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Creating a Dawn: Writing Through Antiquity in the Works of Hélène Cixous

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From "Juifemme" to Achille . . .

Unlike the writings of Foucault and Derrida, whose engagement with the classical world has been the object of recent controversy, ¹ the oeuvre of Hélène Cixous remains largely undiscovered within the field of classics. ² Yet in her long-standing commitment to a rereading of the founding works of Western culture, Cixous can be seen to share in the French postwar dialogue with antiquity. Her earliest formulations of a theory of *écriture féminine* in the now canonic "Sorties" (Cixous 1975a) ³ weave in and out of Greek literary texts as she moves towards an explosive encounter with the **[End Page 121]** *Oresteia* and the other Electra plays in the section entitled "L'Aube du Phallogentrisme." Her later shift to fictional writing encouraged a novel representational mode for such an encounter with the classical world. ⁴ But it is perhaps in her theatrical texts that the influence of Greek literary narratives has been most formative. Cixous' early work on the *Oedipus Tyrannus* culminated in the opera *Le Nom d'Oedipe* (Cixous 1978). Cixous' association with Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil in the eighties was consolidated in the performance of her translation of the *Eumenides* in the 1992-93 world-wide staging of *Les Atrides*. Arguably the most important production of the *Oresteia* in the last twenty years, ⁵ this staging rehearses the debates at the core of contemporary representations of the classical world.

That Cixous' modernist writings should have turned to the texts of antiquity raises many questions about notions of classicism both within and beyond the boundaries of academe. Cixous may have been identified by the academic community with an aggressively French critical outlook; her writings, however, challenge the implicit underpinnings of such an assimilation. If the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition has fashioned itself partly in opposition to a perceived notion of Parisian intellectualism, Cixous will work to uncover the complex dynamic of *national* discourses concealed in this polarity. To what extent reading classical texts is implicated in these wider historical and national narratives is a question that Cixous will repeatedly raise. How and when does a discourse of antiquity become an expression of national stereotyping? To what historical use have the institutions of classicism been put in the service of national and political conflict? My first question, then, will revolve around the nationalist enterprise of scholarship. I will then go on to trace the way in which Cixous' early theoretical texts construct a rhetorical identity in the persona of what she calls a "juifemme" to voice her exclusion from the narratives of classical reception. Anticipating the current debate about the subjectivity of scholarship, ⁶ Cixous will make the classical exemplum the mirror of her own biography (to the extent that she can even claim to be Achilles!). What strategies of elision between ancient and modern have to be employed in such an identification? Is classics merely being placed on the Procrustean bed of twentieth-century subjecthood? These are some of the questions that I shall be examining in a **[End Page 122]** reading of Cixous' "Sorties." But if classics proves good to do theory with, Cixous' work proves to be a self-conscious theorisation of *how* we do classics. Cixous' return to the *Oresteia* in her translation of the *Eumenides*, almost twenty years after the publication of "Sorties," marks a shift in writerly outlook. By looking at her continued investigation of the power of classical literary narratives, I shall examine how this rereading expresses a novel personal politics. Tracing the development of Cixous' writing, I hope to provide a model for the dynamic relationship between modern critical theory and the contemporary study of classics.

A Narrative of Nations

Wenn die Franzosen zu denken anfangen, sprechen sie deutsch.

Martin Heidegger

International relations at their best . . . As Heidegger shows us, the enterprise of scholarship is profoundly implicated in a discourse of national identity. Although, within the field of classics, Judith Hallett may have started to uncover an intricate national politics at the heart of academe, her preoccupation with a marked anti-American prejudice in departments on both sides of the Atlantic should be seen to participate in a wider debate (Hallett 1997). Hélène Cixous offers an alternative. For if the experience of her biography has led Cixous to formulate the idea of nationhood as a "legal fiction," [7](#) her writings have found themselves at the heart of a controversy of national difference.

The last twenty years have seen the Anglo-Saxon academic world play a leading role in a negotiation of nationalist preoccupation. [8](#) In the reaction to the vogue for "French theory," a hostility to the new critical outlook has all too often been troped in a language of barely concealed xenophobia. [9](#) The destabilising discourse of the assailant came dressed in **[End Page 123]** the colours of an "all French" army. The Parisian imprint of the aggressing agent became the signifier of an uncomplicated expression of national identity. [10](#) Behind the military rhetoric, the parochialism of the academic establishment--and no less (perhaps, predictably) the uncritical embrace of certain sectors--conceals a more complex nexus of national and historical interests. In seeking to construct a homogenous "French school," the majority of critics operate with an inadequate awareness of the historical conditions of its genesis. This lack of historical contextualisation may have its source in a wider debate. For although the questioning of the diachronic model and, indeed, "history itself" is prominent in their writings, it remains disturbing to see how they have become subject to an ahistorical appropriation by critics and sympathisers alike. An over-determination of interests has produced a complicit acceptance of an ahistorical conceptualisation of theory which is only now beginning to emerge as the object of *theoretical* controversy. My concern, however, is not to reconstruct a comforting teleology of intellectual development, but rather to see how a reintegration of postwar Francophone [11](#) philosophical writings into a history of *mentalité* can challenge their rhetorics and practices of innovation. In formulating some concerns about a domestication of "French theory," I wish to negotiate the notoriously treacherous task of examining the inescapable *retours* as well as the *sorties* in the discourse of modernity.

This easy picture of resistance to a Francophone philosophical army, however, needs further differentiation. For the gestation of many of this army's tenets in the murky traditions of continental philosophy do not go unmissed by its most vociferous opponents. In fact, the caricature of "hyper-theorised *French* intellectualism" squares badly with the more threatening picture of a wider school of philosophical *continentalism* which forms the background to Cixous' work. The philosophical tradition that stretches from Hegel through Nietzsche and Husserl to Heidegger, which permeates French writings, places the enterprise within a strikingly Germanocentric **[End Page 124]** frame of reference. [12](#) Moreover, the obsessive preoccupation with the most problematic sites of German philosophy that one finds at the centre of the French postwar project remains a relatively unexamined point of contention. [13](#) That Nietzsche and Heidegger find themselves elected the patrons of postwar radical consciousness seems, at the very least, a provocation. Could it be that we are dealing here with an attempt to militate against the lasting legacy of their appropriation by Nazi ideology? This would, however, be a surprisingly generous reading, since Heidegger's postwar texts (let alone their author who, having hailed Hitler as Germany's saviour in 1933, [14](#) never renounced his association with the Third Reich) evidently display fascist tendencies. [15](#)

