

Introduction to the Study of Doxa

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Inherited from ancient Greece, the notion of *doxa* as common knowledge and shared opinions haunts all contemporary disciplines that put communication and social interaction at the center of their concerns. To be sure, the specific term is not always used: *doxa* appears under various guises, such as public opinion, verisimilitude, commonsense knowledge, commonplace, *idée reçue*, stereotype, cliché. Broadly speaking, however, all that is considered true, or at least probable, by a majority of people endowed with reason, or by a specific social group, can be called *doxic*. Whether the Greek term is explicitly mentioned or not, the functions of *doxa* in social life and in verbal exchanges have been the subject of continuous inquiries, if not of sharp polemics, for the two last centuries.

In this domain, francophone literary and linguistic theories, from Gustave Flaubert's studies to Oswald Ducrot's pragmatics and to Chaïm Perelman's "new rhetoric," offer important insights. They seem to have explored the question in two main directions. The first, rooted in the modern consciousness of banality, carries to a paradoxical extreme the obsession with accepted ideas, trite expressions, and (bourgeois) stupidity. In this perspective, *doxa* is a major obstacle to individual thinking and creativity as well as to genuine communication; as such, it constitutes a source of alienation. This approach is masterfully exemplified by Roland Barthes's essays, widely drawing on Flaubert's heritage. The second direction, going back to ancient rhetorical sources, unveils the constructive functions of *doxa* and its multifold uses at all levels of human communication. This is the position

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adopted not only by Perelman's new rhetoric, but also by structuralist poetics in its explorations of verisimilitude and literary convention and, today, by contemporary pragmatics and argumentation studies.

This issue of *Poetics Today* brings together contributions written by specialists from various countries (France, Belgium, Quebec, Germany, Israel) who are all closely linked to the French analytical tradition and have devoted a considerable part of their research to the controversial question of doxa in literary and nonliterary discourse. Their essays deal with the main problems raised today by this question in matters of communication, mutual understanding, and the social impact of discourse. They also explore commonsense knowledge in its relation to persuasion and question the belief that the use of doxa is incompatible with genuine literature.

A short reminder of the treatment of doxa in different disciplines during these last decades will help us understand the specific positions presented in this volume. Starting from the Greek origins of the notion allows us to see why and how it has nourished contemporary research in general and theories focused on verbal efficacy and social interaction in particular. This panoramic presentation aims at illuminating the way in which each discipline (rhetoric and poetics, pragmatics and discourse analysis, reception theories and literary analysis) has, at a peculiar stage of its development, dealt with doxa and with chosen affiliated notions. It also aims to show how questions examined in fields that sometimes have little or no contact with each other may present significant similarities.

From Aristotle's "Endoxa" to Flaubert's "Idées Reçues"

It is impossible to understand the contemporary uses of the notion of doxa without examining how the Greek terms *doxa* and *endoxa* are interpreted and explained by modern critics and philosophers. It is also interesting to see how references to doxa are explicitly linked to other rhetorical notions (like *verisimilitude* and *topoi*) that are often dealt with in themselves, with no direct mention of doxa as such.

It is no coincidence that one of the richest syntheses of the manifold research recently published in France on commonplaces, *Lieux communs: Topoi, stéréotypes, clichés* (1993, edited by Christian Plantin), opens with an "Introduction to the history of the *endoxon*." In this text, Peter I. von Moos goes back to the Aristotelian theory developed in the *Rhetoric* and the *Topics*, noting that if Aristotle did not invent the art of speaking with the help of endoxa, he certainly created the concept on the basis of his observation of a practice common since the Sophists. Moreover, in his treatise on dialectics, *The Topics*, Aristotle provided what would become the canonical definition

of endoxa for many centuries, even when the origin of the term came to be forgotten by its users. Aristotle described endoxa as what appears manifest and true to all, or to most of the people, or to the wise. They thus “are opinions acceptable enough (the positive inverse of *adoxia* and *paradoxa*, shameful or problematic opinions) and they rely on a general or at least representative consensus” (von Moos 1993: 7; my translation). Von Moos draws our attention to the gap between our present understanding of stereotypes and the conceptions developed by Aristotle. Endoxa were, and still are, opinions that have authority insofar as they are part of the general consensus. In ancient Greece, this positive *consensus omnium* did not, however, have the scope it acquired in modern democratic regimes. *Everybody* included only the citizens of Athens capable of seeking an agreement in the polis and not, for instance, slaves, barbarians, or women. Moreover, in Aristotle’s view, the whole body of Athenian citizens can be replaced not only by an elite of wise men or experts representing them, but also by the judgment of undisputable authorities like the gods, the father, or the masters. Their opinion is truth worthy and respectable because they are themselves truth worthy and respectable. Thus endoxa would be both what is recognized as reasonable and respectable by anyone and what is endowed with power because it is believed and circulated by the legitimate representative of power.

In this perspective, doxa has a force that has nothing to do with Truth. Its impact derives from its being accepted, or rather its being seen as probable and likely to be agreed upon by competent authorities. Thus Anne Cauquelin, in the historical part of her recent essay *L’art du lieu commun: Du bon usage de la doxa* (1999: 39), reminds us that doxa is “a kind of thought, of a special genre. . . . It is not correct to say that it can be true or false, that it speaks the truth or goes wrong . . . doxa has to do only with verisimilitude” (my translation). And she adds: “political art (*tekhnè*) as rhetorical art consists of respecting this verisimilitude, of convincing and persuading according to this regime and according to what it is possible for the citizens to accept or to approve” (ibid: 41). Thus doxa no longer appears as a degraded form of knowledge severely condemned by all philosophers who, like Plato, argue for the supremacy of *episteme*, namely, *genuine* knowledge available to those who engage in a search for Truth. Doxa has another kind of value because it is ruled by another logic, the one that guides decisions and actions in human affairs. Its importance essentially lies in its capacity to ensure what Cauquelin, in her chapter on the art of commonplaces, calls a social link.

Cauquelin, like von Moos, stresses the social value of doxa from the Aristotelian viewpoint. Indeed, von Moos does not deny the problematic and somewhat confused nature of the notion. He remarks (von Moos 1993: 10),

for instance, that “there is no logical instance, no metaphysical norm above social ‘respectability’” that gives *endoxa* their power: for Aristotle, rather than needing such further justification, they themselves justify any argument. Notwithstanding this somewhat problematic definition, *doxa* plays an essential role in all matters concerning human reasoning and social interaction. Von Moos emphasizes its social and moral nature: its main function is to allow, on the basis of a community of views, for the development of a discussion between two participants seeking agreement (dialectics) or for the unfolding of an argumentation meant to persuade an audience (rhetoric). The adhesion of the addressee to a thesis (in Perelman’s terms) depends on the value socially conferred upon the common opinion that underlies the argument, not on its strictly logical status.

