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The Issue of Value in Saussure and Vološinov / *A questão do valor em Saussure e em Volóchinov*

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ABSTRACT
This text is theoretical and seeks to achieve a double objective. First, it aims to contribute to a more solid understanding of the theory of value derived from the thought of the Genevan linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. To do so, it presents the three different types of value that, according to Bouquet (2004), are included in the Saussurean theory: the value relative to the internal element, the value relative to the systemic element, and, finally, the value relative to the discursive element. Second, this text tries to make the theory of social evaluation in the word known, at least in part, as proposed by the Russian thinker Valentin N. Vološinov. For this purpose, based on Gomes (2023), it seeks to present three key points to understanding this theory: the distinction between meaning and social evaluation, the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language, and, finally, the relationship between social evaluation and historical becoming.
KEYWORDS: Theory of value; Theory of social evaluation in the word; Axiology; Saussure; Vološinov

RESUMO
O presente texto é de natureza teórica e procura alcançar um duplo objetivo. Em primeiro lugar, ele busca contribuir para um entendimento mais sólido a respeito da teoria do valor oriunda do pensamento do linguista genebrino Ferdinand de Saussure. Para isso, apresenta os três diferentes tipos de valor que, segundo Bouquet (2004), estão abarcados na teoria saussuriana: o valor relativo ao elemento interno, o valor relativo ao elemento sistêmico e, por fim, o valor relativo ao elemento discursivo. Em segundo lugar, este texto intenta dar a conhecer, ao menos em parte, a teoria da avaliação social na palavra, tal como proposta pelo pensador russo Valentin N. Volóchinov. Para tal, baseado em Gomes (2023), procura apresentar três pontos capitais para a compreensão dessa teoria: a distinção entre significação e avaliação social, a relação entre avaliação social e caráter criativo da linguagem e, finalmente, a relação entre avaliação social e devir histórico.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Teoria do valor; Teoria da avaliação social na palavra; Axiologia; Saussure; Volóchinov

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> We can never forget that a thinker, whomever they may be, is part of a great historical current. In other words, thought has history and is made in history.[1]
> *Carlos Alberto Faraco*

Preliminary Considerations

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is usually attributed to the theoretical proposal present in the *Course in General Linguistics* (hereinafter, *CGL* or *Course*), published in 1916. And as such a proposal came to shape much of the linguistics developed in the following decades, naturally, from time to time, to clarify, complement, or contest, various principles and concepts present in the *CGL* were revisited.

Among the formulations contained in the *Course* that refer to synchronic linguistics, the so-called "theory of value" seems to resist as one of those that most provoke doubts. I mean, no one questions its existence, but even so, finding its definition in minimally clear terms is still a challenge.

In this sense, Saussure has some advantage over the Russian thinker Valentin N. Vološinov (1895-1936), author of the already famous *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (hereinafter *MPL*), from 1929. Even with the great attention that the West attributes to his *magnum opus*, the very existence of a theory of value in Vološinov seems extraordinarily little known.

It is in virtue of these two facts that this text is proposed. In other words, what justifies this text is, on the one hand, the challenge of finding a minimally clear definition for what Saussure's "theory of value" would be, and, on the other hand, the challenge of making the "theory of social evaluation in the word," by Vološinov, known.

Faced with these reasons, it is worth pointing out the two objectives of this text. First, it intends to contribute to a more solid understanding of Saussure's theory of value. Second, it aims to make Vološinov's thinking around value — or, if you like, social evaluation — known, at least in part. Certainly, these objectives are simple but no less important.

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[1] Original in Portuguese: "Nunca podemos esquecer que um pensador, qualquer que seja, está inserido numa grande corrente histórica. Em outros termos, o pensamento tem história e se faz na história."

To achieve these objectives, the text seeks to synthesize some considerations by Bouquet (2004) about Saussure. More precisely, it tries to present the three different types of value that, according to Bouquet (2004), are encompassed in the Saussurean theory: the value relative to the internal element, the value relative to the systemic element and, finally, the value relative to the discursive element.[2] The text also seeks to synthesize some considerations by Gomes (2023) about Vološinov. Based on Gomes (2023), it seeks to present three main points for understanding Vološinov's theory of social evaluation in the word: the distinction between meaning and social evaluation, the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language, and, finally, the relationship between social evaluation and historical becoming.

To conclude, in addition to highlighting that, in Saussure and Vološinov, the issue of value is conducted in different ways, the text uses a provocation around the knowledge that both linguists held about the German academic environment of the second half of the 19th century.

1 Saussure and the Theory of Value

In the specialized literature, finding the affirmation that value, or the theory of value, is the central point in Ferdinand de Saussure's reflection is not difficult.[3] What seems difficult to find is a clear definition of what is the concept expressed by the term that corresponds to "value" in Saussure's texts or in the texts attributed to him.

Among Saussure's best-known commentators, the notion of value is often handled in different ways — when it is not, just as often, conveniently silenced. Therefore, in this context, it is worth giving way to what can be seen as one of the most rigorous works to deal with this problem: the work *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure* [*Introduction to Saussure's Readings*].

Originally published in 1997 and arising from the provocative — and therefore necessary — quill of Simon Bouquet, *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure* devotes a few

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[2] It is worth remembering that Simon Bouquet, for better or for worse, is notable for his strongly critical position on the *Course in General Linguistics*, as he understands that the said work does not reflect Saussure's thinking. Therefore, as this text is partially anchored in the exposition that Bouquet (2004) makes about value, the scarcity, here, of recourse to the *CGL* text is justified.

