

## Re-socialising Saussure : Aleksandr Romm's Unpublished Review of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*

Vladislava REZNIK  
Durham University

**Abstract :** As one of the most original and intellectually daring linguistic works of its epoch, Valentin Vološinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* provoked controversial reactions, reflected in the published reviews of the book. However, it is perhaps the unpublished review by Aleksandr Romm that presents a particular interest, as an autonomous attempt to re-conceptualise both Vološinov's and Saussure's linguistic thought. A member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the first translator of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* into Russian, Romm had been an enthusiastic follower of Saussure's work and opposed the general anti-Saussurean movement in Soviet linguistic and literary studies of the late 1920s.

In his review of *MPL*, Romm offers an original resolution of Vološinov's antinomy between the so-called 'abstract objectivism' and 'individualist subjectivism' or, in other words, between the two opposite approaches to language as a specific object of scientific inquiry. In contrast to Vološinov, he does not refute *langue*, but seeks to combine the Saussurean and Humboldtian frameworks to produce a dialectical view of both *langue* and *parole* as simultaneously social product and linguistic activity. This is achieved by introducing a third concept, the word (*slovo*), which Romm interprets in a phenomenological sense, demonstrating a strong influence of Gustav Špet's ideas and the 'Špetian' progress of the scholar's views on Saussure.

Although unfinished and unpublished, Romm's review remains an extremely interesting document, which does not only serve as an example of the evolution of Saussureanism, but also as a testimony to the shift of paradigms in Soviet linguistics of the late 1920s.

**Key-words :** ideology; language; language system; linguistic creativity; phenomenology; Romm; socialisation; sociology of language; Špet; utterance; Vološinov; word.

## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most obvious repercussion of the triumph of Nikolai Marr's linguistic teaching in the early 1930s was the ultimate defeat of structural linguistics and the end of the 'Saussurean era' in Soviet scholarship. Although in 1933 Aleksei Sukhotin's translation of the *Cours de linguistique générale* was finally published in Russian, an Introduction to the translation presented Saussure's contribution with a much more critical attitude than in the book's reviews and summaries of the previous decade. It may be argued, however, that this criticism was only partly a result, or rather even a side-effect, of the Marrist campaign against the 'bourgeois Indo-European scholarship'. More symptomatically, the long-expected Russian translation of the most influential linguistic course of the 1920s generally signalled an unfavourable change of attitudes towards Saussure's abstract sociologism, and in a way crowned a wave of critique, mounted by some Soviet scholars against the philosophy of abstract objectivism at the end of the decade. This anti-Saussurean trend was particularly strong in Leningrad linguistic circles, dominated by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay's intellectual tradition and Marr's Japhetology. In Moscow, on the other hand, it was powerfully represented by the Language Front [*Jazykovoj front*], many of whose members grew up as the disciples of the Formalism, but in the early 1930s came to formulate a strong anti-Saussurean platform under the slogan *Back to Humboldt!*

Valentin Vološinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, first published in 1929, occupies a specific place in the general anti-abstractionist movement. The book was so original and unorthodox that, in fact, in the early 1930s it fell under attack from all sides of the trend: the Language Front, on one hand, and the Marrists, on the other, both of whom found Vološinov an easy target in their ideological war against one another. This is partly explained by the complex and problematic philosophical nature of Vološinov's book, where a peculiar combination of mostly idealist sources was appropriated into a Marxist framework. More specifically, a scientific-philosophical programme of 'socialization' of all cognition and consciousness, which was central to the Bakhtin Circle's work of the 1920s, seems to be of particular relevance for *MPL* (Makhlin 1997, p. 200). Three thinkers were especially prominent in formulating the programme of socialization. The notion of 'socialization' [*Vergesellschaftung*] belonged to the neo-Kantian philosopher Georg Simmel and was formulated in his 1908 work *Sociology*. The programme reached its climax in the 1920s with the elaboration of Husserl's and Max Scheler's phenomenology. It has been suggested that Vološinov's move towards sociology in the period 1926-1929 demonstrated how sociology was regarded as the ground on which Marxism and the idealist philosophy of culture, propagated by neo-Kantian thinkers, could meet (Brandist 2002, p. 54-5). And it is on these philosophical grounds that Vološinov refutes Saussure's abstract sociologism, which he saw in sharp opposition to the crucial notion of 'inter-

nal sociality' [*vnutrennjaja social'nost'*] and the programme of socialisation on the whole.

