

**O(riiginal) V(ersion) with S(ubtitles)**  
**[The enigma of the *cross-cap* and the incurable duplicity of desire].**

Fernando Castro Flórez.

"Suppose that we had no voice or tongue, and wanted to communicate with one another, should we not, like the deaf and dumb, make signs with the hands and head and the rest of the body?" (Plato: *Cratylus*).

Derrida upholds that the experience, among other things, of the work of art is possible only because there is no full presence<sup>1</sup>. In her work, Karin Dolk shows the *dubbing* process in which the subject is constituted and, at the same time, gains access to the rarest of dissolutions. Instead of the full meaning, the phrase or the narration, what she shows is the *anacoluthon*, a kind of gesture of the voice in which no actual language is being spoken. Do this creator's videos hold any relation to that hypersensitivity to all kinds of vibrations that is typical of the deaf<sup>2</sup>. Signs more than meanings, cuts that leave us in suspense, emotional explosions that have collapsed make up the material which Dolk, in a very clever way, delivers to the spectator to *provoke him*, for example, to force him to introduce his voice whatever the case and even from silence. I think these works hold a lucid awareness of simulation, where that does not imply, as the thematizations by Baudrillard, beginning with a sign as the reversion and elimination of all reference, in other words, an arrival at a moment when the image no longer has anything to do with any kind of reality, where it is its own, pure simulation<sup>3</sup>. However, there is also a possibility, as occurs in this case, of a simulation that takes reality as the point of extreme dissolution, like a backdrop, a horizon on which the interpretations are adapted. Dolk's dubbing cut is, by way of analogy, a projection, in terms of a criticism of obscene representation, of the *trompe-l'oeil* in which the aim is not so much confusion with reality but rather the production of a simulation in full awareness of the game and artifice: exceeding the effect of reality to sow a *doubt*<sup>4</sup>.

The visual trick takes us to the pleasures of similarity with regard to the awareness of the fact that what is identical has undeniable *differences*, in other words, that the logic of the eye discovers, in the space of desire, the *dissymmetry*: "From the beginning, in the dialectics of the eye and the gaze, we see that there is no coincidence whatsoever, but rather a genuine bait effect. When, in love, I ask for a look, it is something that is intrinsically unsatisfactory and always fails because -*You never look at me from where I see you*. The other way round, *what I look at is never what I want to see*. And, whatever we say, the relationship between the painter and the enthusiast [...] is a game, a game of

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<sup>1</sup> "Presence would mean death. If presence were possible, in the full sense of a being that is wherever it is, that appears fully wherever it is, if this were possible, there would be no Van Gogh and no work by Van Gogh, or the experience we have of that work" (Jacques Derrida interviewed by Peter Brunette and David Wallis: "Las artes espaciales" in *Acción paralela*, No. 1, Madrid, May 1995, p. 19).

<sup>2</sup> "People who are congenitally deaf do not feel "silence" and do not complain about it, in the same way that blind people do not experience "darkness" or complain about it. They are projections or metaphors we make about their condition. Furthermore, even those who suffer from the deepest deafness hear different kinds of noises and can be very sensitive to any type of vibration. This sensitiveness to vibration can become a kind of accessory sense" (Oliver Sacks: *Veo una voz. Viaje al mundo de los sordos*, Ed. Anagrama, Barcelona, 2003, p. 41).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Jean Baudrillard: "La precesión de los simulacros" in *Cultura y simulacro*, Ed. Kairós, Barcelona, 1984, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> "The *trompe-l'oeil* is not exactly a part of art or the history of art: its dimension is metaphysical" (Jean Baudrillard: *De la seducción*, Ed. Cátedra, Madrid, 1987, p. 64).

*trompe-l'oeil*: a game for deceiving something<sup>5</sup>. That dissymmetry is crucial in Karin Dolk's aesthetics because, in the end, she never stops "speaking" of the impossibility of fully adapting the desire and the gaze. In a return that is not at all literal to Acteon's metamorphosis (the hunter hunted by a woman who sentences him to be brutally torn apart), she confirms that it is not at all easy to count on what one has seen and even less so transform the epiphany of the *other's* body into something solid and definitive.

