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MÉMOIRES DU LIVRE
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SOCIO-CRITICISM, MEDIATIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Pascal BRISSETTE, Björn-Olav DOZO, Anthony GLINOER, Michel LACROIX and Guillaume PINSON

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following article was originally published in French in the journal *Texte* (Toronto), as part of the 2008–2009 issue entitled "Crossroads of Socio-criticism." This issue is available online on the Ressources socius website. It was the first collective contribution y members of GREMLIN (a research group on literary mediations and institutions), as part of a SSHRC-funded research project on representations of literary life in the francophone novel of the 19th and 20th centuries. The main works related to this project, published by the authors of the present article and by those who joined them as part of the GREMLIN, can be read here and are listed in Anthony Glinoer's article "Book and Literary-Life Imaginaries: A Historical, Sociological and Socio-Critical Project," published in 2016 in *Mémoires du livre / Studies in book Culture*. Almost ten years have passed since the original publication of the following article in French; several works, notably by Dominique Kalifa, Françoise Lavocat, and Michel Murat, have since expanded upon and refocused the questions it originally raised. Nevertheless, we believe that the latter remain pertinent.

The Challenges of the In-between

"It is not yet certain that the term 'socio-criticism' [...] has been purged of all ambiguity,"[1] wrote Claude Duchet in 1975. This "theoretical malaise," according to Duchet, should have been temporary, due to the novelty of socio-critical studies; nevertheless, everything indicates that the discomfort endures and that it generates its own set of *re-foundations* or theoretical

assessments.[2] Is this because of the lack of a specific object, which usually produces a coherent conceptual apparatus and a specific methodology, as Duchet posited? Rather, it is due to the state of in-betweenness inherent to the very objective of socio-criticism. Indeed, as soon as scholars seek to explore the sociality of the text, to elucidate the processes and stakes of the semiotic transformation of the social operated by and in the text, that is, to articulate textual and social phenomena by means of analysis, there is an inevitable "epistemological leap from text to context,"[3] a leap from theories and methods elaborated for an object (literature) to other approaches elaborated through distinct frameworks and perspectives (sociology, social history, sociolinguistics). However, lest the social be absorbed entirely into the text and made into a verbal construct, or everything be reduced to sociological considerations, scholars must make this leap.

It may well be that socio-criticism is entirely devoted to taking on and elucidating this awkward state, this in-betweenness, through the notion of mediation. On this subject, Duchet helpfully writes, "If it is true that there is nothing in the text that does not result from a certain action of society, . . . it is also true that this action is not directly accountable for anything, thus the decisive importance of mediations."[4] Similarly, Edmond Cros more recently writes that socio-criticism aims to reconstitute "the set of mediations that deconstruct, displace, reorganize, or re-semanticize the different representations of individual and collective experience."[5] Through this lens, socio-criticism can be defined as the study of the multiple forms of mediation between literature and the order of discourses, as well as between social discourse (which includes literary discourse) and the artistic, social, economic, political and religious phenomena of any given era. It is thus important to conceptually grasp these mediations, to identify the appropriate methods to elucidate them in order to clarify how the social is operated upon in different textual corpuses, whether or not these corpuses were produced and received as "literary."

Examining texts through a dynamic triangulation with the two other poles of discursive configurations and socio-historic configurations also precludes any frontal opposition with the discipline of sociology of literature, allowing the formation of other connections without creating any confusion between these two distinct approaches. It is rather a question of identifying how to achieve the necessary interdisciplinary work, for which approaches other

than the sociology of literature are indispensible. The ambition of socio-criticism within literary studies and, more generally, within the humanities and social sciences, may be exactly this: to (re)think and (re)read more specifically the dynamics of mediation between the social and its representations in all their historicity and textual density.

Interaction and Determinism

In this reading of socio-criticism's *work of the in-between*, we postulate that the logic underlying mediations and, more generally, relations between individuals and systems, fields, or frameworks of action, may be qualified as light determinism. We, therefore, do not subscribe to heavily deterministic conceptions that tend to overvalue the agency of overarching mechanisms. More particularly, we do not subscribe to studies of literature that reduce what plays out in texts and in discourses to the mere effects of laws, state of affairs, infrastructural hierarchies or hegemonies. Nor do we adhere to conceptions that focus solely on the actor and tend to consider structures and social mechanisms as emerging from the effects of his actions.