That the emerging postwar French intellectual movement, in the wake of Franco-German hostility, should have become inebriated with such Germanophilia seems something of a paradox. That it should have used these texts and the cultural tradition they inherited as a filter for a reading of the most influential writings of the Western tradition seems doubly surprising. For if Nazism was eager to appropriate the autocratic principles we see expounded in the oeuvres of Nietzsche and Heidegger, it is their source in the works of classical antiquity which had come to play an integral role in Hitler's propaganda. The "spirit of classicism" which had traditionally been identified as the hallmark of the German intellectual subject position [16](#) be-came firmly embedded in the discourse of racial purity. [17](#) **[End Page 125]**

When Barthes, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous come to plunder the graves of antiquity, they carry with them this dual heritage of German nationalism. Far from representing a neutral return to the source of philosophical contemplation, speaking through the classical world is always already implicated in a more recent history of cultural and political narratives. *Parler n'est jamais neutre*.¹⁸ And to speak Greek, which has so often been paraded as the most "universal" of languages in our post-Holocaust world, involves the inescapable risk of a flirtation with the tones of a Germanic tongue.

A question of origin, of the antiquity of antiquity, is thus brought to light as we trace its reception through a narrative of twentieth-century intellectual history. Even, or especially, in an analysis of the classical world, the scholar in search of roots will often find her/himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. Ironically, Heidegger may well turn out to be right. For to make the Greeks speak through the barbarism of twentieth-century history involves a precarious negotiation of a dialectic of power and liberation. The creation of a dawn can all too easily become inscribed in the twilight of an unexamined contemporary political narrative.

In The *Rootprints*¹⁹ Of An Origin

Toutes les biographies comme toutes les autobiographies comme tous les récits racontent une histoire à la place d'une autre histoire.

Hélène Cixous, *Photos de racines*

Hélène Cixous' antiquity can be read as a recreation of precisely such a dawn through the prism of a life torn by national conflicts. Framed by linguistic play around the intersecting vocabulary of "origin" and "roots,"²⁰ the classical world becomes enmeshed in the construction of Cixous' biography. Such an assimilation can be read along many different axes. With special reference to "Sorties," I shall be focusing on Cixous' inscription of the self in a series of thematics of classical reception in the contemporary continental tradition. In particular, I shall address myself to Cixous' self-presentation [End Page 126] as a Jew and how this relates to a wider debate over an opposition between Greek and Judaic thought. I will be exploring the relationship of "Sorties" to the Levinasian/Derridean questioning of the position of the Jew in the narratives of Hellenism. This excursus seems to constitute a necessary framing of Cixous' involvement with antiquity, as her appropriations write themselves against a tradition of post-Holocaust philosophical literature. Finally, then, following Cixous' more focused reading of the *Oresteia*, I shall try to unveil the problems involved in weaving together discourses of the self in her rewritings of this most privileged text of Greek literature.

While Cixous' involvement with classics may be seen as part of the emerging intellectual climate I have been describing, her oeuvre also militates against its prevailing assumptions. With the double legacy of the Barthesian announcement of the "death of the author" and the reign of the Derridean sound-bite, "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte," biography had become devalued in the theoretical scheme.²¹ Hailing the advent of a new direction in feminist criticism,²² Cixous thwarts critical expectations by exploiting multiple narratives of self in her construction of a liberated historical consciousness. If the overlapping of personal biography and the narratives of the past form the sub-text of a project such as Rabinowitz's and Richlin's *Feminist Theory and the Classics* (1993), Cixous' project strikes one as more ambitious. The programmatic passage from Rabinowitz's introduction is a case in point (1993.1): "If I decide to 'speak for myself,' which of my many voices would I adopt? I come up against the multiplicity of my subject positions: I am a white, bourgeois, Jewish woman, who is 'married with children,' as well as a Hellenist, a member of a Comparative Literature department teaching feminist literary criticism, and an active feminist." In the trivialising climate of "identity politics," *getting personal* for Rabinowitz is tantamount to the mobilisation of a series of stereotypes. Rather than resorting to a thesaurus of unexamined labels, Cixous' negotiation of her subject position involves the reader in a stringent exercise in self-reflection (1975a.127-28):²³ [End Page 127]

Biographiquement, je pars, dès l'enfance, d'une révolte, d'un refus immédiatement violent et angoissé d'accepter ce qui se passe sur la scène au bord de laquelle je me trouve déposée au terme d'une combinaison d'accidents de l'Histoire. J'ai eu cette étrange "chance": quelques coups de dés, une rencontre entre deux trajectoires de diaspora, et au terme de ces chemins d'expulsion et de dispersion qui ponctuent, à travers les

déplacements des juifs, le fonctionnement de l'Histoire occidentale je tombe,--je nais--en plein sur une scène exemplaire un modèle nu, brut, de ce fonctionnement même: j'ai appris à lire, à écrire, à hurler, à vomir en Algérie.

Cixous inserts *her* story as a paradigm for the reading of the *historical* process. At the crossroads of social marginalisation, her first steps into the world are determined by a history of domination. Her search for a personal, biographical, historically conscious voice must always repeat these master narratives of intellectual oppression. Mapping out for themselves a space of literary performance, Cixous' texts will attempt to cut into this fabric. Her account, however, plays out the worry over a tension between personal history and the naive re-embrace of a simple historicity: "Et je sais déjà tout de la 'réalité' qui était la marche de l'Histoire: tout repose, à travers les siècles, sur la distinction entre le Propre, le mien, donc le bien, et ce qui le limite: or ce qui menace mon-bien (le bien n'étant donc jamais que ce qui est bon-pour-moi) c'est l'*autre*" (1975a.129). There is an ambiguity at this point between Cixous' philosophy of openness, the devaluation of the self as the founding principle of historical agency, and her obsessive return to her biographical chronicle. If the writing of "History" is to be condemned as the glorification of the "Propre," the Cixousian gesture of intimacy seems merely to multiply the technologies of egocentrism. Cixous' prose opens up a debate around the self-legitimising strategies of biographical exposition. As she manipulates competing rhetorics of force and liberation, Cixous' critical stance becomes elusive. For all her tactics of pre-emption, even, or especially, in the narrative of *alterité*, the figure of the Self, the invasive authorial voice, becomes a difficult principle to reconcile with a utopian free-play of the Other.

