

Marco Senaldi is an art critic and theorist. He is the co-author, with Antonio Piotti, of *Lo spirito e gli Ultracorpi* (Franco Angeli, Milan 1999). He has worked on various television programs for the Fininvest network and RAI television including "Le notti dell'Angelo." He was Professor of Aesthetics at the Accademia Carrara of Bergamo and has organized conferences and panel discussions for the City of Milan.

*I wrote I Love You in the Sand*, the title of a pop song from the 60s, is the perfect introduction to the various relationships that exist between art and language.

Such relationships can be traced back to a phenomenon called the "linguistic turn" when linguistics, semiotics, structuralism *et similia* asserted themselves with great command within the sphere of the theory-based human sciences (philosophy, psychology, anthropology and so on) and, in time, art.

Ever since the historical avantgardes, art, insofar as it was "modern" or a departure from the art that had preceded it, has quite rightly been integrating language into the work of art. In the case of Futurism, originally conceived as a literary movement, the development of "Freewords" favored the exchange between visual and linguistic elements. Cubism, meanwhile, was drawing directly on the language of pre-existent reality, as were the Dadaists with their use of materials such as newspaper cuttings, labels and tickets as chromatic and pictorial backgrounds. Elsewhere, the surrealists, as they cultivated automatism, were using language as a sort of *lapsus* which they would introduce into the work of art in the form of "absurd" caption (for instance, the celebrated Magritte work *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (This is not a pipe)<sup>1</sup>).

Come the 1960s, and 1961 in particular which brought a set of definitions courtesy of Henry Flynt followed by the true definition of Conceptual Art (Sol LeWitt in '67 and Kosuth in '69), and the establishment of the art collective Art & Language, the switch towards a total surrender of art to language or even to the abstraction implied in languages became radical<sup>2</sup>.

So radical was this watershed that in his *Art After Philosophy* (1969), Kosuth would actually acknowledge that Duchamp had, with not inconsiderable lucidity, foreseen the conceptualization of all art, going so far as to consider artists such as Manet or Cézanne and even the Cubists as comparatively "timid and ambiguous"<sup>3</sup>. It was as if even the work of those artists we might still in some way define as "classical" could only truly be interpreted as an "anticipation" of the true destiny of all art — that destiny being conceptualization. The true sense of the adjective "conceptual" — quite clearly chosen with a polemical agenda over other philosophical adjectives attributable or attributed to art, such as "spiritual", "ideal" or even simply "abstract" (and, why not, "philosophical") — becomes clear only within a cultural context in which language would progressively become the prime theoretical field of reference. If Conceptual artists define themselves as such it is because language, which entered temporarily

into twentieth-century painting as barely more than a decorative element, had taken root to such an extent that it emerged as the sole model capable of redefining “an identity” of art — and all this so soon after Duchamp had destroyed every other “material” (morphological, optical, retinal, and therefore “aesthetic”) identification possible. In a sense, the de-materialization of the identity of art was an historical necessity from which there was no way out for artists: artists would find their answer in the contemporary fact that philosophy (along with sociology and anthropology) have all been “dematerialized” by renouncing their “object” (man, knowledge, truth...) and surrendering to the linguistic model just as the philosophical or aesthetic analysis of art has definitively transmuted into linguistic analysis: semiotics.