Rather, we subscribe to the perspective of limited autonomy and of partial constraint while highlighting the constant feedback between social structures and individual action, as well as between the diverse levels on which literature is deployed and to which it is attached. We thus aim to take into account both the determinisms and *illusio* phenomena (Bourdieu) for the diverse and fluctuating degrees of actors' knowledge of their own practices, and the diverse effects of their actions on structures. There is no dyed-in-the-wool ecumenism in this unstable positioning, but rather the aim to flesh out the forces and actions that are in a perpetual state of reconfiguration and interdependence. Moreover, the integration of a multiplicity of forms of mediation in an analytical framework allows us to distinguish the levels of determination and of interaction, and thus to escape from a deterministic and unilateral reading without removing determinations altogether: this is in line with the process that led many scholars in the social sciences to reconsider the works of Simmel and Elias. The latter, through his notion of "configuration," theoretically translated the dynamics of constant interdependencies, which presuppose the unique position of the individual within society at the same time as his or her dependence on the surrounding world.[6] This connection, which cannot be reduced to either

one or the other pole (there is no "individual" without a "society"; there is no "subject" without an "object"), may constitute the foundation of a new and fruitful way of thinking about the dual nature of what is both unique – the work of art – and nevertheless included from the beginning of the creative process in a network of interdependencies.

Singularity and Socialization

In the case of literature and of any activity directly related to the production and the circulation of semiotic objects that only make sense in reference to reception and interpretation, the often irreducible opposition between systematic and *individualizing* approaches begs the crucial question of singularity.[7]

Here, the major difficulty is to clarify the work operated in and by texts, the displacements, permutations, disturbances, and obfuscations these texts introduce, while at the same time avoiding the various pitfalls of "singularization," amongst which we might identify the following practices:

1) reproducing the system of singularity and originality that has remained predominant for over two centuries (the cult of genius)
2) attributing solely to literature or to texts that are socially instituted as "literary" those significant displacements in the order of discourse or symbolism
3) assuming as a qualitative shift what is perhaps no more than a variation without historical or strong hermeneutical significance
4) substituting the genius of the author with the brilliance of the scholar, who always knows, regardless of the object, how to draw out a form of textual singularity
5) basing one's work on a corpus that is too methodologically limited to allow any form of generalization on the role played by the reproduction and the transformation of social discourse in the creation of the text.

In order to avoid these pitfalls, it is important to focus the critical perspective on the constant interactions between singularity (as the global project of a universe, literature, and as part of the eventual characteristics of a text) and socialization (i.e. all forms of external determinism, of discursive reproduction, of manifestation of the social dimension of the text). This can

be achieved through the study of intermediary instances and operations, and the analysis of the multiple interactions, displacements, and obfuscations made possible by the diverse mediations from the social to the text (and back). From here, socio-criticism can play a specific role in social sciences and humanities research, insofar as it does not assume the singularity of its objects, but on the contrary proposes this singularity as a fundamental problem which it seeks to interrogate. For the socio-critical approach, it is greatly important to distinguish between the hermeneutical quality of its approach, whose first object of study is the relatively autonomous "unity" that is the text, and the singularity claim inherent to modern art.

In so doing, we do not intend to return to the positivism of large corpuses, of quantitative data, of the well-defined framework, or of profuse erudition. Neither do we intend to elaborate a protocol that will effortlessly lead to the discovery of mediations. As André Belleau points out, "indeed, critical practice aims much more at posing problems than at constructing models; it operates with pertinent interrogations, adequate concepts, a good knowledge of the field, and a great deal of observation."[8] However, if the "field," and thus, the appropriate methods, change with each study, interrogations and concepts are subject to more general reflections and invite us to periodically redefine the map of socio-criticism.

Mediations

In order to understand what the text does to the social, and what the social does to the text, it is necessary to identify the mediations that operate on any given text, and see how these mediations are retranslated or transposed in the text. However, despite the importance of the notion of mediation for socio-criticism, there have been few studies aimed at fleshing out its main shapes, with the exception of works by Edmond Cros and Alain Viala. We do not pretend to aim for an impossible exhaustiveness, but seek rather to identify the main axes of mediations that have been or should be examined. However, due to their diversity, any study of these mediations implies an interdisciplinary effort which, far from drowning out any socio-critical specificity, must lead socio-criticism to consider itself a federative approach. Through its desire to examine the sociality of the text in all of its forms, socio-criticism can integrate the questions, approaches, and methods of other traditions and disciplines, which become as many "auxiliary sciences."