And yet, the indeterminate "subject" who emerges from the Cixousian drama nonetheless gives voice to a nexus of national and historical forces present in the reappropriation of classicism. As the interplay of the **[End Page 128]** vocabulary of Self and Other structures her writing, the classical exemplum comes into contact with Cixous' relationship to Judaism. Speaking as a "juifemme" (1975a.187), ²⁴ Cixous confronts the narratives of Western domination with their internally articulated Other. "Être femme juive, situation idéale: cela me permet d'être sans place" (1976). The no-place she seeks to inhabit will, however, soon become identified with a specifically Judeo-Francophone discourse. ²⁵ It is within this context that the relationship of Cixous' work to a wider tradition of philosophical writings comes into focus. ²⁶ Jacques Derrida ²⁷ in particular (who shares Cixous' Algerian-Jewish biography) ²⁸ is a privileged interlocutor. The much discussed ²⁹ association of the Derridean project with the Hebraic tradition constitutes an alternative frame for a reading of his critique of phallogocentrism along a Greek/Jew ³⁰ antithesis. Derrida--in association with Cixous--has done much to **[End Page 129]** promote this genealogy of Hebraicism. Placing as an epigraph to his work on the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas a passage from Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*: "Hebraism and Hellenism--between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of the one of them, at another time of the other; it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them" (Derrida 1967c.117), he closes his essay with the famous quote from Joyce's *Ulysses*: "Jewgreek is Greekjew. Extremes meet" (1967c.228). ³¹ Derrida uncovers through these quotes the power of the Hellenising narrative to achieve cultural hegemony. In his intimation of a liberation from "la domination grecque du Même et de l'Un" (Derrida 1967c.122-23), Derrida's reading of Levinas forms an essential background to Cixous' discourse of Jewish identity. In fact, it is precisely in the context of a discussion of Levinas' formulations of the relationship of a Jewish "language" to the discourses of logocentrism--to resist the temptation "de parler grec" (1967c.133)--that Derrida will make one of his most outspoken homages to Cixous' oeuvre (1996.114-15):

Dans cette typo-topologie, mais aussi hors d'elle [. . .] je me sens encore moins capable d'un discours à la mesure d'une autre poétique de la langue, d'un événement immense et exemplaire: dans l'oeuvre d'Hélène Cixous, et de façon miraculeusement unique, un autre croisement tresse *toutes* ces filiations, les réengendrant vers un avenir encore sans nom. Cette grande-écrivain-française-juive-d'Algérie-sépharade qui réinvente, entre autres, la langue **[End Page 130]** de son père, sa langue française, une langue française inouïe, il faut rappeler que c'est *aussi* une juive-ashkénaze-allemande par la langue maternelle.

Cixous' relationship to a Levinas-inspired Derridean Greek/Jew antithesis is difficult. By removing the Levinasian problematic from a wider tradition of Jewish writings, Derrida adopts a reductive attitude. ³² As Yaacov Shavit 1997 argues, a preoccupation with notions of a Greek/Jewish polarity had emerged at the dawn of the *Haskalah*, the nineteenth-century movement of Jewish enlightenment. A self-directed

interrogation of the *limits* of this antithesis thus emerges as a condition of modern Jewish consciousness. Especially in this century of devastation, the ongoing dialogue has transposed itself as Jews from Berlin to Jerusalem have struggled to build and rebuild a relation to the notion of Western culture in the shadow of the Shoah. ³³

I cannot hope to begin to do justice to this vast area. I must limit my investigation to Cixous' antiquity. If I have been anxious to place the Cixousian project within this frame of a problematics of national/ethnic/cultural identification (Hebrew/Greek/French/German . . .), this is because it seems that it is from this nexus of controversy that her texts emerge. And yet, far from setting Greek/Jew up as antipodes, Cixous seems to operate with a harmonious fusion of the Hebraic and Hellenic worlds as a plundering ground of mythical allusion. Speaking of the journey of the newly-liberated "sextre," she writes in *Souffles*, "Dans sa course vers la source elle traverse son histoire entre Grèce et Palestine, les grands corps mythiques où se fondent le masculin et le féminin." ³⁴ Writing retrospectively about her early historical consciousness, Cixous formulates the worries of such a conflation (1990.26-27): ³⁵ **[End Page 131]**


A certains moments j'étais hantée par le Vietnam puis par la Grèce puis par l'Iran . . . Mes textes sont remplis de tous ces peuples qui souffraient, tombaient ou se relevaient. Quelle Histoire est la mienne? De quelle Histoire suis-je le témoin? Comment unir Histoire et texte? Quelle Histoire est la mienne je ne sais pas. En tant que Juive c'est peut-être l'Histoire juive, mais je ne savais pas trop laquelle et comment? J'ai d'abord fait une réponse d'époque et je me suis définie à un certain moment comme juifemme, et un seul mot parce que c'était plus simple et plus vrai.

Cixous' ambivalent relationship to a specifically Jewish outlook surfaces repeatedly in her early formulations of *écriture féminine*. ³⁶ Constantly aware of a biographical impulse in her work, her recent writing offers a critical reappraisal of her subjecthood as "juifemme" (Cixous/Calle-Gruber 1994. 206):

En France, ce qui est tombé de moi d'abord c'est l'obligation de l'identité juive. D'une part, l'antisémitisme était incomparablement plus faible à Paris qu'à Alger. D'autre part, j'ai brusquement appris que ma vérité inacceptable dans le monde était mon être femme. Tout de suite, ce fut la guerre. J'ai senti l'explosion, l'odeur de la misogynie. Jusqu'ici, vivant dans un monde de femmes, je ne l'avais pas sentie, j'étais juive, j'étais juif. A partir de 1955, j'ai adopté une nationalité imaginaire qui est la nationalité littéraire.