Ever since the linguistic turn (in the 60s, with writings such as Jakobson and Hjelmslev's essays on general linguistics), semiotics has had ambitions of totalization: all cultural phenomena are phenomena of communication and meaning and, as such, are structured like a language. As a cultural phenomenon it follows that art, too, is structured like a language and therefore warrants the same rules of interpretation. Jakobson is quite categorical on the subject: “Art has long eluded semiotic analysis. And yet there is no doubt that all arts (...) refer to the sign” and to a code not unlike the code of linguistics, even when more generically perceptive or cultural. As Eco confirms, signification “is a phenomenon which embraces the entire cultural universe.”<sup>4</sup> In short, semiotics behaved, initially (and subsequently, when the linguistic model proved inadequate and the “textual” model was introduced), in much the same way as the *Predator*, the bloodthirsty alien in the film of the same name: finding itself in an unfamiliar world, it eschews survival strategies for the more sophisticated mechanism of interpretation. In one celebrated sequence, the monster, surveying the savanna, an environment it does not recognize, calls upon a practical gadget it wears on its wrist, a sort of oversized Swatch, to “scan” the surrounding panorama, thus making it intelligible within its own system of comprehension, translating images into numerical series. Semiotics takes a similarly total approach to the world of which works of art form a part, like elements in an unfamiliar landscape requiring examination and “explanation” in theoretical terms. Indeed, if we examine some of the attempts made at semiotic “scanning”, we will encounter actual re-translations, such as Eco's *Outlook for a Semiotics of Visual Art* (1980)<sup>5</sup>. In this sense, and in a retake on Jakobson, art “has ceased to elude semiotics”: on the contrary, it has become an integral part of it. Quite clearly, the linguistic turn as pursued by conceptual artists and outfits such as Art & Language, appears to fall perfectly in line, some might say too perfectly in line, with the view that all reality is sign-based and therefore attributable to re-collocation within semiotics. Fundamentally, the conceptual artist reasons as follows: if it is

true that all cultural phenomena are nothing more than semioses, then we are transforming even those cultural phenomena which tend to resist a directly linguistic interpretation — for instance what was called “visual” or “iconic” art — into directly linguistic phenomena. In other words, if *res sunt nomina*, we have ceased to produce the untranslatable remainder, the *res*, and produce solely and directly the *nomina*. In this spirit, we can concur with Jakobson that “to speak in terms of the ‘grammar’ of an art is by no means a lazy metaphor”<sup>6</sup>, and that the very form of the work of art will become “the grammar for the total work.”<sup>7</sup> Naturally, if the work of art and the linguistic structure are equivalents, then this changes everything. In light of this, Conceptual Art should be taken very seriously since it ceases to be “a new way of making art with a view onto the ever-variegated arena of modern artistic proposals.” The case of Conceptualism is radically different from other great, innovative movements in the art history canon, such as Impressionism or Cubism: no pre-existent code can be applied to Impressionism or Cubism since their artistic form (their way of producing signs) is itself a “violent founding of a code,”<sup>8</sup> yet this means that similar artists who do invent new semantic models, some of which are hitherto unseen, are failing to emancipate themselves from semiotic (which is to say linguistic) “legibility,” in other words, these artists are free from pre-existing codes only insofar as they are inventing another code. Impressionists and Cubists do produce an “original innovation,” “one step removed from the norm” but it remains “one step removed from the *linguistic* norm.” It now becomes clear what moved Kosuth to accuse the Impressionists and Cubists of “timid and ambiguous stabs” despite all their valiant attempts at innovation: whatever is founded, even in the most revolutionary case, will always be no more than just another code. However, what is being founded now is not merely a new code but *the* code, with attempts underway to transform the “founding” into the “code itself” — therefore, not to invent a new way of producing art that will speak a new language (a new way of producing signs) but to establish the definitive equivalence art=production, art=production of signs, art=language, to ensure that the “way in which signs are produced” is the only art possible, the only art remaining<sup>9</sup>.

All of this is quite pertinently taken on board in the work of Art & Language: what appears to surprise artists using the written or spoken language, or, indeed, other linguistic forms such as photography, notes, even mathematical formulae, is the distinct separation of works of visual art using a visual code from the language used to explain or comment on them. In other words, the element of surprise stems from the fact that “although the ‘heart’ (of art, or the fact that visual art has used visual languages) has always been considered as an evolving language, no attempt so far has been made to consider the possibility that this central kernel might be evolving to such a point that it could include