Karin Dolk's work has focused, from pieces such as *Onomatopoeitics* (2005), on the word or, more appropriately, on the guttural voice that acquires a kind of comic tone. If in *Semantic Cannibalism* (2003), the words are, literally, devoured, in certain photographs, the palindromes *Amor Roma* (2006) and *Live Evil* (2004) generate a derivation of meaning. It is clear that although the photograph reproduces the world, it only does so by fragments. Stanley Cavell has no problem with situating the essence of the photographic image in the need for the cutting: "What happens in a photograph is that it focuses on a finished object. A photograph is not obligatorily cut out with scissors or with a blocker, but rather with the apparatus itself. [...] The apparatus, as a finished object, cuts out a part of a field that is infinitely greater. [...] After cutting out the photograph, the rest of the world is eliminated by the cutting itself. The implicit presence of the rest of the world and its explicit expulsion are aspects as fundamental to photography as what is explicitly shown"<sup>6</sup>. A photograph from the series titled *Haunted* (2004) shows a subject who has covered his face with a balloon on which a pirate skull and cross bones have been printed. A combination of play and the premonition of death, leisure and melancholy, adapted to the paradigm of the *catachresis* (the heterogeneity for producing what I shall call the *spark of the imaginary*). To her fascinating videos and photographs, Dolk allegorises the "divided" condition of the subject or, to be more precise, that smeared subject spoken of by Lacan<sup>7</sup>, a figure of the folds of reality and desire, but also of his *destinerrance*<sup>8</sup>. Desire is a mixture of enjoyment and dissatisfaction that cannot be resolved like an "essential absence"; the abandonment of the *different suffering* has to do with our abandonment of ourselves and, of course, with the difficulty of establishing the encounter with the other. Lyotard spoke of the postmodern formula in a conflictive imaginary, like leaving the answer in suspension, without excluding there being something of Other, "something missing and something of desire"<sup>9</sup>. According to Lacan, the virtual subject is the reflection of the mythical eye, in other words, of the other person we are: ultimately, we only see our form realised in the mirage. In the seminar on *transfer*, Lacan points out that the Other intervenes for every subject instead of the word and, accordingly, that is how the *Ideal of the self*<sup>10</sup> is established. These voices give rise to the *alterity* in which Karin Dolk works to, I insist, interrogate the condition of desire.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacques Lacan: "La línea y la luz" in *El Seminario 11. Los Cuatro Conceptos Fundamentales del Psicoanálisis*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1995, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Cavell: *The World Viewed*, Viking Press, New York, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> "The 'smeared subject' of Lacan is not 'empty' in the sense of any 'experience of emptiness' on a psychological-existential level, but in the sense of dimension of self-referential negativity that eludes, a priori, the domain of the vécu of the experience lived" (Slavoj Žižek: *El espinoso sujeto. El centro ausente de la ontología política*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2001, p. 276).

<sup>8</sup> "Consequently, I think that, as with death, the unsayability, which I also refer to as "destinerrance", the possibility of gesture never reaching its destination, is the condition of the movement of the desire which would otherwise die beforehand" (Jacques Derrida: *¡Palabra! Instantáneas filosóficas*, Ed. Trotta, Madrid, 2001, p. 42).

<sup>9</sup> Jean-François Lyotard: "El imaginario postmoderno y la cuestión el otro en el pensamiento y la arquitectura" in *Pensar-Componer/Construir-Habitar*, Ed. Arteleku, San Sebastián, 1994, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> "If, together with Lacan, we suppose that the inclination of the mirror is directed by the "voice of the Other", it becomes apparent that what determines the position of the object as viewer is the symbolic relation: "The word, the symbolic function, defines the greater or lesser degree of perfection, of

