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Four Québécois Dystopias, 1963-1972*

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In Québec, the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s and early 1970s is considered by almost all historians as a period of important social change and "progress" (v. Linteau *et al*.). By contrast, the Québécois SF literature of this era is often very dystopian in character: texts which portray a world where progress and technological development seem inherently harmful and dangerous and, thus, to be proscribed. This strange synchrony of social progress and SF pessimism has been discussed elsewhere in the pages of SFS: when speaking of American SF written during the 1960s, for example, Gérard Klein has noted: "…being an economist, I am surprised by the coincidence of doubt and pessimism in SF with a period of economic growth…which has no precedent in the whole history of the capitalist world…" (SFS 4:4, #11, March 1977). And, as Bradford Lyau has shown for the 1950s in France (SFS 16:277-97, #49, November 1989), a certain "technocratic anxiety" seemed to permeate the SF novels of the Fleuve Noir collection at a time when that country, rebuilding after the war, was making rapid strides to modernize its economic base. It is this apparent paradox that I wish to investigate by examining four "futuristic" SF works from Québec published during the years 1963-1972: the 1963 novel for adolescents by Suzanne Martel called *Surréal 3000* (a reprint of *Quatre Montréalais en l'an 3000* [Four Montréalers in the Year 3000]), the play *Api 2967* (1966) by Robert Gurik, the 1967 novel by Jean Tétreau entitled *Les Nomades* [The Nomads], and the novel *Les Tours de Babylone* [The Towers of Babylon] (subtitled "roman d'anticipation") published in 1972 by Maurice Gagnon.

Québec's Quiet Revolution began with the political victory in 1960 by the Liberal party over the long-incumbent clerical and conservative government of Maurice Duplessis. A vast array of political and social reforms were promptly initiated. New ministries and new organizations were created. The French-speaking technocratic middle class gained increased political power and presented a united front against the social and economic domination of the English-speaking minority. A sharp rise in Québécois nationalism—more

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assertive, stripped of its passéist and religious dimension, and oriented towards change and contestation—gave birth to several sovereignist movements like the Parti Québécois. Counter-culture, feminist, and ecologist movements flourished. It was a period of increased urbanization and modernization; the construction of great hydroelectric dams and the nationalization of the electricity company became symbols of a new Québécois pride. Reminiscent of post-war France, there was an increased rapprochement between the Québec government and the scientific community as the government, despite opposition from some quarters, began to hire thousands of technocrats, researchers, economists, and engineers who would help it to bring about its reforms. The part played by science and technology in the new economy increased steadily: as one education analyst summed it up, "…au coeur du problème, à l'origine du dynamisme créateur de l'économie moderne: la recherche scientifique" [at its very heart, at the origin of this creative dynamism toward a modern economy: scientific research] (Duchesne, 74). Québec began to feel capable, at last, of taking hold of its own destiny: "*Québec sait faire*" [Québec can do] became the slogan of the day. And, despite the continuing presence of a certain conservativism and recurrent moments of ideological dissension, the widespread social affirmation of this new Québécois identity reflected an optimistic confidence in the future.

Sociologist Guy Rocher in his work *Le Québec en mutation* (1973) has pointed out that, before the 1960s, the predominantly rural and Catholic province of Québec remained a "univers clos" [closed universe] solidly linked to the past (45) and was characterized primarily by its insular and conservative immobility. The Quiet Revolution gave the Québécois a new vision of their future and prompted a frenetic desire to "catch up." Values changed: the traditional defining parameters of family, work, and religion became secondary. Customs become more liberal and the Church was no longer unquestioningly accepted as the only moral authority, resulting in a general secularization of the Québécois mentality. The "Belle Province" was now opened to foreign influences, particularly to the French and the American. And, in the words of Rocher, the new prevailing attitude in Québec reflected "une valorisation de tout ce qui est mutation…" [a valorization of all that is change] (25).

Given this social context, it is somewhat surprising to discover that a large number of Québécois literary works which may be linked to the SF tradition that were written during this period are largely dystopian in nature. I say "which may be linked to the SF tradition" because, as Jean-Marc Gouanvic aptly points out in his "Rational Speculations in French Canada, 1839-1974" (SFS 15:71-81, #44, March 1988), true Québécois SF—identified and recognized as such—did not emerge in Québec until somewhat later, until a "virtually complete system of 'literary communication'" (i.e., SF conferences, journals, fanzines, annual prizes, publisher editions, and other "editorial structures") evolved there during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and lifted writers of SF to the ranks of "professional" authors. Prior to this time, neither

SF nor dystopias were recognized as separate literary genres, distinct from "mainstream" Québécois literature. But there was a wide variety of works from the early part of the century (cited by Gouanvic in the above-mentioned article) which can be viewed as rational speculations of this sort and constitute what might be reasonably called a "pre-history" of Québécois SF.