Ruth Amossy writes, "The question remains open to these modes of analysis as 'explanations' of works or as a necessary step, involving a dialogue with other approaches."[9] We believe that, without denying its specificity or the indispensible participation of its forms of micro-readings, socio-criticism must resolutely opt for the second hypothesis. The socio-critical approach has no need to conceive of itself as a radical opposition, or as a form of isolationism that remains ignorant of other works that also aim, albeit through different perspectives, to elucidate the mediations between the text and the social. Socio-criticism must, on the contrary, show that it is indispensible to these types of analysis, in a division of critical work that remains open to various forms of collaboration.

Similarly, on a more concrete level, the overview of diverse axes of mediation must not be perceived as the statement of a research program or as a path to follow in the study of a corpus. We could not imagine suggesting the study of all possible mediations one after the other, as if this plurality guaranteed a hermeneutical supplement. In any case, to take all mediations into consideration would be difficult in a single research endeavour, all the more so if it is led by a single scholar within the restrictive limits of a scholarly article (the dominant model of academic production). For this reason, it is necessary to vary critical perspectives, to switch from one mediation to another, according to the studied objects, and to take into account the articulations between mediations from one case to another, since they never operate alone but always through a "prismatic apparatus."[10] For the same reason, collaborative research endeavours are of the utmost importance because they can help examine and explain several of these axes within the context of one project.[11]

"Discursive" Mediations

Discourse is the primordial level on which mediations play out. As Tynianov states, "Social life enters into correlation with literature above all due to its verbal nature."[12] This is the fundamental postulate of socio-criticism: the reproduction of the social in a text is above all discursive; the refraction of the social occurs first and foremost in formal procedures and the intertextual shell. This postulate is still relevant, more than forty years after the publication of Claude Duchet's foundational article (1971). Nevertheless, diverse approaches such as discourse analysis and the

concept of intermediality have contributed to new articulations of this original stage of mediations, thus making it useful to redefine its contours.

Social discourse, characterized as the cohesive, hierarchical and structured totality of discourses of any given historical period, which was theorized by Angenot (and inspired by the work of Bakhtine and Foucault), immerses each text in a generalized intertextuality, thereby connecting any sign of sociality belonging to this text, in both the statement and the enunciation, both the axiology and the axiomatic, to that which is enunciated in the contemporary discursive mass. This theory and its set of methodological tools gave a solid basis to the study of the co-text (to use the term proposed by Claude Duchet), and sparked a profound renewal of socio-criticism by calling into question, among others, the postulate of singularity.[13]

Different studies have introduced, through discourse analysis, other notions that may contribute to the elucidation of mediations, especially those related to ethos, to the enunciation scene, or to *paratopie* (Amossy and Maingueneau). Moreover, several sociolinguistic studies, such as those carried out by Labov (1972) and Milroy (1987), have explored the modulation and the symbolization of the social within the context of oral interactions; however, if their research, methods, and discoveries can help make sense of how discourse works with the social, there nevertheless seems to be a general and reciprocal disregard between sociolinguistics and socio-criticism.

Aside from the mass of printed texts, mediations that are due specifically to the "semiosphere," to productions that involve a symbolic dimension, must also be considered. From the fine arts to video games, to comic books, cinema, music and digital culture, these productions shape the social in ways that interact with other forms of discourse. In this sense, works dealing with intermediality seem likely to enrich socio-critical reflections on mediation, insofar as they take into consideration the inherently material and social, as well as semiotic character of texts (see the journals *Medium* and *Intermédialités*) in their own analyses of the "in-between."