Karin Dolk defines herself as a *multi-discipline artist* that uses primarily video and photography: "My interest lies in confronting," she lucidly declares, "the subtle cultural agreement that adds monotonous meaning to words and actions with a condition that is beyond the said agreement. The cracks that appear between the meaning, signifier and reference of language lead us to the interstice: the gap that emerges between what we want to communicate and what alterity interprets. I use everyday activities, phrases and objects as investigation tools to explore our concept of identity."<sup>11</sup> In the series of works she presents at Bilbao Arte, she maintains her concern for language, making the *task of dubbing* the protagonist. Dolk points out that, when she came to the Basque Country, she was surprised to see the famous actors of Hollywood speaking Spanish and even Basque. Based on that *strangeness*, she approaches the matter of translation and also that of the meta-language required to interpret something that already, *in the original*, has gestures and very precise temporality<sup>12</sup>. In short, the fragility of adding a voice to a prior "interpretation" is something that leads this artist to ask questions about identity and communication. The installation titled *Llevo toda mi vida doblando* (2007) comprises a set of interviews with actors who dub in Basque and images of the recording studios. All dubbers have a kind of common awareness of the fact that they are strictly *the unknown*, that all their efforts focus on *identifying themselves* with the other to achieve something that has to appear to be original. And yet, the general sensation is that there is an unavoidable "falsification".

As Einstein suggested, the important elements of thought are the signs and images and the words, in every sense, come *later*<sup>13</sup>. In the video titled *De-formaciones* (2008), Karin Dolk *puts together* a series of guttural sounds made by dubbing actors that end up forming a kind of syncopated rhythm. "The dubbers seem to be trapped in their own look, forced to look at themselves, to be their own doubles. The image interpreted, the interpreter interpreted. We dissect reality to then explain it; we dub it. Everyday hermeneutics"<sup>14</sup>. Everything *sounds absurd* even though it is the result of the effort to maintain a tone of *truthfulness* in the "translated" film. It is important to point out, as Craig Owens has done, that the deconstructive impulse is characteristic of postmodern art in general and that it should be differentiated from the tendency to self-criticism of modernism; the modernist theory presupposes that mimetics, the adaptation of an image to a reference, can be placed between brackets or suspended and that the *objet d'art* itself can

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completeness, of approximation of the imaginary". This only contributes to confirming that the place where the subject sees himself is not the place from where he looks. However, although he sees himself to a certain extent in the Other, a point from where he looks at himself is also located in the space of the Other. Yet, that point is precisely the one from where he speaks "since, when he speaks, the constitution begins of that truthful lie from which that which forms part of the desire on the level of unawareness starts" (Joel Dor: *Introducción a la Lectura de Lacan II. La estructura del sujeto*, Ed. Gedisa, Barcelona, 2003, p. 58).

<sup>11</sup> Karin Dolk: "Statement".

<sup>12</sup> "The main function of professional dubbing is to enable the interpretation and understanding of a film or TV programme. However, the translation from one language to another, as well as the difficult synchronisation of the lips, makes the interpretation complicated and fragile. At times, these factors give rise to another representation of the original, another fiction that is implanted by doubles of the same character. Accordingly, dubbing becomes *meta-language* because the actor interprets someone who is interpreting, creating layers of meaning and, between these layers, intervals or moments when it is altered in such a way that the original meaning is lost" (Karin Dolk: comment on her work from 2007-2008).

<sup>13</sup> When he was asked about his own thoughts, Einstein wrote that words or language, as they are written or spoken, "do not seem to play any role in the mechanism of my thought. The mental entities that appeared to act as this person's elements are certain *signs* and *images* that are more or less clear [...] of a visual nature and some of a muscular nature. The conventional words and other signs simply have to be sought laboriously during the second stage".

