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## “Knowledge and taste go together”: Postdramatic Theatre, *Écriture Féminine*, and Feminist Politics

Cara Berger

Although there has been a lively debate on the politics of postdramatic theatre forms following the publication of Hans-Thies Lehmann’s book *Postdramatisches Theater* in 1999, specifically feminist perspectives have been slow to emerge. While publications offering feminist views on the postdramatic turn, such as Karen Jürs-Munby’s contribution to her coedited volume *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political* and a collection of essays in German entitled *Spielräume des Anderen: Geschlecht und Alterität im Postdramatischen Theater*, edited by Nina Birkner, Andrea Geier, and Ute Helduser, are now appearing, the majority of the current research focuses on the configurations of gender and feminist politics in relation to postdramatic plays rather than the aesthetics of live performance.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the rise of postdramatic styles has been met with less positive reactions by other feminists. Since postdramatic theatre abandons the representation of a fictive cosmos, instead emphasizing the sensual and energetic properties of the signifier, it “leaves behind the political style” of Brechtian theatre favored by such scholars as Janelle Reinelt, Jill Dolan, Elin Diamond, and Birgit Haas in the 1980s and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Reinelt, for example, has expressed her doubts toward the political value of the “elliptical, affective” style of postdramatic theatres because they evade “direct engagement” with issues of the political sphere.<sup>3</sup>

As much as the politics of postdramatic aesthetics only appears, according to Lehmann, “indirectly, from an oblique angle, *modo obliquo*,” this does not mean that these aesthetics lack political efficacy.<sup>4</sup> Rather, I suggest that a feminist politics of postdramatic theatre can be uncovered by taking Hélène Cixous’s *écriture féminine*—an experimental, deconstructive writing practice that she associates with femininity—as a starting point. This means shifting the debate from the representation of characters and narrative—in a feminist context this suggests representing women and their lives—to concerns of postdramatic poetics. That is, I believe that the political concerns of postdramatic theatre are found not in what is represented on stage but in the nature of the aesthetic experience that is created or *performed*, signaling a departure from Brecht-inspired feminist theatres that typically reveal and critique normative gender roles.

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This article then aims to contribute to the emerging field of feminism and postdramatic theatre by suggesting that there exists a structural analogy between Cixous's *écriture féminine* and postdramatic theatre aesthetics in relation to how both reformulate traditional paradigms of knowledge. Kathleen Gough defines working by way of analogies as a method for determining forms of kinship that "[do] not elide difference," while at the same time "does not become a way to curtail the possibility of seeking 'both/and' in place of 'either/or.'"<sup>5</sup> In navigating this tension, I will necessarily focus on points of overlap—the both/and—at the expense of moments of division between the two. I unfold the analogic relationship between postdramatic theatre and *écriture féminine* by reflecting on my practice-as-research performance *Rings: Sang, Souffle, Signe, Sein, Sens*, showing how postdramatic theatre aesthetics might contain the potential for producing "feminine" knowledge. As a result of this, I argue, postdramatic practices may have a particular appeal for feminist theatremakers and scholars.

In making this argument, I acknowledge that the outcomes of a practice-as-research investigation cannot be easily abstracted and generalized. This may be especially true when working within the heterogeneous field of postdramatic theatre practices that present, in Lehmann's words, "a new wealth of possibilities" of theatre beyond drama that must be understood as "concrete and unique."<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, I would like to suggest that some identifiable tendencies, present in many postdramatic practices, resonate strongly with Cixous's *écriture féminine* and that because of this a tentative analogy may be drawn between the two even if not all postdramatic theatres produce what I identify as feminine knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

### *Écriture Féminine*

My hunch that an analogic relationship exists between *écriture féminine* and postdramatic theatre was tested in my practice-led research. Over a series of three performances—*ENCIRCLED BY THE IRON GRATING. INSIDE* (May 2012), *fire into song* (September 2012), and *Rings* (March 2013)—I explored how *écriture féminine* as conceptualized by Cixous enters the stage and also the ways in which the resulting practice might be useful for theorizing a feminist approach to postdramatic forms.<sup>8</sup> While Cixous is an eminent playwright, known particularly for her collaborations with Le Théâtre du Soleil, I did not draw on her work for the theatre. As Julia Dobson notes, Cixous ceases to engage with *écriture féminine* in her theatrical practice after only a few experiments, preferring to focus on historical narratives and the notion of a common humanity in place of sexual difference.<sup>9</sup> Cixous confirms Dobson's claim, writing in 1987 that "the theatre is not the scene of sexual *jouissance*. . . . In the theatre it is the heart that sings, the chest opens, you can see the heart tearing itself apart. The human heart has no sex."<sup>10</sup> This statement suggests that Cixous has lost interest in producing *écriture féminine* in theatre. Moreover, whereas her earlier plays that explore questions of gender such as *Portrait*

of *Dora* (1976) and *The Name of Oedipus* (1978) make use of staging strategies that disrupt dramatic structures, her later play texts are positively dramatic in style.

Instead, in my work I drew on her experiments in prose writing, as well as her more theoretical explications concerning femininity to determine a feminine theatre practice. As Cixous has concentrated her feminist efforts on prose writing and her approach to prose does not immediately suggest a theatre practice, the advent of practice-as-research methods makes it possible to revitalize her *écriture féminine* for contemporary theatre scholarship. My aim is then not only to develop a feminist approach to postdramatic forms but also to reassess Cixous's *écriture féminine*, which is often seen as tied to feminist thought of the 1980s and early 1990s, having been rendered theoretically unfashionable amid accusations of essentialism by such writers as Toril Moi and Dolan.<sup>11</sup> Their criticism of Cixous largely hinges on the problematic associations she makes between femininity and the female body in her early writings. Exemplary of this is "The Laugh of the Medusa," in which she describes *écriture féminine* as writing with "white ink"—writing with mother's milk, in other words—while elsewhere she envisions it as an "outpouring," likening it to "menstrual flow."<sup>12</sup> Bodily imagery such as this runs the risk of collapsing difference into a single, proscriptive signifier and promoting biologism. However, Cixous later emphatically rebuts essentialist readings of her work, stating that "it is not anatomical sex that determines anything here," and her works from the 1980s onward, with which this article substantially engages, positions her thinking in closer proximity to deconstructivism.<sup>13</sup> Many of such critiques of Cixous's work then overlook that her vision of an *écriture féminine* is not a static theory but a perspective that she has developed and refined over time.