[3] In this regard, see Bouquet (2004, p.255), Normand (2009, p.158), Normand and Silveira (2009, p.223), Silveira (2009, p.40), Matsuzawa (2014, p.84), Flores (2023, p.106), among others.

dozen pages to the issue of value. And it does so from a critical apparatus that ranges from the famous *CGL* to some original writings by Saussure himself — passing, of course, through class notes, prepared by some students of the master from Geneva.

To further dive into Bouquet's (2004) sayings concerning a theory of value in Saussure, it is first necessary to consider what the French researcher writes about the idea of arbitrariness. For Bouquet, since it concerns two types of relationships, the phenomenon that we usually call "arbitrariness of the sign" — and that the author, prudently, prefers to name *arbitrary of language* (Bouquet, 2004, p.233)[4] — can be thought of in two different degrees.

The first degree refers to the constitution of the sign itself. That is why the author then talks about an *internal arbitrary of the sign* (Bouquet, 2004, p.234).[5] It is under the aegis of this first degree that a given signifier can be considered arbitrary regarding a given signified. Similarly, it is under the support of this first degree that a given signified can be considered as arbitrary with a given signifier. Finally, it is anchored in this first degree that the encounter between a certain signifier and a certain signified in a specific sign can be considered arbitrary.

As for the second degree of the arbitrary, Bouquet (2004) considers that it refers to the phonological and semantic specificities of a given language. That is why the author then talks about a *systemic arbitrary of the sign* (Bouquet, 2004, p.235).[6] It is under the aegis of this second degree that "the number of signifiers and the distinctive characteristics of signifiers" (Bouquet, 2004, p.235)[7] of a given language can be considered arbitrary. Likewise, it is based on this second degree that "the number of signifieds and the distinctive characteristics of signifieds" (Bouquet, 2004, pp.235-236)[8] of a given language can be considered arbitrary.

Bouquet's (2004) considerations around Saussure's theory of the arbitrary harmonize with many other considerations presented by the author throughout his work. In any case, for these pages, the brief explanation of the two degrees of the arbitrary is already sufficient to advance in terms of Saussure's theory of value.

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[4] In Portuguese: "arbitrário da língua."
[5] In Portuguese: "arbitrário interno do signo."
[6] In Portuguese: "arbitrário sistêmico do signo."
[7] In Portuguese: "o número de significantes e as características distintivas dos significantes."
[8] In Portuguese: "o número de significados e as características distintivas dos significados."

According to Bouquet (2004), a rigorous analysis of Saussurean writings and student's notes allows us to state that the theory of value proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure is a semantic theory. In the words of the French researcher,

> the theory of value outlined in the lectures of June 23, 27, 30, and July 4 is simultaneously characterized by its generality — that is, by its unified character, which is one of the senses in which we understand this term — and presented "in all its complexity."[9] Unified, this theory of linguistic value is so much of a theory as far as the phenomenon it reflects, indifferently called by Saussure as *sense* or *signification*, is conceived as unitary. Complex, this theory of value is so much a theory as far as it coordinates two facts, themselves complex. The first fact (which can be called, in a stenogram, [the fact] of value *in absentia*) makes the theory of value and the theory of the arbitrary correspond term by term. The second fact (which can be labeled as [the fact] of value *in praesentia*) associates a value arising from the syntagmatic fact with this value arising from the arbitrariness of language. It is in the combination of these two facts that the linguist sees (...) the essence of the semantic fact (Bouquet, 2004, p.255).[10]

As can be seen, Bouquet (2004) assumes that the Saussurean theory of value is *complex* because it brings together on the one hand, what he names "value *in absentia*" and, on the other hand, what he names "value *in praesentia*." The aforementioned excerpt also shows that the French researcher enforces the *semantic nature* of Saussure's theory of value. Thus, to be more precise, the excerpt in evidence shows us that the author of *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure* links the semantic nature of the theory to the complexity of the theory. Therefore, to effectively understand the semantic nature of theory of value, it is necessary to understand Bouquet's distinction between value *in absentia* and value *in praesentia*.

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[9] In the phrase "in all its complexity," Bouquet (2004) uses quotation marks because he is resuming an excerpt from Saussure's sayings to Gauthier — one of his students —, as compiled by Robert Godel in the famous *Les sources manuscrites du Cours de linguistique générale by Ferdinand de Saussure*.

[10] In Portuguese: "a teoria do valor esboçada nas aulas de 23, 27, 30 de junho e 4 de julho é, ao mesmo tempo, caracterizada por sua generalidade — ou seja, por seu caráter unificado, que é um dos sentidos em que entendemos esse termo — e apresentada 'em toda a sua complexidade'. Unificada, essa teoria do valor linguístico o é na medida em que o fenômeno que ela reflete, denominado indiferentemente por Saussure *sentido* ou *significação*, é concebido como unitário. Complexa, essa teoria do valor o é na medida em que coordena dois fatos, eles mesmos complexos. O primeiro fato (que se pode denominar, num estenograma, o do valor *in absentia*) faz corresponder termo a termo a teoria do valor e a teoria do arbitrário. O segundo fato (que se pode etiquetar como o do valor *in praesentia*) associa, a esse valor proveniente do arbitrário da língua, um valor proveniente do fato sintagmático. É na combinação desses dois fatos que o linguista vê (...) a essência do fato semântico."

As can be read in the aforementioned excerpt, based on the idea of value *in absentia*, Bouquet (2004) assumes that the theory of value establishes symmetry with the theory of the arbitrary in Saussure's formulation. And this symmetry is justified through two considerations.