By adopting this literary identity, Cixous, in fact, side-steps the Greek/Jew antithesis. The realm of an imaginary (o/e)utopia of literary articulation, which she posits as the alternative, can be considered an exercise in escapism. Far from mapping out for itself a locus of historical *engagement*, Cixous' text can be read as a manifesto of pure aestheticism (1975a.131-32): "Il doit y avoir un ailleurs me dis-je. Et tout le monde sait que pour aller ailleurs il y a des passages, des indications, des "cartes"--pour une exploration, une navigation. Ce sont les livres [. . .] Et c'est **[End Page 132]** l'écriture. S'il y un ailleurs qui peut échapper à la répétition infernale, c'est par là, où ça s'écrit, où ça rêve, où ça invente les nouveaux mondes." Cixous, of course, pre-empts the stroke (1975a.132): "Souvent je vais lire dans un arbre. Loin du sol, et de la merde. Je ne vais pas lire pour lire, pour oublier--Non! Pas pour m'enfermer dans quelque paradis imaginaire. Je cherche: il doit y avoir quelque part mes semblables en révolte et en espoir." I am not accusing Cixous of esotericism, nor is this an attempt to re-articulate in a different context the worries of the Franco-American feminist disconnection. ³⁷ But it is rather that, as she floats through a history of Western literary culture, searching for her "*semblables*," lining up her "goodies" in a laboured subversion of orthodox readings, the political genesis of writing, which is so important to a reading of Cixous' own work, seems to be subordinated to an exercise of perverse narcissism.

Through this chaos of undifferentiated literary allusion, Cixous will paint herself onto the canvas of the classical literary landscape (1975a.134): "J'ai fait la guerre devant Troie à ma manière: ni d'un côté ni de l'autre [. . .] Et dans tous les temps mythiques et historiques, j'avais." The act of identification with the unorthodox (or not so unorthodox) figures in a traditional literary canon is written into Cixous' text as the ultimate rebellion (1975a.134): ³⁸ "Et alors, qu'est que j'aurais été? Qui? [. . .] Au temps homérique, en effet, j'ai été Achille. Je sais pourquoi. J'étais l'antiroi. Et j'étais la passion. J'avais des colères qui compliquaient l'Histoire. J'emmerdais la hiérarchie, le commandement." That Cixous can, on the same page, perform the writing of the self around such incongruous figures as the Holocaust

survivor and the psychopathic hero of Homer's martial epic raises questions about literary and historical identification. For a classicist investigating the dangers of a conflation of ancient and modern constructions of the self, it is hard to see Cixous' formulations as anything other than parodic. That the spokeswoman of a radical contemporary feminist outlook should come to imagine herself in the figure of the  seems nothing less than baffling. Cixous naturalises the figures of an alien cultural **[End Page 133]** construction, making them the mere mirrors of a Cixousian political investment.

With such a deliberate conflation of historical horizons, it comes as no surprise that Cixous prefaces her reading of the classics with an extended epigraph from the familiar representatives of modernity: Freud, Joyce, and Kafka are evoked as figures of literary authority as Cixous sets out to examine the laws of domination that control the representations of the female in Western culture. Biblical Judaism, Joycean classicism, and psychoanalysis combine to form a trinity of grand narratives against which Cixous performs her deconstructive readings. In her return to the Electra myth, ³⁹ Cixous inscribes her reading in a tradition of appropriation. As a privileged figure of modernity from Engels through Bachofen and Strauss to Freud, Electra has always proved herself *bonne à penser*. ⁴⁰ Cixous takes her lead from these Germanic ancestors. And yet the interplay in "Sorties" between the interpretation of Kafka's short story "Vor dem Gesetz" (with its now inevitable association with the later Derridean reading) ⁴¹ and her encounter with the classical narrative is far more than the reiteration of a commitment to an intertextual dialogue. Under the heading of "juifemme," she tropes the *Oresteia* in a familiar discourse of personal politics.

In "Sorties," then, the encounter with Aeschylus is not presented in the form of an open dialogue but rather as the illustration of a recurring theme. The reading is formulated, on the one hand, through a Freudian/Joycean problematic of paternity and, on the other, through a Kafka-inspired Judaic relationship to the Law. Cixous moves through the tropes of an earlier conceptualisation of the classics as an open literary space to reconstruct the classical narratives as an enquiry into the Law (1975a.191):

Ainsi entre le juif et la femme c'est le même coup qui se répercute: celui qui se métaphorise dans le tabernacle, comme coffret plein du rien que personne ne doit regretter. **[End Page 134]** Le coup du "tout-puissant." La voix qui dit "Je-suis-celui-qui-dit-que-je suis." Mon nom est "celui-qui-est-où-tu-n'es-pas." Qu'est-ce qu'un père? Celui qui est pris pour père. Celui qui est reconnu pour le vrai. La "vérité," l'essence de la paternité, sa force de loi. Le père "élu."

But in an attempt to undermine this subservience, Cixous will make of her "reading" (the *lu* in the gesture of election [*élu*]) a performative act (1975a.192): "Comme tout est difficile pour Oreste qui se trouve à la charnière du temps, et dont le geste, un matricide, jusqu'à lui le crime des crimes, va signer la fin des mères et inaugurer l'ère sublime!" Deliberate anachronism brings to the fore a preoccupation with the structures of time. The Cixousian text, as Emma Wilson points out (Wilson 1996.97), writes itself in a perpetual present tense. That Orestes imagines himself and his actions in the present is a crucial philosophical positioning. Reading the classical text is not just the repetition of an established order, but also the perpetual reinauguration of an imagined cultural narrative (1975a.194):

[. . .] en Oreste, met terme à plus d'une époque: sous le couvert du scénario classique, phallocentrique (élimination du roi ancien--avec trahison de la femme et la complication incestueuse--); sous prétexte d'un devoir de vengeance (devoir légitime,--accompli à l'aide de moyens contraires à l'éthique du guerrier, frontale, ouverte--); sous déguisement et détour, caché-cachant-révéland en soi plus d'un être non-humain, plus qu'humain, le frère trouble fait tourner le temps et exploser le noyau féminin: toute l'énergie encore bloquée dans cette fin d'après-médée au crépuscule du matriarcat, est libérée, une fois pour toutes.