Tellingly, Martin McQuillan has recently called for a reconsideration of Cixous's work outside the paradigms in which she has been received: "between 'essentialism' and the characterization as 'Lacanian.'"<sup>14</sup> He makes a case for reading Cixous on her own terms, which calls "for a way of reading as yet unformulated."<sup>15</sup> I would suggest that one method for "reading" Cixous's "inexhaustible, unfolding text" in the way that McQuillan advocates is to explore it in and through practice, since this allows for a continuation and transformation of her ideas, making them relevant for the present moment.<sup>16</sup> In doing so it is possible to determine and demonstrate which elements of Cixous's writing still might be informative for feminists today. However, I remain mindful of how *écriture féminine* has been problematized by previous scholars. Moi, for instance, believes that the term should not factor in feminist politics at all since it runs the danger of collapsing different women's experiences into one and "inevitably and relentlessly turn[s] women into the other."<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to Moi, I believe that femininity can play a useful role in feminism, especially in the current climate, in which, as Nina Power argues in her pamphlet *One-Dimensional Woman*, much mainstream, "upbeat" feminism has joined forces with consumer capitalism with the result that "the logic of the market" has co-opted

conventional “femininity.”<sup>18</sup> At the same time, as Judith Butler pointed out over a decade ago, there is an ongoing “trend championed by recent feminists to seek the backing and authority of the state to implement feminist policy aims.”<sup>19</sup> Like Butler and Power, I feel cautious of feminist positions that align themselves too closely with the institutions and laws of those already in power. From this point of view, Cixous’s alternative theorization of femininity as a subversive, defiant force that threatens capitalism as much as it does phallogentrism seems increasingly pertinent and seductive.<sup>20</sup>

I read Cixous’s writing within a deconstructive context, as a strategic move to undo binary hierarchies. In her landmark essay “Sorties,” she sweepingly critiques the epistemological premises upon which Western culture is founded, writing that “thought has always worked through opposition, . . . through dual, hierarchical oppositions” that instate “male privilege” by associating femininity with passivity and inertia.<sup>21</sup> Such articulations place her *écriture féminine* in closer proximity to queer studies and poststructuralist feminism than to biological essentialism.<sup>22</sup> Cixous suggests that the political goal of *écriture féminine* is to transform these binary structures that work to the disadvantage of women by articulating a vision of the world in which “the common logic of difference [would no longer] be organized with the opposition that remains dominant. Difference would be a bunch of new differences.”<sup>23</sup> Here, she advocates replacing the culture of opposition, in which one term is sacrificed for another, with a culture of difference in the Derridean sense. Derrida claims that deconstructive readings are “not simply analyses of discourse,” but “active . . . interventions, in particular political and institutional interventions that transform contexts.”<sup>24</sup> The aim of these interventions is, he states, to analyze “the conditions of totalitarianism in all its forms,” which for him is expressed and supported by a binary order.<sup>25</sup> Deconstruction becomes a method for “free[ing] oneself of totalitarianism” by uncovering and encouraging the endless play of difference, which unsettles any attempt at totalizing being.<sup>26</sup> In such a culture of difference, hierarchies could be exploded and differences would be configured as multiple and fluid. Cixous echoes Derrida in her vision of a more feminine world by ascribing to *écriture féminine* a pivotal role in moving toward a culture of differences.

One of the ways in which Cixous attempts to implement such a restructuring of culture is by reformulating epistemological practices through emphasizing feminine, sensory knowledge. She begins to explore the notion of an alternative, feminine epistemology after reading Brazilian author Clarice Lispector’s novels in 1978. The experience of Lispector’s work has had a profound influence on Cixous’s own prose practice. Her early prose favors word games, puns, and slippery signifiers such as in her first novel *Inside* (1969/1986), in which the title-giving term rapidly shifts across different contexts, accumulating a plethora of layered and at times contradictory meanings, exploiting the inherent instability in what we might

designate as the inside of something since it, as Françoise Defromont points out, is at once “delimited by what is defined as outside” and “non-delimited . . . since it may refer to any space.”<sup>27</sup> Cixous’s writing after her discovery of Lispector, in contrast, shows an enduring fascination with the ability of language to touch on and invoke the absent signified. This does not mean, however, that she begins to favor “old notions like representation”; instead, she searches for ways of writing that “let effects of reality, effects of life sift through in a mode that is infinitely more faithful to our experience than that of classical literature with its procedures of psychological inscriptions.”<sup>28</sup>

By drawing attention to the effects of the signified, Cixous forges a relationship between *écriture féminine* and Heideggerian phenomenology. Susan Sellers notes that this change of orientation in Cixous’s writing can be “fruitfully compared” with Heidegger’s short essay “The Thing.”<sup>29</sup> In it, he seeks to uncover the thingness of phenomena that he believes is annihilated by scientific discourse—which he also terms the *Gestell*, or enframing of knowledge—since it “encounters only what *its* kind of representation has admitted beforehand as an object possible for science.”<sup>30</sup> Appreciating thingness means accepting what lies beyond “human cognition” and its compulsion toward explanations, allowing us to conceive of “the thing’s worlding being.”<sup>31</sup> Heidegger’s theory of the thing then hinges on contrasting two different ways of perceiving the phenomena of the world. On the one hand, they can be treated as objects; that is, they are understood as static and knowable, defined by their use-value and a set of traits that demarcate them into different taxonomic categories. On the other, they may be experienced as things, dynamic forces that are part of the activity of worlding in that they precede and participate in shaping our experience of the world. By turning the noun *world* into a verb, *worlding*, Heidegger also indicates that the relationship between things and their environment is not fixed but that their being-in-the-world is an open-ended action, a continual, agential process.<sup>32</sup> Cixous takes interest in Heideggerian phenomenology since it provides a means for overthrowing the traditional division of the world into knowing subjects and objects of knowledge. In doing this, as I suggest and discuss in the final section of this essay, she revalidates feminine-coded knowledge as a strategic, feminist intervention into traditional paradigms of knowledge that position femininity and by association women as inferior.

My interest here, then, is to show, through documenting and discussing *Rings*, how a performance practice informed by *écriture féminine* might produce experiences that, similarly to Cixous’s approach to prose, allow us to come to know the world in a way that is not premised on representation and taxonomic categories but on a material engagement with things. In my discussion of the practical research process, I pay particular attention to the specific potential of theatre—a medium in which the thing itself is typically present as a generative but also troubling force—to upset traditional models of epistemology and consider where this departs

from Cixous's prose strategies. I then go on to test the outcomes of the practical research against articulations of postdramatic theatre, arguing that postdramatic practices can and frequently do produce experiences of feminine knowledge. By doing this I suggest that postdramatic forms might come to be seen as containing a feminist politics.

