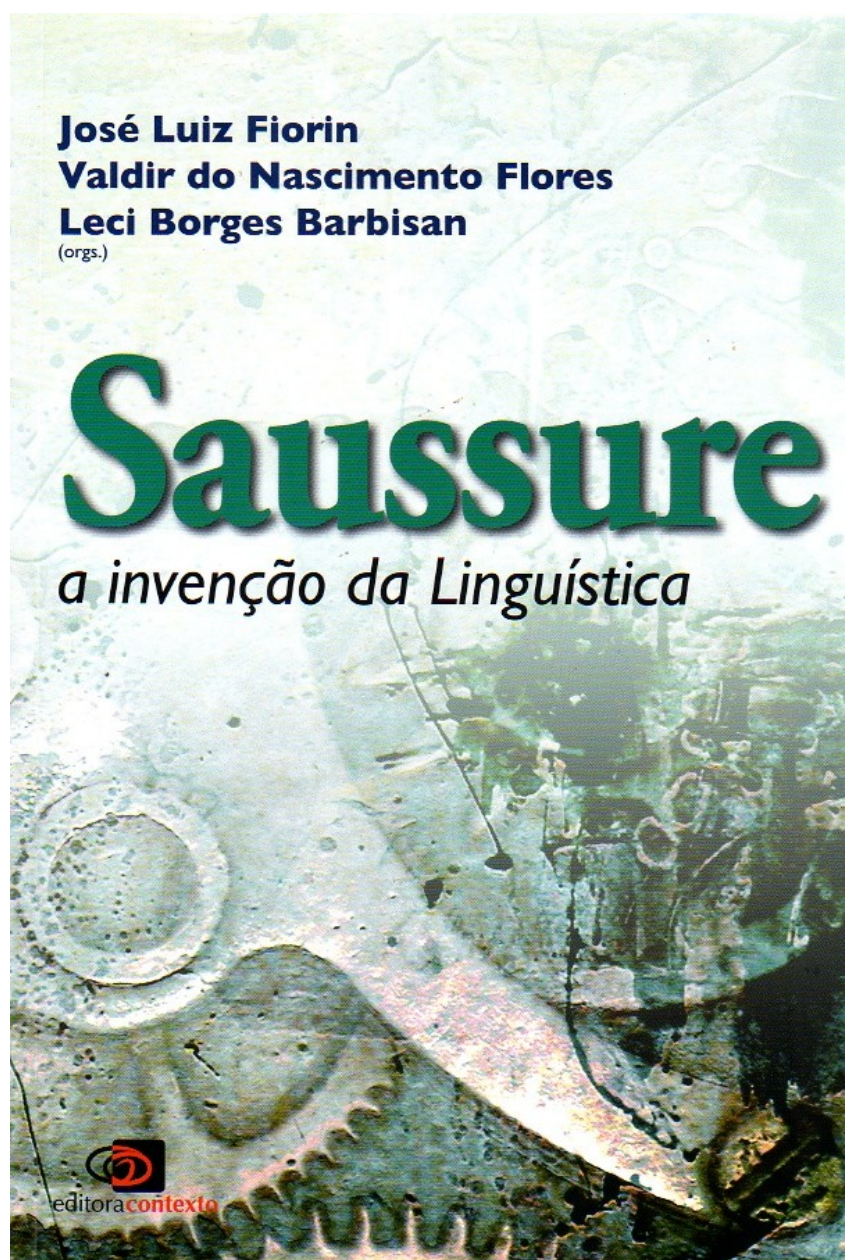


**FIORIN, José Luiz; FLORES, Valdir do Nascimento & BARBISAN, Leci Borges (eds). *Saussure: a invenção da Linguística* [*Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics*]. São Paulo: Contexto, 2013. 174 p.**

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Why still read about Saussure? A collection such as *Saussure: a invenção da Linguística* [Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics], edited by José Luiz Fiorin, Valdir do Nascimento Flores and Leci Borges Barbisan, answers that question and clarifies the important role the Genevan master occupies in the discursive chain of the history of reflections on language, as it adds to the series of tributes paid to him on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