and assimilate one or indeed all of the non-visual languages" (in other words, language *tout court*)<sup>10</sup>. In short, the fact that "art is the definition of art" (to borrow a famous motto from Kosuth<sup>11</sup>) does not merely mark a recursive point in the turbulent history of art but is a paradox which sheds doubt on the very meaning of the semiotic undertaking whereby "all cultural phenomena are also sign-based," and as such structured (and legible) in much the same way as a language. Indeed, if art actually becomes language, rather than distinguish itself from it, any language used to interpret it *will automatically become art*, the obvious consequence of this being that we shall no longer be able to distinguish art from language ... Instead, art, which according to Jakobson had for a long time eluded semiotic analysis like some difficult prey, once it has been captured *becomes the hunter*, as it in turn becomes a "semiotic analysis," obviously preventing semiotics from analyzing anything, and destroying, once and for all, its applicability both to itself and to any other "cultural phenomenon". (If semiotic analysis fails on art, what could it be applicable to? Religion? Pharmacology?) If it is typical that cultural phenomena (those "founded in signification", naturally!) evolve, then the conceptualists are right: why should one language fail to include if not another language, all other languages? And what would this "only" language be? Linguistic language, the broader language of semiotics, the language of art? Or is reality as it stands already the Ur-language? As we shall

A CENA TUTTI INSIEME  
/ EVERYONE TOGETHER  
AT DINNER, COMO, EX  
CHIESA DI / FORMER  
CHURCH OF SAN  
FRANCESCO



see, this is precisely what was posited by Pasolini. Whatever the answer, it is quite clear that every single language, in order that it extend to such a point, would have to renounce its object since it would itself have become an object — or else renounce its own identity as an "instrument of communication and meaning" — which is precisely what is meant when we say that "the whole world is (structured like a) language!"

The more a conceptual artist attempts to reduce the work of art to its linguistic apparatus, the more he is shielding it from its own aesthetic-visual paraphernalia; and the more he tries to dematerialize it, the more its materiality reemerges in phantasmic form; and the more this dematerialization should free the creative act from the art trade in all its manifestations, the more the phantasm of business reasserts itself as even the most transient object, the most vacuous scribble, is fetishized (one need look no further than Beuys — whose story warrants its own scrutiny elsewhere — who went so far as to display, under glass as if they were some kind of relic, evanescent notes on a common blackboard). To fully appreciate the truly epoch-making importance of all this, it is worth remembering — as Lucy Lippard recalls — that nobody, in 1969, would have paid a cent for a Xerox bearing the description of an "art event" or for some snapshot documenting a "situation". So, while artists appeared to be truly free from the tyranny of the art market, a mere "three years later, the prime exponents of conceptualism were selling their work for considerable sums both here (in the USA) and in Europe."<sup>12</sup>

Even more surprising is that despite this impasse (which would eventually lead to the long-term break down of Art & Language and ultimately send other poetics drifting into the vague area of political commitment *tout court* (Seth Siegelaub) or directly critico-philosophical activity (Victor Burgin), Conceptualism has continued to thrive, often producing notable "works of art" (Kosuth in the 90s, to name but one). Still, we would be misleading ourselves if we were to believe that the "visual" character of art had ultimately come off better than the linguistic extremism of the 60s and 70s, despite its capacity for provoking reactionary phenomena such as the "return to painting" which would hallmark subsequent decades. No contradiction, once it has been made explicit, can be put back onto the shelf and forgotten "as if it had never existed." Far from marking the triumph of semiotics as a linguistic analysis of the world, the contradiction made explicit by conceptual art actually reveals the intrinsic checkmate on which language itself is founded: in other words the symbolic system which establishes its translatability over the untranslatable, the describable over the indescribable, the linguistic over the non-linguistic, the semiotic over the non-semiotic and so forth. Some famous "definitions" courtesy of Kosuth, for example, cannot be said to make any real progress towards an understanding of the