In this context, it is possible to identify several Québécois works written before the 1960s as early dystopias—defined generally as a representation of "des sociétés idéalisées négativement" [societies negatively idealized] (Bouchard *et al.*, 191). For example, consider Ulrich Barthe's 1916 tale of the invasion of Québec by the Prussians in *Similia Similibus, ou La Guerre au Canada* [Similia Similibus, or The War in Canada], Ubald Paquin's 1925 *La Cité dans les fers* [The City in Shackles]—a separatist story of a new Laurentian Republic taken over by the English—and Emmanuel Desrosiers' apocalyptic *La Fin de la Terre* [The End of the Earth] of 1931. But it is especially interesting to note that, from the early 1930s to the early 1960s, one finds virtually no evidence of a Québécois dystopia—only works with a distinctly utopian bent like *Eutopia* by Jean Berthos in 1946 and the innovative *Défricheur de Hammada* [The Pioneer of Hammada] published in 1952 by Guy-René de Plour (v. Gouanvic, 1988, 74-75). Then, during the years of Québec's Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and early 1970s, several Québécois dystopias suddenly appeared in the literary market-place.

Each of the dystopias analyzed here has won a certain amount of recognition: they are all quoted in the *Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires du Québec* [Dictionary of Literary Works of Québec] (1984, 1987) and they have all been discussed in SF criticism published both in Canadian periodicals and in foreign journals. Martel's *Surréal 3000* received the Prix de l'ACELF (Canadian Association of Francophone Writers) and has been reprinted several times; it has been translated into English and into Japanese and has been used as teaching material. Gurik's play *Api 2967* has been performed in Québec and abroad, and it also has been translated into English (*Api or not Api*). And although Tétreau's novel *Les Nomades* did not attract much critical attention, Gagnon's *Les Tours de Babylone* has received a great deal, including the Prix de l'Actuelle.

Surréal 3000 is the oldest of the four works. It is the only one which refers explicitly to Québec since it alludes to Montréal (Surréal), to the Saint Lawrence River (Laurania village), and to English (the language of the people of Laurania village). It is also the work which expresses perhaps the most clearly certain Québécois ambivalences during the early 1960s toward technology, the urban space, the past, and traditional values.

The story is simple: created after an ancient Catastrophe, Surréal is a magnificent, automated underground city. Four children manage to sneak out of the city thanks to a secret passage, and they discover the appealing non-mechanical rural world of "Air Libre" [Free Space]. At the conclusion of the novel, the peoples of both Surréal and Air Libre hope to work together and bring about a rapprochement between their two societies.

In *Surréal 3000*, the scientific advances linked to energy production play a predominant role in the plot structure. *Surréal 3000*'s publication is contemporary with the construction of the great hydroelectric dams in Québec, and unlimited electric energy, central to the plot of the novel, is provided by a "Premier Moteur" ["First Engine"][1] that is extremely powerful and carefully maintained by Surréal engineers, technicians, and scientists. The technological applications which derive from this First Engine constitute real social power, both positive and negative: e.g., it assures the public's convenience and welfare, but it is also serves as a means to control society. The Premier Moteur is the "heart" of this underground metropolis and animates the entire life of the city: transportation systems, lighting, heating, information exchange, etc. It even helps to regulate the population's social life: for example, a "coupe-jour" [day cutter] and a sleep-inducing gas given to all city inhabitants dictate their waking and sleeping hours; electronic supervision is constant; and hygiene, food, and leisure activities are strictly managed. But the inhabitants of Surréal accept these restrictions for the sake of the common good, and they admire their city's technical accomplishments. The young heroes are as proud of their city as patriots would be of their homeland (53). Founded on traditional values, the society of Surréal is not severely dehumanized by this technological power, as is often the case in other dystopian novels: the inhabitants of Surréal love games and sports; friendship, the sense of duty, and tenderness in the family are preserved; and the social organization as a whole seems well-accepted by the populace.

But it is a predominantly materialistic world where God cannot be fully replaced by the Premier Moteur, a sanitized world cut off from Nature, a closed world which is unable to satisfy the human need for exploration, risk, freedom, or a search for otherness and spirituality.