### Developing Rings: Finding Touch

Cixous suggests that the phenomenology of things is feminine knowledge throughout her writing on Clarice Lispector, proposing that Heidegger's theories are "answered in the writing-living" of Lispector.<sup>33</sup> For Cixous, Lispector's writing "gives us back the thing" and is capable of making its worlding force sensible to the reader.<sup>34</sup> She uses the example of flowers to contrast Lispector's phenomenological approach to the thing with forms of writing that objectify the signified. On the one hand, "there is a way of saying 'tulip' that kills every tulip."<sup>35</sup> When the word comes too close to the thing, it presses itself onto it, crossing the bar between the two, violating the tulip by rendering it into a taxonomized object. On the other hand, she writes, "there is a Clarice way of making-the-tulip, and from the stem to the eye's pupils, I see how the tulip is real."<sup>36</sup> Lispector's writing in Cixous's description is able to touch the sensory reality behind the word, the haecceity—or "thisness"—of the thing it represents, and allows its worlding aspects to flourish.

This conception of feminine knowledge formed the starting point for *Rings*, a performance in which I set out to develop methods for exploring feminine knowledge in devising and to communicate this knowledge in the public performance. *Rings* was created in collaboration with a cast of five theatremakers: Stephanie Black, Aby Watson, Jodie Wilkinson, Catherine Elliott, and Nina Ravnholdt-Enemark.<sup>37</sup> In order to discuss the findings from the practical research, I will focus first on the developmental process I undertook with Stephanie as an example of the creative process as a whole, discussing the potentialities and limits of our approach, and then detail the strategies we developed to produce feminine knowledge in the public performance. Finally, I discuss how the results of the practical research may be informative for thinking about the relationship between feminism and postdramatic theatre.

The process Stephanie and I developed was rooted in a central motif that Cixous uses to conceptualize her notion of a feminine epistemology: the biblical tale of Eve. Cixous sets Eve up in opposition to the law instituted by a paternalistic and patriarchal God. The most notable feature of her version of the story is that Eve gains knowledge through oral, sensual contact with the fruit of the tree of knowledge. She explains: "What we are told is that knowledge might begin with the mouth, with the discovery of the taste of something: knowledge and taste go together. . . . And what Eve will discover in her relationship to simple reality, is the inside of the apple, and that the inside is good."<sup>38</sup> God in Cixous's fable seeks to foreclose the

taste of the apple; his law institutes separation and desire motivated by absence. This law strongly resembles Jacques Lacan's Name-of-the-Father principle that "from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" and, as such, institutes prohibitions and taboos, the first of which is the mother's body.<sup>39</sup> God's law expresses the logic of masculine epistemology, premised on the idea that we can only come to know the world mediated by the Symbolic order, which, in turn, is founded upon abstraction, distance and absence.

Against a notion of knowledge mediated by the Name-of-the-Father, Cixous's Eve embodies a way of seeking knowledge that is premised on nearness and presence. Knowledge is reformulated as knowing, as a gerund, a nonfinite verb, indicating that it is a praxis, not a static object. Eve discovers that knowledge emerges from the senses, from touching the apple with her tongue, tasting it over and over. From Cixous's reading of Eve, Stephanie and I extracted a series of practical provocations at the start of the developmental process:

- What can we find out about thingness by exploring objects through the senses, in particular taste and touch? What kind of knowing does this effect?
- Do touching and tasting allow us to approach the "inside" of things?
- What kind of performance scores might be developed from these activities?
- What is the experience of watching these activities; what happens to the spectator?

In response we drew up a collection of exercises that experimented with using touch and taste as a method to gather knowledge about a thing. The focus of these workshops consequently was to explore the generative potential of touch and taste for devising, but also the difference between using them in performance, which is literal, and in writing, in which they remain figurative. In concordance with the biblical roots of the source material, we chose an apple as our object of inquiry and the exploration of the sensual dimensions of an apple became the central motif of the devising process.

Throughout the process we were particularly concerned with how we dealt with the "strangeness" of the apple. Cixous advocates a new approach to strangeness in her writing on *écriture féminine* particularly in relation to feminine knowledge—she condemns patriarchal "desire . . . that stultifies the strange" and contrasts it with feminine desire that "[watch-think-seeks] the other in the other."<sup>40</sup> She admires Clarice Lispector's "struggle against . . . the movement of appropriation" of strangeness by "*knowing how to not know*, knowing how to avoid getting closed in by knowledge, . . . knowing how to not understand, while never being on the side of

ignorance.”<sup>41</sup> While Cixous proposes that feminine modes of knowledge-seeking do not appropriate strangeness, she emphasizes that coming to know the other and its strangeness entails a transformation of both parties.



Fig. 1. Stephanie Black and the apple in the public performance of *Rings*, 2013, The Arches, Glasgow. Photo courtesy of the author.

To get to know the apples in their strangeness Stephanie undertook a series of durational exercises with them. She balanced one, sometimes two apples on different body parts, waiting until they fell. Through repeated falling the apples became increasingly bruised and disjointed; they began to leak, crumble, and fall apart. Inspired by Cixous’s emphasis in her retelling of Eve that sensual knowledge is about coming to know the inside of something, Stephanie developed a score in which she clasped her teeth around a section of an apple and waited until gravity finally tore it to the ground, revealing its inside. In another exercise she gradually sucked all the liquid out of an apple, allowing herself to taste it slowly, intensely. In reflecting on the actions afterward we began to reconsider the relationship between moving and being moved, touching and being touched, or, in other words, the notion that the human performer is active and the material around her passive and inert, since the material properties of the apple, its shape, textures, smells, and flavors determined the performance material and exercises we were generating. Like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, we found that touching has the potential to make “nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity,” since this

kind of touching means “to reach out” toward something or someone and at the same time be touched in return.<sup>42</sup>

Cixous similarly emphasizes the gesture of reaching out in touching, embodied in the notion of *mansuetude* (meaning gentleness), which she borrows from Lispector. Drawing on the etymological origin of the word, “the custom of offering one’s hand,” Cixous makes clear that she understands touching as a gentle movement toward the other, rather than a violent imposition.<sup>43</sup> This vision seemed to be partially fulfilled in the work with Stephanie because through touching the apple with her hands, lips, limbs, and so on, she seemed to begin to unravel the simple binary between the subjectified human performer and the objectified thing as we composed a performance score in which the apple determined the rhythm and pace of the piece as it rolled unpredictably across the stage or began to break into pieces at unforeseen moments. However, Stephanie’s process also demonstrates how difficult it is to maintain a feminine position without slipping into the appropriation of strangeness. In order to reach the inside of the apple, she had to enact violence upon it. For instance, she dropped it several times on the floor until it split: a violent, annihilating gesture. Cixous likewise contends that revoking appropriation is not simple. It is a process that includes mistakes and dead ends, though this does not mean that the ultimate goal to approach strangeness should be given up altogether.