work of art; rather they turn comprehension against the incomprehensible and vice versa, as in the 1965 piece *Self-Described and Self-Defined*. The piece features a yellow neon strip-light spelling out the phrase of the title which pushes the paradox to the surface with full clout as the language remains linguistic (the phrase, in English, is effectively “legible”), the piece also standing in its own right as an object (an illuminated neon). Apparently, though, there is no “visual representation” here; what we actually have is a “luminous yellow sculpture” which also “represents” linguistic signs. Immediately and paradoxically, this bounces the meaning from one level to another, from the “referent” to the “sign” and vice versa ... Works of this type clarify what one great Lacanian theorist, Žižek, defined as “the blind spot of language”: we only truly understand a phrase in a foreign language ‘when we realize the extent to which all efforts to determine the meaning fall short, not because of any particular lack of comprehension but because the meaning of the word in question is ‘in itself’ incomplete (in the ‘other’ language). Every language, by definition, comes complete with an opening onto enigma, onto a dimension in which ‘words are not enough’: and it is this minimal opening onto the meaning of words and phrases that constitutes a ‘living’ language<sup>13</sup>.’ Furthermore, this is what Lacan meant when he said, “undoubtedly, language is constituted by language”, in other words a *quid corporeo* (language) and a *quid enigmatico* (the non-linguistic aspect, the a-language of language)<sup>14</sup>. This immanent paradox was also to the fore within the field of semiotics itself: it was Eco, commenting on a passage by Morris on the incompleteness of the iconic sign, who glossed such reasoning with the observation that incompleteness is intrinsic to all signs, indeed “the true and complete iconic sign of Queen Elizabeth is not the Annigoni portrait but the Queen herself (or, possibly, a science-fiction double of her).”<sup>15</sup>. Naturally, this paradox goes hand-in-hand with Greimas’ intuition that no referent is “completely natural,” while all things are already founded in meaning; here, on the other hand, there is no founding in meaning, given that the only signs fit to express things completely are “the things themselves,” as “completely natural referents.” The dual face of the semiotic paradox is reason for great exultation in the anti-semiotics camp and among those who decry the linguistic reduction of artistic procedure, not only old professors steeped in Crocean idealism, but younger, materialist and heterodox artists. Into this category falls Pasolini, picking up on the contradiction and exploiting it in what would be known as the “polemic on iconism,”<sup>16</sup> which was actually a polemic on the very legitimacy of the “linguistic turn.” However, any self-respecting paradox, when rounded up on by adversaries, will sooner or later turn on whoever exposes it, wherever such adversaries fail to appreciate the dialectic value of contradiction.

Indeed Pasolini — gleeful at having caught Eco out on the theme of iconic signs which he had accused of “ingenuous materialism” — inadvertently subverts his

own materialistic presuppositions by stating that if cinema is “the language of reality” then “Reality is cinema (or language) in nature.”<sup>17</sup> In his attempt to stay faithful to a narrowly materialistic relation between connotation and denotation, for fear of falling into the trap of a semiotic “idealism,” Pasolini remains blissfully unaware that he is falling into the considerably larger trap of dialectic idealism whereby Reality is nothing more than the transformation of nature into Spirit (rather than language) — with art (in the case of Pasolini, cinema), merely the agent of this transformation.

As far as Pasolini is concerned, “Reality itself should be considered a language.”<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, there have been those in the more restricted field of the visual arts who would readily have subscribed to a similarly surprising statement: one need look no further than two works by Gino de Dominicis from 1970, *Zodiaco* and *Mozzarella in carrozza*, in which real things neither simply occupy “the place of” other things, nor “act as” signs, but are intrinsically sign-based, intrinsically linguistic (in *Zodiaco*, the signs of the Zodiac abandon their symbolic aspect to become “things” (in pride of place in the gallery we have two twins for Gemini, a virgin for Virgo, a bull for Taurus, fish for Pisces and so on), while in the latter the metaphorical “mozzarella in carrozza” (breaded, deep-fried mozzarella cheese, the translation being Mozzarella in a Carriage) is rendered as a real mozzarella comfortably nestled in a real carriage<sup>19</sup>. Works such as these are situated at the opposite pole from the conceptual output of the same period.