At the same time as it is incorporated in these discursive and media-related sets, which impose, before any writing takes place, their own representations of the social and their own modes of representation, the text reworks them

through its own internal mediations, specifically mediations related to form. Determined to avoid sociology of content, socio-criticism has made formal mediations its main object of inquiry, the very foundation of its constitution as a distinct approach. If there is no need to insist once more on the importance of these "literary institutions," to borrow the expression of Alain Viala, one might nevertheless question the relative cohesion of studies. To put it brutally, one of the problems inherent to socio-criticism, which is partially due to the essentially *comprehensive* nature of its approach, is the *cumulativeness* of its discoveries. In what manner might the richness of socio-critical interpretations contribute to more general syntheses? How might we progress from the hermeneutics of specific corpuses to a history of formal mediations, as sketched out by the GREGES group, for example (1989)? In a certain way, these questions are related to the problem of *diachronism*, of the articulation between socio-criticism and history, which remains problematic, but rarely problematized.

Institutional Mediations

This first level of mediations, operating within and through language by means of formal, rhetorical, and semiotic resources belonging to each specific type of text, is in a way stripped of actors and processes, as if the literary process were immaterial and played itself out in a purely linguistic space. However, the mediation of the social takes place within the social and is linked to the action carried out by mediating instances between the text and the social. We therefore propose to distinguish from this level a second level of mediations possessing a double nature: on one hand, their involvement in the socialization of texts, their position as interface between the internal logic of the literary sphere and external logic (economical, ethical, religious or political constraints) makes these mediations abstract and procedural; on the other hand, by virtue of the processes put into motion, their effect becomes evident in a number of ways in the texts themselves, in the choice of forms, the work on intertextuality, the process of re-writing leading from the desire to write a specific text to its publication. The institutions of literary life[14] are not pure spaces of determination, external to the text; rather, they press closely on the text itself – on its writing and reading. Whether at the source, the end point, or the heart of the text, literary institutions are intertwined with the textualization process of the social.

The steps leading from manuscript to printed word mobilize two preliminary series of institutional mediations. The first consists in the mediations resulting from the circulation of pre-texts among many actors (counsellors, publishers, journal editors, professional readers, literary colleagues), the study of which may be illuminated by a socio-genesis integrating the role of these mediators to the assets of genetics. The second includes mediations produced by textual supports (manuscript, typescript, photocopy or printed text, type and format of paper, font, jacket, etc.), the study of which has been enriched by studies in book history and descriptive bibliography. These latter approaches neglect to ask, however, what textual materiality "says" about the social.[15] The text is always dependant on a multitude of actions deployed by several social actors. The mediations produced by mediators and by materiality itself are also closely related, even inseparable, since the intervention of the former often reveals itself to be decisive in the transformation of the text into a book. Imposing corrections, appending a title, fixing margins, or opting for a luxury paper or a large format are all operations that not only pertain to the "external surface" of the text, easy to analyze according to commercial logistics, but also pertain to other symbolic arrangements, which generate their own set of specific socialities.

Once a book is published and distributed, it does not lose all interest for the socio-critic, who would otherwise leave it to sociologies of reading and reception studies. For, through its social circulation, the text progresses through multiple institutional mediations that help sediment its meaning, interposing layers of reading between the text and its reader (socio-critic included). If we posit that socio-criticism can only adopt the postulate that the meaning of the text is not inherent, independent of its appropriations and interpretations, it follows that socio-criticism must attempt to articulate receptions and mediations of the text.

Thus, the socio-critic explores, among others: a) interferences between the text, the paratexts (dedications, epigraphs, frontispieces, back covers) and the *épitexte*[16] generated by the media coverage of the literary practice (interviews, photographic portraits, descriptions of writers' houses); b) the "triple game" that plays out in literature and in art between creators, specialists, and the public, through which the chain between the production

and the reception of the cultural product is re-established[17]; c) the "instances of recognition" (the publisher adding a certain title to his catalogue; the literary critic, neutral, polemical or even complacent, choosing to discuss or to not discuss a certain work) and the "instances of consecration"[18] (prizes and other gratifications) upon which is built a specific literary canon.

In this sense, one of the major contributions of the literary field theory, as elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu, has been to highlight the fruitfulness of a social logic that is specific to the literary sphere. Bourdieu thus stresses, alongside other examples, "the refraction exercised by the field [on] writers who are the most visibly subject to external necessities."[19] Though the reduction of texts to a series of stances within the literary field may seem to demote rather brutally the work of the text to the expression of a strategy (conscious or unconscious), it is necessary to take into consideration strategies inherent to the literary field (which remains "relatively" autonomous) when studying the phenomena of mediation through the examination of "effects of the field." This is not to say, it must be repeated, that this prism should be held as the ultimate key to interpretation.

