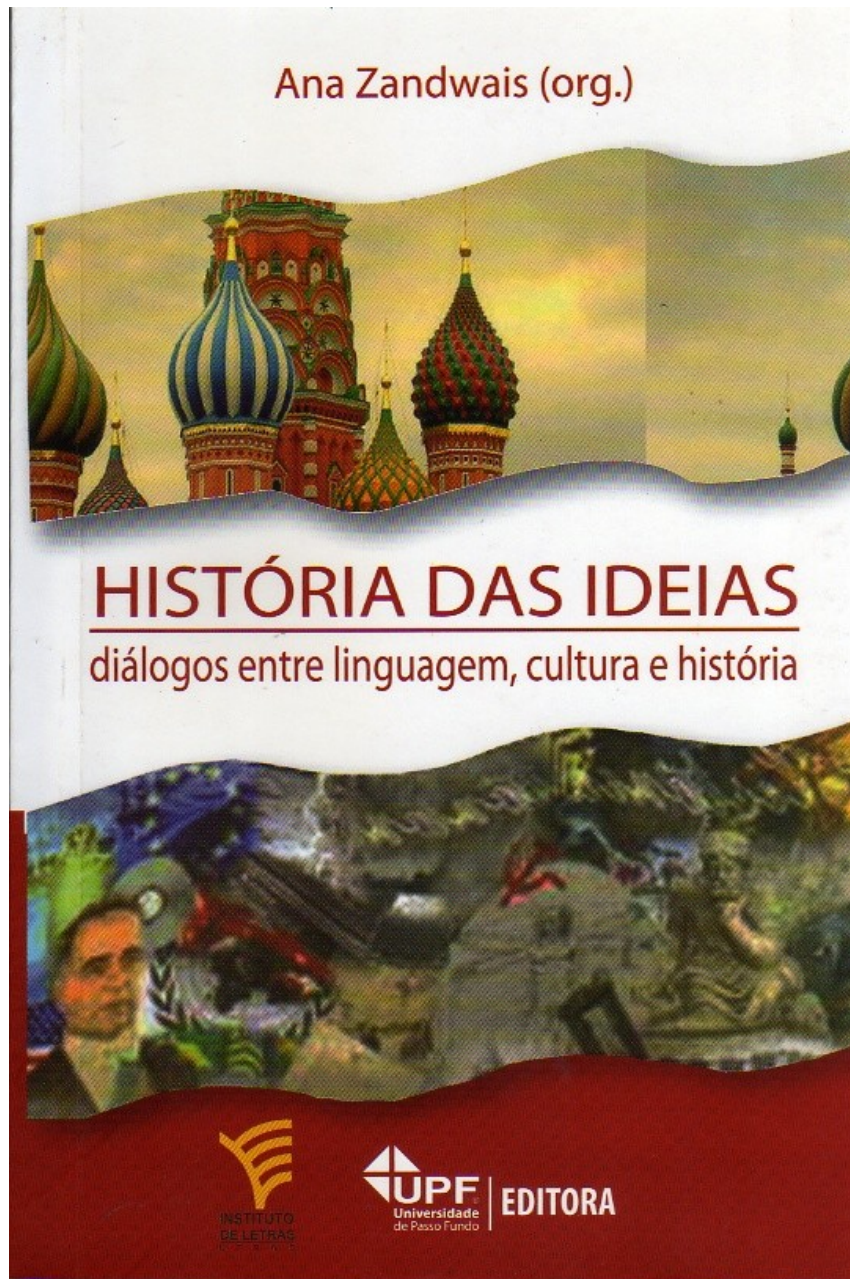


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História das ideias: diálogos entre linguagem, cultura e história [*History of Ideas: Dialogues between Language, Culture and History*] is a collection of 12 texts written by linguists and discourse analysts, using language as their source. What characterizes the work is, on the one hand, the expansion of the reflection to the fields of history, philosophy, linguistics and discourse, and on the other, a collection of texts that analyze linguistic studies in Russia and the Soviet Union from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century or that focus on concepts and theoretical foundations of Bakhtin and Voloshinov.

In this review, I divide the collection of texts into three groups. Though this is not exactly the sequence proposed by the organizer, it is quite similar.

In the first group one can find the texts by Patrick of Sériot (University of Lausanne), Craig Brandist (University of Sheffield), Mika Lähtenmäki (University of Jyväskylä - Finland), Ekaterina Velmezova (University of Lausanne) and Vladimir Alpatov (Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow). These texts allow us to come into contact with the theories and discussions about language that developed during the late nineteenth century, with the advent of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath throughout the twentieth century, and most importantly, with the context in which these theories and discussions were formed. Great moments of political rupture are historical and discursive events that establish the difficult task of seeing the world in a different way. Rather than just conveying the history of Russian and Slavic studies on language, these texts define the exact role of language in that revolutionary process, which became, because of the very formation of the USSR – ethnic diversity, high illiteracy and poverty – the first agenda of the Soviet socialism.