The various contradictions we have addressed so far can be pared down to two, as follows: on the one hand, the semiotic position is inclined to *read* all realities in terms of signs-linguistics: this position is radicalized in conceptual art (in a broad sense) and in the observations of Greimas and Eco regarding the “iconic sign” (the “thing” as an iconic sign of itself). On the other hand, the position championed by Pasolini tends to see reality *directly* as language, with language indistinguishable as an explicative-hermeneutic code, given that language itself is “one thing among other things.” The former stance seems to bring with it a sort of Kantian schematism: it is only possible to describe the world through the linguistic schemes which *a priori* structure our experience of the world (thus for Kosuth, art as language “is true *a priori*”); the latter, meanwhile, leans towards a willfully Spinozan pantheism whereby reality, as a substance, is itself “the code of codes”, “expressive” and “non-hierarchical” (in keeping with Deleuze in his essay on Spinoza)<sup>20</sup>. The various premises of Pasolini’s polemic against semiology (as embodied on various occasions by Christian Metz, Eco, Barthes and others) are quite clear and he uses them in this justification of his concept of cinema:

Cinema is a language — sang Totò — a language that forces us to broaden the notion of language. It is not a symbolic, arbitrary, conventional system. It has no

artificial keyboard on which to ring out the sound like Pavlov's bells: signs which evoke reality, just as a bell evokes cheese for Mickey Mouse, making his mouth water in the process.

Cinema does not evoke reality in the same way as literary language does. Neither does it copy language like painting nor does it mime reality like theater. Cinema *reproduces* reality: images and sounds! What does cinema achieve by reproducing reality? Cinema expresses reality through reality. (...) *Reality is a language*. Far more important than any "semiology of cinema," we should be working on *the semiology of reality!*

Cinema is the written language of realities such as language.<sup>21</sup>

We must not think that by referring to "painting," Pasolini is in any way thinking in terms of contemporary art (in the example he gives of the iconic sign of the Queen of England, he refers to the portraitist Annigoni); the fact is that Pasolini suggests the convergence of all avantgarde arts into cinematic form, or more precisely, what he defines as "audiovisuals." If the whole of reality is language, an expression in itself, it follows that reality is "Cinema in nature": "The whole of life (...) is a natural and living cinema (...) reality (...) is (...) this dual representation in which we are actors and spectators at the same time: a gigantic happening."<sup>22</sup> The happening (we might also add the installation) is already a speaking, expressive reality, despite the absence of an actual "movie camera."

Pasolini's stance also includes a supplementary element which debunks his own intrinsic logic, and that element is cinema itself as a "language": as cinema reproduces reality, it relates it in a new and special way, as if it had been discovered through its own reproduction, as if certain expressive mechanisms had come to the fore only via this new reflected situation.<sup>23</sup>

Thanks precisely to their condition as a contradictory language, audiovisuals introduce a dialectic split between reality-as-expression and reality-as-representation into the proceedings, whereby the thing itself (the Queen of England, Reality) is presented as *intrinsically twofold* — which Pasolini, inadvertently using a term well-known to connoisseurs of Hegel, refers to as "reflected": reality appears to be *reflected* precisely because it is simultaneously more and less than itself. Far from countering brutally natural reality against a refined linguistic system, Pasolini glimpses a route that leads from the contradiction into the emergence of a reality which is "new" by virtue of the fact that it is negated by a "new" language *and at the same time* reunited with itself in doubly reversed form (which is to say doubly inverse, *obverse*). This is precisely the creative function of language in psychoanalysis according to Lacan: to bring the thing itself to the fore where it is not, or is in-other: like when you entrust a "new reality" to its consignee, telling it "You are my woman" thus "sealing the subject as his spouse's man."<sup>24</sup>



A CENA TUTTI INSIEME  
/ EVERYONE TOGETHER  
AT DINNER, COMO, EX  
CHIESA DI / FORMER  
CHURCH OF SAN  
FRANCESCO

Remember what Hegel had to say regarding concept: *The concept is the time of the thing*. The concept is certainly not the same as the thing for the simple reason that the concept is to be found where the thing is not, it comes in order to substitute the thing, not unlike the elephant which I brought into the room the other day, using the word *elephant* as an intermediary. If any of you have been particularly struck by this it is just that it was obvious that the elephant was there once it had been nominated. What of the thing can be there? Neither its form nor its reality because in actuality all the places are taken. Hegel is quite categorical when he says: the concept is what enables the thing to be there while not being there<sup>25</sup>.