<sup>14</sup> Karin Dolk: text on *De-formaciones*.

be replaced (metaphorically) by its reference. Postmodernism does not place the reference between brackets and does not suspend it, but rather works to problematise the activity of the reference<sup>15</sup>, to dramatise the *representation*. Karin Dolk takes us from the words and guttural sounds to the gestures, to the hands of the dubbing actors, which undoubtedly represents an attempt to *furnish what they are doing with corporality*. *Apropiaciones* (2008) intensifies meditation on language and its interstices, originality and copying, appropriation and translation. "These gestures are normally invisible in the dub, yet they form an essential part of the acting. The hands are taken out of their "original" (copied) context and the dramatised image forms another image in which we feel an attempted communication, but where the cracks in the remote and insufficient gestures become very visible"<sup>16</sup>. Laplanche and Pontalis observed that fantasy is not the object of desire, but rather its *setting*. In fantasy, the subject does not search for the object or its sign: he appears captured by the sequence of images. The punctum is a supplement, it is what the look adds to every photograph, a kind of subtle beyond-the-field, as if the image throws itself on the desire by crossing the barrier of what is being shown: "the photograph has found the right moment, the *kairós* of desire"<sup>17</sup>. It can be conceived in the photograph and also in the video as a fetishist mark of the encounter with the enigma of sexuality. In the perverse space, nothing is fixed, everything is mobile, there is no particular purpose. The photographer behaves like a voyeur and, to a large extent, Karin Dolk positions us in her works like the peeping Toms which, as we have indicated, are the "invisible actors", those who put their voice to the *translation of the original*.

The piece titled *Not [ai]* (2008) establishes a confrontation between the mouth and the eye, language and gaze. Dolk refers explicitly to the ocular metaphors of Bataille and to Lacan's meditations on the function of the look in the construction of the self, but the video also refers to Beckett's work<sup>18</sup>. The mouths do not manage to synchronise themselves and the sound bounces in echoes and mirages. When we try to achieve an identity, we listen to something that has to do with suffering or we could even understand that what is produced is a strict *negation of the subject*. It is important to remember that an object is not something simple or something that can be conquered if it had not been previously lost: "an object is always a reconquest. Only if a place that has first of all been uninhabited is recovered can man reach what is incorrectly called his own completeness"<sup>19</sup>. According to Lacan, the essential term with regard to the constitution of the object is *deprivation*, a derivation of that recognition of the absolute Other as the seat of the word. The metaphor is the function that proceeds by using the signifier, not in its connective dimension in which all metonymic use is installed, but rather in its dimension

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Craig Owens: "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism" in *Beyond Recognition. Representation, Power, and Culture*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1992, pp. 52-87. "If postmodern art is referential, it refers only "to the problematisation of the activity of the reference". For example, it can 'steal' types and images to develop a critical 'appropriation' -with regard to a culture in which the images are goods and with regard to an aesthetic practice that remains (nostalgically) associated with an art of originality" (Hal Foster: "Asunto: Post" in *Arte después de la modernidad. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 197).

<sup>16</sup> Karin Dolk: comment on *Apropiaciones*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Roland Barthes: *La cámara lúcida*, Ed. Paidós, Barcelona, 1990, p. 111.

<sup>18</sup> "The video that reminds us of Beckett's *Not I* comprises two opposing projections in black-and-white. Two mouths pronouncing the word "I" [ai] with different tones, from the whisper to the shout, sounds that affirm and question (besides meaning "yo" in Spanish, the phoneme [ai] is a sound of exclamation)" (Karin Dolk: comment on *Not [ai]*).

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Lacan: "Ensayo de una lógica de caucho" in *El Seminario 4. La Relación de Objeto*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1994, p. 374.

of replacement<sup>20</sup>. Even so, the constitution of the object is not metaphor but rather metonym, it occurs where history stops: the veil appears, the image is the indicator of a point of repression. Karin Dolk returns again and again to the question of the impossibility of communication, as if between what one wants to say and what the other finally experiences there were an unsurpassable wall rather than a veil. *Palabras prestadas* (2007) is based on the text of *The Unnameable* by Samuel Beckett to reiterate the question of the double, that falling-to-pieces of a substantive identity. This creator is undoubtedly aware of the fact that *the codes never stop*. That is why her work reduces those extraordinary speculations at the same time as they compose a kind of heterotopia or, to use Dällenbach's words, a *constantly changing story*<sup>21</sup>. "Nowadays, the codes of representation fall apart in favour of a multiple space whose model can no longer be painting (the "picture") but would rather be theatre (the stage), as announced, or at least desired, by Mallarmé"<sup>22</sup>. Karin Dolk's videos force us to think about a *stage of what is not visible* which has finally been revealed: that of those who *put* their voice to the Other.

