

Helene Cixous

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Born in Oran Algeria in 1937, is considered one of the 'mothers' of poststructuralist feminist theory. The daughter of a Pied Noir Sephardic Jewish father and German Ashkenazi Jewish mother, she is the author of 40 books and over 100 articles, including fiction, poetry, drama, philosophy and feminism. The majority of her works are fiction but in the English-speaking world Cixous is known primarily as a theorist and philosopher. In the 1970s she began writing about the relationship between sexuality and language and Cixous is most often associated with *écriture féminine* "feminine writing". Perhaps the most influential of her essays is *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976). Here Cixous employs a writing style which is rich and plays with textual layers to demonstrate the essentialised and phallogocentric nature of language and discourse, and the urgent necessity for women to break out of this dominance and use their bodies to communicate – *to write in "white ink"*.



"The orange is a moment. Not forgetting the orange is one thing. Recalling the orange is another thing. Rejoining it is another. At least three times are needed in order to begin to understand the infinite immensity of the moment" (Cixous, 1994, p. 88).

Being intercultural is being two - the nature of the being is intersubjective, intercorporeal and inbetween. Using the metaphor of self as apple, and Other as orange, Helene Cixous suggests evocatively that being between two is a moment "to live the orange" (Cixous, 1994). Cixous asks under what conditions however may I live the orange and immediately draws attention to the political nature of being two in intercultural moments. Her work reminds us that to live the orange is a political act (p. 90) and her work calls us to the necessity of an ethical relation in being two. Questions of possibility, performativity, power and privilege are everywhere here and I wonder what intercultural pedagogy might become if we begin to think, live, feel, breathe and be the ethical and moral response-ability Cixous is gesturing towards?

References

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