



# DESIRE IN LANGUAGE: A SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO LITERATURE AND ART

By KRISTEVA

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*Desire in Language* traces the path of an investigation, extending over a period of ten years, into the semiotics of literature and the arts. But the essays of Julia Kristeva in this volume, though they often deal with literature and art, do not amount to either "literary criticism" or "art criticism." Their concern, writes Kristeva, "remains intratheoretical: they are based on art and literature in order to subvert the very theoretical, philosophical, or semiological apparatus."

Probing beyond the discoveries of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Roman Jakobson and others, Julia Kristeva proposes and tests theories centered on the nature and development of the novel, and on what she has defined as a signifying practice in poetic language and pictorial works. *Desire in Language* fully shows what Roman Jakobson has called Kristeva's "genuine gift of questioning generally adopted 'axioms,' and her contrary gift of releasing various 'damned questions' from their traditional question marks."

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#### Review

"Kristeva's depiction of contrariety and anomaly at the heart of postmodernist theory is ingenious, provocative, and challenging." -- "Contemporary Literature"

"Kristeva changes the place of things: she always destroys the "latest preconception," the one we thought we could be comforted by, the one of which we could be proud; what she displaces is the illusion that it has all been said already, that is, she removes the pressure of the signified---in a word, stupidity; what she subverts is authority----that of monological science, of filiation." -- Roland Barthes

#### Language Notes

Text: English, French (translation)

#### About the Author

Julia Kristeva, internationally known psychoanalyst and critic, is Professor of Linguistics at the University de Paris VII. She has hosted a French television series and is the author of many critically acclaimed books published by Columbia University Press in translation, including *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature* and the novel, *Possessions*.

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