This perspective is widely adopted in contemporary work seeking to analyze *doxa* as the common ground on the basis of which people can make together rational decisions and build the life of the polis. Thus Perelman’s “new rhetoric” (1969) sees in human interactions founded on accepted premises and shared commonplaces the only possible substitute for violence. Only debate, discussion, attempts at mutual persuasion can lead to common decisions and replace the power of physical and military strength with the force of argument. To build the life of the group or the nation, people have to rely not on some problematic and unreachable Truth, but on what seems sensible and plausible to the majority. Thus rhetoric, feeding on *doxa*, is needed in all matters where there can be no absolute Truth, namely, in human affairs.

Following this line of thought, philosophers and rhetoricians today defend the efficacy and social virtues of *doxa*, as can be seen in Cauquelin’s already quoted *L’Art du lieu commun: Du bon usage de la doxa* or in the chapter devoted to *doxa* by Georges Molinié in a recent book on prejudice (Amossy and Delon 1999). For Molinié, a French rhetorician and semiostylistician who insists on the current relevance of Aristotle’s rhetoric, the social domain cannot be governed by the search for scientific Truth, and when it is, the results seem to be appalling (as contemporary history has sadly demonstrated). Therefore, *doxa*’s capacity to regulate social relations is precisely what endows it today with such importance (Molinié 1999: 53). Interestingly, contemporary thinkers reviving the notion of *doxa* (and in the original Greek term) all emphasize its constructive relation to rationality—it allows one to choose what seems probable and reasonable, hence to organize social life on a rational basis—and the consequent social function it fulfills.

Before going into contemporary theories of *doxa* in more detail, it is important to emphasize that they run counter to a powerful trend closely

related to the decline of rhetoric and seeing in common opinion and collective speech the doom of any critical spirit or original style. As the discipline concerned with rational decisions taken in common, argumentation has needed the support of doxa, best expressed in *topoi*, commonplaces, which in the Aristotelian perspective were at the heart of *inventio*, one of the five parts of rhetoric (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *actio*). Mainly initiated by Pierre de la Ramée (Petrus Ramus) in the sixteenth century, the annexation of *inventio* (together with *dispositio* and *memoria*) to dialectic and its consequent separation from rhetoric led to a drastic reduction of the latter. Although rhetoric was still described in later centuries in terms of the classical models, it was more and more perceived as the art of *elocutio* and as such narrowed down to figures. This “restricted rhetoric” — “rhétorique restreinte,” to use Gérard Genette’s (1972) label — culminated in Du Marsais’s *Traité des tropes* (1977 [1730]) and found its ultimate expression about a century later, in Pierre Fontanier’s famous *Les Figures du discours* (published in 1818–1827). This aspect of the history of rhetoric being well known, there is no need to dwell on it. Still, it is important to recall that the substitution of an art of ornament for an art of persuasion was decisive in the undermining of doxa. Even if *topoi* were not altogether banished from the literary field, they were no longer the common ground of shared views and accepted truths on which communication could be safely built.

However, the devaluation of doxa not only issued from the redefinition of rhetoric in terms of figures of speech. It also came as a consequence of the triumph of Cartesian philosophy, according to which Truth was to replace probability and verisimilitude. “In order to be certain that the propositions articulated by the philosophers did not constitute uncertain and false opinions instead of indisputable truths,” they had to rely on “a self-evident intuition that could guarantee the truth of what is perceived as self-evident” (Perelman 1982 [1977]: 6). In the introductory part of their *Treatise of Argumentation*, Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca had already devoted a few pages to the fatal blow inflicted on rhetoric by Descartes and Kant. They showed how the attempt at erasing the “false” knowledge derived from tradition and prejudice has long prevented the recognition of doxa’s value in philosophical deliberations and social interactions. Thus, along with the decline of *inventio*, the overwhelming influence of Cartesian thought progressively led to the neglect, if not to the condemnation, of doxa.

Negative evaluation of doxa reached a climax in modern times. From the nineteenth century on, doxa has reappeared under various, mainly pejorative, labels. It has been defined as a lack of thought and of style, as the vulgarity of common opinion and the banality of worn-out language. In the postrevolutionary area, these condemnations fed on a growing conscious-

ness of the dangers newly brought by democracy, on the one hand, and by social and technological developments, on the other. The latter dangers resided in the increasing power of the press, in the growth of what Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve in 1840 aptly called “*littérature marchande*” (mercantile literature), and later in the invention of popular and cheap “*feuilletons*” (serials). These account not only for the negative meaning attributed in France to the notion of “commonplace” (topos), but also for several neologisms inspired by typography, such as “cliché” or “stereotype” (Amossy and Rosen 1982: 6–7). Originally used in the new printing technologies, these terms soon acquired their figurative meaning, which could not, in this context, be anything but a pejorative one. They mainly point to the banality of trite expressions, to the stupidity and indigence of collective representations. The democratic space all citizens can share—the commonplace—thus became the degraded space of the *vulgus*, the crowd. From then on, doxa, in its various designations and terminological guises, was taken as uncritical discourse, repetition devoid of thought. It was also equated with the power of dominant opinions, mainly rooted in the bourgeois worldview. Turning the expression *idée reçue* into a familiar formula of everyday language, Flaubert denounced through it all statements that present public opinion as a diktat (what one should think and say) confused with self-evidence and common sense (Herschberg-Pierrot 1999).