It is quite extraordinary how the words of Lacan could be used to describe any one of the classic situations that took place in galleries in New York during the 60s or 70s! And yet we should remember that for the concept to be realized where the thing is not, the thing must, in some way, *be there!* And how else can this be possible if not by audiovisual means?<sup>26</sup> Are audiovisuals not precisely the medium which enables us to reconstruct the history of the happening as well as so much conceptual output, if we leave aside the ephemeral works and faint traces such as the Xeroxes alluded to by Lucy Lippard, weak traces which inevitably belong to the regime of reproduction)?

Thus, the task of conceptual art extends beyond bringing the linguistic turn into the field of art, so bringing linguistics to its point of contradiction. Conceptual art must also bring to the fore the generalized dialectics of the concept which obverts “things themselves,” bringing them to their audiovisual status or simply placing them in the “video stage.”<sup>27</sup> Yet this obverse movement is evident in all art that has followed in the wake of Conceptualism. We need to trace the current interest of artists in video as well as the transformation of the conceptual, the happening, and site specific art into video form — a format already championed by the forefathers of Conceptual Art, celebrated examples of whom include Smithson and the outstanding video of the creation of the artist’s *Spiral Jetty*).

How else could we define the difference between Kosuth’s approach to language and that of an artist like Jenny Holzer? If the Kosuth is an Annigoni of language — in other words (and this brings us back to the metaphor of the Queen of England as “an iconic sign of herself”), Kosuth has produced works which “portray” language in a bid to glean its character as iconic sign — Holzer is closer to the Pasolini school of thought: her “truisms” (meaningless phrases of the type we might overhear in a telephone conversation or on the bus, such as “protect me from what I want” or “boys and girls follow the same fashion”) appear to draw from the conviction that language is in reality and must only be “shot” (in the dual sense of captured and immortalized on film). It is no coincidence that in a Holzer installation, the capacity for words to move (especially in the artist’s use of luminous LED panels) provides the static nature of language with a video supplement, thus bringing the paradox of the linguistic turn to the awareness of contradiction, and contradiction to the awareness of the inevitability of a double inversion.

*I wrote I love you in the sand*, which could well run as a Holzer truism, also symbolizes the destiny that conceptual installations have been pursuing for the past forty years: if the lyrics of the song refer to a famous metaphor for oblivion (in the sense that anything written in the sand will soon be washed away etc.) what renders them immortal is not the age-old power of art (poetry as a *monumentum aere perennis*) which would introduce a new split between language and life, but the power of the audiovisual, the very fact that these words have taken up permanent residence in the mass culture of pop music; in this sense, the wave that will come to claim the immortal words *I love you* will, from now on, be an electromagnetic wave, the penultimate cultural metamorphosis of the Spirit.

1 See the issue of *Artstudio* dedicated to *L'art et le mot*, 1989; see also Foucault’s essay dedicated to the Magritte painting *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* (1972).

2 See chapter IX (“Language and Concepts”) in K. Stiles, P. Selz (eds) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, UCLA, Berkeley-London; see also B. Buchloh, *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*, in *October - The Second Decade, 1986-1996*, MIT Press, Cambridge-London 1997, p. 117-55. Re. the dates mentioned: note that art chroniclers of these years often attempted to track a given movement or tendency in art down to its whoever had arrived there first. Consequently, the hunter became the game, the prey of his own chronological time. Fundamentally, and here I agree with Salvo, in times of contemporaneity — the word says it all — we are all contemporary. Consequently, any one of us can say of himself “I am the best,” because he is the last to arrive at the scene of a history that no longer exists. The ironic observations of “genius reactionary” Jean Clair (*Critique of Modernity*) are particularly piquant here.

3 J. Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy* (1969-87). See also Stiles and Selz, cit. p. 843.

4 As quoted in O. Calabrese, *Il Linguaggio dell’arte (The Language of Art)*, Bompiani, Milan 1985.

5 In E. Mucci (F. Tazzi, ed.), *Teorie e critiche della critica d’arte (Art Critique: Theory and Practice)*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1980.