First, Bouquet justifies the symmetry between value *in absentia* and the theory of the arbitrary by stating that, just as the arbitrary of the sign presents an internal characteristic to the sign — I reiterate: a characteristic related to the constitution of the sign itself —, the idea of value *in absentia* encompasses an *internal value of the sign* (2004, p.257).[11] In this case, what is meant more specifically is that

> (1) the signifier responds for its signified; to that extent, *the signified is the value of that signifier*; (2) the signified responds to its signifier; to that extent, *the signifier is the value of that signified*; (3) signifier and signified respond simultaneously to each other; to that extent, *the signifier and the signified are simultaneously each other's value* (Bouquet, 2004, p.258).[12]

This excerpt, which is followed by pertinent examples extracted from Saussurean texts, leaves no doubt: what Bouquet (2004) brings together under the expression "internal value" encompasses three different senses for "value." In the first sense, which the author admits is more intuitive and linked to classical lexicology, the term "value" is equivalent to the Saussurean concept of "signified." In the second sense, which the author recognizes as linked to comparative linguistics, the term "value" is equivalent to the Saussurean concept of "signifier." Finally, in the third sense, the term "value" is equivalent to the dyad established by the necessary simultaneity of the two values mentioned in the previous senses.

Thus, by coining the expression "internal value," Bouquet (2004) aims to specify terminologically what, according to his understanding, would be the *exchangeable element* that Saussure talks about. And, to the extent that, as interpreted by the French scholar, this element can take the form of the signifier, the form of the signified, and the

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[11] In Portuguese: "valor interno do signo."

[12] In Portuguese: "(1) o significante responde pelo seu significado; nessa medida, *o significado é o valor desse significante*; (2) o significado responde pelo seu significante; nessa medida, *o significante é o valor desse significado*; (3) significante e significado respondem simultaneamente um pelo outro; nessa medida, *o significante e o significado são simultaneamente o valor um do outro*."

form resulting from the encounter between these two, it becomes possible to speak of an *internal element of the sign* — especially in the first two cases.

Second, Bouquet justifies the symmetry between value *in absentia* and the theory of the arbitrary by stating that, just as the arbitrary of the sign has a systemic face — I repeat: a face related to the phonological and semantic specificities of a given language —, the idea of value *in absentia* encompasses a *systemic value of the sign* (Bouquet, 2004, p.259).[13] In this case, what is meant more precisely is that the value of a sign depends on what this sign has around it in terms of an associative family. Thus — and Bouquet (2004) is not responsible for this example — when it is stated that "in some languages, it is not possible to say 'sit in the sun'" (Saussure, 2011, p.116),[14] the aim is to emphasize that the "sun" sign owes its value to the signs with which it forms an associative family, such as, for example, the "moon" sign. Therefore, where the distinction between the two stars is not linguistically marked — and the examples are many (Lévi-Strauss, 1980)[15] —, the sign "sun" does not have the same value as its equivalent in languages where there is such a distinction.

When addressing this second face of value *in absentia*, the French researcher reinforces the idea that it is a mistake to assume conceptual homogeneity in Saussure's use of the French term corresponding to the English "value." Thus, by coining the expression "systemic value," Bouquet (2004) aims to specify terminologically what, according to his understanding, would be the *comparable element* that Saussure talks about. According to the interpretation of the French scholar, this element can only be determined by comparison with other elements of the same nature that make up the large set of existing elements in a given language, which makes it possible to speak of a *systemic element.*

As can be seen, what has been exposed so far refers to what constitutes the value *in absentia* that Bouquet (2004) refers to. And, if understood correctly, it is in this value *in absentia* that we can recognize the systemic character of linguistic value, as it appears in the *CGL*.

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[13] In Portuguese: "valor sistêmico do signo."

[14] SAUSSURE, F. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by W. Baskin; edited by P. Meisel and H. Saussy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. As one can read in Bouquet's text (2004), this idea, which was included in history through the *CGL*, appears both in Dégalier's notes and in Constantin's notes.

[15] LÉVI-STRAUSS, C. The Sex of the Sun and Moon. *In*: LÉVI-STRAUSS, C. *Structural Anthropology. Vol. 2*. Translated by M. Layton. New York: Basic Books, 1980, pp.211-221.

At this point, however, it is necessary to do more than summarize the interpretation of the French scholar, it is necessary to point out one issue: for those readers accustomed to the *Course*,[16] it is possible to have the idea that, while the exchangeable element concerns associative relationships — relationships that unite terms *in absentia* —, the comparable element refers to syntagmatic relationships — relationships that unite terms *in praesentia*.

However, by all indications, this is one of the possible interpretive mistakes that *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure* helps to undo. By bringing both the changeable element and the comparable element together under the expression "value *in absentia*," Bouquet (2004) makes clear his interpretation that, in Saussure's rationale, the comparable element still does not allude to syntagmatic relations. According to the French researcher, in his use within his discussion of the Saussurean theory of value, the expression *in absentia* refers to "the fact that the sign is considered *in language, in the absence of any syntagmatic insertion*" (Bouquet, 2004, p.257).[17] Thus, to think about syntagmation — or, if you like, syntagmatization —, it is necessary to look at what Bouquet (2004) calls *value in praesentia*, about which he states:

> (...) the value *in praesentia* encompasses everything that syntax studies in language — the word *syntax* being understood in the most general sense of a theory of the syntagmatic fact, in other words, of a theory of that which is within the competence of the linear, i.e., "spatial" character of linguistic production (Bouquet, 2004, p.269).[18]

Because of this passage, before summarizing how Bouquet (2004) links associative and syntagmatic relations with the values *in absentia* and *in praesentia*, it is worth noting his description of the value *in praesentia*. The researcher considers that, because syntax comes from linguistic production — namely, from discourse —,

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[16] Especially accustomed with the second section of the chapter "Linguistic Value" — namely the section "Linguistic Value from a Conceptual Viewpoint" — and with the first section of the chapter "Syntagmatic and Associative Relations" — in special the section "Definitions."