The world of Air Libre, by contrast, is one of Nature, space, light, and God. But it is a primitive world of the past. Conventional science and technology lost during the Catastrophe play no role here—only the "parallel sciences" like the telepathy of a little girl (explained by a mutation) who attracts the young heroes into the land of Air Libre, and their own intuition which leads them to its discovery. The inhabitants of Air Libre live in tribes and struggle to survive by hunting and fishing; they reside in crude villages such as Laurania and have a "patriarch" as chief; they believe in God, and their daily life is focussed on their faith; they experience disease and death as everyday occurrences; and they speak an ancient language, English, the tongue that the Surréalais teenagers learn at school in their prehistory class.[2]

With its rather ambiguous vision of the social consequences of technical progress, *Surréal 3000* evokes the diverging tendencies of the Quiet Revolution during its earliest years: the vague feelings of alienation which coexisted with the (still fragile) affirmation of the new Québécois identity; the veneration of the past confronting the "défi du progrès" [challenge of progress] (Monière, 330); the sudden questioning of the traditional domination of the Church in matters of morality and institutions; the hunger for social improve-

ment mixed with a nostalgia for "the way things were." In *Surréal 3000*, as in Québécois society of the 1960s, one witnesses an expression of this newfound desire—albeit full of contradictions and ambivalences —to split with the old world and to build a new and better one.

The play *Api 2967* is very different in content and tone; of the works discussed here, it the closest to the classic dystopia in its portrayal of a repressive society with almost no way out. The basic plot is as follows: Professor A (for Adam) and his assistant E (for Eve) live in a motionless world stringently controlled by an omnipresent TV "Announcer" and where human longevity has been increased by severely limiting each citizen's physical mobility. During their research into the language and behavior of a disappeared civilization, A and E come to taste the "Api" (apple) and suddenly discover a new and wonderful reality. But, no longer completely passive and immobile, they soon die as a result of their discovery.

Api 2967 goes much further than *Surréal 3000* in its overt criticism of a world ruled by technology, and its condemnation of the dehumanizing effects of applied science is clear indeed. Universalized television and computerization allow for the total control of the population, and the daily lives of the people are strictly regulated. But, as in *Surréal 3000*, this repression is wholly accepted since this forced limitation on physical mobility leads to an increased life span, acknowledged as a supreme good. Due to sustained scientific research on human longevity, an invididual in this society can now live 271 years "grâce au nouveau rationnement des déplacements et de la parole" [thanks to the new rationing of movement and speech] (41). Human life—totally devoid of sexuality, pleasure, love, or even contact with others—had become nothing more than, as one of the protagonists describes it, "une mort élonguée" [an extended death] (p. 53).

In *Api 2967*, Science is also shown as being incapable of giving access to reality. The scientific study of language is supposed to lead to the discovery of the secrets of an ancient civilization which knew words and a sexuality whose meanings were now forgotten. But the "conventional" sciences fail, and the teacher cannot manage to decode the words of the disappeared society: "tu perds ton temps, la vie est autre part" [you are wasting your time, life is elsewhere] E tells A (63). The new reality, emerging from the past, can be discovered only via other means: only the intuition of E combined with the almost magical act of eating the Api can open the way. For A and E, eating the apple leads to the rediscovery of sexuality and love and, thus, reinvests human activity with real value.

Even though this narrative is a simple derivation of the myth of Genesis, the author chooses to represent a mode of knowledge and transformation that is very different from the traditional, scientific one. It is the assistant who is the most receptive to this new ontological knowledge. She catches, deeply but imperfectly, the meaning of the words studied by the professor. She discovers "real" life and shares it with her companion. Her grasp of this other reality,

though incomplete, allows her to fight against the pressure of a social system personified by the Announcer. She is able to affirm, in a world of stillness, that "seuls les gestes comptent" [only gestures count] (82). And she freely accepts her death (which has now been accelerated) because she has truly lived. In the conclusion of *Api 2967*, the return to the repressive status quo is nearly total; but the main characters in the play, if only temporarily, have lived a more meaningful life and have encouraged others to taste the Api as well and to start moving again, evoking the future possibility of widespread social change.