Social Practices

We posit that, despite the decisive importance of institutional and discursive mediations, other "mediating" channels and other dialectics have an influence on the sociality of the text. This premise is mostly shared by scholars who practice socio-criticism; nevertheless, mediations operating on this level have not been studied and theorized much, despite André Belleau's statement, according to which "a properly constituted socio-criticism . . . could implicate not only a theory of the text but also a theory of society."[20] Almost thirty years later, the conditional is still appropriate, most likely since one refers here to questions that fall within other approaches and disciplines, in particular sociology and cultural history. Must one entirely surrender the study of relations between discourse and social practices, in particular questions of a historical nature, to these approaches? We think not, mainly because of the "triangular dialectic" between texts, discourses, and social phenomena, which is animated by the incessant confrontation between the order of discourse and the experience of the social experienced by each individual, consciously or not. Social

practices, in all their diversity and complexity, separate, hierarchize, and particularize the relation between the social and the individual.

In this line of thought, the proliferation of historical and sociological research on the social dimensions of culture or the cultural dimensions of the social deserves to be examined with particular attention by scholars. The works of R. Chartier, A. Corbin, C. Ginzburg, E. Levine, P. Burke and others in fact often integrate the question of representation while assembling corpuses that include legitimate literary texts, mass literature, samples of the discursive mass, etc. The analysis of these social practices, as an axis of mediation, constitutes what might be the best meeting ground between the socio-critical approach and other approaches, developed within other frameworks and based on other postulates. Thus arises the necessity of developing a critical form of interdisciplinarity concerned with avoiding syncretism and epistemological contradictions while remaining open to a conceptual and methodological dialogue or to collaborations based on shared objects of study.

Attempting to paint a portrait of all the mediations at work according to this axis would obviously be impossible, even if only its principal forms were to be sketched out. For that matter, the choice of which mediations to study essentially depends on each researcher's object of study. Nevertheless, we believe in the usefulness of underlining the heuristic quality of certain avenues, albeit in a succinct manner. Axiological constructions might represent a possible avenue, through the elaboration of norms, of values, and of hierarchies. Following the work carried out by Hamon (1998), who made obvious the importance of evaluative operations within texts and who examined, according to the notion of ideology, the relations between the *mise en texte* of value and socially significant systems of difference, it could be pertinent to elucidate the problem of value (of texts and within texts) based on practices, institutions, media, and other mediations played out in any given socio-historical situation. Certainly, the logic of distinction and sociological interpretations of reception have highlighted many aspects of this problem; nevertheless, a study of discursive and formal procedures must complete, and even rework such analyses since, here as much as elsewhere, form often constitutes a "sedimentation of content," to borrow the expression of Adorno.

The invention of collective identities intersects with this first avenue of research, but ultimately leads to other mediations. Here existed, on the conceptual level, a hiatus, an unbridgeable chasm between what is related to the most tangible phenomena and most solidly set in reality (social classes, for example), and what is sometimes related to fantasy or reflection (literature). Different trends in anthropology and sociology have helped to bridge this gap, notably by showing the importance of discourse in the construction of imagined communities (the nation, for Anderson[21]) or the importance of rhetoric in social interactions,[22] to give only two examples. The convergence with socio-criticism, which has itself contributed to different articulations of social identities and formal mediations, owes much to the "linguistic turn" taken by social sciences and can often obscure the profound incompatibility of epistemological frameworks. Studies on the socio-discursive construction of identities are indeed occupied by a quantity of distinct perspectives, from feminism to post-colonialism, from the study of sites of memory to deconstructions of historiographical narrations. Socio-criticism still has a role to play in this field and might seek to identify the approaches with which a dialogue would be the most fruitful, in order to eventually identify with more clarity and depth, in the case of certain objects, the levels of mediation that modulate social divides.