The text of Patrick Seriot points out that, from 1920 to 1930, when the Soviet Union was going through a process of organization and consolidation of the new regime, a project of an anthropological nature was behind actions that sought to eradicate illiteracy and normalize the recent reading and writing of languages. This was a moment that questioned the relationship between language and society, language and political space, as well as the power of linguistic institutions. The author emphasizes the movement of representations that progresses toward unity and homogeneity, precisely in a society where temporal layers coexisted – ancient classes, old ways of production,

new productive forces. In other words, to establish itself socialism had to erase differences.

In his text, Craig Brandist argues that the Bolshevik revolution brought about conditions for the development of an incipient form of sociolinguistics in Russia, long before similar studies were done in the West. The author claims that the fusion of linguistic and literary studies in the same discipline of philology contributed to raise linguists' awareness to the social dimensions of language. His text provides an insight into how Soviet linguistics separated from psychology, giving way to a sociological view of language. He analyzes the linguistic studies in Russia from the nineteenth century on (a period under the influence of psychology), until he arrives at a different extreme: Bakhtin's dialogic theory.

In his text, Mika Lähteenmäki temporally distinguishes Voloshinov and Bakhtin's productions in the late 1920s and early 1930s from those produced between the 1930s and the early 1950s. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, first published in Russia in 1929, was consigned to oblivion after its publication. Interest in the work increased only forty years later, outside of the original context of its production. The book was written before Marrism was set as an official linguistic doctrine and at a time when one could still debate what a Marxist linguistics would be. However, a misinterpretation of Voloshinov's ideas has caused an ordinary Marxist view to prevail, sustained by the theoretical deterministic position supported by Marr. Based on the notion of ideology, Lähteenmäki discusses the dialogical conception of language, interaction and the linguistic sign in Voloshinov.

The work of Jakovlevitch Nikolai Marr (1865-1934), the leading linguist of the Soviet Union of the 1920s and 1930s, whose theories were very challenged by his fellow contemporaries, is emphasized in two texts of the present work. In the first text, Ekaterina Velmezova acknowledges criticisms of Marr, but she claims that his theory must be studied like any other. In her article, she proposes to analyze the notions of Slavic languages and peoples in the "New Theory of Language" by Marr, and answer why Stalin intervened against Marrism. The other text is by Alpatov Vladimir, who questions why the interest in Nicolai Marr's studies is revisited in Russia from time to time. He identifies the renewed interest in the author between 1950 and 1980 as a challenge to the Stalinist politics rather than a theoretical linguistic issue. In contrast to

the ostracism against Marr in the 1990s, he points out that, recently, young linguists' interest in the author has increased. Implacable, Alpatov states that in light of Marr's personality and education he could have been a prophet or a revolutionary, but never a scholar. The remaining questions are from the author himself: Would Stalin keep being the target? Would his fight be against positivist science? Or is Marr's revival the result of a crisis in the Humanities in Russia?

By introducing the second group of texts, I separate from the book's original sequence and turn to Beth Brait's text (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUCSP, and Universidade de São Paulo - USP), which parallels the first group of texts by foreign authors with other Brazilian texts that form the collection. This text traces the arrival of Bakhtin's thought in Brazil in the late 1960s and 1970s, when researchers, professors, graduate students, poets and translators belonging to the area of Literature and Linguistics began to have contact with the works of Bakhtin and the other members of the Circle.

The uniqueness of the text lies in listening to those who actively took part of this history, either as students, as in the case of Carlos Alberto Faraco (who would eventually become one of the foremost Brazilian scholars on Bakhtin's work), Sírio Possenti and Wanderley Geraldi, or as a Graduate professor at Unicamp (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, SP), such as Carlos Vogt. Both the author's ideas and the testimonies that make up the text suggest that *El signo ideológico y la filosofía del lenguaje* – an Argentine edition translated from the English version and arriving in Brazil in 1976 – not only signified the discovery of a linguistic perspective that could include the social, the subject and ideology, but also represented a form of resistance to the arbitrariness of the military regime.