The denunciation of idées reçues is best exemplified in Flaubert’s famous *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, which appeared against the background of a new kind of dictionary meant to expose and ridicule the ready-made formulas and banal ideas circulating in everyday conversation. Quatrelle’s *Le Causeur parisien* [The Parisian talker] as well as Eugene Vivier’s *Très peu de ce que l’on entend tous les jours* [A little of what is heard everyday] were both published in France in 1879 (Herschberg-Pierrot 1984). Obviously, Flaubert knew these works when he prepared his own dictionary, a much cherished project that he nevertheless left unfinished: the manuscripts hidden by his niece were first published as late as 1910, with *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, then separately in 1913. This work, “the historical glorification of all that is approved,” in Flaubert’s (1997: 7) own phrase, demonstrating that “majorities are always right, minorities always wrong,” had a considerable impact in France. One must not, however, forget other works, such as Léon Bloy’s *Exégèse des lieux communs* (1983 [1901]), which attacked the incapacity of the bourgeois to think and their subsequent tendency to limit their language to a small stock of ready-made formulas (Bloy 1983 [1901]: 9). Thus Bloy established a repertoire of uncritical sayings, for example, “children don’t ask to be born,” “habit is second nature,” “nobody is perfect,” and so on, accompanied by his own acerbic comments. It is under the influence of this modernist trend, and

especially through the work of Flaubert, that contemporary writers and critics rediscovered the notion of doxa. No wonder that Roland Barthes (1977 [1975]: 47) defines it in negative terms echoing *Bouvard and Pécuchet* or the *Dictionary*: “Public Opinion, the mind of the Majority, petit bourgeois Consensus, the Voice of Nature, the Violence of Prejudice.”

Ideological Analysis: Doxa and Related Notions (Myth, Social Discourse, Sociogram)

The current survey has diagnosed two main contemporary approaches to doxa in France and in francophone studies. The critical trend, springing from Flaubert’s notion of *idées reçues*, pertains to ideological criticism, while the one tracing back to Aristotle’s *endoxa* is rhetorical analysis, which investigates the constructive functions of doxa in the framework of argumentation theory, new rhetoric, or literary studies.

Let us start with the return to doxa initiated by ideological criticism. In the study of discourse and literature, more or less orthodox Marxist trends feeding on the concept of *ideology* (or one of its many interpretations) brought to the fore the idea of a common knowledge that determines the way individuals see and experience the world. Without developing a strict materialist analysis, these ideological critics borrowed from Marxism a number of principles emphasizing the importance of *idées reçues*. There is no immediacy: our relation to the world is irremediably mediated. There is no self-evidence: what we “spontaneously” perceive as obvious is nothing but a cultural product. The systems of representation mediating between the subject and his or her environment are a network of values, opinions, and beliefs that individuals tend to confuse with Reality and Truth. Lured by the false transparency of shared knowledge and public opinion, the subject is thus the victim of a mythification that only a clear-sighted analyst can fully expose and denounce. In this framework, the pervasiveness of ideology links the old idea of doxa with the Marxist concept of alienation. Rather than interpreting consensus as the mark of reason and probability, Marxism-inspired criticism sees it as the mask of dominant ideology, that is, as the alibi of Power.

Doxa, of course, is not meant here to be an exact synonym of ideology. Unrelated to the essential distinction between superstructure and infrastructure, it does not rest on materialist philosophy. It is a rather vague notion referring to what is thought, imagined, said in a given state of society. In this perspective, doxa is equated today with a set of other notions more or less closely related to its original meaning.

The most famous of these notions is *myth*, used by Barthes in a rather

peculiar sense in his *Mythologies* (1972 [1957]), an early work in which doxa, a designation that was to hold such a central place in Barthes's later essays, does not yet appear (see Anne Herschberg Pierrot's contribution to this issue). A myth is in Barthes's eyes a false self-evidence; it is culture deceitfully presented as nature, social representations confused with the real object. In widespread images as well as in verbal products, what "goes without saying" has an ideological impact that he seeks to denounce. This approach, called by Barthes himself "ideological criticism," unveils the values and beliefs insidiously hidden in innocent-seeming stories or pictures. It analyzes the Black as seen in "Bichon et les Nègres," a *Paris Match's* reportage on a little boy traveling with his parents to Africa: the Blacks' world there corresponds to a stereotyped *guignol* close to the average French reader's preexisting views on Africa. Or it exposes the populist leader of the fifties, Pierre Poujade, whose discourses circulated a ready-made image of the rootless, lazy, physically disgraceful Parisian intellectual. In all these essays, Barthes throws light on what the text implies and indirectly reinforces. Showing how bourgeois ideology underlies all kinds of texts that rely on the authority of objectivity or common sense, he aims at unmasking, denouncing, and demystifying its operations.

Another notion that has been used as a near-synonym of doxa, mainly in the framework of French sociocriticism, is *social discourse*. In Claude Duchet's (1973: 453) early formulation, social discourse is the "*it is said* of the text [*le on du texte*], and its rumor, the *already-said* [*déjà-dit*] of a preexisting self-evidence" (my translation). A necessary ingredient of the literary text, social discourse is eventually transformed through rewriting. In Marc Angenot's later reinterpretation (1989: 13), it is defined as "everything that is said and written in a certain state of society; all that is printed, that is publicly spoken or represented today in electronic media; all that can be narrated and argued" (my translation). The first point of view presents social discourse as public rumor, a rather diffuse body of banal sayings and formulas underlying any text. The second view presupposes that a given state of all that is said and can be said at a particular moment—for example, the year 1889 in France—constitutes a whole that can be fully reconstructed by the analyst. Despite this difference of approach, both critics essentially explore doxa as language. By presenting it as social *discourse*, they imply that the beliefs and images circulating in a given community, the mental representations shared by the group, cannot be apprehended outside their verbal formulations. Thus ideology is inscribed in language; the social dimension of the text is internal, not merely external, to it. This is the basis on which sociocriticism has developed under various guises in French criticism from the seventies on.

Similar views have been developed by Charles Grivel through the use of notions like *social knowledge* or *créances* (beliefs). In *La Production de l'intérêt romanesque* (1973), an early book on the French novel from 1870 to 1880, Grivel examined how different fables that appear to produce novelty through plot actually reproduce dominant ideology and insidiously consolidate its power. Later, in 1981, he developed his views on the pervasiveness of social knowledge, arguing that no understanding of a given text (and thus no literature) is possible unless based on what the social group agrees upon, or what it considers plausible or real. According to Grivel (1981: 72), “we can communicate only through what we believe,” since meaning is nothing but “the elements of a shared knowledge, instituted as such” (my translation). We thus interpret the world and the text via “universals,” which are paradoxically defined by Grivel (1980–1981: 11) in terms of their social dimensions: “what is repeated often enough to enable it to function as the basic meaning of an utterance, of a discourse” (my translation). In the same framework, Grivel uses the term *créances* to refer to the implicit self-evidence on which any utterance is built. According to him the speaker is generally not aware of these embedded beliefs. What is more, the text is unable to fully account for the deep-rooted beliefs he or she feeds on. No wonder, then, that Grivel (1981) sets out to build a “theory of doxical systems,” where discourses can be analyzed as cultural products necessarily relying on shared beliefs, knowledge, and values.¹

In this perspective, sociocriticism and related trends have variously explored the ways in which literary texts deal with social discourse while analyzing two main textual strategies. Roughly speaking, the first operates to diffuse doxa through various fictional and nonfictional means, thus consolidating the power of dominant ideology. The second strategy concerns literature’s ability to denounce and oppose the power of doxa by rewriting and remodeling social discourse.