When we look at the eyes of a portrait, we feel a challenge, that intangible body (painted on the fragmented surface of everyday life, to then be "flattened" photographically) calls for emotional proximity: once again, the circumstantial quality upholds the joy of the gaze<sup>23</sup>. Karin Dolk goes beyond narcissism to capture the gestures and sounds of that which tries to *translate* what has been originally created in another language. Julien Green said that in any photograph, he could not see anything more than the reflection of an absent person. I get the feeling that Dolk's videos and photographs, for example, the *Still life* series (2007) name something that is *missing*. Lacan's bunch of flowers and vase were finally dissolved in the same way as the funeral flowers end up in the waste bin. The absence of the Other is also the "defect of the support of the absence"; the recognition of that *empty place*, as well as allowing an explanation of the dialectics of desire itself, also provides an essential element of understanding for the process of anguish. A sentence said by Jenny Holzer, "Protect me from what I want", very accurately expresses the fundamental ambiguity involved in the fact that desire is always the desire of the Other. It cannot be interpreted as "Protect me from the excessive self-destructive desire in me which I am not capable of controlling". This is an ironic reference to the traditional male chauvinistic wisdom, according to which a woman, liberated from herself, is trapped in self-destructive fury in such a way that she needs to be protected from her own impetus by benevolent male domination. In more radical terms, the sentence suggests that in today's patriarchy society, a woman's desire is radically alienated and she wants what men expect her to want, she wants to be desired, and so on. In this case, "Protect me from what I want" means "What I want is now imposed on me by the patriarchal socio-symbolic order, which tells me what I should want, so that the first condition for my liberation is to break the vicious circle of my alienated desire

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<sup>20</sup> "All creation of a new meaning in human culture is essentially metaphoric. It is a replacement that also maintains what it replaces. In the relationship between what has been removed and what has replaced it, that new dimension occurs which is so visibly introduced by poetic improvisation" (Jacques Lacan: "Ensayo de una lógica de caucho" in *El Seminario 4. La Relación de Objeto*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1994, p. 380).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Lucien Dällenbach: *El relato especular*, Ed. Visor, Madrid, 1991, p. 210.

<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes: *S/Z*, Ed. Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1980, pp. 45-46.

<sup>23</sup> "That circumstance is the indication which, like the bone of the palaeontologist, will allow us to reconstruct the meaning of the work, in that it overflows our feelings, avoiding meaning. There is little importance, I more or less quote Freud, in taking advantage of that genuine concealment, that sleight of hand that replaces the part with the whole and releases the prey for its shadow, the *satisfaction* of succumbing to the need of interpretation" (Jean Clair: *Elogio de lo visible*, Ed. Seix-Barral, Barcelona, 1999, p. 219).

and learn to formulate my true desire on my own". Indeed, the problem consists of this second interpretation implying a somewhat naive opposition between the heteronomous alienated desire and truly independent desire. However, if desire as such were always "the desire of the Other", in such a way that ultimately, there is no way out of the hysterical mire of "Please deny me what I am asking for, because it is not *that*"<sup>24</sup>. The protection is possibly that of the *desire itself*, an awareness of the abysmal, in other words, those turbulences of passion in which every foundation is lost. But the paradoxical enunciation may also have to do with the dynamics of seduction, with saying that it is folded up and does not offer unified meaning. It does not appear to be an appeal to another located in a hierarchical position, but rather a plea that seeks to reach the problematic place of the *subject*: a movement that is not repression, but rather strange veiling. As in catharsis, rejection and repulsion are combined with fascination for the extreme, here, protection can be the moment before an *unconditioned submission* to the release that is so difficult to reach.

