, would lead one to believe that, in his novel, the anticipated invader is the terrorist. The main storyline, however, presents this problem differently, obliterating all conventional Manichean logic. The main invader is neither the alien nor the jihadists (at least not only), but someone else within our own civilization.
- 8 The alien in *Artefact. Machines à Écrire 1.0* is not represented as being of a scary, monstrous or slimy nature as would normally be the case in other more traditional forms of science fiction. Ben Laden's jihadists are the invaders in the novel, and they are portrayed as being

completely *human, all too human* (to paraphrase Nietzsche). With regard to the alien's discourse, he communicates himself with a distinctive narrative authority, in part related with his superhuman qualities (telepathy, night vision, etc.) that go beyond traditional human heroic traits. These qualities render this character superior, in wisdom and physicality, to any human being. This hero even remarks, at one point, that he was able to foresee the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center ahead of time, using a technology developed by his civilization: "Je connaissais tant de choses sur tous ces événements que j'avais pu observer sur la télévision du futur¹⁰" (Dantec, 2010, p. 29). This vision of a world in chaos, in apocalypse, is communicated to the reader by the alien's fatalistic vision which acts as the voice of truth and authority throughout the story. This is done so as to give credibility to a recurring idea that paces the text and acts as an echo of the social rumor *post* September 2001: that of the end of a/the world. This idea is made obvious in several passages: "Le XXI^e siècle vient de commencer¹¹" [talking about the terrorist attacks (Dantec, 2010, p. 26)], "On ne rate pas un rendez-vous avec la fin d'une civilisation planétaire¹²" [still talking about the same events (Dantec, 2010, p. 146)], "Nous partirons juste au moment où ce monde commencera pour de bon à se désintégrer¹³" (Dantec, 2010, p. 146). These are just some examples. This pessimistic and alarmist narrative go hand in hand with the idea of a global, apocalyptic war : "La "guerre" elle-même changeait fondamentalement de nature : de mondiale elle devenait globale¹⁴" (Dantec, 2010, p. 114) and "La guerre-globe allait ainsi devenir la sphère cognitive de toute l'humanité¹⁵" (Dantec, 2010, p. 115), and demonstrate this relationship. Therefore, through fatalist exaggeration in response to a real-life traumatic event, the discourse employed by the alien both shape and represent part of the social imaginary of September 11th. In the process, the "ideological unthought" (Bozzetto) typical of the author's ideas is revealed (philosophical conservatism mixed with religious undertones¹⁶): an "unthought" that recalls the voices of those *reactionaries* who made themselves heard at the beginning of this troubled 21st century. In other words, literature gives a voice to all of those who participate in the creation of any given social imaginary, even if it means being told through ideas which contradicts our own (if we don't agree with Dantec...) or through the eyes of something as foreign to it as a fictional alien.

This cultural subject of decadence

- 9 In Dantec's fictional world, these crumbling World Trade Center towers allegorize the decline of the West, doomed to implosion and destruction, *credo* of a particular form of philosophical conservatism. As Oswald Spengler puts it, this outlook diagnoses and criticizes the decadence of Western Society and foresees total ruin as being the inevitable outcome to which it is doomed. We must therefore take note of this "ideological unthought" to understand that *Artefact. Machines à écrire 1.0* cannot be considered as the complete image of the social imaginary left behind by September 11th (as this is not the role of literature), but rather as a reflection that frames this imaginary within the context of a specific ideological, if not theological, axis. Further, other literary or intellectual voices would obviously have to be considered to grasp the whole image of this imaginary as Edward W. Saïd, for example, who took part in the debate on the event of September 11th. However, this being the case, Dantec does manage to accurately and holistically represent a feeling of collective anxiety which emerged as a result of this tragic event. To better understand his representation, the analysis of another key character, that of the serial killer featured in the last part of the novel, is necessary, seeing as it is he who poses a major terrorist threat to society. This antagonist thus thwarts the ideological and simplistic scapegoat logic that is apparent in the discourse of the extraterrestrial character in the first story.
- 10 As mentioned before, the psychopath killer calls himself the devil's ally (he calls the latter his brother), and his *modus operandi* is to upload his tortures, murders and planetary bacteriological contaminations online, thus exploiting in a twisted way what Guy Debord calls the *société du spectacle*, as a means of societal destruction. More than any other, this protagonist incarnates, in its being, the ugliness and slag of its civilization, which is presented as being on the decline (excessive voyeurism, obsession for sensationalism, televisual objectification of human beings, etc.). The notion of cultural subject, developed by Edmond Cros, provides insight into understanding why the killer goes beyond his own self and acts on a social level:

Le sujet ne s'identifie pas au modèle culturel, c'est au contraire ce modèle culturel qui le fait advenir comme sujet. L'agent de l'identification est la culture et non le sujet. Le sujet en effet n'a d'autre issue que de s'identifier de plus en plus aux différents tenants-lieu qui le présentent dans son discours¹⁷ (Cros, 2009, p. 117).

- 11 Although the notion of the “cultural subject” is not limited to this passage, it helps to understand the depth of the killer's character, who appears in the novel as being a pure product of his culture, and what's more, as the vector for its disaster. Through him, the history of the 21st century is visible as is formulated by many intellectuals on the subject of decadence, mentioned above. Through this protagonist, Dantec seeks to communicate to his reader that we are all, in a gregarious way, responsible for social destruction; society itself is degraded to the point of giving birth, by way of its toxic culture, to such a horrific Satanic individual who many glorify. In other words, on an allegorical level, this character exemplifies the *société du spectacle* (“Toute la vie des sociétés dans lesquelles règnent les conditions modernes de production s'annonce comme une immense accumulation de spectacles¹⁸” [Debord, 2001, p. 15]) in a time of nihilistic “hyper-reality”, formulated by Baudrillard (“Implosion du sens dans les média. Implosion du social dans la masse¹⁹” [Baudrillard, 2002, p. 230]).
- 12 In the same manner, Cros' assertion that “the cultural model gives way to the subject” (and not the other way around) resonates in two complementary ways in the novel. On the one hand, the psychopathic killer is not unrelated to history and its continuum; something that the novel attempts to highlight when the character ends up accomplishing, in the future, what was initially announced by the horrors of September 11th (first part of the book). Consequently, the plot plays a role in painting the social imaginary in a particularly catastrophic colour. To understand it, one must recall the prophetic words of the extraterrestrial narrator:

Puis le cercle de l'enfer s'élargira. Des populations entières seront consumées. Des nations seront rayées de la carte. Des villes disparaîtront en une colonne de feu et de fumée ardente, comme des millions de World Trade Center réunis, des régions entières du globe seront dévastées, le reste ne sera guère épargné²⁰ (Dantec, 2010, p. 150).

- 13 This hellish metaphor which refers to Dante's *Inferno* – iterative from beginning to end of the plot – perpetuates, in a surprising way, the goals of Al-Qaeda, but through the acts of an authentic westerner (serial killer). Ironically, the killer's first important destructive act is to ignite Montreal in flames, mimicking the New York tragedy. His final goal is to decimate the entire globe by spreading a deadly virus, all while broadcasting his malicious and sinister acts on his website: *welcometohell.world*. However, regarding language and psychology, what “brings the discourse of this killer to the present” (to use Cross' expression) is an astonishing phrase that he repeats as a leitmotiv at several moments in time, after committing heinous crimes on camera: “The world is a party! Life is a game!” On this subject, he explains himself as follows: “Car la vie est un jeu, n'est-ce pas ? Le monde est une fête ! Je l'ai lu récemment dans un exemplaire du *Cité-Hype Montréal*, une de ces pittoresques animations culturelles sur papier journal que nous offre la modernité à un rythme hebdomadaire. Alors : *Let's play!*”²¹ (Dantec, 2010, p. 306). These provocative phrases must be read and understood as ideologemes, a concept that Ruth Amossy summarizes as follows: “Maxime sous-jacente au développement argumentatif d'un énoncé, l'idéologème s'incarne aussi dans des formules figées, proches des stéréotypes”²² (Amossy, 1997, p. 65). The irony, even the sarcasm, of these *ideologemes* in the novel is intended to criticize contemporary hedonism, another face and name responsible for current social decadence, according to the author's conception of things. From this angle, the killer becomes more than just a plot character – he becomes the “spokesperson”, the *cultural subject of decadence* of an entire society that alienates him by arousing his destructive impulses. Therefore, a simplistic and ideological reading of reality is foiled, giving substance otherwise to the social imaginary of September 11th. Therefore, if ever the idea of a “clash of civilizations” were valid or not, both sides of the ideological spectrum would be, in a way, held responsible in the coming apocalypse.