I suggest that the impasse we encountered was, in part, caused by the differences between theatre and writing. A brief parsing of Cixous’s reading of Lispector’s novel *The Passion According to G.H.* will illustrate my point. In the novel, the female narrator, G.H., discovers a cockroach in her house. She crushes it without killing it immediately. G.H. is struck by the creature’s endurance and will to survive while she faces her deep-rooted disgust over the creature. Confronted by the cockroach, she begins to realize that “the basic error in living was finding cockroaches disgusting,” deciding that “redemption in the thing itself would be putting into my own mouth the white paste from the cockroach,” an action that she envisions as an “anti-sin.”<sup>44</sup> In a ceremonial gesture she then decides to consume some of the fluids oozing from the insect’s body, evoking the symbolic incorporation of Christ. However, after doing this she comes to the realization that “kissing a leper . . . is first one’s own salvation” and that she was “seeking accretion” rather than finding communion with the creature.<sup>45</sup> Cixous hones in on the narrator’s realization that she has committed a mistake and that her action was both appropriating and objectifying. She explains:

The marvelous thing about this story: [G.H.] immediately realizes, passing through the portal of error, that she was mistaken. Her mistake was that she did not give up the space to the other. . . . The text teaches us that the most difficult thing to do is to arrive at the most extreme proximity while guarding against the trap of

projection, of identification. The other must remain absolutely strange within the greatest possible proximity.<sup>46</sup>

In this reading, feminine knowledge of a thing never solidifies into a finite form but remains an exercise in approaching; the thing remains eternally out of reach.

Whereas Lispector's novel can make room for mistakes and lessons to be learned from them since it takes place in the symbolic realm of writing, working with a real object in the rehearsal room—the apple—did not allow for such a process. A smashed apple cannot be revived. In effect, Stephanie had to act upon the apple whether through violent gestures or more gentle ones, in order to prime it for the expectations that the theatre carries with it: that something will happen. Theatre does not deal well with inert beings that do not act of their own accord. The consequence of this was that Stephanie's actions were always already imposing upon the apple; her "reaching out" contained a level of violence. In the same way that G.H. realizes that the cockroach cannot be subsumed into the human symbolic system without violence, working with Stephanie showed that theatre's demand that something must happen inevitably leads to an appropriation of the apple. The apple was incorporated into the order of theatre, which meant that it was in the end returned to a state of objecthood, rather than being fully treated in its potential as a worlding thing.

### Performing Feminine Haptics in *Rings*

Although our attempt to experiment with touch and taste in the devising process was not entirely successful in activating feminine knowledge in performance, a second strand that emerged from it was more generative. Watching Stephanie's actions had a curious effect on me as a spectator in the rehearsal room. I experienced a sensation of being propelled toward the apple, just about able to capture a trace of its taste in my mouth or feel the sensation of its crumbling flesh and oozing juices on my fingertips. Through Stephanie's slow, concentrated exploration of the apple, the total focus she afforded it, I too was able to experience it sensorily, albeit from a distanced, vicarious position. I would like to suggest that this perceptual experience might be qualified as both synaesthetic—finding one sense, touch, in another, vision—and haptic, following Laura Marks's theorization of the term.

In her writing on sight in cinema Marks distinguishes between two types of seeing: optical visibility and haptic visibility. The former she views as related to "European post-Enlightenment rationality" that denies vision as "a form of contact."<sup>47</sup> Optical visibility is thus bound to a notion of epistemology that masters and objectifies. Haptic visibility, in contrast, is premised on "touching, not mastering"; it "acknowledge[s] the material presence of the other."<sup>48</sup> Haptics allow us to register how gentle touching intermingles with each of our senses: vision occurs through light touching our retinas, sound through waves touching on our eardrums,

taste through particles touching receptors on our tongues. All sensations in some way include a contact with the other, a physical touching or brushing. Cixous's emphasis on the sensual over the abstract, and on touching over comprehending, when framed within Marks's ideas, shows that Cixous privileges haptics in her description of how feminine knowledge is acquired.

Feminine knowledge is thus gathered through haptic approaches to the world, and arts practices that produce haptic experiences become a method for acquiring and disseminating such knowledge. Consequently, I sought to devise strategies for emphasizing haptic forms of perception in the performance of *Rings*. In order to encourage a haptic relationship between the spectators and the stage image, I aimed to produce a sense of "close-up" through the spatial configuration. This is consistent with Cixous's idea that avoiding objectification and mastering the other hinges on how space is negotiated. Like Heidegger, who emphasizes that we can never arrive at the full presence of the thing, only take part in the activity of "nearing," which "preserves distance," she believes that maintaining distance is key to learning to appreciate thingness.<sup>49</sup> This leads her to adapt his notion of nearness and distance into what she calls a politics of approaching. It is about getting close to something without giving up the distance that is needed to acknowledge its undiminished strangeness. Reaching out and crossing space is a delicate operation that needs time. It is only possible by going ahead slowly. And it is also about being at the right distance: if one gets too close to the thing, one runs the danger of pressing oneself onto the other, subsuming it, as Stephanie did at times.<sup>50</sup>



Fig. 2. Performance space of *Rings* with performers Stephanie Black, Nina Ravnholdt-Enemark, Catherine Elliott, Aby Watson, and Jodie Wilkinson, 2013, The Arches, Glasgow. Photo courtesy of the author.