[17] In Portuguese: "ao fato de que o signo é considerado *na língua, na ausência de toda inserção sintagmática.*"

[18] In Portuguese: "o valor *in praesentia* abrange tudo o que a sintaxe estuda na linguagem — sendo que a palavra *sintaxe* deve ser entendida no sentido mais geral de uma teoria do fato sintagmático, em outras palavras, de uma teoria do que é da competência do caráter linear, ou seja "espacial", da produção linguística."

characterizing the *in praesentia* value as syntagmatic means assuming that the *in praesentia* value is of a discursive order; it is, then, a *discursive element*.

Thus, in a synthesis of the connection that Bouquet (2004) establishes between associative and syntagmatic relations and values *in absentia* and *in praesentia*, it is clear that, while the value *in absentia* is related to associative relations, i.e. relations that are orchestrated in the field of the human mind, the value *in praesentia* circumscribes syntagmatic relations, that is, spatial relations that are arranged in the realization of human linguistic production. Under these conditions, it is not without reason that the French scholar insists on the idea that, in the Saussurean way of thinking, more than once, the distinction between associative relations and syntagmatic relations mirrors the distinction between language and speech respectively — or, better yet, language and discourse.

With this exposition, the interpretation of the Saussurean theory of value proposed in *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure* is clearly shown: through the French term corresponding to the English, "value," Saussure refers (i) to the internal element — which is exchangeable — (ii) the systemic element — which is comparable — and, finally, (iii) the discursive element, where the first two concern associative relations and the last concerns syntagmatic relations. And, still according to Bouquet (2004), it is precisely in the coupling of the internal and systemic elements with the discursive element that the semantic face of the Saussurean theory of value is placed.

Finally, as you can see, for those who have become accustomed to thinking of Saussurean reflection as restricted to the system, there is something different. Following the interpretation proposed by Bouquet (2004), one arrives at the understanding that, in Saussure's thought, on the one hand, the value emanates from the system — in part, it is the value *in absentia* — and, on the other hand, the value emanates from the discourse — it is the value *in praesentia*. And that is why, at the end of the chapter in which he discusses value, the French researcher writes:

> can we say that, given his syntagmatic theory of value, that, due to the non-elaboration of the notion of "speech" (or "discourse"), Saussure failed, in his program, to place epistemological concepts that would allow theories of syntactic competence, linguistic pragmatics or discourse analysis? On the contrary: his concept of "value *in praesentia*" outlines the program of these linguistics. Furthermore, if others — whether semanticists, syntacticians, or pragmatists — thematized epistemological concepts linked to this value *in praesentia*,

concepts that do not appear in the *Cours* and that only appear implicitly in the original texts, it would not be fair to be dissatisfied with the Genevan master and claim, right there, a rupture with their epistemological program: it is easy to show that their linguistics is, on the contrary, essentially built on this program (Bouquet, 2004, p.280).[19]

2 Vološinov and the Theory of Social Evaluation in the Word

Contrary to what happens with Saussure, Valentin N. Vološinov's reflection around a theory of value — that is, around an axiology — is often disregarded. And among the many facts that could be listed to explain such disregard, one needs to be highlighted: the fact that not infrequently, Vološinov's *magnum opus* — namely, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* — was taken as being authored by his friend Mikhail M. Bakhtin and, therefore, was read from a theoretical perspective that proposes as a point of arrival that, for Vološinov, was a starting point.

Therefore, to contribute to the recognition and understanding of what Vološinov once called the "theory of social evaluation in the word" (Voloshinov, 2004, p.249),[20] it is worth giving rise to three main points of the referred theory: (i) the distinction between meaning and social evaluation; (ii) the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language; and, finally, (iii) the relationship between social evaluation and historical becoming.[21]

Regarding the *distinction between meaning and social evaluation*, it is necessary to observe what appears in the essay "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art: Concerning Sociological Poetics" (hereinafter also *DLDA*), from 1926. In this text, which begins

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[19] In Portuguese: "podemos dizer, face à sua teoria sintagmática do valor, que, devido à não-elaboração da noção de 'fala' (ou de 'discurso'), Saussure deixou, em seu programa, de colocar conceitos epistemológicos que permitiriam teorias da competência sintática, da pragmática linguística ou da análise do discurso? Ao contrário: seu conceito de 'valor *in praesentia*' delineia o programa dessas linguísticas. Além disso, se outros — sejam eles semanticistas, sintaticistas ou pragmáticos — tematizaram conceitos epistemológicos ligados a esse valor *in praesentia*, conceitos que não aparecem no *Cours* e que aparecem apenas de maneira implícita nos textos originais, não seria justo ficarem descontentes com o mestre genebrino e reivindicarem aí uma ruptura com seu programa epistemológico: é fácil mostrar que sua linguística é, ao contrário, essencialmente, construída sobre esse programa."
[20] VOLOSHINOV, V. N. Archival Materials. *In*: BRANDIST, C.; SHEPHERD, D.; TIHANOV, G. (Eds.). *The Bakhtin Circle*: In the Master's Absence. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, p.223-250.
[21] Due to space limitations, it is not possible to approach, even if panoramically, the way in which the issue of social evaluation appears throughout Vološinov's writings. In any case, for a more final treatment, the reader can consult Gomes (2023).