Many other avenues might support the analyses of discursive mediations and of literary life by providing an opening for mediations that operate within the framework of social practices, as well as for other approaches or disciplines related to these practices. The city or labour might be valid options, for example, but for the sake of conciseness, only the avenue of sociability will be examined here. The social is not only a question of abstract determinations, of anonymous masses, of categories, or of transversal mechanisms. It also includes concrete social interactions, local "communities" that serve as filters between the social and its representations, notably through "*sociolects*," which form the basis of Zima's study on the Proustian novel (1988). It is thus important to account for sociabilities as forms of mediation, because the connection between writers and the social passes through this filter and because any contact with literature, discourse, forms of capital, and social divisions is in a way channelled and directed by interactions with others and by local configurations at the heart of which writers are placed (reviews, publishing houses, literary circles, associations, more or less formal networks). Thus,

there are necessarily discrepancies between a) the totality of what is published in any given society; b) the part of this totality that is the object of discourse in the media; c) books that are circulated and become the subject of conversation and discussion within any given group. These discrepancies produce certain effects, encourage certain readings, direct towards certain forms of writing, and introduce distortions between social discourse, the field, and writers. In short, much more than an anecdotal aside, sociability operates as a significant mediation between literature and society.

The Social Imaginary

Often used yet rarely theorized, the notion of the "social imaginary" appears to be one of the important mediations of the social, which the socio-critic must continue to investigate.[23] Closely tied to the development of research on social discourse, this notion has always possessed a fundamentally ambivalent nature, caught between description and prescription. It refers to both what society dreams of, and what has the power to make society dream, as Pierre Popovic recently proposed.[24] The main virtue of this concept may well be that it seeks to summarize the effects of fiction in the social world, the feedback and the determinations that influence reality, impact sensibilities, even command actions, from an almost anthropological perspective: according to Angenot and Robin, "the text contributes to the production of a social imaginary, of figures of identity (and of identification) for social groups, of representations of the world that have a social function."[25]

At this level, the conceptual shifts and recoveries are often difficult to follow in all their ramifications. The literary text works in a very particular form of intertextuality, of which the object is the "socialization" of the text and literary imaginaries. The well-known stories of "misreadings," which are not without consequences on "reality" (*Don Quixote, Madame Bovary*), or those of the mediations of art and literature on aesthetic appreciations of reality (*À la recherche du temps perdu*), bear witness to the fact that there is no place more attentive to the effects of literature than literature itself. From the social imaginary should also arise a reflection on the "mythical imaginary"[26] in the sense that literature reactivates great historical myths and helps shape and crystallize them by integrating them into the practices and rites of writing. Take, for example, the myth of Bohemia, inseparable from

the formation of the idea of literary and artistic modernity, at the root of which one finds a series of social stereotypes (the wandering Bohemians), *topoï* (the poor but happy artist), scenes (the orgy, the frugal dinner, the hospital bed), key characters (the *grisette*, the painter' apprentice, the decrepit poet, the landlord), which are formed in France during the July Monarchy. From Murger to Puccini, to Vallès and Bloy, the myth of Bohemia "precipitates" in a series of literary works that claim to reflect a certain mode of artistic life but in fact contribute to the creation of types of practices and rituals that are, in turn, exported to the great cities of Europe and America.[27]

There is no reason to limit the social imaginary to the realm of literature, even though literature has no doubt long been its predominant element, and the novel most particularly from the 19th century onwards. There is no reason either to return to literary solipsism, to the restrictive examination of the literary world as it imagines itself. It is rather a question of examining a certain "efficacy" of discourse, and notably the values that make up the social imaginary and that ensure a great deal of feedback on the social and practices. In other words, interrogating a certain form of "inertia" of the literary imaginary might allow us to observe and analyze its capacity to permeate the social world, to last throughout history, and to provide societies with frameworks of appreciation and judgement. In this, the social imaginary most likely develops on the edge of that which cultural history has proposed around the notion of representation.[28]

This overview of mediations delineates a vast territory shared by many perspectives and disciplines. As we have stated, it does not constitute a program of research, but rather invites us to think about the articulation between socio-critical research, carried out in regards to specific objects, generally on a short- or medium-term horizon, and the conceptualization of multiple forms and axes of mediation, which is never complete and ever renewing. This overview also seeks to consider this research and these conceptualizations while taking into account the sites of convergence, dialogue, and confrontation (lest we subscribe to an idealized vision of academic research) between the various perspectives and disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. Socio-criticism must not be diluted within the larger field of sociology of literature, of discourse analysis, of cultural history, of intermediality, of the history of the book, but it must accept

more clearly the fact that its areas of research and many of its most fundamental interrogations are shared with these approaches, and that, consequently, it must take into consideration this inevitable interdisciplinarity. It is up to scholars of socio-criticism to borrow from the several tool boxes available to them those instruments best suited to shed light on their object of study.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Pascal Brissette is a professor in the Department of French language and literature at McGill University. His recent work focuses on poetry events in Montreal and the connections between poetry and the media. He is the director of the CIRM (Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Montreal) and participates in research led by the GREMLIN (a research group on literary mediations and institutions)