Looking for the hidden ideological layers of the text, critics often set out to show how novels and poems are built on old beliefs and trite opinions, reinforcing them through the pseudo-novelty of the plot or through the metaphorical and mythical elements woven into the text. Thus Henri Mitterand (1980) analyzes Flaubert’s description of Sénéchal, the socialist of *The Sentimental Education*: the character is built on a current, stereotypical vision of the social category he belongs to. What holds for Flaubert, the novelist who so forcefully draws our attention to *idées reçues*, is even more conspicuous in the case of Emile Zola. Mitterand aptly analyzes the doxic system on which the physical appearance of *Germinal*’s characters draws (including

1. A survey of Grivel’s theories is provided in English translation in Grivel 1985.

hair color and purely bodily features); likewise, below the scene of the striking miners' demonstration there lies a terrible representation of the French Revolution, with a predictable impact on the bourgeois reader of the time. Thus doxa turns out to be omnipresent, even where absent at the surface level of the text.

As a critical method designed for the analysis of literary texts, however, sociocriticism deals with the capacity of artistic writing to go beyond mere repetition and open new avenues of thought and understanding. Such inquiry was, from the outset, central to Flaubert studies. The critics were eager to unveil the sophisticated ways in which the creator of *Madame Bovary*, of the parrot of *Un coeur simple* and of the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* could deal with the very clichés that were, to his mind, inescapable because located at the very heart of language. The fascination of French writers and critics with Flaubert's texts has mainly derived from the fact that, far from trying to avoid stereotypes, they displayed them and deconstructed them from the inside.

Many analyses have been devoted to this ironical treatment of the "stupidity" that is not in the Other, but in the writing subject him- or herself. Thus Anne Herschberg Pierrot (1979) has provided a sharp rhetorical analysis of Lieuvain's epideictic discourse on agriculture in *Madame Bovary*, where the official stereotyped speech alternates with Rodolphe's declarations of love for Emma, thus unveiling the cardinal role of clichés in both kinds of speech. She also provides a systematic study of the lexicographic means used by Flaubert in his dictionary, showing how it diverges from the fashionable *sottisiers* (catalogs of stupid sayings) of the time and exploring its posterity in the twentieth century (Herschberg-Pierrot 1988, 2001). Like others, she emphasizes Flaubert's special irony, which mostly produces uncertainty, so that the reader (as the writer himself bluntly put it regarding his dictionary) will never know if he or she is being made fun of or not. The same kind of attention has been given to all the novelists who, following Flaubert, have deliberately and systematically exploited trite expressions and ready-made metaphors to put into a critical perspective the doxa of their time. Examples include Nathalie Sarraute's well-known "tropismes" (recently analyzed in Laurent Adert's *Les Mots des autres* [1996]) but also, in another vein, Raymond Roussel's narrative clichés (Jenny 1972) or Lautréamont's commonplaces (Bouché 1974).

Thus this vein of sociocriticism, instead of merely unveiling what is insidiously hidden in literary texts, insists on literature's capacity to resist doxa or at least to reveal the contradictions and aporias of dominant worldviews. As a consequence, it confers value only upon those discourses that manifest a true power of demythification or transgression. In this perspective,

debates about “literariness,” that is, about the very existence of a peculiar entity called “literary discourse,” essentially focus on literature’s relation to common knowledge and public opinion. What kind of “knowledge” does literature provide, to what extent does it convey dominant opinions and beliefs under a false pretense of novelty, or conversely, to what degree does it tear away the veil of doxic opinion in order to provide true understanding or at least a glimpse of some alternative kind of knowledge? These issues are discussed thoroughly in Marc Angenot’s essay, which claims that focusing our attention on doxa and social discourse does not demean literature, nor does it equate novels and poetry with vulgar cookbooks. Such an enterprise does, however, aim to “de-fetishize” literature by asking what it can do through its reelaboration of social discourse and how far it is able to question and transform social representations (Angenot 1992: 16). For Angenot, what is called *literature* can indeed question or destabilize accepted views because it is a “supplement,” a discourse that comes *after* all the others and displays them before the eyes of the reader, thereby revealing their tensions and blind spots.

For critics like Claude Duchet (1973, 1980), Régine Robin (1992), and their followers, however, such a position does not do full justice to the distinctive feature of literature. They suggest that literary writing is valuable insofar as it allows for an *aesthetic* process that throws into question established views and widespread appearances of self-evidence. Analyzing André Malraux’s famous novel *L’Espoir* about the 1936 Spanish civil war, Duchet relates it to contemporary social discourse on war and revolution as well as to speeches by Popular Front intellectuals. Focusing on “these crucial places in the novelistic text where the aestheticizing activity is remarked on” would, according to Duchet (1980: 158), lead to a discovery of all “the unresolved contradictions, the complex of interferences, or the trace of deviant meanings.” Thus epiphanized, the literary text cannot be assimilated to nonliterary discourse because, as the result of creative writing, of an aesthetic reelaboration of language (“travail sur le langage”) with its sets of images, representations, and values, it can go beyond the certitudes of doxa. In this perspective, Duchet later worked out the notion of *sociogram* as distinct from stereotype, defining it not as a frozen collective representation, but on the contrary, as an unstable and dynamic constellation of partial and conflictual representations. Borrowing a preexisting kernel that takes the form of a stereotype, a cliché, an emblematic character, and so forth, novelistic and poetic writing opens it up to new interrogations, producing meanings and insights that transgress the boundaries of doxa. Although it does not lean on the notion of *sociogram*, a similar hypothesis forms the basis of Ruth Amossy and Elisheva Rosen’s *Les Discours du cliché*

(1982), which analyzes the uses of frozen, lexicalized figures borrowed from social discourse in various types of literary texts, from nineteenth-century realism as elaborated by Honoré de Balzac to the playful practice of surrealist titles.