Vološinov's emphasis on the concept designated by the expression "social evaluation" — or simply "evaluation" —, it is written:

> We seem to perceive the *value* of a thing together with its being *as one of its qualities*, we seem, for instance, to sense, along with its warmth and light, the sun's value for us, as well. All the phenomena that surround us are similarly merged with value judgments. (Vološinov, 1976a, p.101; emphasis added).[22]

Undoubtedly, this is one of the passages that justify the understanding that, for Vološinov, social evaluation is "the attribution of an inter-individually constructed evaluative load to events, phenomena and/or objects in the world" (Gomes, 2023, no prelo).[23] And more: that, under these conditions, social evaluation constitutes a property naturally found in "any of the possible ways of knowing the world," which is equivalent to saying that "there is no knowledge devoid of evaluation; which in the very nature of *knowing*, together with meaning, inhabits *evaluating*" (Gomes, 2023, no prelo).[24]

In these circumstances, while the *CGL*, enigmatically, proposes a distinction between signification and value, in the *DLDA*, Vološinov distinguishes meaning from appreciation — or, if you prefer, from evaluation. Thus, for the Russian philosopher, social evaluation does not simply consist of granting a semantic load. Rather, evaluation refers to something like a value judgment, which is constituted based on history and made about a particular event, phenomenon, and/or object in the world.

It is possible to say that, even succinctly, the distinction between meaning and social evaluation appears in the book *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, published in 1927.[25] In the aforementioned work — which is a more complete version of the essay "Beyond the Social: On Freudianism," from 1925 —, when claiming that the Freudian theory operates on the mistake of projecting a current point of view in the past, the Russian thinker writes:

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[22] VOLOŠINOV, V. N. Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art: Concerning Sociological Poetics. (Appendix I). *In*: VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Freudianism*. Translated by I. R. Titunik. Edited in collaboration with N. H. Bruss. New York: Academic Press, 1976a, pp.93-116.

[23] In Portuguese: "a atribuição de uma carga valorativa, interindividualmente construída, aos eventos, fenômenos e/ou objetos do mundo."

[24] In Portuguese: "qualquer um dos possíveis modos de conhecer o mundo (...) não há conhecimento desprovido de avaliação; que na natureza própria do *conhecer*, junto ao significar, habita o *avaliar*."

[25] For reference, see footnote 23.

we transfer from the present to the preconscious past of the child above all that ideological-evaluative complexion which is characteristic of the present only. (...) 'Sexual attraction to the mother,' 'the father rival,' 'hostility toward the father,' 'wish for the father's death' — if we subtract from all these 'events' that *ideational significance*, that *evaluative tone,* that full measure of ideological weight which accrue to them only in the context of our conscious 'adult' present, what would they have left? [...] Once you give up projecting into the past the points of view, **evaluations**, and interpretations that belong to the present, then you have no cause to speak about any such thing as an Oedipus complex, no matter how great the quantity of objective facts cited in proof (Vološinov, 1976b, p.81; emphasis added).[26]

In any case, it is only with *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* that the distinction between meaning and social evaluation is shown in more detail.[27] In this text from 1929, the concept designated by the term "meaning" appears on the first pages:

any ideological product is not only itself a part of a reality (natural or social), just as is any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product for consumption, it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. *Everything ideological possesses meaning [znatchiénie]: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a sign. Without signs, there is no ideology*. A physical body equals itself, so to speak; it does not signify anything but wholly coincides with its particular, given nature. In this case, there is no question of ideology. (Vološinov, 1973, p.9; emphasis added)[28]

This excerpt — as stated elsewhere, "a passage that carries incomprehension that is proportional to its fame" (Flores; Faraco; Gomes, 2021, p.22)[29] — allows us to observe a relationship between meaning and reality. More precisely, the meaning is assumed to be "the property, conferred by the human being to any events, phenomena and/or objects

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[26] VOLOŠINOV, V. N. Freudianism: A Marxist Critique. *In*: VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Freudianism*. Translated by I. R. Titunik. Edited in collaboration with N. H. Bruss. New York: Academic Press, 1976b, pp.5-91.

[27] As a matter of fact, this distinction appears in the previous summary that integrates the *MPL* work plan. There, we read what Vološinov projected as the fifth chapter of the second part of his *magnum opus*: "1. The system of social evaluations in language. 2. Expressive intonation. 3. Sense and evaluation. 4. *Semantics and axiology*." (Voloshinov, 2004, p.227, bold added). As is known, in the final text of *MFL*, instead of the intended eight chapters, the second part contains only four chapters. And, in the brief summary of the fourth chapter, we can read: "*Theme and meaning. The problem of active perception.* Evaluation and meaning. *The dialectics of meaning.*" (Vološinov, 1973, p.99, bold added)

[28] VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.
[29] FLORES, V. do N.; FARACO, C. A.; GOMES, F. A. The Properties of Word, the Prerogative of Language: Specificities and Primacy of Language in Vološinov and Benveniste. *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso*, *[S. l.]*, v. 17, n. 1, pp.15-38, 2021. Available at: https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/bakhtiniana/article/view/53484.

of/in the world, to represent or replace other events, phenomena and/or objects" (Gomes, 2023, no prelo).[30] In other words, to signify is to represent or replace a given reality, so that any element that represents or replaces a certain part of reality becomes a sign. And so, as Vološinov writes,

> meaning [*znatchiénie*] can belong only to a sign; meaning [*znatchiénie*] outside a sign is a fiction. Meaning [*znatchiénie*] is the expression of a semiotic relationship between a particular piece of reality and another kind of reality that it stands for, represents, or depicts. Meaning [*znatchiénie*] is a function of the sign and is therefore inconceivable (since meaning [*znatchiénie*] is pure relation, or function) outside the sign as some particular, independently existing thing (Vološinov, 1973, p.28).[31]

In fact, by mentioning the refractive character of the sign, Vološinov (1973) already seems to signal the distinction between meaning and evaluation. In any case, it's still on the front pages of *MPL* that this distinction stands out clearly. And this can be seen, for example, when the author points out that

> a sign does not simply exist as a part of a reality — it reflects and refracts another reality. Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth. *Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i.e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.)* (Vološinov, 1973, p.10; emphasis added).[32]

As can be seen, Vološinov (1973) states that different types of social evaluation can be applied to the sign, such as "true, false, correct, fair, good." In this way, it is clear that, as he did in *DLDA*, Vološinov (1973) leads to the understanding that social evaluation consists of attributing different value loads. And, as the reader of *MPL*'s text knows, this value load cannot be constructed in any other way than inter-individually.