Conclusion

- 14 In conclusion, by way of this analysis, the representation of the future in *Artefact. Machines à écrire 1.0* is inhabited by an apocalyptic and alarmist “ideological unthought”, which is used to describe the beginning of the 21st century and its multiple issues. Through this demon-

stration, it has also been proved to what extent science fiction lends itself to sociocriticism: indeed, history, as a tool for projecting future events, is to be understood in relation to the present and can help the reader go beyond fiction and understand the world around him. To demonstrate all of this, on one hand and in the light of Popovic's concept of "social imaginary", this study explored the particularities of September 11th as a backdrop to Dantec's novel. This moment in history appears as being more than just an important date because it conjures a set of representations in which science fiction – located halfway between the principles of *mimesis* (a concept linked to Auerbach) and of estrangement (theorized by Suvin to describe the genre) – problematizes our own ways of apprehending and representing historical events and facts. The extraterrestrial of the novel's first part is not merely an entertaining plot element (as usually is the case in pulp magazines). In fact, he reveals, to the attentive reader, something about his (our) world and its historical evolution. Moreover, the present article proved that literary representation and its "ideological unthought" were subtly dependant on an apocalyptic vision of future decadence, as illustrated in Dantec's world. This is what the analysis of the second character – the serial killer – has revealed, in connection to the notion of "cultural subject" as formulated by Edmond Cros. In conclusion, we should not believe that Dantec's portrayal and conception of September 11th presents a complete image of the social imaginary/situation associated with this subject. We must not forget that, among other things, such a concept is not limited to one author's representation of the world (even though its representative of many, like him). Literature is thus not alone in the constitution of such an imaginary. Instead, literature is a piece of a much larger puzzle, whose image – that of September 11th and its aftermath, in this case – is to be completed by other elements of analysis, key in understanding our reality. In any case, one thing is certain and worth worrying about: the once majestic, strong towers have disappeared from our once complete jigsaw puzzle.

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NOTES

1 Original: "Ainsi la sociocritique (...) se donne comme objectif de mettre à jour les modalités qui gèrent l'incorporation de l'histoire dans les structures textuelles" (Cros, 2003, p. 13).

2 Original: "(...) les textes de science-fiction offrent aussi au lecteur subtil, outre le plaisir de la découverte, la possibilité de s'interroger sur les virtualités et les limites de l'imaginaire social de son époque, et de questionner l'impensé idéologique qui sous-tend cet imaginaire" (Bozzetto, 2007, p. 14).

3 Translation: "September 11th, 2001 is a significant narrative knot that plays a very specific role within the police/crime genre (...). The 11th of September becomes henceforth an effective tool in the revelation and reproduction of historization mechanisms of the present and their relationship to various means of communication. (...). In *Villa Vortex*, the presentist landscapes are integrated and absorb themselves into a fictional system at the limits of the science fiction genre, which in turn responds to the fictitious nature of the present by an overpowering of fiction over reality" (Lovece, 2011, p. 13).

4 Translation: "The social imaginary is composed of interactive elements of correlated representations, organized in latent fictions, constantly re-composed by various purposes, texts, chromos and images, discourses or works of art. For example, bonapartism and positivism form two important components that make up the social imaginary of the Second Empire, and the two narratives that structure them have more than one trait in common" (Popovic, 2008, p. 24).

5 Translation: "What is normally classified as 'literature' is that which results from a formalization of the social imaginary, not only on a generic level but also in regard to the text itself" (Popovic, 2008, p. 28).

6 Translation: "The five major methods of reality-semiotization" (Popovic, 2008, p. 26).

7 Translation: "What comes from the remains of the World Trade Center is no longer History as we knew it before, up to its *apoxie*" (Dantec, 2009, p. 128).