The Constructive Functions of Doxa: Structuralist Poetics and Semiotics

Ideological analysis and sociocriticism saw in doxa the network of common opinions building up the sociohistorical dimension of texts. Poetics, in turn, revived it as the probable or obvious opinions building up any narrative. Returning to the Aristotelian notion of verisimilitude as distinct from truth, Tzvetan Todorov (1977 [1968]: 83) distinguished several meanings of the term, including a contemporary reinterpretation of the Greek notion:

We shall discard only the first naïve meaning, according to which a relation to reality is expressed. The second meaning is that of Plato and Aristotle: verisimilitude is the relation of the specific text to another, generalized text which is called “common opinion.” Among the French classics, we already find a third meaning—comedy has its own verisimilitude, different from the tragedy’s; there are as many verisimilitudes as there are genres [. . .] Finally, in our own day [. . .] we speak of a work’s verisimilitude insofar as the work tries to convince us it conforms to reality and not to its own laws. In other words, verisimilitude is the mask which is assumed by the laws of the text and which we are meant to take for a relation with reality.

Thus verisimilitude is nothing but the result of the discourse’s degree of conformity to doxa. To say that a given utterance is verisimilar means that it accords with what common opinion declares probable or true—in other words, that it relies upon what is seen as probable or true in previous discourses. In the same special issue of *Communications* devoted to verisimilitude in which Todorov’s article was originally published (1968), Gérard Genette’s essay on verisimilitude and motivation (reproduced the next year in *Figures II*) similarly defined the verisimilar novel as a text exemplifying a series of implicit maxims considered true by the audience. As these maxims are familiar, they mostly remain tacit, so that the narrative obeys rules that it does not have to name or even to fully grasp.

Rephrasing the constitutive relation between verisimilitude and doxa in terms of intertextuality allowed Todorov to reunite its different meanings. Any text draws on another, more general text. Either it obeys the laws of common opinion with its norms of probability or it follows the rules of the genre with its familiar conventions. In both cases it fits preexisting cultural models. In this perspective, it is only too clear that realistic novels cannot but build an illusion of reality through their more or less apt manipulations

of doxic material. For the structuralist, what seems closest to reality is what best conforms to our ready-made conceptions of the “real.” Instead of trying to unveil the masks of dominant ideology, the structuralist approach mainly aims at analyzing the ways in which textual verisimilitude could be produced. Structuralists do not ask what ideological premises are hidden under the text’s “natural” surface but rather examine how the work was built, how generic verisimilitude could be achieved and realistic writing made possible. Thus Genette, in “Vraisemblance et motivation” (1969), dwells on the different ways in which fictional texts found their plausibility on causality, so that verisimilitude is nothing more than the effect of reality created by postfactum motivation.

The structuralist approach to doxa and its function in literature was widely circulated in the anglophone world thanks to Jonathan Culler’s well-known *Structuralist Poetics* (1975): he not only introduced the contemporary French interpretation of *vraisemblance*, he also developed in this framework a notion of *naturalization* mainly drawing on the concept of motivation (Sternberg 1983) worked out by the Russian Formalists, to whom French structuralists were also much indebted. This notion accounts for the process that makes the text readable: “to naturalize a text is to bring it into relation with a type of discourse or model which is already, in some sense, natural and legible” (Culler 1975: 138). “Some of these models,” Culler (*ibid.*) adds, “have nothing specially literary about them but are simply the repository of the *vraisemblable*, whereas others are special conventions used in the naturalization of poetics works.”

The first of these models involves a discourse “that requires no justification because it seems to derive directly from the structure of the world” (*ibid.*: 140). It includes, among other things, paradigms of action: a journey is either completed or abandoned; a murder implies a murderer having some motive to commit it, and so forth. Culler calls this category “the real,” distinguishing it from cultural *vraisemblance*, which is made up of stereotypes or accepted knowledge recognized as culture dependent. “Naturalization proceeds on the assumption that action is intelligible, and cultural codes specify the forms of intelligibility” (*ibid.*: 143). Take, for example, the sentence from Balzac’s *Sarrasine*, the work extensively analyzed in Barthes’s *S/Z* (1974 [1970]): Sarrasine “rose with the sun, went to his studio and didn’t emerge until night.” Here “we naturalize the scene by reading it as direct manifestation of character and interpret it as ‘excess’ [. . .] and as artistic commitment” (*ibid.*). Whether or not they disguise their cultural nature, it appears that doxic elements are the very foundation on which narrative coherence can be reconstructed and texts can be properly deciphered by their readers.

In its effort to understand how texts are *constructed*, structural analysis in its golden age not only showed that realism derives from naturalization and references to cultural codes, it also conducted thorough investigations of simple forms, recurring plot structures, actantial systems. The attempt to reduce a narrative to its elementary components and then reconstruct it in order to find the logic of its organization necessarily led the critics to observe stereotypes at the level of plot as well as at the level of characters. Their objective was to describe the ways in which a genre, a serial, or a single narrative are built through the use of formally and semantically fixed elements. Thus value judgment as well as ideological denunciation gave way to the objective description of the ways that ready-made components are used in familiar scenarios to produce narratives. Such an approach unveils the structure of the work rather than accounts for its surface texture. It is particularly suited to the exploration of popular and fairy tales, serial novels, soap operas, and all kinds of popular literature. Umberto Eco (1966) provided a famous example of this kind of approach in his analysis of Ian Fleming's James Bond. It is important, however, to notice that structuralist analysis of narratives took doxa into account only insofar as it constituted an inherent part of the fixed elements forming the basis of the work's structure. The sociocultural dimension was forgotten in favor of the formal aspect, on which the poetician exclusively focuses.

The emphasis on formal, or rather purely textual, processes is also what characterizes Michael Riffaterre's semiotics. Following his first writings on clichés (Riffaterre 1971), which renovated stylistics by illuminating the constructive function of frozen figures, Riffaterre (1979) showed how text production draws heavily on stereotyped elements. From an interest in the still vivid effect of hackneyed figures of style, he thus moved to an exclusive preoccupation with their productive functions and writing potential. To him, clichés and stereotypes are the main source from which the literary text springs and the initial pattern on the basis of which it develops by way of multiple and often complex transformations. Locating clichés and seeing how a familiar expression automatically summons up a series of connected elements associated with it in a so-called "descriptive system" accounts for the engendering of the text. It also provides new insight into the communication process. It is because readers are well acquainted with verbal constellations so deep-rooted as to look natural that they can decipher the poetic or narrative text and endorse it. From this viewpoint, Riffaterre provides his own version of naturalization: a description looks true because it conforms, not to reality, but to a mythology built of clichés and commonplaces that the reader has internalized and appropriated through his or her culture. "What is convincing in an image, what calls for the reader's adhesion simply de-

rives from the irresistible nature of its verbal logic” (Riffaterre 1979: 182; my translation). Thus Riffaterre explains a poem by Victor Hugo on the basis of the descriptive system of the word *carillon*, analyzing the phrase “frêle escalier de cristal invisible” as a chain of verbal associations. Music summons up the expression “rising scales” and is thus spontaneously associated with stairs; these are made of crystal because the sound of the carillon is “crystalline”; they are “fragile” and “invisible” because the first epithet is inseparable from crystal and the second refers to the crystal’s transparency. What makes the text readable in Riffaterre’s eyes is its capacity to arouse in the reader’s mind stereotyped expressions that are recognizably derived from, as well as comparable to, the original model.