Indeed, a series of more specific questions could be raised regarding Vološinov's well-founded distinction between meaning and evaluation. In any case, what seems in need of highlighting in these few pages is the fact that the existence of a distinction

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[30] In Portuguese: "a propriedade, conferida pelo ser humano a quaisquer eventos, fenômenos e/ou objetos do/no mundo, de representar ou substituir outros eventos, fenômenos e/ou objetos."
[31] For reference, see footnote 29.
[32] For reference, see footnote 29.

between meaning and evaluation does not imply any possibility of separation between the two. In other words,

> the meaning, that is, this characteristic of signs to represent or replace a given reality, although different, is inseparable from the attribution of distinct inter-individually constructed evaluative loads, or, in short, from the attribution of different value judgment accents (Gomes, 2023, no prelo).[33]

And this is clearly observed when the author of the *MPL* maintains that "there is no such thing as word without evaluative accent" (Vološinov, 1973, p.103),[34] or when the same author reinforces:

> no utterance can be put together without value judgment. Every utterance is above all an *evaluative orientation*. Therefore, each element in a living utterance not only has a meaning but also has a value. Only the abstract element, perceived within the system of language and not within the structure of an utterance, appears devoid of value judgment (Vološinov, 1973, p.105).[35]

All that said, it is time to move on to the second key point of the theory of social evaluation in the word proposed by Vološinov, namely, *the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language*. And, regarding this second point, it must be said, right from the start, that it highlights what, following Faraco (2006), can be called Vološinov's "Humboldtian heart."

To be more precise, the creative character of language is at the heart of Vološinov's concept designated by the Russian expression equivalent to the English "social evaluation," just as it is at the heart of the famous "inner form of language," emphasized by the erudite German Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). Therefore, Vološinov's social evaluation is a sociologized development of this Humboldtian notion. And, to make this even more explicit, it is convenient to observe the words of Vološinov (2004, p.249)[36] in his work plan for the *MPL*:

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[33] In Portuguese: "a significação, isto é, essa propriedade dos signos de representar ou substituir dada realidade, embora diferente, é inseparável da atribuição de distintas cargas valorativas interindividualmente construídas, ou, em suma, da atribuição de diferentes acentos valorativos."
[34] For reference, see footnote 29.
[35] For reference, see footnote 29.
[36] For reference, see footnote 23.

a special place is occupied by the problem of the *sense* of the utterance, and by the associated *problem of the change of meanings in the history of a language*. This problem, which is currently being worked on intensively by the school of Anton Marty and the phenomenologists, is of primary importance for the sociology of the language. The chief defect of all theories dealing with this problem comes down to their complete failure to understand the role of *social evaluation* in language. *Social evaluation is a necessary and fundamental moment of meaning*. There is no word that is indifferent towards its object. Evaluation must not be identified with emotional expression, which is merely an optional overtone of social evaluation. *Social evaluation forms the very content of the meaning of the word, i.e., the concrete definition* that the word gives to its object. The notorious '*inner form of the word*' is in the work of most of its theoretical apologists merely a distorted and scientifically unproductive expression for the social evaluation inherent in the word. Social evaluation determines all of the word's *concrete connections*, both within the limits of an utterance and within the limits of the interaction of several utterances.

It is likely that, by skimming or reading the aforementioned passage inattentively, the reader will be left with the impression that Vološinov (2004) is questioning the Humboldtian concept of inner form of language. However, if well understood, the aforementioned passage shows that the Russian thinker's rejection is not to the inner form of language — as formulated by Humboldt —, but, rather, the apparent corruption elaborated by "most of its theoretical apologists." For the author of the *MPL*, the development that such theorists — in particular, Anton Marty (1847-1914) and Gustav Shpet (1879-1937) — gave to the inner form of language did not properly cover evaluation. Hence, therefore, the allegation that, in the hands of these theorists, the inner form of language is nothing more than "a distorted and scientifically unproductive expression for the social evaluation inherent in the word."

It is precisely this interpretation made by Vološinov that receives more detailed treatment in the 1929 text. At a certain point in the fourth chapter of the second part, Bakhtin's colleague addresses his disagreements, exposing what he understands as fragility both in Marty and in Shpet. For the author of the *MPL*, Marty and "most linguists" fall into the mistake of isolating "evaluation from meaning and to consider evaluation an accessory factor of meaning, the expression of a speaker's individual attitude toward the subject matter of his discourse" (Vološinov, 1973, p.105).[37] And, in a

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[37] For reference, see footnote 29.

similar mistake, Shpet "has spoken of evaluation as the *connotation* of a word. Characteristically, he operates with a strict division between referential denotation and evaluative connotation, locating this division in various spheres of reality" (Vološinov, 1973, p.105).[38]

Following a path that emphasizes the creative and social nature of evaluation — therefore, a path other than that of Marty and Shpet —, the author of the *MPL* points out that

> with respect to changes of meaning, it is precisely evaluation that plays the *creative role.* A change in meaning is, essentially, always a *reevaluation*: the transposition of some particular word from one evaluative context to another. A word is either advanced to a higher rank or demoted to a lower one. *The separation of word meaning from evaluation inevitably deprives meaning of its place in the living social process* (where meaning is always permeated with value judgment), *to its being ontologized and transformed into ideal Being divorced from the historical process of Becoming.* (Vološinov, 1973, p.105; emphasis added).[39]

As can be seen, this excerpt ratifies the concomitant distinction and inseparability between meaning and social evaluation. Even more so, it ratifies Vološinov's establishment of a close relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language. The creative character of language, explored by scholars such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Karl Vossler, and Ernst Cassirer — all well known by the author of the *MPL* —, is justified by employing Vološinov's resource to the concept of social evaluation. Thus, what was individual, is presented as something inter-individually constructed.