In this group, one can also find texts by Eloina Amanda Scherer (Universidade Federal de Santa Maria) and Ana Zandwais (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul), who discuss the issue of language homogeneity. Additionally, Maria Cristina Hennes Sampaio (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco) and Maria do Socorro Aguiar de Oliveira Cavalcante (Universidade Federal de Alagoas) examine the ideas that underlie the philosophy of Bakhtin-Voloshinov's work.

Scherer, working with the theoretical fields of Discourse Analysis and History of Linguistic Ideas, looks at three language teaching tools used at different times - *Basic*

English, England, 1923-1927; *Français Élémentaire*, France, 1949-1960, *Português Fundamental do Brasil*, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Brazil. The author questions how such instruments indicate the forms of constitution, institutionalization and circulation of language policies in different socio-historical moments. Throughout the text, her reflections on how to denominate *language* (universal, international, artificial, etc.) support her analysis of these instruments. Among other things, they seek to avoid babelization and are looking for a transparent, controlled, describable and universal language. In her article, Zandwais considers the essential utopia of language homogeneity in different forms of human organization. The text resumes the ideal of Antiquity, that is, of a homogeneous and universal language, whose origins can be seen in the biblical narrative of the "dream of Babel." Elaborating upon this theme, it establishes an analogy between the primitive tribal organization and the implementation of the rule of law in the nineteenth century. The author stresses that when the State transforms multilingualism into monolingualism, something only possible through a language of culture inaccessible to the majority, a contingent of linguistically *unprepared* speakers is formed. The reflection is based on the notions of monoglossia, heteroglossia and refraction of Bakhtin-Voloshinov.

Next, Maria Cristina Sampaio establishes a dialogue between the philosophies of Bakhtin, Heidegger and Levinas. The author's concern is about the foundations of ethical thought, and because of this, she revisits themes common to these philosophers and Bakhtin: relationships between being-entity, man-existence, humanism, and being-authority-responsibility. Addressing these issues, ethics can only be conceived of by means of an individual and single act and in relation to a researcher subject, as related to otherness in thought and context. Still within the field of philosophy, the text signed by Maria do Socorro Cavalcante develops a correlation between historical materialism and the central notions of Pêcheux's Discourse Analysis. Besides Pêcheux, the text also interacts with Lukács, Bakhtin and Leontiev, theorists who contribute to thought about language, ideology and the subject. Following Lukács and Leontiev, the author addresses the question of consciousness. I admit that the text underlines a point that may embarrass Discourse Analysis: is this subject ideologically overdetermined, and, therefore, absolutely predictable and devoid of freedom? The author answers this

question with Bakhtin and Lukács: the subject makes choices and subjectively faces an objective reality as it is presented to him/her.

In the third group, I draw together the texts by Maria Inês Batista Campos (University of São Paulo) and Carme Regina Schons (Universidade de Passo Fundo), who share the task of presenting important analytical work.

From the text *The Author and the Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, written by Bakhtin in the 1920s, Campos examines the notions of *proximity*, *distance* and *excess of aesthetic vision* in both epitaphs of the novel "Macunaíma," by Mário de Andrade. The author-hero relationship in the process of aesthetic creation is discussed here. After exploring the theoretical notions, the author goes on to analyze the epitaphs, unveiling the work of Mário de Andrade, which is based on texts of foreign travelers, myths, legends and aspects of Brazilian folklore. The work results in a character-hero who, from afar, is seen as getting close to Brazilian people.

The text I present at the end of this review, by Carme Shons, will look into the formation and organization of the working class, especially the unions in Brazil in the first half of the twentieth century – 1st and 2nd Republic. Using Discourse Analysis, founded by Michel Pêcheux, the author analyzes the expression *union* from its inception, seeking from within what she calls legal discursive formation (Constitution and laws of the period), how *union* is characterized by regulations. The text follows the route of formation of the trade union movement. In the First Republic, this movement is ruled by anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist practices and is also associated with the image of confrontation and struggle. In the New State, by confronting the legal discursive formation, it is transformed into a corporatist model, becoming a mere instrument to claim economic improvements.

Reviewing a collection highlights the difficulty of talking about a single object whose content is essentially heterogeneous. However, what is being looked at is the history of the ideas that founded several of the fields that are grouped together surrounding the study of text and discourse, particularly with regard to the concepts of language, subject and meaning. I refer in part to the theoretical precepts of the Bakhtin Circle, but also to the historical and discursive events such as the advent of Marxism and the Russian Revolution in 1917. *History of Ideas* gives dimension to the importance of these two events in terms of knowledge. It echoes discussions and developments that

not only marked the twentieth century, but that also still mobilize intellectuals to think – beyond the skepticism and bewilderment of the twenty-first century – of ideas that influence the lives of human beings.

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