In the public performance of *Rings*, five individual scores, developed with each of the performers separately, were presented in a circular space demarcated by soil (Fig. 2). Throughout the performance the audience walked around the ring or crouched, stood, or sat at one point for as long as they wished. Each of the scores was based on a haptic encounter with a thing: Aby worked on the materiality of the circular performance space; Catherine worked on the possibilities and limitations of her body in confrontation with a handful of sentences; Jodie's performance developed from physical engagement with eggs, Nina's with water, and Stephanie's with apples. I rehearsed the performance scores separately with each performer and then presented them simultaneously in one space. A number of texts by Cixous that formed the starting point for each investigation were also compiled into the script for a soundtrack. Read by three female voices, it refracted and echoed the performers' work.<sup>51</sup> The speakers read the texts without having intensively rehearsed them, so that mispronunciations, stressing errors, stutters, and stumbles remained. These irregularities, together with the raw and unrefined quality of the recording in which the speakers could be heard breathing and rustling, and the poetic, enigmatic style of Cixous's writing ensured that the soundtrack acted more as an accompanying texture than an overdetermining text. As a consequence, *Rings* produced a multiplicity of material textures: the smell of soil, the sound of recorded speech, and the erratic breath of the performers, all blended with the sculptural arrangement of the bodies in space.

Crucial to producing the sense of close-up that I experienced in the rehearsal was the spatial arrangement of the stage, which provoked an interplay between proximity and distance. I developed the spatial formation of *Rings* from how Cixous believes one can approach or come to know phenomena in a feminine manner. Typically she is more interested in the detail and the part than the greater picture. She explains the reason for this in an essay on Lispector's short story "The Egg and the Chicken." In it she warns that we cannot see phenomena, in this case the egg, by looking at them directly; the "egg does not lend itself to a 'look,'" she writes; rather, so as to "respect" the egg, "one has to give it a quick glance." Not just one glance will do, however; one must "[put] the egg into orbit" and glance at it from all sides and angles to see it.<sup>52</sup> This method of approaching means that "the egg remains unseizable."<sup>53</sup> Such a fragmented approach to the egg acknowledges that we can never arrive at a state of complete knowingness, solving the other, but we can traverse some of the distance by taking our time. In doing this, the most mundane thing—an egg, for instance—can come to be seen as an endlessly evolving mystery whose worlding force creates the subject of knowledge, upsetting the dichotomy between subject and object.

As Cixous proposes that we gather feminine knowledge by gazing at the egg, touching it with glances, incessantly, from all angles without fixing it, so the spatial arrangement of *Rings* encouraged the spectators to look at the performance

from all angles, moving around it, without finally arriving at a stable, fixed position or distance. The spectator's gaze could not survey or take in the entirety of the performance. Instead, the spectators were encouraged to momentarily zoom in on details—body parts, objects, sounds, and gestures. My experience of watching the performance and of informal conversations with spectators after the event confirms that most negotiated between a close-up, haptic, detail-oriented mode of seeing and a wider image, encompassing the whole space. However, neither mode of watching allowed the spectator's gaze to master fully the *mise-en-scène*. Either the simultaneity of the five performances overloaded attempts to survey the entire performance or the gaze became stuck on fragments, forfeiting the whole. By arranging the space in such a way that details were emphasized over the whole, I intended for the spectators to be brought close to the material, to engage with things as textures, without actually touching them because the circle kept the spectators at a distance (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Stills from *Rings*, performers Nina Ravnholdt-Enemark, Jodie Wilkinson, Aby Watson (top left to bottom right), 2013, The Arches, Glasgow. Photo courtesy of the author.

The spatial formation of *Rings* prompted me to consider that Cixous's textual strategies for maintaining a distance from the thing must be adapted for performance. In writing there is already a great deal of distance between the thing and its symbolic representation, the word. In *Rings*, meanwhile, a concrete space existed between the materials of the performance and the spectator's haptic experience of them. Whereas writing must work on approaching the thing, traversing the distance without mastering it in order to produce feminine knowledge, the thing is often already present in theatre. The conclusion from this might be that the theatremaker must step back, increase the distance to the thing, in order to allow it to appear in its strangeness. This, however, risks foreclosing a sensory approach to the thing. Alternatively—and this is what I suggest happened in *Rings* in its most successful moments—the thing might be brought into extreme close-up, so that it appears strange again, thus allowing sensual forms of perception to overtake categorizing ones.

The discoveries from my practical research are attuned to some of Cixous's ideas on the political potential of *écriture féminine*. Frequently associating the different senses with different modes of knowing, she describes her prose writing practice as a form of writing “with [her] eyes closed,” as a strategy to avoid experiencing the “world-as-it-is-supposed-to-be-seen-by-seeing-human-eyes.”<sup>54</sup> The eye becomes a metaphor for ways of signifying that confirm binary oppositions. This is especially the case with regard to sexual opposition, because the sight of a body immediately invites us to place it into a gender binary: we view it as either male or female and overlay it with various cultural scripts and codes. Vision is bound to an oppositional logic that imposes taxonomic categories on material bodies. It is this mode of perception that Cixous circumvents in her *écriture féminine*. As such, in an earlier essay on femininity in theatre, “Aller à la mer,” she calls for a performance practice no longer rooted in vision but rather in touch.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast to the eye that supports binary oppositions, Cixous associates touch with femininity. *Écriture féminine*, she says, does not “rush into meaning,” but finds itself “at the threshold of feeling.”<sup>56</sup> Feeling here is an ambiguous term, evoking both emotional impact and sensorial perception. Cixous thus stresses the tactility of the feminine text in which “touch passes through the ear.”<sup>57</sup> Aesthetic strategies that are based on touch, that attend to materiality and sensuality, become a way to render forth the feminine, while challenging traditional paradigms of knowledge. Marks stresses that haptic and nonhaptic forms of perception are not dichotomous; neither exists fully to the exclusion of the other. My experience of watching *Rings* confirms Marks's contention. I found myself moving between perceiving the performance haptically, enjoying how the textures, sounds, and smells touched me, and snapping out of this perceptive mode. As such, haptic forms of perception may only be produced as a latent potential in performance. Moreover, the realization of this potential may be contingent on numerous other factors such as the individual

spectator's openness to such experiences, potential distractions, and irritations from other spectators, for example.

### Postdramatic Theatre and Feminism

The sensual, orbiting spatial arrangement of *Rings* and the use of haptic strategies to create the *mise-en-scène* resonate with formulations on postdramatic theatre. In contrast to the ideal of dramatic theatre—which is to present phenomena as surveyable and abstract, rooted in Aristotle's prescription that theatrical plots should be tailored to a "magnitude" that allows the spectator to comprehend it fully—postdramatic theatre revels in the "renunciation of . . . surveyability."<sup>58</sup> Whereas Lehmann sees the resistance to surveyability as an effect of temporal, dramaturgical processes such as the characteristic refusal of logic, continuity, and coherency found in much postdramatic theatre, in *Rings* an experience of unsurveyability was created through its spatial arrangement that foreclosed a medium distance. In the following I argue that it is here that an analogic relationship between *écriture féminine* and postdramatic theatre practices becomes visible: both can create a form of sensory experience that challenges the traditional ordering of the senses, emphasizing touch over sight and feeling over comprehension, thus producing an alternative mode of knowing.