## 1. MARXISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE : AGAINST SAUSSURE

Vološinov's book does not only remain the most famous example of uncompromising anti-Saussurean critique in Soviet linguistics, but it has also been compared to the *Cours* itself, due to the similarities and controversies in the histories of the books' writing and publication, which in both cases resulted in a long-running scholarly debate on their authorship.

Vološinov's refutation of Saussure's linguistic theory makes the focal point of the book's linguistic content and a crucial component of his dialectical analysis of the main trends in Western lingua-philosophical thought. Vološinov juxtaposes the so-called 'abstract objectivism' and 'individualist subjectivism', whose opposite approaches towards language as a specific object of linguistic inquiry can be summed up with the help of the classic Humboldtian distinction between language as a creative activity, *energeia*, and as a static system of self-identical forms, *ergon*. If Humboldt is the most important figure of the subjectivist movement, Saussure 'has endowed the ideas of the [objectivist] trend with amazing clarity and precision' (Vološinov 1998, p. 352).

It is important, in the context of this discussion, to look at Vološinov's interpretation of Saussure's linguistic terminology which is bound to inevitably reflect his own lingua-philosophical system of concepts. Vološinov renders Saussure's triad *langage/ langue/ parole* as *jazyk-reč' / jazyk (kak sistema form) / vyskazyvanie*. Vološinov's interpretation of *parole* is pivotal for his critique of 'abstract objectivism', in general, and of Saussurean theory, in particular. In his terminological system, the term *vyskazyvanie* is used as a synonym for the *individual'nyj rečevyj akt* or *individual'nyj akt govorenija*. In a nutshell, Saussure's thesis that *langue* (*jazyk*), a social phenomenon and a system of arbitrary signs, is opposed to *parole* (*vyskazyvanie*) and presents the only true object of a linguistic inquiry, constitutes for Vološinov the *proton pseudos* of the Saussurean doctrine. For the Soviet scholar, concerned in *MPL* with the same task as Saussure in the *Cours* – the problem of the identification and the delimitation of language as a specific object of study – the solution of the problem is found on the diametrically opposite end of Saussurean heuristic, that is, in *parole*. From this perspective, Vološinov's preferences are wholly on the side of 'individualist subjectivism', particularly as presented in Karl Vossler's doctrine, where the speech act is considered as the only essential element of language. At the same time, Vološinov rejects what he considers to be the *proton pseudos* of this trend – its belief in the individual character of the utterance. For the utterance, declares Vološinov, is social. It is immersed in its ideological context, in its social milieu, and is not governed

by the subjective laws of individual linguistic taste, as the Vossler school argued, but by the specific ideological taste within a social environment: 'The organizing centre of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside – in the social milieu surrounding the individual being' (Vološinov 1998, p. 379) Moreover, the social milieu determines the ideological contents and the structure of the utterance, which can perform any ideological function – aesthetic, ethical, religious – thanks to the neutrality of the word as an ideological sign *par excellence*. As such, the word and the utterance become the material of social life (in the form of either inner speech or outer speech) and the media of dialogic speech interaction. And it is from this perspective that Vološinov formulates his own linguaphilosophical programme :

1. *Language system as a stable system of normatively identical forms is merely a scientific abstraction [...] This abstraction is not adequate to the concrete reality of language.*

2. *Language is a continuous generative process implemented in the social-verbal interaction of speakers.*

3. [...] *The laws of language generation are sociological laws.*

4. [...] *Linguistic creativity cannot be understood apart from the ideological meanings and values that fill it.*

5. *The structure of the utterance is a purely sociological structure* (Vološinov 1973, p. 98).

Thus, one can clearly observe a particular sociological turn that the neo-Humboldtian tradition, with its primary focus on language as a creative generative process *energeia* and its belief in the capacity of language to embody an ideological worldview, has taken in Vološinov's interpretation to produce an idiosyncratic philosophy of language, which the author presented as a sociological linguistic method conducive to a Marxist theory of language. It is, in his own words, a 'negation of both the subjectivist thesis and objectivist antithesis alike' and an attempt to find the truth 'that lies over and beyond them', constituting a *dialectical synthesis* (Vološinov 1998, p. 377).