*Saussure: a invenção da Linguística* [Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics] is organized through the perspective of three renowned Saussurean scholars in Brazil – Fiorin, Flores and Barbisan –, who sign the initial chapter entitled “Why Still Read Saussure?” This enticing question is the motif for what the reader is going to encounter in the eleven chapters that make up the collection. In this prologue, before presenting the structure of the work, the editors situate Saussurean discourse in its epoch, pointing out other discourses with which it dialogued during its constitution. They then develop a fundamental reflection on the Saussurean sources, which includes a review of the conditions of production of the *Course in General Linguistics (CGL)*.

The importance of the genesis of this founding work is highlighted in the reflections advanced in the introductory chapter, in which the authors also point out the changes that have occurred since 1957, when Robert Godel’s thesis *Les sources manuscrites du Cours de linguistique générale de F. de Saussure* was published – a work that marked a period of (re)discoveries of sources, among which Saussure’s manuscripts. Such considerations lead the editors to conclude that the dialogues held today with the Genevan master do not stand free from the establishment of the researcher’s point of view which, in its turn, delimits the choices of sources among the “myriad of texts that make up what we might call the Saussurean *corpus*” (p. 13). These choices determine the various research *corpora*, such as those established by the authors of the different chapters in *Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics*.

What, then, does the Saussurean *corpus* consist of? As constituting sources, Fiorin, Flores and Barbisan point out: the texts published when Saussure was alive; the annotated edition of *CGL* by Rudolf Engler; the aforementioned work by Robert Godel; the *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*; and a series of texts which each new discovery of sources has led Saussure’s exegetes to establish. The presentation of this broader scope of the Saussurean *corpus* is followed by considerations on the choice of a research *corpus*. Thus, Fiorin,

Flores and Barbisan show that each researcher's object points to a certain *corpus* selection, one which is not confused with the universe that is the Saussurean *corpus* itself. In this connection they bring in postulates by Bouquet, Kyheng and Trabant, authors who acknowledge the specificity of each available source and move away from unproductive discussions on the "true" and the "false" Saussure.

The essays that compose the ensuing chapters of the book have in common precisely the establishment of specific approaches to the Saussurean *corpus* and the definition of a research *corpus*. Together they make up "a picture of the productive contemporary Saussurean body of research in the context of Brazilian linguistics" (p.17). Without aiming to compete with the presentation made by the very editors in the initial chapter of *Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics*, in what follows I go over the authors of these chapters and the themes they approach.

In "On Myths and History: A Retrospective View of Saussure in the Three *Course in General Linguistics*," Cristina Altman makes a review of the three courses ministered by Saussure and, with that, manages to explain the mythical dimension of the Genevan master.

In the following chapter, "An Apparent Contradiction in Saussure: The Problem of the Language-History Relation," Márcio Alexandre Cruz questions the representation of Saussure as the founder of a synchronic science and shows how his discourses have founded different approaches to contemporary linguistics, which do not necessarily exclude, from their scope, a concern with the concepts of subject, meaning, and history.

Eliane Silveira, in "The Role of the Concept of Speech in Saussure's Theory," sets out to demonstrate the unfinished character of one of Saussurean theory's key concepts, postulating that the reading which suggests the exclusion of speech as an object of linguistics is not the only one possible. For that, she shows the role the concept plays in comparative grammar, one of the theories with which Saussure dialogues in order to examine such role in *CGL* and the Saussurean manuscripts.

With "*Course in General Linguistics: unde exoriar?*" Hozanete Lima problematizes the concepts of sign and paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes, thereby establishing a connection between *CGL* and the Saussurean manuscripts.