Such a return to the negative status quo is typical of many dystopias, but one can nevertheless see a certain optimism in the conclusion of *Api 2967*— despite the fact that access to this new world is portrayed as something possible only via a quasi-magical act. And it is also noteworthy that, as in Québec for many years prior to the Quiet Revolution, it is once again the (non-scientific) past which is seen as the only viable path to an acceptable future. As a kind of nostalgic eulogy to the pre-technical age, *Api 2967* both sounds a warning against the possible dehumanizing effects of science on the quality of life—where the hegemony of technocratic power results in social paralysis—and shows that only a return to the ways of the past can give life real meaning.

Tétreau's novel *Les Nomades* expresses an even stronger denunciation of science and technology. Once again, the Earth succumbs to a dire Catastrophe which not only wipes out a scientific team on a space mission in orbit around the Moon, but also ultimately destroys all technology on Earth. The heroes of the story, Niels and Silvana, manage to adapt to this new world and set out to explore it (whence the novel's title). Despite the difficulties they face, Niels and Silvana grow to appreciate the nomadic life; they travel throughout the north of Italy, feeling only "le besoin de changement…le désir de partir vers d'autres horizons…de voir autre chose" [the need to change…the desire to go towards other horizons…to see something else] (211). The Catastrophe, having radically transformed the physiognomy of Earth and having created many mutations in the animal and plant life (136), constitutes for the heroes an opportunity to end with the past: "la fin de ce monde nous a libérés; la vie est belle" [the end of this world has made us free; life is beautiful] (127). Throughout their journey, Niels and Silvana also explore their own values and beliefs: at the outset, they refuse any "fixed elements" in their lives (207) and they reject all traditional values such as monogamy, faith in God, the desire to have children, or even the need to live in society. But, towards the end of the novel, Silvana returns to her "roots" (both geographically and ideologically), helps to rebuild a society based on the values of a pre-technological past, and devotes her life to her newborn child. And Niels tries to reach the Republic of Aoste—a social experiment built for "ceux qui n'ont pas perdu foi dans l'avenir de l'Homme" [those who have not lost faith in Man's future] (p. 210)—but is killed in an accident en route.

In *Les Nomades*, as in *Api 2967*, scientific knowledge and applied technology are portrayed as ultimately useless in coming to grips with the true reality of the world. The astronauts of *Les Nomades* put their trust only in hard facts and "des certitudes mathématiques" [mathematical certitudes] (71); their narrow positivism does not allow them to understand the true nature of the Catastrophe nor to control its effects—and almost all of them perish before they can return to Earth. The two who manage to survive soon die in the altered environment of their native planet. As a newspaper article found by the heroine explains: the Sciences (in particular, mathematics) "ne collent plus au réel" [do not correlate anymore with reality] (33). Thus, in contrast to its portrayal in *Surréal 3000*, the hypothesis of Science as a stepping-stone to harmonious relations among human beings and to a deeper understanding of the natural universe is totally rejected in *Les Nomades*. Once again, it is the pre-technical past which is valorized and which, alone, seems to offer the only workable blueprint for the future.

Further, and more than the other works discussed here, Tétreau's *Les Nomades* reflects a certain "tension vers l'altérité" [striving towards alterity] (v. Gouanvic 1982, 110). More than simple societal modification, *Les Nomades* asserts the need for fundamental change: a radical worldwide metamorphosis, a kind of planetary *tabula rasa*. The pro-science civilization and its values have to be destroyed. Although the new social project is not yet fully delineated, it nevertheless posits a world totally cleansed and renewed by the intervention of the Catastrophe: a world of mutation, movement, and liberation. In this respect, one might interpret *Les Nomades* in the context of its times in two very different (but contiguous) ways: as a dramatic illustration of the desire for positive change and "otherness" felt by many Québécois during the Quiet Revolution, and as a response to their feelings of disenchantment and alienation to the progressively technocratic character of their world.

Another interesting portrayal of a social organization based on science and technology can be found in Maurice Gagnon's *Les Tours de Babylone*, the most recent of these four Québec dystopias. In the ultra-modern city of Babylon, everything is powered by nuclear energy and regulated by computers—both of which are controlled by a political elite known as the "Sociétaires." In this city, religious beliefs are unknown, the physical well-being of the populace is assured, and sexual freedom is total. But rampant social repression undergirds the seemingly idyllic luxury of Babylon. Reminiscent of Orwell's *1984*, constant public surveillance is the rule, and all who deviate from the norm are "cured" in the CCP, the Center for Psychological Conditioning. The practice of eugenics is well-established: begun immediately after the Catastrophe (which, like in many of the other works discussed here, took place prior to the beginning of the novel) with the goal of eliminating mutants, the CCP now targets for death all those deemed "inferior" and detrimental to the "progress" of the city—e.g., the feeble and the elderly. In the hands of a few "affreux petits technocrates" [horrible little