## 2. AGAINST SAUSSURE?

The essence and the true intention of Vološinov's polemically charged anti-Saussurean critique remain a highly debatable issue. It has been argued that Saussure's understanding of language in terms of binary oppositions, and specifically that between *langue* and *parole*, was conceived as a methodological solution, aimed above all at the creation of a scientifically rigorous linguistic science. Viewed in terms of binary oppositions, language could be approached only from one of its sides – either social or individual – and for Saussure's goal of purposeful formulation of internal linguistics, *langue*, a social system of forms immune to the influence of individual

volitional factors, could provide the only possible methodological ground. As such, Saussure's langue/parole distinction was primarily of methodological value, but in post-Saussurean linguistics, however, it has been consistently (mis)interpreted as ontological condition of language (Thibault 1997: 6-7, 80-2). A straightforward reading of *MPL* may lead to believe that this common (mis)conception was also Vološinov's problem with Saussure. Indeed, some of his concrete refutations seem to suggest that Vološinov conceives of Saussure's langue as ontologically real, arguing for example, against its 'objective' representation as a series of consecutive synchronic states (Lähteenmäki 2003). Whilst it is certainly clear that Saussure's synchronic system is a scientific construction, rather than the representation of an 'objective phenomenon' of language, it does not seem possible to assert with any degree of certainty, whether Vološinov did really misunderstand Saussure's thought and took langue at its face-value as an ontological characteristic of linguistic reality. More likely and, perhaps, more logically in the context of *MPL* itself, where almost nothing is to be taken at face-value, Vološinov's ultimate difficulty with Saussure seems to be not his alleged (mis)conception of langue, but his fundamental, precisely methodological disagreement with making langue the basis of linguistics and, moreover, proclaiming internal linguistics, *linguistique de la langue*, the scientifically rigorous linguistic science. Vološinov vehemently opposed this possibility, as the theoretical and methodological impetus of his philosophy of language lay exclusively in *parole*. Conversely, what Vološinov found essential for the understanding of language and delimiting a specific linguistic object of study was not ignored or discarded by Saussure, but was simply referred to the realm of external linguistics with its own, different from langue, object of inquiry. Thus, Vološinov's anti-Saussurean critique is based on his primary methodological rejection of *linguistique de la langue*, and although his whole argument is extremely interesting in its own right, it is also beyond the scope of a methodologically tenable discussion in relation to Saussureanism. In other words, Vološinov's extraordinary linguistic-philosophical project in *MPL* is an attempt by a Soviet author to construct a *linguistique de la parole* with an independent object of linguistic inquiry in the form of the utterance. Moreover, it aims to include the already extremely complicated phenomenon of human speech in a much wider encompassing context of a socially organized process of communication. In fact, what we clearly observe in Vološinov's argument is a relatively common neo-Humboldtian rebellion against the scientificization of linguistics, an attempt to revive a thoroughgoing philosophy of language, one that is concerned with verbal discourse in its psychological, communicative, and aesthetic totality. Unsurprisingly, then, Vološinov finds unacceptable the objectivist approach, and Saussureanism, in particular, where the object of linguistic inquiry is rigorously and consciously confined to *langue* and the delineation of an internal linguistics is declared the only possible methodological tool for making linguistics a proper science. As such, Vološinov's philosophy of language, with its dis-

tinct philosophical apparatus, but only vaguely formulated linguistic methodology, can be regarded as a critical alternative to 'abstract objectivism', which rightly points at many of its weaknesses, but does not refute or, even less, nullify the entire trend.

### 3. ALEKSANDR ROMM'S RETURN TO SAUSSURE

Vološinov's pioneering work produced a baffling effect on his reviewers, who seemed almost amused by the fact that Saussure's conception, regarded as a breakthrough in the sociological and, by the same token for Soviet linguists, broadly social understanding of language, was criticized from a neo-Humboldtian idealist platform by an ostensibly Marxist writer. It may be argued, however, that what the reviewers failed to see in Vološinov's anti-Saussureanism was precisely its consistent impetus for the socialization of all cognition and consciousness, which was a defining ideological feature of the Bakhtin Circle's linguistic and literary works of the 1920s. For Vološinov, what has passed into a Marxist linguistics from Saussureanism, due to its social emphasis, is only 'half-truth', and a dangerous one, if affirmed in its Marxist status. The 'half-truth' of language as a social fact, crystallized in the abstract form of *langue*, excludes a possibility of socialization of consciousness and therefore cannot provide a methodological path for a Marxist linguistics. This explains Vološinov's total rejection of Saussure's version of the sociology of language, as formulated in *Cours de linguistique générale*. However, for the first translator of this book into Russian, Aleksandr Romm, whose knowledge of and enthusiasm for Saussure's theory compelled him to write his own review of Vološinov's book, the *Cours* does offer a path to the 'truth'. Arguing against Vološinov's downright anti-Saussurean critique, Romm seeks to construct his own 'dialectics of language', in which he sets out 'to think to the truth' [*dodumat' do istiny*] both Vossler's and Saussure's thought.