Reading against the grain, Cixous would like her text to disrupt this seeming teleology. By re-enacting the genesis of the reigning technologies of patriarchal domination, Cixous wants to unleash the blocked energy of an imagined matriarchy. Cixous' *écriture féminine* endeavours to release an ambiguity of meaning concealed in the constant play of language-use enacted in the text. And yet, for all the apparent liberation, her rewritings of Aeschylus remain superficial. The subtle wordplay that has become the hallmark of the deconstructive reading, the punning which in its subversion releases the *jouissance* of the text, retains in Cixous' hands the mark of reductive **[End Page 135]** authorial control. For all her

meditations on the cultural construction of language, the problematic dynamics of the translation of this masterpiece of the Greek language remain unchallenged. Her hitherto ambivalent relationship to the French language is sacrificed to an ever so *unambivalent* twentieth-century Francophone encounter (1975a.195): "A la fin il n'oreste donc que soeur Electre [. . .] S'allume, à la fin de l'après-médée, lorsque le crépuscule des mères s'enfonce dans la nuit propice aux rêves de mort, L'Électricité." Name punning from *Oreste* through *Electre* and *Médée* to the self-reflexive *Hélène* (1975a.139) constitutes the central feature of the intertext between Cixous' interpretation and "La langue d'Electre" (1975a.195)-- which language, the reader is given little help in remembering, is ancient Greek. In contrast to the writings of Derrida and Irigaray, where the Greek element occupies centre stage in the treatment of classical texts, ⁴² Cixous' reading remains a decidedly monolingual exercise. ⁴³

Emma Wilson's identification of the emergence of a *lecture féminine* in Cixous' work places the *Oresteia* reading in a wider project of the Cixousian text. Wilson's introduction is programmatic for such a contextualisation (1996.96):

Cixous' work appears to pre-empt and desire a performative reading; her texts reverberate with the drama of their own reception. Indeed Cixous creates an enclosed world of mirrors, and specular desires, where the reader's activity is in fact closely directed by the text s/he encounters. What I will seek here are the necessary blind spots in this seductive play of reflections [. . .] The vanishing-point in Cixous' system of representation may be located, as I will argue, in her desire to control the Other, her reader, and her desire to construct herself as Other [. . .] through the looking-glass. In this sense I want to challenge the notion that *lecture féminine* offers an enfranchised alternative to the contest of mastery. . .
[End Page 136]

Wilson's polemical challenge to the openness of the Cixousian reading elucidates my own criticisms. As Cixous stamps her personal voice on the Greek text, the "specularity" of her reading deviates from the deconstructive practice with which it wishes to be associated. For all its outspoken commitment to the contrary, the *lecture féminine* becomes the harbour of a certain *egoité*, an inability to move beyond "le Propre, le mien, donc le bien" towards an embrace of an "autre" (Cixous 1975a.129). In the final analysis, the Cixousian encounter with Greek literature proves itself incapable of resisting the lure of the "domination Grecque du Même et de l'Un" (Derrida 1967c.122-23).

Performing "Sorties": *Les Euménides* ⁴⁴

Entre deux pièces, combien de temps s'écoule-t-il? Des années. Des années. Le passé ne passe pas. Les distances n'éloignent pas.

Hélène Cixous, *Les Atrides II*, p. 17

Why, seventeen years after the publication of "Sorties," should Cixous have returned to the *Oresteia*? What is to be made of the Théâtre du Soleil's *mise en scène* of Cixous' translation of the *Eumenides* in their 1992 performance of *Les Atrides*? I shall be examining the implications of Cixous' revisiting of Aeschylus. For if, on the one hand, this adoption of the theatri-cal would seem to mark a deviation from the one-dimensional textuality of the "Sorties" reading, then, on the other hand, the surprising *atextuality* of the mythical corpus in her theoretical writing has now given way to an investment in the intricacies of Aeschylus' text which a translation necessitates. In the context of this doubly innovative representation, my analysis will concern itself with the shifting theoretical premises of Cixous' investment in antiquity. As the dramatic space becomes the locus of this encounter, I will finally be asking how Cixous' turn to the "scène de l'Histoire" ⁴⁵ has become inscribed in a new politics of self.

If a certain linguistic myopia had emerged as the hallmark of Cixous' readings of the *Oresteia*, one is struck by how literal her translation [End Page 137] of the *Eumenides* remains throughout. In stark contrast to the translations written by important figures on the contemporary Anglo-Saxon literary scene, ⁴⁶ Cixous' French remains surprisingly close to both the syntax and vocabulary of the Greek text. Far from the disturbing domestication that seemed to result from her "Sorties" reading, this translation will find itself exploiting a conscious *effet d'étranger*. ⁴⁷ If the chorus has often been characterised as the signifier of the essentially alien in Greek drama, Cixous exploits this *Verfremdungseffekt* to its full. Her translation of the first chorus is exemplary in this respect. The dutiful reproduction of the Greek "lou! lou!

Popoi!" (Cixous 1992a.23) is emblematic of the caution of her text. Cixous' preface on the genesis of translation seems to place this linguistic deference in a programmatic context (1992a.14):

J'ai eu devant moi le texte d'Eschyle nu, dans son éclat *encore grec* en français [. . .]
C'est alors qu'on voit la puissance génétique d'Eschyle: partout viennent éclore, dans leur légère syntaxe, des mots *créés* par le poète, mots composés, mouvementés, jeux fertiles de langue. Plus tard ces mots ne cesseront plus jamais de lancer des feux de sens. J'ai donc reçu d'abord, depuis ce travail de fidélité, l'énergie linguistique propre d'Eschyle.

In this bid for *fidélité*, Cixous seems to want to weave an intertext between the linguistic subversion of the Aeschylean text and her own project of literary emancipation (1992a.15): "Et moi? [. . .] J'ai essayé de transposer cet ensemble de pierres sonores et ce vaste espace d'échos, en un chant aussi réminiscent que possible des premiers accords. Délicat travail de l'instrumentiste, qui ne sait pas qui 'fait' la musique."

The complex model of literary agency that Cixous seems to be mapping out for herself demands a closer examination. Specifically in the context of the chorus, Cixous' figuring of herself as the performance artist needs to be read against her writings on the role of the chorus. In an essay entitled "La Communion des Douleurs," [48](#) Cixous follows a conventional identification of the chorus with the audience. Marking out a space of **[End Page 138]** common suffering, the chorus becomes the locus of negotiation for the audience in their relationship to the towering protagonists: "Mais nous aussi, nous, que le poète a appelé le Choeur, nous sommes dans le filet, et nous souffrons, et plusieurs fois [. . .], nous qui sommes le Personnage innombrable et Sans Nom de ces récits" (Cixous/Laurent 1992a.2). And yet, if Cixous wishes to make her translation voice a communal experience, her insistence on the faithful reproduction of an Aeschylean model would seem to depend on an unexamined elision of the ancient and modern. Especially within the context of the *Eumenides*, such an assimilation would seem far from straightforward. As representatives of a past order, the chorus are already inscribed in a dynamic of anachronism. The chorus' first entry thus represents a moment of maximum disjunction. The apparent literalism of Cixous' text conceals a conscious programme of appropriation. Cixous' is no simple mimetic project. Her linguistic conservatism is rather part of the *questioning* of continuity and rupture at the heart of the Aeschylean drama. As the victims of a violent moment of transition, the Erinyes are involved both in an *internal* thematic debate about the dynamics of teleology as well as in bringing into question our *own* relationship to their demise.