In "Showing the Linguist What S/He Does: The Analyses by Ferdinand de Saussure," Valdir do Nascimento Flores goes over the Genevan master's anxieties about the work of the linguist and sets out to answer a series of questions: "How did Saussure

characterize the work of the linguist? Which tasks did he attribute to her/him? Which problems did he suppose the linguist should solve?" (p.72). The author makes it clear that the sources that make up his research *corpus*, which take *CGL* as basis, do not explicitly advance answers to these questions. The linguistic phenomenon of analogy, understood as creation and not as change, is the central category in the researcher's analyses, who manages to demonstrate the important role of speech in the description of the work of the linguist emerging from the analysed *corpus*.

In her "A Little Essay on Time in Saussurean Theory," Maria Fausta Pereira de Castro reflects on the treatment given by Saussure to the question of language in a specific state or succession of states. Based on reflections by important Saussurean exegetes, she articulates the question of the work of time over language with the notions of arbitrariness of the sign and linearity, highlighting the role of "speaking mass" in this discussion.

In "The Semiological Project," José Luiz Fiorin explains that the key principles in the Saussurean construction of language as object – such as the arbitrariness of the sign and value – are also fundamental to the study of languages and, therefore, to semiological studies. The author explains that in *CGL* Saussure points out "two dimensions in the study of semiology: those of system and process" (p.105). From there, he goes on to establish dialogues between the Saussurean semiological project proposed in *CGL*, Hjelmslev's theory, and the work of scholars who somehow carry on this project, concluding that "Barthes and Greimas were only able to accomplish last century's great semiological adventure after Saussure's *Course*" (p.110).

In "Effects of Saussure in the Theorization of Errors and Symptoms in Speech," Maria Francisca Lier-DeVitto attributes to symptomatic utterances a role in the "heteroclitic fabric of linguistic manifestations" (p.115). With that, she presents the clinical, methodological and theoretical contributions that the (re-)reading of the Genevan master and his exegetes has made to her own work as professor, linguist and researcher, with an emphasis on activities related to two research groups: one on language acquisition, at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP); the other on acquisition, pathologies and language clinic, at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP).

In "Ferdinand de Saussure's Contribution to the Understanding of the Linguistic Sign," Mônica Nóbrega and Raquel Basilio trace a precise and well justified delimitation of their research *corpus*, in order then to discuss Saussure's theoretical construction of the

concept of linguistic sign. They approach the relation of the sign with arbitrariness, system, and the production of values. They also point to the contributions that such theoretical construction make to studies in socio-discursive interactionism.

The chapter entitled “Presences of *Course in General Linguistics* in Discourse Analysis,” by Carlos Piovezani, problematizes the presence of Saussure’s discourse on speech in later discourses, with a view to analyzing the dialogue observed between echoes of the Saussurean *corpus* and the postulates of French discourse analysis, mainly as regards the studies by Pêcheux, Robin and Maldidier. Piovezani wraps up his reflections with an analysis of such echoes in present-day discursive studies in Brazil, pointing out, as some of the authors of the preceding chapters have done, the misunderstandings that are sometimes detected in the formation of our linguists, since “among beginners and, occasionally, among experts it is not rare to reinforce the crystalized censorship to the supposed ‘exclusions’ promoted by Saussure [...]” (p.157).

Concluding the book, Leci Borges Barbisan proposes, in “From Sign to Discourse: The Complex Nature of Language,” that the defense of the inseparability between language and discourse can be observed in segments of *CGL* and *Écrits de linguistique générale*, although she only finds questions there, not answers, on the role of the notions of value and relation in order for the sign to “constitute discourse” (p.166). According to the author, a possible answer would lie in Ducrot’s linguistic semantics and argumentation theory.

Many are the dialogues that the authors of *Saussure: The Invention of Linguistics* establish and many are the welcome gaps to this work. Aimed at a broader audience, it will leave wishing for a second volume those who come from linguistic and discursive schools and approaches other than those covered in the book in their connection with Saussurean thought, such as Bakhtinian discourse analysis and text linguistics. For everyone, however, whether beginners or initiated in linguistic and discursive studies, the book becomes an obligatory work adding to the constitution of the Brazilian Saussurean *corpus*.

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*Received November 26, 2013*

*Accepted April 18, 2014*