From 1919 Aleksandr Romm (1898-1943) had been a member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle (MLC). He was actively involved in the Circle's scholarly and administrative work, having held, at different times, the positions of its assistant secretary, treasurer, documents keeper and scientific secretary. Translation had been one of Romm's pre-elected activities, and in the course of the 1920s-1930s it had gradually become his main occupation. Known primarily as a translator from national languages of the USSR, Romm also extensively translated French poetry and prose. In 1922 he undertook his most ambitious project of translating *Cours de linguistique générale* into Russian and thus providing a first translation of this seminal work into a foreign language. It is truly regretful, however, that failing to reach an agreement with the book's editors Bally and Sechehaye, Romm never completed the translation which, until recently, remained virtually unknown, in spite of its obvious philological and bibliographical value.

Romm's review of Vološinov's book was drafted in December 1929 and remained equally unpublished until 1995. It is particularly interesting as the author's original autonomous attempt to resolve the antinomy between 'abstract objectivism' and 'individualist subjectivism' in a way different from Vološinov's and more in line with the evolution of the MLC Saussurean thought.

We have seen that the antinomy between *ergon* and *energeia* was solved by Vološinov unambiguously in favour of its second Humboldtian element, that is language as a creative activity of the speaker, completely rejecting Saussurean notion of language system as a social product passively registered by the speaking collective. Vološinov's radicalism was not typical for Russian linguists of the 1920s, who generally accepted Saussure's dichotomy *langue-parole*, albeit subjecting it to serious reconsideration and modifications by the late 1920s. Grigorii Vinokur, for one, attempted to reconcile both aspects of language, *ergon* and *energeia*, by accommodating them into the dichotomy *langue-parole*. He suggested that the distinction between *langue* and *parole* essentially implies the discrimination between language in general and style [*jazyk voobščee i stil'*]. He insisted that *langue* as a social phenomenon provides the basis for language activity, *parole*, and only within the limits of *langue* the speakers can create their language.

In contrast to his MLC colleague and in a constructive polemic with Vološinov, Romm does not divide *ergon* and *energeia* along the lines of *langue* and *parole*. His approach is more unorthodox and more dialectical, since he regards both *langue* and *parole* as simultaneously social product and language activity: 'it is not possible to debate whether language, [*jazyk*] is *ergon* or *energeia*. It is both [...]. The same concerns the word [*slovo*], which should be singled out as a distinct concept' (Romm, RGALI, f. 1495, op. 1, d. 77. Romm, 1995, p. 204). As the pioneer of Russian Saussurean terminology in his 1922 translation, Romm rendered the antinomy of *langue* and *parole* as, correspondingly, *jazyk* and *govorenie*. In the *MPL* review, however, Romm develops a more elaborate and distinctly phenomenological system of oppositions, distinguishing between *jazyk*, *govorenie* and *slovo*. If we assume that the term *slovo* is used as an approximate equivalent to Vološinov's *vyskazyvanie*, 'utterance', and *rečevoj akt*, 'speech act', then it may be interpreted as an inexact analogue of Saussure's *parole*. At the same time, the presence of a third member of the triad, *govorenie*, allows Romm to draw a dividing line within the sphere of *parole* itself; something that clearly demonstrates the 'Špetian' progress of Romm's linguistic thought in the 1920s.

Husserl's student, philosopher Gustav Špet (1879-1937) was a frequent guest at the MLC meetings, and his philosophy of language enjoyed such a popularity among the young Moscow linguists that some of them preferred to call themselves Špetians, rather than Saussureans, and often read Saussure in the light of Špet's ideas.