Lehmann suggests—and this is also the case with *Rings*—that some postdramatic stage arrangements have a notable tendency to "valorize the objects and materials of the scenic action in general," and are thus inclined to present bodies and objects as equally expressive.<sup>59</sup> In moments where postdramatic practices draw attention to nonhuman things they may be seen as moving away from an anthropocentric view of theatre, favoring in its place a form of more-than-human performance. That is, they allow for a performance mode in which the "interconnectedness and interdependency" between human and nonhuman elements are foregrounded. Both are acknowledged as agential in their own right, as Minty Donald claims in her explication of the term *more-than-human* in relation to performance.<sup>60</sup> I suggest that when postdramatic practices facilitate haptic, close-up experiences of the material textures and intensities of objects, bodies, and other stimulants of the sensorium, as Lehmann proposes, they create a space in which the potential exists for feminine knowledge to be expressed and gathered.

The resulting emphasis on the more-than-human that Lehmann highlights is equally present in Cixous's writing on feminine knowledge wherein the objects of knowledge are eggs, apples, and cockroaches. This begs further discussion in regard to its value to feminism. Questions of the more-than-human might at first glance appear distinct from feminist concerns—since feminism's preoccupation with women usually places it in a firmly human sphere—or even counterproductive, as the association of women with objects is open to critique. Indeed, the relationship between people and things is a central point in Birgit Haas's criticism of postdra-

matic theatre. Echoing Lehmann's proposition that postdramatic aesthetics often effect a flattening of the hierarchy between the human and the more-than-human through producing both as equally expressive, Haas argues that postdramatic theatre is disempowering and "postpolitical."<sup>61</sup> She proposes that since it "dissolves the division between subject and object," it does away with the notion of the agent, political human and, with it, any hope for political change.<sup>62</sup> Haas even ascribes fascist tendencies to postdramatic forms because they make the human subject "descend" to parity with objects: the human subject is no longer figured as the rational "ruler of nature," but as a dominated and subjugated object.<sup>63</sup> Her criticism should not be underestimated and, if it is accepted, it suggests dire consequences for proposing a feminist politics of postdramatic theatre. If the human subject is victimized and objectified in postdramatic practices, and all hope for political change is vanquished, then postdramatic theatre cannot be useful for feminist politics. Moreover, if postdramatic theatre objectifies human life, irrespective of gender, nurturing a dangerous ideology that has been used historically to legitimize violence and oppression, then feminists should actively reject postdramatic forms.

However, I believe it is possible to assert a different politics of postdramatic practices, one that might be more attractive for feminists. Significantly, Lehmann proposes that postdramatic forms make it possible to create a *mise-en-scène* in which the interconnectedness of all beings is acknowledged: "When human bodies join with objects, animals and energy lines into a single reality . . . theatre makes it possible to imagine a reality other than that of man dominating nature."<sup>64</sup> This suggests that rather than instating a global objectification, postdramatic theatre might be regarded as revaluing objects and those human beings who have been historically, culturally, and symbolically figured as such—women, for example. Framing the politics of postdramatic theatre in relation to Cixous's notion of feminine knowledge could allow for a view of postdramatic theatre in which the emphasis on the intensities of objects can be seen as supporting feminist politics.

Through making *Rings* I developed a different impression from the one that Haas outlines of the relationship between subjects and objects in a postdramatic mode. Instead of seeing human beings as degraded by sinking to the level of objects, our work and the experience of the public presentation prompted me to consider objects in *écriture féminine*, and by analogy in postdramatic theatre, as Heideggerian things, acknowledged in their capacity to "world," that is, to be alive and creative. In *Rings* the sense of thingness was produced primarily through the spatial arrangement that encouraged haptic encounters between the spectators and the materials of the performance—the performers, the more-than-human materials, the smells, the sounds, and textures. The effect was that neither the human nor the more-than-human elements of the performance was produced as more alive and agential than the other. In the spectators' experience both had the potential to be registered as dynamic and creative, and the two frequently intermingled as

the human body was fragmented in the perceptive field, joining with nonhuman materials: a finger merged with water, a foot with mud, or an apple was consumed and entered a performer's body (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Details from *Rings*, performers Nina Ravnholdt-Enemark, Jodie Wilkinson, Aby Watson (left to right), 2013, *The Arches*, Glasgow. Photo courtesy of the author.

While this effect of postdramatic theatre is not overtly feminist, it resonates with feminist politics. Cixous insists that the way we approach even the smallest thing is paradigmatic for every larger political issue; our “relationship to things” exposes our political conditioning and possibilities.<sup>65</sup> In her reading of Eve, for example, she explains that a masculine-coded knowledge is geared toward “pure interdiction, pure ‘you mustn’t’”; it is premised on accepting the father’s no, on accepting the absence of the apple.<sup>66</sup> This kind of knowledge that is grounded in absence, and motivated by a desire for the absent thing, remains problematic for feminists. As Jacques-Alain Miller points out, knowledge, as it is traditionally conceived, rests on an “ideal . . . of the union of subject and object.”<sup>67</sup> He qualifies this union as a “co-naturality of subject and object, a pro-established harmony between, the subject who knows and the object known.”<sup>68</sup> Miller explains that this notion of knowledge is mirrored in the structure of sexual difference, or rather sexual difference becomes a paradigm of knowledge: the subjectification of man and objectification of woman mirror the subjectification of the knower and the objectification of the known. The object is positioned as “complementary to the subject” and, as such, epistemology is “also a way of taming the woman,” as woman is figured as complementary to man, the object to his subject-being.<sup>69</sup> Knowledge is, then, bound up with the absence and repression of woman, which makes it a feminist concern to develop an epistemological practice not based on the principles of lack, negative desire, and the ultimate yearning for wholeness that the masculine-coded subject imagines can be quenched by incorporating the other.