technocrats] (174), science and technology have become the tool of choice for social subjugation and individual torture. In *Les Tours de Babylone*, science in the hands of a repressive political regime no longer serves the interests and the needs of the majority; its serves the minority in power.[3] The novel's rebel hero named Sévère successfully confronts the system, thwarts a political conspiracy aimed at him by the Sociétaires, allies himself with the outside "Barbarians," ultimately defeats Babylon's ruling class, and proposes a new utopian social project which is worldwide in scope.

In the conclusion of this novel, similar to what occurs at the end of *Surréal 3000*, a positive interaction develops between a technical with a non-technical society. Here, the Barbarians constitute the non-technical; outside the city walls, they represent mobility and freedom, in contrast to the pampered yet stagnant immobility of the totalitarian state of Babylon. These Barbarians form two distinct groups: those of Eastern Europe live in total anarchy. As described by the novel's hero Sévère, they are "sales, analphabètes… démunis…mais ils sont libres" [dirty, illiterate… impoverished…but they are free] (119). By contrast, the proud horsemen of the Khan are much more organized and, among their other achievements, they have learned how to preempt most of their enemy's conventional military technology in battles against the army of Babylon. And, unlike the other works discussed here, in *Les Tours de Babylone* a group from this non-technical world is shown to be ready and willing to use the advanced technology of the technical world—even if it is technology destined only for military use. That is to say, the portrayal of scientific technology in *Les Tours de Babylone* is not simply one-dimensional: it is presented as more than just the instrument for social repression. Technology is shown as having intrinsic value and, in the right hands, capable of worthy and humane applications. Accordingly, when the hero Sévère manages to annihilate his Babylonian enemies, he does all he can to protect the city's technology and to transfer it to the Barbarians, his new allies (184). The "turncoats" of Babylon (who remain supporters of Sévère throughout the struggle) and the Barbarians themselves soon learn how to live and work together; and plans for the building of a new utopian world order called the "Great Federation" are elaborated. This "Great Federation"proposed at the end of *Les Tours de Babylone*—founded on sharing and collaboration (but also quite centralizing and devoid of real concern for the real needs of other nations)—might be viewed as an idealized representation of a political structure considered by some Canadians as desirable. But it also seems to be inspired by much American SF of the 1960s and, perhaps as well, by an ideology which one scholar has called "l'universalisme humaniste" [humanist universalism] (Linteau, 619) and which was shared by many writers and intellectuals of this era.

Les Tours de Babylone underscores in a typically dystopian way (even more explicitly than the other Québécois dystopias of this time) the inherent danger in the convergence of political power and technology—a convergence

at the very heart of the Quiet Revolution during the 1960s—and the potential for widespread social repression if such scientific knowledge is abused. But, somewhat paradoxically, this novel also expresses a great faith in the dynamism of scientific progress and its capacity to improve society—a faith which was the subject of much social discourse during this period in Québec and in American SF. Further, *Les Tours de Babylone* (which is the most recent of the works discussed here) is also unique in that the protagonists do *not* seek to use the past as a defining blueprint for the future: they do *not* wish to return to an edenic yesteryear and they do *not* attempt to bring back the traditional value systems of the past. In this respect, Maurice Gagnon's novel constitutes an important new paradigm not only in the context of the earlier (and more atavistic?) dystopic works included in this survey, but also with regard to a certain image of Québec itself.

With their mixture of dystopian circularity and utopian appeal (i.e., negative or static portrayals of society, visions of a better world, ambivalences and contradictions about science and technology and respect for individual rights, nebulous yet generally optimistic conclusions), these four Québécois SF works of the 1960s and early 1970s might best be classified as "ambiguous dystopias" (similar to Ursula Le Guin's "ambiguous utopia" of *The Dispossessed*). That is to say, they seem very ambiguous both in terms of how one normally defines a classic dystopia (as compared, for instance, to an "anti-utopia")[4] and in terms of the commentary they offer on their times.