What we still have (in our surviving culture of postmodern incredulity) our *morbid symptoms*. Promiscuity, the end of the pathos of distance, causes a kind of generalised *Larsen effect*<sup>25</sup>: the amplifier causes feedback with the sound it has just emitted. We have completed the purpose of the aesthetic delusion. *We never watch anything but television*<sup>26</sup>. We would have to re-read the story of *Josefina la cantora y el pueblo de los ratones* to understand what is wrong with us. The rat Josefina has power thanks to the *place* she occupies. Her song is, in fact, the imposition of silence. That voice, no better than the other squealing of her fellow rats, is a kind of *ready-made*, like the *Roue de bicyclette* of Duchamps, which more than turn anything into art, *creates nothing*. There is a *separation* between that wheel and that sharp cry and all the other "identical" things: that is the *art of the minimum gap*<sup>27</sup>. Karin Dolk often speaks of the *gap of language*, she makes visible dissymetries, she thinks of the betrayal of translation without falling into an institutionalisation of the crack<sup>28</sup>, of the gesture that would name a tremor or tension of desire. The paroxysm of passions reveals that the true nature of man leads the body to a submission to signs, as if we were deaf or had stopped listening

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<sup>24</sup> Slavoj Žižek: *El espinoso sujeto. El centro vacío de la ontología política*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2001, pp. 319-320. In this text, I follow many of the opinions and arguments put forward by Žižek in his debate with Judith Butler on passionate (dis)attachments.

<sup>25</sup> "The abolition of distance, of the *pathos* of distance, makes everything undetermined. Even on a physical level: The excessive proximity of the receiver and the source of emission creates a Larsen effect that interferes on the waves. The excessive proximity of the event and its real-time diffusion generates non-determination, a virtuality of the event that removes its historical dimension and separates it from memory. We are immersed in a generalised Larsen effect" (Jean Baudrillard: *La agonía del poder*, Ed. Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 2006, pp. 60-61).

<sup>26</sup> "According to Susan Sontag, when she was watching the television broadcast of man landing on the moon, some of those present said that it was all staged. So, she asked them: "So, what are you watching?" And they answered: "We are watching the telly." They had understood everything" (Jean Baudrillard: *La agonía del poder*, Ed. Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 2006, p. 66).

<sup>27</sup> "It is like the sudden intrusion of transcendence in immanence, but a transcendence that is left in the middle of immanence and maintains exactly the same appearance, the noticeable difference in sameness" (Mladen Dolar: *Una voz y nada más*, Ed. Manantial, Buenos Aires, 2007, p. 204).

<sup>28</sup> "[...] the strategy of art, of art as an unexceptional exception that can arise anywhere, at any time and that is made of anything (of ready-made objects) as long as it can offer them a crack, make a crack open. It is the art of minimal difference. However, as soon as it appears, this difference is spoilt by the same gesture by which it was produced, in that this gesture and this difference are instituted, in that art becomes an institution for which a certain place is reserved and for which certain limits are laid down" (Mladen Dolar: *Una voz y nada más*, Ed. Manantial, Buenos Aires, 2007, p. 206).

to what we really care about<sup>29</sup>. I think that Karin Dolk has put together a kind of *cross-cap*, using the projective plane to represent the specific articulations that bind the subject with the object of desire. Instead of the Möbius band, a view of dubbing which, I repeat, alludes to absence. The *cross-cap* is a surface which, to put it this way, has taken the hole's place, a surface that clearly shows that what is important is that the structure of the hole is still the central point, where it begins; in our representation, the line of pseudo-intersection. "It is precisely the cut in that it concerns the vacuum, around which it is developed, the potential structure of that place (that of the object a); which, in turn, organises the remaining surface structure (the subject), which reveals its dependence on the vacuum by which it has been constituted"<sup>30</sup>. The object of the desire is constituted in the dimension of what is hidden, of what is not seen, of what cannot be apprehended; however, that rest can take shape insofar as the cut that separates it takes place. Dolk does not resort to the literalism of castration, but rather, with great lucidity, prefers to highlight the dissymmetry of the word and the gaze, knowing that the object of the desire is that which must be abandoned so that the world can be given to us as world. In *La lógica del fantasma*, Lacan states that it is completely pointless to articulate the reality of desire because, basically, desire and reality are in a relation of texture without a cut.