Invoking the famous orgasmic ending of *Ulysses*, Cixous sees a feminine knowledge in contrast as premised on a yes, “the yes of Molly Bloom.”<sup>70</sup> This knowledge is based on a process of nearing instead of a fixed distance, and presence instead of absence. Cixous theorizes the orgasmic yes as the cornerstone of feminine

knowledge that figures the other as a Heideggerian thing, a worlding being that commands respect of its strangeness on its own terms. This results in an unhinging of the binary relationship between subject and object and with it hierarchical binaries that in Cixous's view make "all conceptual organization subject to man," in effect subduing femininity and objectifying women.<sup>71</sup>

Significantly, Cixous stresses that these different ways of approaching things are not innate, ahistorical, or bound to biological bodies, but are produced by, and in turn produce, cultural and social discourses. Experimenting with feminine knowledge then does not mean advocating a notion of a singular feminist epistemology, nor a female epistemology grounded in biology. This is crucial because, as Elizabeth Anderson argues, feminine knowledge, if assumed to be a property of women alone, may be used as a "pretext" to keep women from acquiring masculine-coded knowledge, hence curtailing their access to education and cutting short their voices.<sup>72</sup> Instead of positioning feminine knowledge as the sole property of women, Cixous proposes that "cultural schema"—such as the sociocultural association of women and femininity in myth including that of Eve—allow women to approach knowledge in a feminine way more easily than men.<sup>73</sup>

Cixous makes clear that she believes that "training, education, supervision" are methods for the "reproduction of ideological results" and that precisely because our approach to things is anchored in history, it is possible to imagine a "radical transformation" of culture by putting different forms of knowledge into circulation.<sup>74</sup> Writing and reading become a political pedagogy, a method of approaching the world in a manner grounded in a feminine epistemology. The pedagogic function of experience is also present in Lehmann's comments on the politics of postdramatic theatre. He makes clear that postdramatic politics cannot be found in who and/or what is represented, a narrated fable or an uttered political statement, but rather in a "cultivation of affects, the 'training' of an emotionality that is not under the tutelage of rational preconsiderations."<sup>75</sup>

Framed through my discussion of feminine knowledge, we may see postdramatic theatre forms as a means to train spectators in how to gather feminine-coded knowledge through affective encounters with things. At the same time, I think it is important to caution against concluding that all postdramatic theatre is feminine. Deirdre Heddon's reflections on the politics of live art apply here. Contesting the idea that there is something "essentially political to live art practices," she argues that the politics of live art must be understood as a potential. This potential is only ever realized "in singular acts of live art."<sup>76</sup> Equally, while postdramatic theatre practices have the potential to produce feminine knowledge, not every postdramatic performance realizes this potential, especially because the spectator must be taken into account in any such realization. I would like then to suggest that particular instances of postdramatic theatre may assist in eroding the structures that produce

the violent hierarchies of sexual difference, making way for new forms of knowledge and experience.

While this reading of the politics of postdramatic theatre may be overly hopeful, it is important to acknowledge that *Rings* also demonstrated the difficulties of maintaining a nonviolent, nonobjectifying approach to things in a symbolic structure. Lehmann's precise formulation that postdramatic theatre "makes it possible to imagine" a different form of coexistence is essential to theorizing the political efficacy of postdramatic theatre and its relation to feminism.<sup>77</sup> Postdramatic theatre does not necessarily enact or embody a utopian space in which a feminine epistemology emerges. Instead, it creates an "experience of potentiality" that gestures beyond the current system of hierarchies.<sup>78</sup> I propose that *Rings* did not annihilate the performers' agency and that they did not descend to the level of objects, as Haas would have it. Instead, they and the spectators actively participated in forming a space in which the world-creating properties of things could flourish. In this way, postdramatic theatre may not be regarded as feminist—or political—in an overt manner through representing women's issues, but rather by putting feminine knowledge into circulation. The consequences of a feminine education go beyond feminist concerns understood narrowly as bettering the lives of women, toward envisioning new structures of relating and being in human and more-than-human worlds.

## Notes

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1. See Karen Jürs-Munby, "Parasitic Politics: Elfriede Jelinek's 'Secondary Dramas' *Abraumhalde* and *FaustIn and out*," *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*, ed. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll, and Steve Giles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 209–32; *Spielräume des Anderen: Geschlecht und Alterität im Postdramatischen Theater*, ed. Nina Birkner, Andrea Geier, and Ute Helduser, (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014).

2. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006) 33.

3. Janelle Reinelt, "Generational Shifts," *Theatre Research International* 35.3 (2010): 290.

4. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Das politische Schreiben* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2002) 16; author's translation.

5. Kathleen Gough, *Haptic Allegories: Kinship and Performance in the Black and Green Atlantic* (London: Routledge, 2013) 7.

6. Hans-Thies Lehmann, "World and Stage in Postdramatic Theatre," *Drama and/after Postmodernism*, ed. Christoph Henke and Martin Middeke (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007) 50.

7. Due to the scope of this article, it is not possible to discuss postdramatic practices other than my own. I suggest, however, that my findings might be used to uncover other instances in which the latent potential for producing feminine knowledge is realized, thus opening up the landscape of postdramatic theatre for further feminist scrutiny.

8. All performances were premiered in Glasgow. *ENCIRCLED* was shown at the University of Glasgow, while *fire into song* and *Rings* were both performed at The Arches.

9. Julia Dobson, *Hélène Cixous and the Theatre: The Scene of Writing* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002) 62.