8 Translation: "A decisive and cataclysmic confrontation between civilizations is sure to arise" (Dantec, 2009, p. 129).

9 Saïd's arguments against the idea of a "clash of civilizations" are exposed in his introduction to his book *Orientalism* (Edward W. Saïd, *Orientalism*, New York, Penguin Classics, 2003).

10 Translation: "I knew so much about all of these events that I had observed on the television of the future" (Dantec, 2010, p. 29).

11 Translation: "The 21st century had just begun" (Dantec, 2010, p. 26).

12 Translation: "One does not miss his date with the end of a planetary civilization" (Dantec 2010, p. 146).

13 Translation: "We will leave right when this world starts to disintegrate for good" (Dantec, 2010, p. 146).

14 Translation: "War itself had fundamentally changed: from worldwide it became global" (Dantec, 2010, p. 114).

15 Translation: "The global-war would thus become the cognitive sphere of all of humanity" (Dantec, 2010, p. 115).

16 Maurice G. Dantec is a self-proclaimed « catholic of the future ». Born in France in 1959, he eventually moved to the province of Quebec (Canada) in 1998 and converted to Catholicism around the year 2000. His opinions and

political views are generally those of the right-wing traditionalists, not to say the far-right sometimes.

17 Translation: "The subject does not identify with the cultural model; on the contrary, it is this cultural model that gives way to it as a subject. The agent of identification is the culture and not the subject. Indeed, the subject has no other way than to identify more and more with the different tenants who brings it to the present in his discourse" (Cros, 2009, p. 117).

18 Translation: "The whole life of societies in which the modern conditions of production reign is announced as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*" (Debord, 2001, p. 15).

19 Translation: "Implosion of meaning in the media. Implosion of the social sphere in the mass" (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 230).

20 Translation: "Then the circle of hell will widen. Whole populations will be consumed. Nations will be wiped off the map. Cities will disappear in a column of fire and fiery smoke, as millions of World Trade Centers together, whole regions of the globe will be devastated, few will be spared" (Dantec, 2010, p. 150).

21 Translation: "Because life is a game, isn't it true? The world is a party! I recently read in a copy of *Cité-Hype Montréal*, one of those cheap cultural events on newsprint that modernity offers us at a weekly pace. So *let's play!*" (Dantec, 2010, p. 306).

22 Translation: "A maxim underlying the argumentative development of a statement, the ideologeme is also embodied in fixed formulas, close to stereotypes" (Amossy, 1997, p. 65).

ABSTRACTS

English

The novels of Maurice G. Dantec tackle the political, historical and philosophical issues of the contemporary world and those of the future. Sociocriticism helps unveil the mechanisms at work within the science fiction genre. *Artefact. Machines à écrire 1.0* explores the "social imaginary" (as theorized by Popovic) of 9/11 with the help of the notion of "estrangement" conceptualized by Suvin. This deeply pessimistic novel reveals a decadent "cultural subject" (Cros) as the source of the twenty-first century crisis.

Français

Les récits de Maurice G. Dantec pensent les enjeux politiques, historiques et philosophiques d'aujourd'hui et de demain. La sociocritique permet de mieux mettre en lumière ces derniers dans son œuvre, tout en dévoilant la mécanique de la science-fiction en général. Son roman *Artefact. Machines à écrire 1.0* propose en effet, par une mécanique de la distanciation (Suvin), un imaginaire social (Popovic) du 11 septembre, dont le catastrophisme révèle qu'à la source du XXI^e siècle en crise, il y a un sujet culturel (Cros) de la décadence.

Español

Las historias de Maurice G. Dantec reflejan los problemas políticos, históricos y filosóficos de hoy y mañana. La sociocrítica permite resaltarlos mejor en su obra, a la vez que desvela la mecánica de la ciencia ficción en general. Su novela *Artefact. Machines à écrire 1.0* propone, mediante un “distanciamiento” específico del género (conceptualizado por Suvin), un “imaginario social” (teorizado por Popovic) del 11 de septiembre, cuyo catastrofismo revela que en el origen de la crisis del siglo XXI hay un “sujeto cultural” (noción formulada por Cros) de la decadencia.

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Mots-clés

science-fiction, sociocritique, sujet culturel, imaginaire social, Maurice G. Dantec

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