The interplay of discourses sets in motion a complex negotiation of self and other. As the chorus sing (Cixous 1992a.23): "Y-a-t-il quelqu'un pour me dire/ Ce qu'il y a de juste dans tout ça?" (155-56), their opening words announce the central debate of the play. Defining who will be in a position to say what is just marks progress towards the resolution of the trial scene. Within the context of Cixous' pronouncements on the role of the chorus, however, the phrase becomes the articulation of a precarious self-positioning. Moving away from her conception of a simple identification, Cixous will show how the audience are inevitably implicated in the evaluating mechanisms of the dramatic scene: "Cela se passe devant nous, pendant une querelle grave. On débat âprement de crime et de châtiment. Naturellement, nous, comme devant tout procès nous nous mêlons à l'affaire. Nous voilà juges, nous voilà accusés, défenseurs, plaignants. Nous tous, nous sommes nés pour accuser. La vocation d'avocat est inscrite dans la voix des mortels." [49](#) As the *Oresteia* enacts the transition towards an institution of justice, its self-questioning devices involve the reader in the problematisation of this progression. When the audience come to define **[End Page 139]** their positioning vis-à-vis *this* tragic chorus they cannot but avail themselves of the legalistic idiom they are forced to witness at its genesis. The process of evaluation that Cixous posits as fundamental to the theatrical institution is--as it were--always already the rehearsal of an original condemnation. As Cixous puts it (1992a.8):

Peu à peu, de manière oblique, nous sommes poussées à de pénibles découvertes. La Justice n'est pas une fin. La Justice n'est pas droite. La Justice c'est le mot qui se tient debout des jambes fléchies, les pieds écartés, c'est l'équilibriste. La Justice c'est ce qui rend l'injustice convenable. Sur quel tas d'injustice s'élève la Justice! La Justice n'est pas faite pour être juste. *Elle est faite pour arrêter.*

And it is the spectators' unavoidable implication in the definition and determination of meaning which involves the reader in a dangerous politics of evaluation. As Cixous faces a contemporary Parisian audience with her version of the text, "*encore grec en français*" (1992a.14), the *éclat nu* of the

unambiguously alien erects a further imaginary boundary in the negotiation of the structures of law. "Nous faisons partie. Inutile de le nier, ce qui arrive en Grèce nous arrive à Paris. Nous faisons tout pour l'oublier, mais nous n'échappons pas" (Cixous/Laurent 1992a.9). Where the experience of the Greeks becomes translatable into contemporary discourse, Cixous places this *common* idiom at the problematic intersection of *two* languages. As her translation appears to reproduce the language of Aeschylus in the tones of a Parisian tongue, it raises, in fact, the *question* about the very process of translation. Cixous marks the internal thematic preoccupation with the purchase of linguistic definition as a locus of common controversy. The modern reader returns again to repeat the violence of definition we see staged at the heart of the Aeschylean text. The illusive linguistic "neutrality" of Cixous' text acts rather as the articulation of a dual-level politicisation.

The *mise en scène* of Cixous' translation raises a series of further problematics. Where the rich texture of Aeschylean writing turns again and again to a discussion of semiotic controversy, the Mnouchkine/Cixous co-production is a challenging exploration of the language of *dramatic* space. If the "manifestos" of *écriture féminine* had privileged a reinscription of the body through writing, Cixous' turn to the theatrical can be read as the exploration of precisely such an *écriture corporelle*. In an early dramatic [End Page 140] text such as *Le nom d'Oedipe*,⁵⁰ Cixous had already explored the possibilities of a bodily inscription of literary narratives. An innovative dramatic device--such as the double-casting of each protagonist in often irreconcilable roles--combines with a rebellious narratological structure to produce a radically *dissonant* performance. Through a post-Lacanian rereading of the Oedipus story, Cixous will use the somatics of dramatic convention to un-leash the power of this reigning myth of sexuality.

Her return to the classical corpus in the *Eumenides* can be read as a further exploration of this relationship. The temporal, bodily representation of the theatrical moment is explored in its relationship to a wider history of literary narrative. In a surprisingly naturalistic move, Mnouchkine's Furies, in their adoption of contemporary costume elements, assume an uncompromisingly immediate political voice. If, as Bryant-Bertail suggests (1994.23), "Mnouchkine's production of the *Eumenides* strongly historicises the text's depiction of the feminine Furies/Eumenides and by implication women themselves as elemental irrational forces that must be tamed and submerged by rational male forces," then Mnouchkine's outlandish costuming of her chorus as the representatives of a half-ape, half-canine sub-species also acts to problematise such a convenient strategy of othering. "Straight from a Brechtian proletarian netherworld,"⁵¹ "Mnouchkine turns the three chief Furies into bag ladies, dressed in tattered duds and sneakers" (Kroll 1992.51). Moreover, a doubling effect is produced: in a strategy which has become a hallmark of the Théâtre du Soleil, the actress, who, in the three preceding plays of *Les Atrides*, had played the roles of Iphigenia and Electra, is recast as the "Mother Courage" of the choric troupe. A series of repetitions has its climax in the reappearance of another actress, who had played Clytemnestra, in the persona of Athena to address an Iphigenia/Electra figure metamorphosed, in her new choral guise, into the spokeswoman of a defeated feminine order. As Bryant-Bertail concludes (1994.24), "Through this *counternarrative* created by the discourse of casting and costume, and the anachronisms of the final scene, the unified image of the Greek cosmos is shattered, and along with it the discursive unity of the myth." In the complex layering of contemporary features with an almost parodic literalisation of an [End Page 141] Aeschylean model of feminine bestiality, Mnouchkine's theatrical representation replays many of the ambiguities we had uncovered at the heart of the Cixousian text. The semiotics of the theatre come to be the locus for the staging of different, but mutually constituted, *historical* processes. Far from a naive contemporary appropriation, *Les Atrides* would seem to want to elucidate through theatrical means the fateful *intersection* of ancient and modern discourses in the founding myth of the West.