*Slovo* is the fundamental concept of Špet's philosophy of language,

central to all of his published and unpublished works of the 1910s-1920s. In a complex phenomenological and hermeneutic interpretation, *slovo* is understood as the archetype of culture, a constituent element and a vital link between the thing and the meaning, as well as the cryptic embodiment of sense, open for deciphering. It serves as 'the ideal flesh of thought', and 'reigns above all on earth, on waters, and in the sky' (Špet 1989, p. 397-8). In his work *Iazyk i smysl*, Špet gives a concise formulation of the three main definitions of *slovo*: firstly, *slovo* is defined as a general human faculty of speech, which distinguishes humans from 'wordless' animals; on the other hand, it is also language as an instrument of communication and expression, including the notion of individual languages. Secondly, *slovo* is understood as a semantically completed sequence of words, the utterance, but also as a collection of 'expressions, phrases, utterances, propositions, etc'. Finally, *slovo* is the ultimate unit of language, both in the former general sense and the latter more specific, executive, meaning (Špet 2005, p. 568-9). In this triple definition, Špet's *slovo* can be – however tentatively – related to all three of Saussure's notions: whilst its first definition embraces both *langage* and *langue*, the second allows for a possible interpretation as *parole*.

We may then come to a conclusion that by differentiating between the linguistic aspect of *parole* as '*empiriia govoreniia*', the empirical actuality of speaking, and its philological aspect, *slovo*, Romm revokes Špet's concept of the word as a contextual construction of meaning and seeks, as it were, to 'concretize' Vološinov's rather broad notion of *vyskazyvanie*.

Romm fully approves of Vološinov's sociological revision of Vossler's subjectivist theory of language creativity, which transfers the process of linguistic activity 'from psychology of the speaker to social life ideology, that is the milieu lying between the speakers' (Romm, RGALI, f. 1495, op. 1, d. 77. Romm, 1995, p. 203). However, Romm refuses to accept Vološinov's thesis that only this milieu, 'the social situation of discourse', determines the speaker's utterance. For him, the milieu, 'this porridge of struggle and the process of becoming of language norms in their *application*', is no more than an ill-defined empirical actuality of speaking that requires systematization (Romm, RGALI, f. 1495, op. 1, d. 77. Romm, 1995, p. 201). This is where Saussurean vision steps in and is subjected to a similar rethinking. Romm insists on the power of Saussure's objective normative system of language to impose social boundaries on individual language creativity and to endow the speaker's activity with what Vossler called linguistic 'taste' or 'spirit'. What is crucial, however, is that this taste is defined neither by the individual aesthetic feeling, nor by the social situation of discourse only, but primarily by the internal harmony (*solidarité*, to use Saussure's expression) of the language system. As a social phenomenon, Romm argues, language is capable of functioning on a national level thanks to its compulsory elements, mainly grammar and vocabulary, which enter from language system into the concrete process of production of *slovo* (utterance, discourse) and objectivize it: 'this is what is

preserved as a real *ergon* of both *jazyk* and *govorenie*'. In other words, ways of speaking of any two interlocutors are determined by the whole society, whole social group and, ultimately, whole nation, with the help of their common language. The wider is the intended audience of the speaker, the less is the possibility for individualization of his/her discourse. In an interesting twist of thought, the scholar performs what has been called 'a peculiar re-sociologization' of Saussure's theoretical project: 'Saussure is valuable because he emphasizes the element of social *compulsion*, whilst Vossler creates a bourgeois illusion of the interlocutors' *freedom*. In a socialist society coercion is abolished (Saussure's immobility is abolished), but compulsion remains' (Romm, RGALI, f. 1495, op. 1, d. 77. Romm, 1995, p. 203). In a summary of his argument, Romm once again emphasizes the inseparability of *ergon* and *energeia*, which in his opinion unite *langue* and *parole* by means of *slovo*: '*Slovo*, 1) is determined both by language and by empirical speaking; 2) determines both language (history) and empirical speaking'. Such pre-eminence of *slovo* should lead to the elaboration of a specific scholarship concerned with the study of *slovo*, its types and forms. The discipline of *slovo* would include both history and theory of the word, and as such, would unite poetics, rhetoric, and generics (by generics Romm, most likely, referred to a study of speech genres). This, Romm concludes, is what Špet's impressionistic attempts were directed at – the creation of a new philological discipline, as opposed to a pure abstract linguistics, whose understanding of the social nature of both language system and the utterance would allow for a constant re(interpretation) of the latter in its original and immanent contexts. Taking a challenge against Vološinov's ostensible anti-philologism on the grounds of his own argument of language as an ideological realm, Romm declares: 'Philologism not only *was* but *remains* the basis of culture or, if you wish, ideology' (Romm, RGALI, f. 1495, op. 1, d. 77. Romm, 1995, p. 204).