In this theoretical framework, doxa is purely verbal: it is inherent in language, which includes series of stereotyped associations that can be systematically exploited, developed, and eventually transformed into poetic writing. These verbal constellations are as well known to the poet as to the reader, and this is what makes understanding possible. Doxic elements thus appear as the very foundation of text production and interpretation. No doubt Riffaterre, who sees in them the material literature feeds on, assigns to them a highly privileged role. On the other hand, he deliberately reduces them to signifiers, that is, to merely verbal components deprived of social meaning and cultural weight.

This panoramic view of francophone approaches, from structuralist poetics to Riffaterre’s semiotics, stresses the peculiar status conferred upon doxa when it is defined as verisimilitude or conceived of as a formal component. In this view, the main objective is to understand how narratives are built, how realism as an illusion of reality is achieved, how texts are produced and processed. Although diverse, these methods are all interested in the contribution of doxa to the building of a verbal work of art. Understood as a constructive element, doxa is dissociated from the pejorative notion of *idées reçues*. Instead of being criticized as the diktat of public opinion or the mask of ideology, it is defined as a neutral ingredient, an indispensable component of any artistic structure or poetic process. As a consequence, doxa is examined in its formal rather than social aspects: redefined in terms of poetic material, it seems quite distant from the Aristotelian notion of endoxa.

A more sociologically oriented account of the stereotype’s constructive functions is provided in Ruth Amossy’s *Les idées reçues: Sémiologie du stéréotype* (1991). There stereotype is examined as a modern notion presenting doxa in its constitutive ambivalence: it is something that has to be dispensed with because it is so desperately common, and yet it is something that proves indispensable because it is part of any cognitive or communicational process.

Stereotype is defined along sociopsychological lines as a collective representation, a familiar pattern shared by a community: a thematic kernel—the Jew, the woman, the countryside—is linked to a series of recurring attributes. Accordingly, Amossy unveils the strategies that allow various kinds of texts to exploit the very stereotypes they consider degrading. She thus analyzes the uses of stereotypes in Hollywood stars' autobiographies and in horror fiction but also in feminist writing or in Barthes's essays on photography. In all cases, it turns out that the acute consciousness of stereotypes characterizing modern and contemporary times, far from excluding doxic elements, encourages a creative and often subtle invention of textual strategies.

Doxa in Reader-Oriented Theories

Related to the latter trends insofar as they examine the functions of doxa without any attempt at denunciation, some *reader-oriented theories* adopt and adapt for their own purposes the notions of probability and verisimilitude, of stereotype and doxa. Riffaterre already stressed the importance of the reader's familiarity with the descriptive systems of language, without which any deciphering would be impossible. For him, however, the reader is by definition endowed with the capacity to recognize clichés and stereotyped associations because they are part of his or her knowledge of the language—in other words, because they are inherent in language and shared by all native speakers. In this perspective, the reading process and the role of the reader do not need any further investigation: the emphasis is on text production. This is not the position of reader-oriented criticism as developed by authors like Eco. Focusing on “textual cooperation,” Eco, in *The Role of the Reader* (1979), examines its different levels, first postulating the necessity of encyclopedic competence on the part of the addressee. The latter has to master socially recognized cultural data—for instance, what everybody knows about lions as being related to the jungle, or the circus, or the zoo. Eco then dwells on scripts described as common or intertextual. The common scripts derive from the encyclopedic knowledge the reader shares with the members of his or her own culture. Here the semiotician uses the notion of *frame* defined as a structure of data allowing for the representation of a stereotyped situation, such as going to a birthday party. The intertextual scripts are not necessarily part of common knowledge: they are rhetorical and narrative patterns referring to a cultural background shared only by elites. They take the shape of ready-made plot patterns (as in detective novels), of motives independent of any sequential ordering (the persecuted maid), of stereotyped situations (the fight between the bandit and the sheriff in westerns), of rhetorical topoi (like the *locus amoenus*). In other words,

there are many doxic layers playing a crucial role in the reading process. The reader can fulfill his or her role in textual cooperation only insofar as he or she is in possession of the common knowledge modeling the text or of the cultural knowledge underlying intertextual scripts. In this perspective, doxa appears once more as an indispensable ingredient of literary communication as well as of text production.

Drawing on previous inquiries into text processing and reception, Jean-Louis Dufays devotes a comprehensive study to the functions of stereotypes in reading. In his *Stéréotype et lecture*, published in Belgium in 1994, he shows that referring to preexisting patterns is a necessary step of any deciphering. “Reading always consists in looking for familiar structures. Thus stereotypes are what the reader is bent on; they are what allows him to establish with the text the kind of complicity each reading is in search of; through them, it is possible to locate what has no place as yet and to banalize novelty” (Dufays 1994: 169; my translation). Moreover the reader recognizes familiar schemata and scripts while discovering spots of ambiguity or contradiction, elements that do not fit in the pattern, blanks, or missing elements. He or she either tries to reduce the complexity by forcing everything into a familiar pattern (“*clichage*”) or opens up to the indeterminacy of the text (ibid.: 187). Drawing on Amossy (1982) and Amossy and Rosen (1982), Dufays distinguishes between different modes of processing clichés recognized as such in relation to the degree and forms of distance from them exhibited by literary writing. Thus the analysis of stereotypes and clichés in the reading process shows how literary communication can complicate our ways of understanding and appropriating common knowledge and beliefs. It is worth mentioning that on the basis of his systematic exploration into the constructive functions of stereotypes, Dufays (1997) was able to work out a didactic approach, opening new avenues to the teaching of texts in class through the use of stereotypes.