10. Hélène Cixous, "Writings on the Theatre," trans. Catherine Anne Frank, *Qui Parle* 3.1 (1989): 131.

11. See Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991) 86–95.

12. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1.4 (1976): 881; Hélène Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?," trans. Annette Kuhn, *Signs* 7.1 (1981): 54.
13. Hélène Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity," *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous*, ed. Susan Sellers, trans. Ann Liddle and Susan Sellers (New York: St. Martin's, 1988) 16.
14. Martin McQuillan, *Deconstruction without Derrida* (New York: Continuum, 2012) 136.
15. 122.
16. 122. My method can be described in line with Derrida's thinking on fidelity and betrayal. He argues that to follow a body of theoretical work, to be faithful to it, already has an act of betrayal built into it: "Within the experience of following . . . there is something other, something new or something different which occurs, which I sign." Accordingly, my essay follows Cixous's work not by repeating it in the context of theatre, but by allowing it to lead me into new modes of practice and theoretical insights, while "signing" this where appropriate. See Jacques Derrida, "Following Theory," *Life after Theory*, ed. Michael Payne and John Schad (New York: Continuum, 2003) 10.
17. Toril Moi, "From Femininity to Finitude: Freud, Lacan, and Feminism, Again," *Signs* 29.3 (2004): 845.
18. Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman* (Winchester, UK: 0 Books, 2009) 15, 69.
19. Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000) 1.
20. It is important to note that Cixous's cultural interventions are situated in and respond to a specifically Western European context; they are not a global enterprise and her articulations on femininity as a cultural trope in her work are born out of this particular critical legacy. This means that while Cixous detaches femininity from biologically sexed bodies—opening it up to bodies of any gender—she maintains it as a strategic counterposition to the phallogocentric organization of Western discourse. Equally, I acknowledge that my own work emerges from my situatedness in a Western scholarly and theatrical context and seeks to intervene in these specifically.
21. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy M. Wing (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986) 64.
22. In a recent interview Cixous has proposed that her work might be better understood as a precursor to queer studies than as feminist theory. The relationship between *écriture féminine* and queer perspectives is not simple, however, and she stresses that there are just as many differences between her early work and queer studies as there are similarities. Michel Foucault's notion of genealogy, which does not propose origins or linear developments but stresses the contingency of ideas, describes the relationship between *écriture féminine* and queer studies quite precisely. See Hélène Cixous, Elisabeth Schäfer, and Claudia Simma, "Medusas 'Changeancen': Ein Interview mit Hélène Cixous," *Das Lachen der Medusa zusammen mit aktuellen Beiträgen*, ed. Esther Hutfless, Gertrud Postl, and Elisabeth Schäfer (Vienna: Passagen, 2013) 181–92.
23. Cixous and Clément 83.
24. Jacques Derrida, "But, Beyond . . . (Open Letter to Anne McClintock and Rob Nixon)," trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry* 13.1 (1987): 168.
25. Jacques Derrida, "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep within a Shell: Paul de Man's War," trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry* 14.3 (1988): 648.
26. 648.
27. Françoise Defromont, "L'épopée du Corps," *Hélène Cixous: Chemins d'une Écriture*, ed. Françoise van Rossum-Guyon and Myriam Díaz-Diocaretz (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999) 91; author's translation.
28. Hélène Cixous, *Reading with Clarice Lispector*, trans. Verena Andermatt Conley (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990) 99.
29. Hélène Cixous, *The Hélène Cixous Reader*, ed. Susan Sellers (London: Routledge, 1994) 83.
30. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 1971) 168; emphasis in the original.
31. 178.
32. The German term *welten* that Heidegger uses fulfills a similar function as its translation *worlding*, though the gerund form used in English possibly encapsulates the processual aspect of this activity even more precisely.
33. Hélène Cixous, "Coming to Writing" and *Other Essays*, ed. Deborah Jenson, trans. Sarah Cornell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991) 60.
34. 61.
35. 72.
36. 72.

37. Since Cixous argues that femininity and masculinity are not bound to female and male bodies, my decision to work with female performers might be troubled. By doing this, I did not imply that only women can access feminine knowledge. Rather, because of the feminist nature of the project I thought it important to create a space for women to collaborate, develop their practice, and perform together. In hindsight, I consider this decision to be problematic since it allowed for too easy a slippage from feminine to female, risking reiterating the patriarchal norm that women are more naturally inclined to feminine libidinality and sensuality.

38. Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity" 16.

39. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Routledge, 2001) 50.

40. Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa" 893.

41. Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity" 19, 22.

42. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2003) 14.

43. Cixous, *Coming to Writing* 166.

44. Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, trans. Ronald Sousa (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988) 157.

45. 162–63.

46. Cixous, *Coming to Writing* 170–71.

47. Laura Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002) xiii.

48. xii, xviii.

49. Heidegger 175.

50. Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity" 19.

51. The full text of the soundtrack can be accessed at <<http://www.feministpostdramatic.tumblr.com>> It was spoken by Cassandra Rutherford, Louise Gaw, and myself.

52. Cixous, *Reading with Clarice Lispector* 102.

53. 105.

54. Qtd. in Verena Conley, *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1984) 146; Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (London: Routledge, 1997) 89.

55. Hélène Cixous, "Aller à la Mer," trans. Barbara Kerslake, *Modern Drama* 27.4 (1984): 546–48. The title of Cixous's article translates as "going to the sea" while also referring to the figure of the mother via the homophony between *mer* (sea) and *mère* (mother). The metaphor of the sea/mother that Cixous uses poetically portrays theatre as a life-giving environment.

56. Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?" 54. In the French Cixous uses the verb *sentir*, which means to feel in an emotional sense or in regard to one's health, to think or believe, and also to smell, invoking perceptual categories.

57. 54.

58. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* 90.

59. 72. Lehmann is referring here particularly to Tadeusz Kantor's theatre but acknowledges that Kantor's theatre "manifests an intention found in many postdramatic forms," indicating that it can be regarded as a more general tendency.

60. Minty Donald, "Entided, Enwatered, Entwined: Human/More-than-Human Agencies in Site-Specific Performance," *Performing Objects and Other Theatrical Things*, ed. Marlis Schweitzer and Joanna Zerdy (London: Palgrave, 2014) 188.

61. Birgit Haas, *Plädoyer für ein dramatisches Drama* (Vienna: Passagen, 2007) 31; author's translation.

62. 35.

63. 106.

64. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* 81.

65. Hélène Cixous, *Weiblichkeit in der Schrift*, trans. Eva Duffner (Berlin: Merve, 1977) 14; author's translation.

66. Hélène Cixous, "Reaching the Point of Wheat, or a Portrait of the Artist as a Maturing Woman," *New Literary History* 19.1 (1987): 4.

67. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Elements of Epistemology," *The Symptom: Issue 9* <<http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=37>> (accessed 28 Jan. 2016).

68. Miller n.p.

69. Miller n.p.

70. Cixous, "Reaching the Point of Wheat" 4. Cixous is referring here to the ending of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which features a stream of consciousness by Molly Bloom, the protagonist's wife.

Cixous reads the final word of the book, "yes," as an affirmation of the possibility to establish a sensuous contact with the world.

71. Cixous and Clément 64.

72. Elizabeth Anderson, "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense," *Hypatia* 10.3 (1995): 50.

73. Cixous, "Extreme Fidelity" 16.

74. Cixous and Clément 83.

75. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* 186.

76. Deirdre Heddon, "The Politics of Live Art," *Histories and Practices of Live Art*, ed. Deirdre Heddon and Jennie Klein (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 176.

77. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* 81.

78. 163.