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Embodiment

Embodiment has been discussed since the very beginning of class and **Cixous is said to advocate women's writing their bodies**. She takes the idea of embodiment and uses it almost like a weapon to empower women orators. She seems to **acknowledge the importance of acknowledging a rhetor's body, actions, and delivery as much as their words in her writing style as her writing style is extremely animated and sounds like a speech**. This style of writing is **a necessity as just the act of gaining an audience is tough for women and people of color**. Although difficult, **Cixous is already recognizing that her "self" is at least partly a racially, historically, and politically situated body. Simply by being the rhetor she is, she is actively "doing" French history by participating in the public sphere**. In her time it was not as dangerous to partake in public speaking but for **Cixous, the very act of public speaking, for women, is a communication about the value and existence of women and femininity**. With the idea of embodiment Cixous was able to have **much of what she had to say still be revolutionary, and her body is an important part of that revolutionary performance**. She supported **écriture féminine** that worked against the predisposition that women were the lesser sex. They could not stick to **linear and hierarchical textual structures**, which only lead to greater

writing skills. She would rather the writing **organize itself diffusely around key themes** and supplied a **generous flow of allusive language and remains open to many viewpoints without trying to enforce just one**. Although an advocate to women **writing their bodies, she would like to rid us of words like 'feminine' and 'masculine** and allow either sex to explore this style of writing that embodies the author.

Virginia Woolf, as well as Cixous, **advocate for a distinct feminine writing, which is experimental and, quite frankly, strange**. It is strange because **it goes off of Freud's idea that women are less structured and moral**. Cixous manages to defend this in a positive way **by stating that those qualities in a woman allow her to move freely through their imagination in the act of writing. They were granted the gift of less controlling social rules**.

Woolf shows a female author killing the Angel of the House while Cixous reimagines Medusa as laughing at patriarchal discourse. For both Cixous and Woolf, feminine writing can improve writing and tear down hierarchies. Because of the fact that Cixous believes that **women speak differently than men because their bodies are biologically and socially differentiated**, this style of writing can be widely accepted because it provides a new experience away from the traditional male writings.

By writing with their bodies, Cixous and Woolf also challenge traditional notions of logic. Woolf provides a departure from the praise of reason we've encountered from many of the Enlightenment writers, or the traditional male writings as mentioned above. For Woolf, reason stifles imagination, especially women's imagination. Since women were granted the **gift of being biologically and**

socially differentiated from men, why stifle the woman's imagination when it could help break down the hierarchy?

Woolf is equating her writing with her body when she fears that the Angel of the House "would have plucked the heart out of my writing", which seems to be a departure from Woolf, who thinks the best women's writing isn't personal/individual, which is the opposite of how Cixous believes. Cixous believes that the best writing was personal and straight from the individual, as well as able to portray that writing physically as Cixous argues that bodies are a means through which the rhetor "physically materializes what she's thinking. It is stated in the Cixous reading, "She doesn't 'speak,' she throws her trembling body forward; she lets go of herself, she flies; all of her passes into her voice, and it's with her body that she vitally supports the "logic" of her speech. Her flesh speaks true. She lays herself bare. In fact, she physically materializes what she's thinking; she signifies it with her body" . For Cixous this is a necessity as just the act of gaining an audience is tough for women as well as people of color. Cixous says that women must communicate this way, which we see through her animated style, for many reasons.