Doxa and Topoi in Pragmatics, Rhetoric, and Discourse Analysis

While structuralist poetics and reader-reception theories were rediscovering the constructive functions of stereotypes, pragmatics as developed in France by Oswald Ducrot placed the emphasis on *topoi*, a term evidently borrowed from rhetoric and reinterpreted in the framework of a pragmatic-semantic theory. It is interesting to see how literary studies, new rhetoric, and contemporary linguistic trends, in mutual ignorance of their respective research, rehabilitated, at about the same time, various notions affiliated to doxa. It is also worth mentioning that Ducrot’s pragmatics, which occupies quite a central position in France, is hardly known in anglophone circles and

has only recently become the object of systematic presentations (e.g., van Eemeren et al. 1996: 315–22). Ducrot’s masterful book on presuppositions, *Dire et ne pas dire* (1972), was followed by an inquiry into argumentation, considered an indispensable ingredient of utterance interpretation. Ducrot sets out to demonstrate that meaning cannot be dissociated from argumentative orientation. “John is lazy but very clever” calls for “give him the job,” while “John is very clever but lazy,” though containing exactly the same informational data, argues for the opposite conclusion. “This is a good hotel” is supposed to be followed by (or to imply) “I recommend it”; “I do not recommend it” would sound strange and call for an explanation. It follows that “to mean, for an utterance, is to orient” — “not to describe or inform, but to orient discourse in a given direction” (Anscombe 1995: 39; my translation). It also follows that the rhetorical component, namely, “the form of influence called argumentative force” (Anscombe and Ducrot 1983: Avant-Propos; my translation) is an integral part of the utterance, just like the syntactic and semantic components. In other words, pragmatics does not come, as some would have it, as an additional layer that exceeds language, which is analyzable only from the phonetic to the semantic levels. The term *pragmatique intégrée* given to Ducrot’s approach reflects this attempt at integrating the pragmatic components into semantics.

In this specific framework, Anscombe and Ducrot developed a theory of *topoi*, defined as elements allowing for the linking of utterances (see Amossy’s and Georges-Elia Sarfati’s articles in this issue). “She’s ugly; he will not even notice her” relies on the belief that only beautiful girls attract the attention of men. “It’s hot; let’s stay at home” makes sense if we think that heat is something unpleasant, to be avoided. The unexpressed premise accounting for the passage from one utterance to the other is a *topos* in the pragmatic-semantic meaning of the word. In Ducrot’s terms (1995: 86), *topoi* are “beliefs presented as common to a given collectivity” and enable the linkage of arguments. Anscombe (1995: 35; my translation) describes them as

general principles on which reasoning relies but which are themselves not reasoning. They are never asserted in the sense that the speaker does not present himself as the author of these principles (even if he actually is), but they are made use of. They are almost always presented as being an object of consensus in a more or less large community.

A distinction is drawn between “intrinsic *topoi*,” at the basis of a lexical unit’s meaning, and “extrinsic *topoi*,” which are purely cultural. The latter are borrowed from the ideological reservoir of a language at a given period of time and are thus essentially doxic. For example, in “John is rich. He

can afford going to luxury hotels,” the *topos* is intrinsic because it follows from the original meaning of rich as “having money—thus ability to buy,” whereas in “John is rich. He’s got a lot of friends,” the *topos* is extrinsic because having money does not basically mean being surrounded by interested people. Extrinsic *topoi* are mostly based on clichés, proverbs, and slogans. Anscombe (1995: 57) adds that their use is generally aimed at constructing ideological representations. Extrinsic *topoi* are thus a social rather than a purely linguistic element. However, the interest of pragmatics in both kinds of *topoi* derives from their capacity to unveil the hidden principles of argumentative orientation, without which neither meaning nor utterance linkage could be accounted for.

This new perspective proved to be fruitful in several linguistic fields. As they claimed that “to use words is to call upon *topoi*,” so that “the meaning of a word is not fundamentally giving a referent, but rather providing a bundle of *topoi*,” they opened the way to interesting developments in lexicography (Anscombe 1995: 51). These are best expressed in two books on dictionaries by Georges-Elia Sarfati (1995, 1999), formerly a student of Ducrot (see Sarfati’s essay in this volume). “Integrated pragmatics,” with its emphasis on argumentation, also greatly contributed to the recognition of the long forgotten importance of rhetoric in linguistics. Anscombe and Ducrot, however, defined argumentation in terms of utterance linking rather than in terms of verbal persuasion. This is why some of the specialists in pragmatics and discourse analysis who were inspired by their theories tried to integrate them into a broader framework.

Christian Plantin (1990), one of the first scholars who tried to bring together the pragmatic and the new rhetorical trends, distinguishes among three approaches to argumentation defined in a discursive perspective: (1) language itself, in Saussure’s sense, is argumentative (Ducrot’s position); (2) every utterance is necessarily argumentative (because it “aims at acting upon its addressee and at modifying his system of thought. Each utterance requires or induces the other to believe, see, act otherwise.” [Plantin 1996: 18; my translation]); (3) only some kinds of discourse are argumentative, as they try to persuade through an appropriate discursive organization. The last is the position of classical theories of argumentation and the approach advocated by, among others, Chaïm Perelman. He sees in argumentation a broad range of possibilities covering different types of discourse, from political discourse to philosophy and literature.

Some of the rhetoricians adopting this global approach have attempted to use the tools of “integrated pragmatics”—such as presuppositions, connectors, *topoi*—in a disciplinary framework centered on argumentation analysis (i.e., on discourse and not, like Ducrot, on language). This is the

case with Marc Angenot's (1980) inquiry into the pamphlet, conceived of as a specific polemical genre and analyzed according to its main strategies of persuasion; with Jean-Michel Adam's (1997) linguistic analysis of commercial slogans; and with Gilles Declercq's (1993) study of the use of argumentation for literary analysis. Ruth Amossy's (2000) essay on argumentation in discourse, although insisting on the importance of genre, tends to adopt the second position, mainly represented previously by conversational analysis as advocated by Jacques Moeschler and his followers: the theory of argumentation in discourse distinguishes between the *argumentative aim* to be found in certain kinds of discourse intended to persuade and the *argumentative dimension* inherent in any text. In all these revivals of rhetoric, doxa is reformulated in terms of specific notions that can be used in text analysis. A practical aspect of inquiries into doxa thus accompanies the historical accounts that have flourished in recent years in France and that have viewed the concept of doxa in a chronological perspective (as in Fumaroli 1999).