Finally, it is now possible to discuss the third key point of the theory of social evaluation in the word proposed by Vološinov, which is the *relationship between social evaluation and historical becoming.* It should be emphasized that this last point is intricately connected to the previous one, i.e., the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language.

As already mentioned, the creative character of language was explored by some thinkers known to Vološinov — *e.g.*, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Karl Vossler, and Ernst

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[38] For reference, see footnote 29.
[39] For reference, see footnote 29.

Cassirer. Thus, what gives Vološinov's approach a certain uniqueness is the fact that, through social evaluation, the Russian thinker attributes a sociological structure to the creative character of language.

Now, considering that in Vološinov's proposal, the creative character of language is shown to depend on the concept of social evaluation, it is clear that, in this same perspective, history — whose character is permanently that of something under construction, formation, creation — cannot dispense with the process of axiologization. In other words, in Vološinov's work, "the becoming of history moves, without fail, through the process of axiologization carried out through language" (Gomes, 2023, no prelo).[40] And this is exactly what is shown in the last two paragraphs of the second part of *MPL*:

> the prehistoric herdsman was virtually interested in nothing, and virtually nothing had any bearing on him. Man at the end of the epoch of capitalism is directly concerned about everything, his interests reaching the remotest corners of the earth and even the most distant stars. This expansion of evaluative purview comes about dialectically. New aspects of existence, once they are drawn into the sphere of social interest, once they make contact with the human word and human emotion, do not coexist peacefully with other elements of existence previously drawn in, but engage them in a struggle, reevaluate them, and bring about a change in their position within the unity of the evaluative purview. This dialectical generative process is reflected in the generation of semantic properties in language. A new significance emanates from an old one, and does so with its help, but this happens so that the new significance can enter into contradiction with the old one and restructure it.
> The outcome is a constant struggle of accents in each semantic sector of existence. There is nothing in the structure of signification that could be said to transcend the generative process, to be independent of the dialectical expansion of social purview. Society in process of generation expands its perception of the generative process of existence. There is nothing in this that could be said to be absolutely fixed (Vološinov, 1973, p.106).[41]

In this extensive excerpt, Vološinov (1973) exemplifies how the attribution of evaluative emphases — which, with its creative nature, runs from human beings towards the world — intervenes in the historical process. For the author, social evaluation

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[40] In Portuguese: "o devir da história passa, impreterivelmente, pelo processo de axiologização levado a termo por meio da linguagem."
[41] For reference, see footnote 29.

attributes to language the ability to be in uninterrupted formation and, at the same time, the ability to promote the uninterrupted formation of history.

Thus, the summary of this third point is confused with the summary of Vološinov's theory of social evaluation: more precisely, the social evaluation, the creative character of language, and the historical becoming are organized into an internally coherent whole. And this allows us to state that, for Vološinov, history advances through the clash of values.

Final Considerations

Based on Bouquet's (2004) complex and thought-provoking *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure*, this exposition establishes the understanding that, in Saussure's writings, there is a conceptual fluctuation concerning the French term corresponding to the English word "value." Moreover, establish the understanding that, for Saussure, the theory of value is a theory of semantic order, which subsumes three different types of value: (i) the internal value of the sign; (ii) the systemic value of the sign; and (iii) the discursive value.

Similarly, anchored in Gomes (2023), this exposition establishes the understanding that, in Vološinov's writings, even with the terminological fluctuation related to the idea of social evaluation — *e.g.*, "evaluative accent," "social value," "social accents," "differently oriented accents," "multiaccentuality," "live social accents" e "social value judgments" —, there is a consistent theoretical proposal surrounding social evaluation in the word. And regarding this proposal, which Vološinov himself came to call the "theory of social evaluation in the word" (Voloshinov, 2004, p.249),[42] three key points were explained. First, the fact that attributing a evaluative load to an event, phenomenon, and/or object in the world is different and inseparable from the fact of attributing a semantic load. Second, the fact that, with the idea of social evaluation, Vološinov attributes a sociological structure to the creative character of language, which, as is known, was explored in the Humboldtian concept of the inner form of language and in Vossler's concept of linguistic taste. And third, the fact that, in the wake of the

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[42] For reference, see footnote 23.

relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language, Vološinov allocates historical becoming, that is, the permanent process of history formation.

Faced with these considerations, it is necessary to recognize that, as is known, it is not exactly in these terms that the Saussurean theory of value became a part of history. However, to the extent that, as proposed, this theory goes beyond the limits of phonology and morphology, it really seems to call for a closer look.

Likewise, up until now, it is not exactly in these terms that Vološinov's thought has been explored. However, thought along the lines of what was exposed in this text, Vološinov's theory of value — or, if you like, theory of social evaluation in the word — seems quite promising for future incursions in the discursive field.