## CONCLUSION

Romm's review, in spite of its unfinished character and a curious politicization of the argument, clearly demonstrates the evolutionary course that Saussureanism had followed in the MLC linguistic thought in the 1920s, as also revealed in the works by Vinokur and in the Prague Linguistic Circle doctrine. It is primarily concerned with the abolition of the strict divide between the history of language and its static system, and the attempt to overcome the abstract features of Saussureanism by establishing the points of contact between *langue*, as language system, and *parole*, as its individual material realization. In Vinokur's analysis, this converging point was perceived in the distinction between language and style, in the Prague Circle's structuralism – in the complementary antinomy between code and message, and in Romm's review – in the establishment of a third element *slovo*, which abolishes the abstraction of language system, but does not refute the

system as such. Romm's philological orientation and his insistence on the creation of a specific scholarship of the word testify to a strong Špetian influence and his teaching of the inner form of the word, which to a great extent defined the Moscow thinkers' reception of Saussure's *Cours*. And it is precisely Romm's fidelity to Saussure and his alliance with Špet, that may (at least partly) account for the incomplete character of his work. In contrast to his translation of the *Cours*, which Romm was only too eager to publish, he must have felt wary about the publication of the review, whose content could be perceived as both linguistically and politically untimely.

In March 1929, after a public linguistic discussion at the Communist Academy, the (in)famous New Teaching on Language, an idiosyncratic linguistic school of academician Nikolai Marr, was ultimately pronounced as Marxism in Soviet linguistics and recognized as the only scientifically and politically legitimate discourse on language. The accession of Marrism dealt a final blow to the 'Saussurean era' in Soviet linguistics, dominated in the 1920s by the systemic and structuralist approach of the Formal School. Among the many victims of the purges in the academia that followed was Gustav Špet, whose State Academy of Artistic Studies [*Gosudarstvennaia akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk, GAKhN*] was labelled 'idealist', 'formalist', 'mysticist' and as such disbanded. Unsurprisingly, then, Romm never finished or sought to publish a review, whose intellectual loyalty to Saussure and Špet would be too obvious to their enemies and, sadly, too useless for their followers. Nevertheless, the review remains a unique testimony to the shift of scientific paradigms in Soviet linguistics, of which Vološinov's *MPL* is a remarkable example, as well as to the change of socio-political epochs in Soviet history.

Whilst following the evolution of Saussure's ideas in Soviet linguistics for more than a decade from the date of the *Cours* arrival in Russia in 1917, one is bound to realize what an unusual and, indeed, ironic history Saussureanism had had in Soviet scholarship of the 1920s and early 1930s. In 1918 Saussure's conception received perhaps the warmest welcome in Europe among the Russian linguists: it was lauded for providing a methodological foundation for a sociological linguistic science by establishing the nature of language as a social fact, but, in 1933, when Sukhotin's translation of the *Cours* was published, it was accused of no less than eliminating the immanent social essence of language (Vvedenskii 2000 (1933), p. 219). The long-awaited publication of the book in Russian in fact marked the *end* of the Saussurean epoch in Russian linguistics. The *Cours* was far from being theoretically 'novel' by this time and had already outlived the peak of its fame, while the possibility of using the book in linguistic education and instruction was ruled out by the establishment of the Marrist teaching as the only legitimate theoretical and methodological framework in language education. The book's appearance in fact carried a reverse ideological message: the aim of publishing the *Cours* in Russian was stated in terms of submitting 'one of the grandest works of theoretical linguistics in Western Europe' to a 'serious critical examination' and 'sur-

passing the Saussurean heritage in linguistics' (Vvedenskii 2000 (1933): 200, 221). And yet, at least in one respect the 1933 publication was important: Sukhotin's rendering of the terms *langage/ langue/ parole* as *rečevaja dejatel'nost' / jazyk/ reč'* became conventional in Russian Saussurean terminology, while his translation remains the classic Russian text of the famous book.

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Valentin Nikolaevič Vološinov (1895-1936)