6 R. Jakobson, *The Development of Semiotics*, 1978.

7 Sol LeWitt in Stiles, cit., p. 824.

8 U. Eco, *Trattato di semiotica generale (Treatise on General Semiotics)*, Bompiani, Milan 1978.

9 This is why Art & Language was not Art as Language (indeed, Art & Language occasionally emerges simply as Art-Language); in the May ’69 issue we read: “For instance, we might say that the first Cubist painting was an attempt to set down some guidelines on what is visual art while obviously it is also considered a work of visual art in its own right (...) But what Conceptual Art questions first and foremost is the conditions (which make) visual art remain visual (...) (In conceptual work, meanwhile) the visual form is governed by the form of the conventional signs of written language. The contents of the artist’s idea are expressed through the semantic quality of the written language (...) (cit. in Stiles and Selz, p. 852).

10 *Ibid.*

11 *L’Arte dopo la filosofia (Art After Philosophy)*, cit., p. 32.

12 L. Lippard, *Six Years: The dematerialization of the Art Object*, New York U. P., New York, 1979, p. 62. Kosuth himself declared, in 1969, that only by mistake had his photostat blow-ups of dictionary definitions “been mistaken for paintings.” (*Art After Philosophy*, cit., p. 39), a misconception which has not prevented these works from being exhibited, commercialized and reproduced even today “like paintings”. Furthermore, in Fall 1999, coffee cups, decorated by Kosuth in his unmistakable “conceptual style,” were put into production (*Modus Operandi*, for Illy Caffè, cfr. *D. La Repubblica delle Donne*, 30 November 1999).

13 S. Zizek, *The Great Other*.

14 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire (The Seminary)*, Book XX, 1983.

15 P.P. Pasolini, *Empirismo eretico (Heretical Empiricism)*, Garzanti, Milan 1972, 1991 p. 283 (the text quoted is *Il codice dei codici (The Code of Codes)*, 1967).

16 R. Fabbrihesi Leo, *La polemica sull’iconismo (Polemic on Iconism)*, ESI, Naples 1983.

17 P.P. Pasolini, *Empirismo eretico (Heretical Empiricism)*, (This cinema in nature that is reality is, in effect, a language”); in *Cinema e Film*, 1, Winter, 1966-67)

18 *Ibid.*, p.279 “As I have already said seven or eight times, a Gneral Semiotics of Reality

would be a philosophy that interprets reality as language."

19 See M. Senaldi, *Lo Spirito a Punksatawney - Arti e misteri di GDD*, in *Flash Art*, Feb. 1999.

20 *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, (*Spinoza and the Problem of Expression*) Les Editions de Minuit, Paris 1968: Pasolini's reference to Spinoza comes in the article, *cit.*, *The Code of Codes* (1966), in *Heretic Empiricism*. Deleuze returns to Pasolini's defense against Metz in *Cinéma 2 - Image temps*, (Minuit, Paris, 1985) stating that while Metz and his followers remain staunchly Kantian, Pasolini is decidedly post-Kantian.

21 *Heretic Empiricism*, *cit.*, p. 135.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 206 (1966)

23 *Ibid.*, *Cinema e Film*, 1, Winter 1966-67

24 J. Lacan, *The Freudian Thing*, 1972, *Function and Field of the word and Language in Psychoanalysis* (1953).

25 *Id.*, *The Seminary. Book I* (1953-4), *Creative Function of the Word*.

26 "Once again we see the complete triumph of spectacularity that we have seen subsist between reality and the video recording": R. Barilli, *Informale Oggetto Comportamento* (*Informal Object Behavior*), 2 vols., Feltrinelli, Milan 1979. Text quoted from 1970.

27 On the video-stage and obversion, compare M. Senaldi, A. Piotti, *Lo Spirito e gli Ultracorpi* (*The Spirit and Ultrabodies*), Angeli, Milan 1999.