As the theatrical body acts to historicise the gendered inscription of the subject, Cixous' return to Aeschylus instantiates her earlier theoretical insight. Where "Sorties" had unveiled the tyranny of ancient literary narratives in the construction of (post-)modern(ist) subjectivity, *Les Euménides* seeks to disrupt the comforting teleology of such an assimilation. Cixous revisits the texts of her/the past merely to reveal the illusion of the inevitability of such a return. And yet, such an apparent continuity of purpose does little to conceal a fundamental shift in writerly outlook. For Cixous herself, the discovery of the theatrical was also a discovery of the Other.⁵² In the *Eumenides*, the effacement of the writing subject, which is a recurring thematic of the *mise en scène*, could not contrast more strikingly with its invasive presence in her early theoretical work.

The dissemination of the authorial which has become emblematic of a new direction in Cixous' theatrical

writing is, however, itself inevitably inscribed in a further ideology of self. In Cixous, the turn to the historical far from subsumes an interest in the personal. It seems appropriate that it should be issues of national and ethnic identity which have come to play a prominent role in Cixous' reappraisal of her intertextual project. ⁵³ I have attempted to suggest how, in *classics*, these internal Cixousian preoccupations may, in a sense, have become the performative of a far wider thematics of reception. Where narratives of self intersect with historically contingent constructions of classicism, Cixous implicates her reader in a productive renegotiation of such a relationship. Through my readings of Cixous' encounters with the *Oresteia*, I hope to have revealed some of the benefits as well as the limitations of this contemporary investment. For all the shortcomings of Cixous' individual projects, the implication of the classical narrative in her ever-evolving intellectual biography has raised some of the crucial problematics of the postwar classical tradition. If the figures of *juifemme* and *Achille* [End Page 141] have expressed the range of identities of a Cixousian personal politics, so too I hope to have shown how the example of Cixous can profitably be written into our own twentieth-century history of classical appropriation.

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Notes

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1. See, for example, on Foucault, Halperin 1990 and 1995, Halperin/Winkler/Zeitlin 1990, Goldhill 1995, and Larmour/Miller/Platter 1998. On Derrida, see Ferrari 1987, Neel 1988, Cassin 1992, and Zuckert 1996. See also Benjamin 1988.

2. With the exception of Motard-Noar 1994 and brief references in Rabinowitz/Richlin 1993, Kennedy 1993.41, Fowler 1997.10, and Goldhill 1992.98-99, Cixous remains absent from classical scholarship.

3. The influence of "Sorties" on feminist criticism has been fundamental. For an Anglo-American perspective see Eisenstein/Jardine 1980, Abel 1982, Flynn/Schweickwart 1986, and Allen/Young 1989, Gallop 1982, Moi 1985, and Brennan 1989. Ironically, its reception in France is more difficult to trace. As the threatened status of the Centre d'Études Féminines (established by Cixous at the experimental University of Paris VIII-Vincennes in 1974) has shown, Cixous continues to attract more support internationally than in France.

4. From *Illa* (Cixous 1980, see Motard-Noar 1994) through *Dedans* (Cixous 1986d) to *Le livre de Promethea* (Cixous 1983) the classical thematic is a constant.

5. See Macintosh 1997.

6. For a classical perspective see Hallett/Van Norwick 1997.

7. Quoted from an unpublished paper "My Algeriance, Departing (So As) Not to Arrive--from Algeria" delivered at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in October 1997.

8. Notably the controversy about Derrida's honorary Cambridge degree and the more recent Sokal/Bricmont (1997) "affair."

9. Current hostility to a "Parisian School" within classical circles is by no means an unprecedented example of a discourse of national conflict. The hegemony of a German tradition of classical scholarship, with its origins in the last century, was not established without a comparable expression of resistance, cf. Bollack/Wismann/Lindken 1983, Marchand 1996, and Stray 1998.

10. From the most antagonistic to the most sympathetic treatments of postwar French writings, the insistence on an unexamined notion of French intellectualism is disturbingly ubiquitous, cf. Sturrock

1979, Harari 1979, Culler 1982. Quite apart from the theoretical problems of national branding, it would be difficult to speak of the Algerians Derrida and Cixous, the Romanian Kristeva, the Belgian Irigaray, and the Italian Guattari as uncom-plicatedly French.

[11.](#) I will use this term to define French-language writings to avoid the use of the loaded expression "French."

[12.](#) See, for instance, Ferry/Renaut 1988. Foucault is here categorised under "le nietzschéisme français" and Derrida under "l'heideggerianisme français" in an attempt to argue that all that is famous in contemporary French philosophy is, in fact, German philosophy in disguise.

[13.](#) The explosion of the de Man affair in 1987 should undoubtedly be linked to this debate. See Lehman 1991 and Morrison 1996.

[14.](#) Cf. Heidegger's famous "Rektoratsrede" in Freiburg.

[15.](#) See Bennington/Derrida 1991.271-72: "Un tel schéma, dans tout ce qu'il peut avoir de satisfaisant, buterait quelque part contre le rapport de Derrida à Heidegger, qu'on serait peut-être tenté de qualifier d'aberrant, voire de pathologique. Il est certain que ce genre de scénario informe certaines réactions récentes aux affaires Heidegger et de Man, et ce qui pu sembler à d'aucuns comme un refus tout à fait pervers de Derrida de trancher, condamner, arrêter un jugement sans appel." It should be noted that Derrida's most recent works, e.g., Derrida 1996, do begin to place his association with Heidegger, as it were, "sous-rature." On Heidegger and the "Philosophenstreit" see Farías 1987.

[16.](#) See Bollack/Wismann/Lindken 1983 for *Altertumswissenschaft*. On Nietzsche see Silk/Stern 1981. I am aware of the necessary rhetorical selectivity of my German/Greek narrative. Marchand 1996 reveals the multiplicity of narratives concealed behind the partial reading I have been offering.

[17.](#) See Bernal 1987 and Marchand 1996.341-68.

[18.](#) The title of Irigaray 1985.

[19.](#) The title of the English translation of Cixous/Calle-Gruber 1994.

[20.](#) See Cixous 1993b.

[21.](#) An oversimplification, of course, cf. Barthes 1975.

[22.](#) The turn to the personal now plays an important role in feminist projects, see, for example, Miller 1991.

[23.](#) I have decided not to provide a translation of my quotations from Cixous: her frequent use of wordplay and other idiosyncratic manipulations of the French language makes such an exercise not only difficult but also, ultimately, counterproductive.

[24.](#) This term and a fascination with punning on the notions of Jewish identity and woman-hood is omnipresent in Cixous' work. See Cixous 1976, 1986b, and, especially, 1979.