Björn-Olav Dozo teaches popular culture and digital humanities at the Université de Liège. His work examines the video game press. He co-edited, with Fanny Barnabé, the issue of *Mémoires du livre / Studies in Book Culture* on the relationships between books and video games.

Anthony Glinoer holds the Canada Research Chair in the history of publishing and literary sociology and is a professor at the Université de Sherbrooke. His work focuses primarily on the history of publishing (*Naissance de l'Éditeur. L'édition à l'âge romantique* with Pascal Durand in 2005), on the study of representations of the literary life in literature (co-editor of *Fictions du champ littéraire* in 2010, of *Imaginaires de la vie littéraire* in 2012 and of *Romans à clés* in 2014), and on groups of authors and artists (*L'âge des cénacles. Confraternités littéraires et artistiques au XIX^e siècle* with Vincent Laisney in 2013). The director of the GREMLIN, Anthony Glinoer also launched the Socius project in 2014, which has produced re-editions of the classics in literary social theory, re-edited or original bibliographies, and a lexicon of concepts introduced by an international team (see the open-access site ressources-socius.info).

Michel Lacroix teaches Quebec literature and sociology of literature at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He is a member of the GREMLIN, of the writing team of "La Vie littéraire au Québec," and of the Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature et la culture québécoises. His current research projects are centered on literary groups and periodicals, and on metafiction. He is the author of *De la beauté comme violence* and *L'invention du retour d'Europe. Réseaux transatlantiques et transferts culturels*.

Guillaume Pinson is a professor in the Université Laval Department of literatures and the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences. His research focuses on the history of media culture in Europe and French North America. He is the co-director of the *Médias 19* (www.medias19.org) project with Marie-Ève Thérenty, and the SSHRC-funded "Le Canada de Jules Verne" project with Maxime Prévost (University of Ottawa). He has published *La culture médiatique francophone en Europe et en Amérique du Nord, de 1760 à la veille de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Québec: PUL, 2016); *L'imaginaire médiatique, histoire et fiction du journal au 19e siècle* (Paris: Garnier, 2012); and, in 2008, *Fiction du monde. De la presse mondaine à Marcel Proust* (Montréal, PUM).

Notes

[1] Claude Duchet, "Introduction. Le projet sociocritique: problèmes et perspectives," in *La lecture sociocritique du texte romanesque*, eds. Graham Falconer and Henri Mitterand (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1975), 5.

[2] On the history of socio-criticism, see Edmond Cros, *La sociocritique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003); Marc Angenot, *Bibliographie de la sociocritique et de la sociologie de la littérature* (Montréal: CIADEST, 1994); and Anthony Glinoer, "Introduction," in *Carrefours de la sociocritique* (Toronto: Trintexte, 2009), 7–10.

[3] André Belleau, *Le romancier fictif. Essai sur la représentation de l'écrivain dans le roman québécois* (Québec: Nota Bene, 1999 [1980]), 78.

[4] Claude Duchet, "Positions et perspectives," in *Sociocritique*, ed. Claude Duchet (Paris: Nathan, 1979), 4.

[5] Edmond Cros, *La sociocritique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 37. A major current of the sociology of art and of music, following the work of Baxandall, Howard Becker, Nathalie Heinich and Antoine Hennion, has from an early stage integrated the notions of mediation and mediator. According to Hennion, "If other readings give justice to the sociology of art, it is striking to state that its task may be summarized as a restitution, either empirical or theoretical, of the mediators of art." Antoine Hennion, "La sociologie de l'art est une sociologie du médiateur," in *L'art de la recherche. Essais en l'honneur de Raymonde Moulin*, eds. Pierre-Michel Menger and Jean-Claude Passeron (Paris: La documentation française, 1994), 171. However, the notion of mediation has been so invasive, that at this stage in time it plays the role of "keystone" for this trend of sociology of art, sometimes leading to a obfuscation either of the hermeneutics of works, or of the set of beliefs, competitions, and conflicts in which all these interventions take place.