Sidestepping the narrative limitations of most "pure" dystopian and anti-utopian SF, these "ambiguous dystopias" seem to reflect both the "valorization of all that is change" (Rocher, 25) and the sense of profound ideological hesitation felt by many Québécois during this historical period. One of the greatest hesitations portrayed in these works—quite representative of the Québécois attitudes of the 1960s—is the choice between a non-technical, stable, and rural world animated by the belief in God (often, but not always, represented by a return to a pre-industrial past) and a highly technical and desacralised urban world. In similar fashion, science and technology are portrayed alternately as either leading to corruption and social repression or as a worthy means for creating prosperity and social well-being. During a period of important changes in the Québécois society, these texts seem to "hesitate" between new and old value systems, between present and past, between individual liberty and "collective rationality." Written in the context of a divided Canada, they try (albeit often ambiguously) to portray new alliances and new social projects. In a Québec emerging into modernity and striving towards self-assertion and liberation, the groups represented here demonstrate a recognition of social repression and a pride in becoming responsible for their own destiny. With the extensive representation of movement in these narratives—an almost aimless quest in a totally new world—coupled with their sketchily-defined "new" social projects at the conclusion of each plot, these works seem to express both the drive toward

radical change and a sense of ambiguity as to how a new social order might be concretely realized. The many social and technological changes taking place in Québec during the Quiet Revolution are not, themselves, evident in these works (except, perhaps, in *Surréal 3000*); but what is clearly represented are the many dynamic forces at work (the desires, the hopes, and the fears) at the roots of the gradual shaping of a new Québécois society.

In her seminal study on utopias ("Towards an Open-Ended Utopia," SFS 11:25-38, #32, March 1984), Bülent Somay distinguishes between the enclosed "fictive *utopian locus* which arose from the individual imagination of the author, who presented it to his or her audience in a finished, unchanging, form" and the "*utopian longing* which arose from the people's collective imagination" or what might be called the "*utopian horizon* of an age, which was in itself non-discursive, infinite, and open-ended" (25). The utopian social project is only a step; it is not the full realization of social desire, and it must not be confused with the larger "utopian horizon" which is always in motion, constantly renewing and redefining itself. The social project is always imperfect; but it can be modified, it can evolve. These four Québécois "ambiguous dystopias" represent, to some extent, the mobility of such desire itself. While they do not portray the mobility of a social project inscribed in reality and its possible evolution, they do suggest hope: a "beyond" (after the conclusion of the plot in each, as well as in the ambiguities of the narratives themselves) where other transformations can be realized. Even if viewed as products of escapism or a refusal of a certain kind of social change, these works seem, above all else, to call for real mutation—perhaps this "mutation of desire" discussed by Boris Eizykman (1973)—which would permit a true utopia to emerge in our time.

NOTES

1. Note the play on words here: "Premier Moteur" = *Primum movens*, the title attributed to God as the Prime Mover, the originator of all things.

2. *Surréal 3000* also describes another social group: the "others" (the only name given to them throughout the novel). These "others"—thieves of the city's electricity and seen as generally disreputable by the Surréal people—elicit contradictory moral feelings among the latter: the "others" must be conquered but also helped. One also finds a similar portrayal of social outcasts in *Les Nomades* and *Les Tours de Babylone*. But, in the context of Québec during the effervescent 60s, what might these obscure but omnipresent "others" represent?

3. See Marc Angenot's characterization of anti-utopias in this regard: "The anti-utopia constitutes itself directly around the negative image of the hive or the termite nest as metaphor for the rationality of the State which subordinates the individual to foreign ends, which entails creeping dehumanization, and which alienates the social from the human on the fallacious pretext of bettering societal conditions and increasing efficiency" (p. 130).

4. See Bouchard *et al*. (pp. 190ff) and Angenot. See also John Huntington, "Utopian and Anti-Utopian Logic: H.G. Wells and his Successors," SFS 9:122-46, #27 (July 1982).

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Abstract.—*Social progress and SF pessimism seem often to go hand in hand. This apparent paradox occurs in Québec between 1963 and 1972: the majority of Québécois SF written during this period of important social change known as the "Quiet Revolution" are dystopias—*Surréal 3000 *by Suzanne Martel (1963),* Api 2967 *by Robert Gurik (1966),* Les Nomades *by Jean Tétreau (1967), and* Les Tours de Babylone *by Maurice Gagnon (1972). These Québécois SF works may be called "ambiguous dystopias" in that they tend to exemplify or express indirectly (in form and message) the ambiguity and contradictions of their times, and in particular the complex attitudes of the Québécois towards the social effects of change related to science and technology. Pessimistic yet hopeful, they also represent a call for a deeper, more humane, and more global renewal of society.* (HCC/ABE)