[25.](#) On the Franco-Jewish intellectual identity see Weber 1996 and Astro 1994. See also Finkielkraut 1980 and Bénabou 1986 for a fictional treatment of a specifically North-African outlook.

[26.](#) In fact, an equally compelling narrative parallel to the appropriation of classicism could be told about Levinas, Derrida, Cixous, Lacan (see Haddad 1996), and Lyotard's fascination with *Jewish* thought.

[27.](#) For *explicit* cross-references to each other's texts see, for example, Cixous 1975a.244 n. 1, 1973b, 1994b, and 1994 and Derrida 1994 and 1996.

[28.](#) Cixous' precise biographical details, which she reveals in a footnote to "Sorties": "Mon père sépharade,--Espagne-Maroc-Algérie--ma mère askhenaze--Autriche-Hongrie-Tchécoslovaquie (son père) et Allemagne (sa mère) traversant par hasard un Paris éphémère . . . ," Cixous 1975a.244 n. 5,

place her in a uniquely complex relationship to Jewish identity.

[29.](#) See Norris 1987.228-34, Hartman 1981, and Bennington/Derrida 1991; for a longer study see Handelman 1982.

[30.](#) An opposition that might square badly with a certain direction of French classics over the last thirty years. The re-evaluation of postwar politics in the light of this encounter with Hellenism is prominent in the work of the "Paris school." See, for example, Loraux 1996, who analyses xenophobic discourses in modern day France through the lens of the construction of the *étranger* in the language of Athenian civic identity. The work of Vernant--whose project of intellectual exploration Froma Zeitlin has related to his heroism as a Resistance fighter in the war (see Zeitlin 1991 and now Vernant 1996)--inspired Derrida 1987. Pierre Vidal-Naquet is now a prominent figure in French Holocaust studies (see Vidal-Naquet 1981 and 1987) and a respected spokesman of the French Jewish community (see regular articles in *Le Monde* on Jewish issues). In Weber 1996.49-72, Vidal-Naquet speaks explicitly about the relationship between his study of Ancient Greece and the fight against the "assassins de la mémoire," the project of historical revisionism of the Shoah. See also his work on Flavius Josephus (Vidal-Naquet 1975), and his recent memoirs (1995 and 1998). Marcel Bénabou (1986), a Roman historian whose fictional work writes itself within a consciously Jewish frame of reference, would be another example of this alliance of interests. Jean Bollack (1991), a respected Hellenist (with whom Cixous worked on her translation of the *Eumenides*), is also a prominent critic of the works of Paul Celan. My intention is not just to list a series of Jewish or philosemitic classicists in an attempt to make the self-evident point that the study of these two traditions is by no means mutually exclusive. Rather, in trying to investigate a novel trend in classical studies as it moves towards an integration of the figures of social oppression into its narrative of cultural hegemony, I wish to trace certain points of intersection between Hebraic and Hellenic preoccupation. Coming from the opposite perspective (and the other side of the Atlantic), D. Boyarin 1993 is exemplary in this context.

[31.](#) Joyce's *Ulysses* has been read as the schizophrenic heritage of the competing narratives of the Hebraic/Hellenic traditions. See Connor 1995.

[32.](#) See, however, J. Boyarin 1996, which examines the persistence of the Greek/Jew thematic in Derrida 1991b. Jonathan Boyarin's fascinating article (1996) on Derrida brings together many of the preoccupations concerning national and ethnic identity which I have been trying to examine in the work of Cixous.

[33.](#) See Scholem 1989 for the Benjamin/Scholem correspondence and Köhler/Saner 1992 for the Arendt/Jaspers letters. Both are examples of the controversy over religious/cultural/national identity at the heart of twentieth-century discourses of Judaism.

[34.](#) Quoted on the back cover of Cixous 1975c.

[35.](#) See also Finkelkraut 1980 on the dilemma of Jewish sixty-eighters who were tempted to keep alive the memory of the Shoah by a simple assimilation to the cause of the "universal oppressed."

[36.](#) See Cixous 1975a, 1975b, and 1986c.

[37.](#) Cixousian studies throughout the eighties were paralysed by this debate. See Abel 1982, Allen/Young 1989, Eisenstein/Jardine 1980, Duchén 1986, and Crowder 1983. The familiar charges concerning the apolitical direction of "post-structuralist" writing is combined in these discussions with an attack on New French Feminism. One of the features of this preoccupation is a misleading *de facto* systematisation of Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva's work. For a French reader this association remains far from self-evident.

[38.](#) See also Cixous/Calle-Gruber 1994.16.

[39.](#) Cixous' reading of the *Oresteia* in "Sorties" had, in fact, been previously published as Cixous 1973a for Andrei Serban's production of Sophocles' *Electra*. The conflation of different ancient representations of Electra into a largely atextual mythical corpus is a strategy of the Cixousian reading whose claim to radicality could be read both ways.

[40.](#) See Goldhill 1986.51-53 and 1992.96-99. In terms of her psychoanalytical reappropriation, it is interesting to compare Cixous' treatment of Electra to Irigaray's 1974 return to the Antigone myth.

[41.](#) Derrida 1983.

[42.](#) See Derrida 1972b, 1987, and 1992 and Irigaray 1974.

[43.](#) Again, this constitutes an atypical feature of Cixous' writing. The majority of her literary dialogues are held with texts written in languages other than French: Joyce, Kafka, Celan, Ingeborg Bachman, Thomas Bernhard, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Clarice Lispector. See especially, Cixous 1979.

[44.](#) Cixous 1992a.

[45.](#) The phrase Cixous uses of her theatrical writing since her association with Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil. See Cixous 1990 *passim*.

[46.](#) See, for example, Harrison 1982.

[47.](#) See Barthes 1955, a review of Barrault's *mise en scène* of the *Oresteia*.

[48.](#) In Cixous/Laurent 1992a.

[49.](#) From "Le Coup," Introduction to Cixous 1992a.7. The influence of Foucault 1975 is manifest.

[50.](#) *Le nom d'Oedipe* (Cixous 1978) was actually performed as an opera in collaboration with the composer André Boucourechliev at the Avignon Festival in 1978. It remains a programmatic work in the development of Cixous' theatrical writing.

[51.](#) John Rockwell, quoted in Bryant-Bertail 1994.24 n. 28.

[52.](#) See, for example, Cixous 1984, 1986a, 1987, and 1990.

[53.](#) See Cixous 1990 and Cixous/Calle-Gruber 1994.

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