[6] "Contemporary usage would lead us to believe that the two distinct concepts, 'the individual' and 'society,' denote two independently existing objects, whereas they really

refer to two different but inseparable levels of the human word." Norbert Elias, *What is Sociology?* (London: Hutchinson, 1978 [1970]), 129.

[7] In regards to the opposition between the system of singularity and the system of community in the spheres of cultural activity, see the works of Nathalie Heinich, such as *L'Élite artiste. Excellence et singularité en régime démocratique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005).

[8] André Belleau, *Le romancier fictif. Essai sur la représentation de l'écrivain dans le roman québécois* (Québec: Nota Bene, 1999 [1980]), 14.

[9] Ruth Amossy, "Sociologie de la littérature," in *Dictionnaire du littéraire*, eds. Paul Aron, Denis Saint-Jacques, and Alain Viala (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 581.

[10] Alain Viala, "Effets de champ, effets de prisme," *Littérature* 70 (1988): 70–71.

[11] Although this overview of forms of mediation does not constitute a program of research, the reflection on the determinations, interactions, and transformations that inspired it is in part tied to a specific project. This project, carried out with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, aims to reconstitute the vast corpus of novels about literary life in France, which, from 1800 to 1940, show the writer interacting with his peers and diverse literary mediators, in order to examine how, at the exact moment when it imposed itself as a social space, literature thought of itself, by way of the novel, as a site of socialization, of identity mooring, and of collective work.

[12] Iouri Tynianov, "De l'évolution littéraire," in *Théories de la littérature*, ed. Tzvetzan Todorov (Paris: Seuil, 2001 [1925-1927]). Cited in Edmond Cros, *La sociocritique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 31.

[13] It is important, on the other hand, to not turn theory on its head by substituting to the research of regularities and repetitions a quest that is essentially preoccupied with the identification of anomalies and interferences.

[14] Alain Viala, "L'Histoire des institutions littéraires," in *L'Histoire littéraire aujourd'hui*, eds. Henri Béhar and Roger Fayolle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990), 111–21.

[15] The exception is the trend issuing from the work of Donald F. McKenzie, who proposes the aim of a "sociology of texts" because such an endeavour seeks to provide a social signification to all aspects of the book: "In the pursuit of historical meanings, we move from the most minute feature of the material form of the book to questions of authorial, literary, and social context." *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 23. If his proposition deals primarily with the material aspects of the book and what these materialities can teach us about the "intentions" of authors and publishers, it has the merit of resisting scholars' tendency to passively accept disciplinary boundaries.

[16] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997 [1987]).

[17] Nathalie Heinich, *Le triple jeu de l'art contemporain* (Paris: Minuit, 1998).

[18] Jacques Dubois, *L'institution de la littérature. Introduction à une sociologie* (Bruxelles: Nathan, 1979).

[19] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996 [1992]), 221.

[20] André Belleau, *Le romancier fictif. Essai sur la représentation de l'écrivain dans le roman québécois* (Québec: Nota Bene, 1999 [1980]), 128.

[21] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991 [1983]).

[22] Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[23] Régine Robin (1993) wrote the constitutive article on this topic without proposing a concrete definition of the social imaginary.

[24] According to Popovic, the social imaginary, or "l'imaginaire social" is a "waking dream" that "each society maintains according to its own needs and usage"; it is "composed of interactive sets of correlative representations, organized in latent fictions, recomposed unceasingly by speech, texts, photos and images, discourses and works of art." *Imaginaire social et folie littéraire. Le second Empire de Paulin Gagne* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2008), 24

[25] Marc Angenot and Régine Robin, "L'inscription du discours social dans le texte littéraire," *Sociocriticism* 1 (1985): 53.

[26] Henri Mitterand, *Zola, l'histoire et la fiction* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1990).

[27] Pascal Brissette and Anthony Glinoer, eds., *Bohème sans frontière* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010).

[28] Roger Chartier (1989) provides a useful synthesis of the vast number of works that deal with this issue.

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