Rhetorical approaches drawing on Aristotle give a crucial importance to doxa while separating it to some extent from what has always been considered its main expression, namely, commonplaces. Understanding *topoi* in the current modern meaning of widespread opinions and beliefs and ignoring their divergence from the Aristotelian *topoi koinoi*, Anscombe and Ducrot established a fruitful relationship between doxic elements, implicit propositions, and text coherence. Defined in the strictly Aristotelian sense, however, *topoi koinoi*, commonplaces, appear in Angenot as well as in Perelman or Molinié's *Dictionary of Rhetoric* (1992) not as widespread opinions and beliefs, but as models underlying surface utterances. They are empty molds (e.g., "if the more is true, the less is also true") into which actual utterances can be poured. Barthes's famous essay on rhetoric (1988 [1970]) reminds its readers that commonplaces are not familiar and outworn motives, but formal patterns empty of specific contents. Angenot (1980: 162) in turn emphasizes the role of what he calls primary schemes, relational structures of which a given proposition is only one possible actualization. This is to say that the commonplace or *topos*, strictly speaking, has little to do with doxa, since it is a logical and content-free pattern. Only when it is actualized in a concrete utterance does it appear as a saying connected to the diffuse general Text called doxa or public opinion.

This does not imply, however, that contemporary rhetorical analysis does not revert to the notion of doxa—on the contrary, it heavily relies on it. Perelman strongly emphasizes the role of shared premises and thus of doxic elements, without which no persuasion would be possible. *Topoi* as general ways of reasoning are part of the orator's and the audience's shared competence, allowing for effective interpretation and interaction. Angenot

(1980: 179) shows that the relational patterns structuring the text make use of implicit maxims, those doxic elements that he calls “*ideologemes*.” Ekkehard Eggs (1994: 331) relates Aristotle’s logico-argumentative common topoi to the specific topoi that are close to what we call opinion, maxim, proverb, banality, truism, self-evidence, stereotype, commonplace, cliché. He shows that argumentative patterns (common topoi) and accepted opinions or endoxa (specific topoi) are closely related in actual utterances and contribute to building them up.

Contemporary linguistic trends that emphasize the nature of language as *action* and power to influence, or as *interaction* and co-construction by mutual influence, also revert to the notion of doxa under various names. Conversational analysis, among others, brings to the fore the fact that any exchange is built not only on linguistic competence, but also on shared sociocultural knowledge (so-called encyclopedic and conversational competence). As a result, the implicitly self-evident plays a crucial role in everyday exchanges as well as in any form of dialogue: see Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni’s excellent synthesis of verbal interactions (1990). On the other hand, discourse analysis, understood in the French perspective as distinct from conversational analysis, assigns a major role to doxa in its insistence on *interdiscourse*. Examining different types of texts in their enunciative framework, that is to say, in a social and institutional situation of communication (Maingueneau 1991: 12–13), discourse analysis takes into account institutional positions and generic constraints as well as the constitutive relation of a given utterance to what has been said and is being said at the time. This Bakhtinian position, also expressed in the notions of dialogism and intertextuality discussed above, emphasizes the heavy reliance of any discourse on what circulates at the time of its enunciation and reception. It also points to the new utterance’s specific reappropriation of this diffuse, endlessly migrating common discourse. In this perspective, discourse analysis uses interdiscourse as a notion closely connected to sociocriticism’s “social discourse,” seeing it, however, not as some frozen preexisting entity, but as the dynamic circulation of shared opinions and discourse in social space—something that emerges and moves in multiple utterances echoing each other, so that doxa is necessarily at the heart of each attempt at speech and communication.

Conclusion

This mapping of various disciplinary approaches to doxa in contemporary research does not pretend to encompass all revivals of the notion. Some fields have obviously been left out—such as imagology or intercultural studies, to mention only two important and rich domains where the

notion of doxa is prominent. We have tried, however, to throw light on those aspects that have been more specifically, and most fruitfully, dealt with by French-speaking criticism and linguistics, from the sixties to the present. Explaining the importance of doxa in the theoretical framework in which it has been reelaborated shows what is really at stake. We have thus seen how ideological analysis and sociocriticism try to expose the alienating common knowledge that alters our worldview and influences our judgment, whereas poetics and semiology are concerned not with denunciation, but with the ways in which literary and nonliterary texts can achieve verisimilitude or are constructed as works of art. Reader-oriented theorists have adapted the notion to their own needs, inquiring into the capacity of the text to guide the reader and looking for the role of frozen doxic elements in text processing. While pragmaticists are mainly interested in linguistic means of utterance linking, or in the dynamics of verbal interaction, research based on argumentation theory sets out to understand the efficacy of discourse and the secrets of persuasion. In all these frameworks, doxa—whether designated by its Greek name or not—plays a central role. It appears under various labels, such as social discourse, intertextuality, and interdiscourse; *topoi*, endoxa, and commonplaces; clichés, stereotypes, and *idées reçues*; verisimilitude and plausibility; common knowledge, encyclopedic competence, and public opinion.

The essays that follow can now be grasped in their context, and I will let them speak for themselves. Let me only mention that Ekkehard Eggs's essay is an entirely innovative attempt at reviewing doxa in the light of Aristotle's *Poetics* as well as his *Rhetoric* (another attempt at summarizing his interpretation of doxa and *topoi* can be found in Eggs 2002). This illuminating work on ancient theories and their impact on contemporary thought is followed by Anne Herschberg Pierrot's comprehensive essay on the central contribution of Roland Barthes in all its complexity. Jean-Louis Dufays exemplifies a reader-oriented perspective, showing the constructive function of stereotypes in the reading process. These two essays drawing on textual analysis and reception theories are followed by Georges-Elia Sarfati's presentation of the contribution to cultural studies of lexicographical work based on topic analysis. In his analysis of the image of the Jew, Sarfati draws on Ducrot's pragmatic semantics and on his own works on representation in dictionaries. Ruth Amossy's essay offers to bridge the gap between pragmatics and discourse analysis, on the one hand, and rhetorical and literary criticism, on the other. Outlining a theory of argumentation in discourse in which doxa plays a crucial role, she tries to provide tools for text analysis. The closing article by Marc Angenot is a powerful essay going much beyond his previous work on *topoi* and social discourse. It raises the ques-

tion of the total incompatibility, in contemporary society, of diverse doxa that remain alien to each other and seem to allow for no possibility of common social life. Doxa is thus linked not only to the questions of dominant ideology and social efficacy, but also to the apparent aporia of postmodern cultures.²

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