In the end, what draws attention is the fact that the theory of social evaluation in the word proposed by Vološinov is not to be confused with the Saussurean theory of value — not even when the latter refers to the order of the discourse. Thus, if the issue of value appears both in the Swiss linguist and in the Russian thinker, this does not occur for reasons of theoretical affinity. Considering the biographical issues of both Saussure and Vološinov, the most likely reason is the knowledge, of both authors, regarding the German academic environment of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It was in this environment that the dominance of neo-Kantian philosophy brought to light, for example, the famous theory of value (*Werttheorie*) of the Baden school (Beiser, 2014).[43] However, a true exploration of this exciting possibility is yet to come.

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Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The author organizes the presentation of the text in two sections: the initial text and the final texts: Preliminary considerations, 1 Saussure and the Theory of Value (pp.1-8); 2. Vološinov and the Theory of Social Evaluation in the Word (pp.8-15); Final considerations (pp.15-17); References (p.18).

The article has two objectives: "First, it aims to contribute to a more solid understanding of the theory of value derived from the thought of the Genevan linguist Ferdinand de Saussure." "Second, this text tries to make the theory of social evaluation in the word known, at least in part, as proposed by the Russian thinker Valentin N. Vološinov."

In the first section, the Author recovers the book of Bouquet, Introduction to Saussure's Readings, to extensively explain the importance, in the Genevan linguist's theory, of the notion of linguistic value. However, this section could include a paragraph on Chapter IV – The linguistic value – of the Course in General Linguistics (1916), based on the work organized by Bouquet indicating that reading Bouquet contributes to a better understanding of the concept of value.

In section 2, the focus is on the theory of value surrounding an axiology, defended by Vološinov. On p.9, the Author indicates three central points in the middle of the text: "(i) the distinction between meaning and social evaluation; (ii) the relationship between social evaluation and the creative character of language; and, finally, (iii) the relationship between social evaluation and historical becoming." This section is excellent, highlighting the deepening of the concept of value/valuation. Worthy of mention is the discussion in which he retrieves Vološinov's theory of value — or, if you prefer, "the theory of social evaluation in words," from Vološinov's Work Plan. [1927-1928].

In the final remarks, the Author articulates the notion of value in different conceptions and, in the last lines, refers to the school of Baden. Without having mentioned Vološinov's s clash with Rickert, it seems that it could be left as a suggestion for another article, since the philosophical issue was not addressed in the text.

The objective of the article is relevant and deserves to be published. ACCEPTED

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Reviewed on March 06, 2023.

Review III

The article is very well written and organized. It is adequately constructed from the point of view of its textual formulation, and, from a theoretical-methodological point of view, it presents all the elements compatible with theoretical-conceptual work (the objectives are well formulated, theoretical reflection is well conducted, the weight of reflection is well distributed among the parts of the article, etc.).

The theme of the article deserves some comments.

It contemplates two important authors of the 20th century - Saussure and Vološinov - and begin with the purpose of evaluating them in terms of the notions of value mobilized by both. On the one hand, the Saussurean theory of value; on the other, the theory of social evaluation in the words of Vološinov's. The authors are studied "per se" and with the help of qualified critics (Bouquet, Faraco, etc.).

In this sense, the text is quite correct and formulates conclusions that are circumscribed to the objectives formulated in the abstract and in the introduction. At the end of the text, a suggestion is made to continue the debate. By acknowledging that "Vološinov is not to be confused with the Saussurean theory of value — not even when the latter refers to the order of the discourse." The article suggests that the question of value could be further deepened in both authors - taken in relation - as long as one considers "biographical issues of both Saussure and Vološinov." Finally, it is suggested to consider "the knowledge, of both authors regarding the German academic environment of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century." This environment - considered in the article "dominance of neo-Kantian philosophy" - would have given rise to the value theory of the Baden school of thought. This is an interesting topic and one that should definitely be pursued.

If a contribution to the text can be made, it is recommended that the justification demonstrating the need to contrast the two authors in contemporary times be made explicit in the article's introduction. It is about gathering a small number of arguments in favor of the adopted procedure. ACCEPTED WITH SUGGESTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on March 24, 2023.

Editorial Review

The author is requested to carefully read the reviews, rewrite the article considering aspects raised by the reviewers, and resubmit the text to the journal by April 9, 2023.

Interaction

Professor, in order to comply with your suggestion, I explained the justification in the section named "Preliminary considerations." If you have any other suggestions, feel free to let me know. They will be promptly considered.

By way of information, I should say that I had to add two explanatory notes due to the considerations present in OPINION II. The first, to say that the scarcity of citations from the CLG is due to the option for Bouquet's comments (considering that the author is recognized for his criticisms of the CLG and its editors, citing CLG to support his argument would be inconsistent); the second, to mention some of the commentators --- Bouquet (2004, p.255), Normand (2009, p.158), Normand and Silveira (2009, p.223), Silveira (2009, p.40), Matsuzawa (2014, p.84), Flores (2023, p.106) --- who consider value, or the theory of value, as the central point of Saussure's line of thought.

If you think there is a mistake, feel free to let me know.

Thank you very much in advance for your willingness to talk through this channel. March, 24, 2023.

Review IV

After reading the last version of the article, it is worth considering the following:

a) The article has been remodeled in order to meet all the requests made on the occasion of the first opinion.

b) The set of material placed under analysis meets all the demands of scientific papers, especially with regard to theoretical-methodological clarity and formulated objectives.

c) The bibliography consulted is current and consistent with the proposed reflection.

Based on the above, I am in favor of the publishing the article in the Bakhtiniana magazine, as it is in perfect harmony with the editorial line of the journal, especially with regard to the quality of the work available. APPROVED

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Reviewed on April 10, 2023.