Schopenhauer pointed out that, "thoughts die when they become words". And, despite everything, he was not capable of abandoning *writing*. Even fire writes, as occurs in Karin Dolk's video-installation titled *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (2004). That desire to find meaning in the unmentionable, in death, in other words, in something enigmatic but common<sup>31</sup> takes us to a classic palindrome. The flowers are now burnt and absence imposes its ghostly presence, to use a paradox. Reality is only the reverse of desire; accordingly, the ghost constitutes a mark of that mental reality and in its centre, desire operates, covering up reality from the subject, which can only be seen beyond it, in other words, through the montage of symbol and imaginary. Karin Dolk's *appropriations of dubbing* show, in an allegorical manner, the object a, the rest that falls between subject and the Other<sup>32</sup>. The question is still that of how the self is constituted: speculatively through the echo of the voice, in an enigmatic vibration. In a brief passage of *Poetics*, dedicated to the forms of artistic diction, Aristotle defines the enigma as follows: "The form of the enigma thus consists of connecting impossible terms by saying existing things". In the enigma, there is a particular *density of metaphors*, but there is also an impossible connection or combination, the mixture of literal and figurative

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<sup>29</sup> "When we read or imagine someone speaking, "we hear" a voice in our inner ear. And those who are born deaf? how do they imagine voices? When Clayton Valli, a deaf sign language poet receives a poem, he feels his body making signs... it is, we could say, like speaking to himself, with his own voice. Lunatics usually suffer from "hearing voices"; exterior voices, often accusing, telling them off or praising them. Do the deaf also suffer from "seeing voices" when they go all mad? And if so, how do they see them? Like hands making signs in the air or like visual apparitions of entire bodies making signs?" (Oliver Sacks: *Veo una voz. Viaja al mundo de los sordos*, Ed. Anagrama, Barcelona, 2003, p. 39). Karin Dolk uses the sign language of the deaf to compose the word *Abracadabra* (2007).

<sup>30</sup> Joël Dor: Introducción a la Lectura de Lacan II. La estructura del sujeto, Ed. Gedisa, Barcelona, 2003, p. 228.

<sup>31</sup> "Like flies flying around the flame of a candle until they meet their destruction, human beings usually go round and round the question of life and death without finding an answer. Funeral rites try to give meaning to what cannot be explained. Different cultures approach this enigma in different ways -in certain areas of England the name of the deceased person is usually written in letters made up of flowers (Karin Dolk: text on *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*).

<sup>32</sup> The object a is also what the Other desires in the deceased subject through its ghost and the anguish reveals the phenomenon, cf. Chapter 7 of the seminar on *identification*.

meanings<sup>33</sup>. The aesthetics of the *revelation of absence*, that meditation on the gap of desire formulated by Karin Dolk, suggests that perhaps we should eat our own words. Semantic cannibalism and the *dubbing of the pre-language* leave behind, as the final remains, one question: who is speaking? We will almost certainly have something to say about that<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> "The enigmatic meaning manifests itself as a formally unsayable meaning, which involves two levels of the enigma: first of all, the co-presence of two alternating and reversible projects of understanding (literal/figurative) which can be applied in the same way but conversely over the expressions produces not the ambiguity or ambivalence of the enunciation, but rather the fact that it cannot be understood, the closure of understanding in the confirmation of unsayable relations of meaning; secondly, the confirmation of the semantic unsayability is limited to the detection of two possibilities of understanding whose formal coexistence leads to senselessness or to contradictory meaning" (José M. Cuesta Abad: *Poema y enigma*, Ed. Huerga & Fierro, Madrid, 1999, pp. 34-35).

<sup>34</sup> "The question of the subject is posed as such: who is he? Who is there? Who functions? Who speaks? Who many other things? And, even so, we should expect something like that in the technique which, in general terms, is a communication technique, a technique of interlocution, of relation: whatever the case, we would need to know who is speaking to whom? [...] It is a matter of knowing which logic leads us to that [...] where we stand with regard to the formal logic and that we will almost certainly have something to say about that" (Jacques Lacan: in the unpublished seminar titled *L'identification*, 21 February 1962).