

— Jennifer Reek, »Consolation as Graced Encounters with Ignatius of Loyola and Hélène Cixous«

— A B S T R A C T —

This article suggests that the sixteenth-century Basque saint Ignatius of Loyola and the French thinker Hélène Cixous experienced consolation in unexpected encounters with texts. For Ignatius, consolation came as a result of reading while recovering from a battle wound in 1521 the only texts available to him, of lives of the saints and Christ. For Cixous, it was the consoling birth of her writing life after the death of her father in 1948 and 30 years later a chance reading of the Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector. These encounters serve here as a point of departure into a beginning exploration of reading and writing as consolation in the work and life of these two disparate yet essentially compatible figures. Taking a cue from Cixous's reading and writing practices, personal criticism is used in the reading of their texts so that the writing of this essay may itself perform an act of consoling.

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■— Jennifer Reek —■

■— CONSOLATION AS GRACED ENCOUNTERS WITH
IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA AND HÉLÈNE CIXOUS —■

■— Before I begin in earnest, my odd couple of Ignatius of Loyola and Hélène Cixous may need brief introduction for those who are unfamiliar with the work of either or both. I will refrain initially from going into too much detail about why I choose them, for that will hopefully become clear as we proceed. Suffice it to say here that in addition to the consolation I perceive in their reading/writing experiences, the texts of both have been transformational for me, though I had not considered until the writing of this article my own encounters with them specifically and uniquely in terms of consolation. I will include in my argumentation my own experiences of consolation in my reading of their texts so that the writing of this essay is not so much a writing about consolation but rather an attempt to perform an act of consoling and in doing so to get at an essence of thinking and feeling what consolation is.

Both Cixous and Ignatius exhibit a gift for encounter, an exquisite ability to meet an other, to listen and converse, to allow themselves to be led and transformed by the voice of an other, whether God, person or text. Perhaps best known as the author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, a series of Gospel meditations and contemplations meant to enable one to grow into a more intimate encounter with God, Ignatius of Loyola, the sixteenth-century Basque saint and founder of the Society of Jesus, was many things in his life: soldier, mystic, pilgrim, what we would call today »a mature student«,¹ spiritual director, teacher, priest, founder of the Society of Jesus and contributor to the Jesuit pedagogy that arose out of Jesuit spirituality, prolific letter writer (almost 7 000 letters!),² master administrator and teacher, founder of schools and excellent reader of his own and others' interior lives.³

That latter quality is what to my mind most binds Ignatius to the French thinker Hélène Cixous, for she also has a gift for seeing into the depths of her own and others' interiors. It is for this that I most love them both, for the same reason Cixous gives when she speaks of her love for certain writers she consistently engages: »The writers I love,« she writes, »are *descenders*, explorers of the lowest and deepest. Descending is deceptive. Carried out by those I love the descent is sometimes intolerable, the descenders descend with difficulty.«⁴ Such skillful descent is evident in Cixous's own writing in the multiple genres in which she works – theater, theory, experi-

mental fiction, memoir, interview, notebooks – though she defies the limited descriptions those labels suggest as she deliberately crosses boundaries of fiction and theory, poetry and prose, interior and exterior. She shares with Ignatius a few other traits. She is a teacher, for decades a professor of literature at the experimental Université de Paris VIII, which she helped found as an alternative after the political and pedagogical turmoil of 1968. She is prolific, author of more than forty books and over a hundred articles. She is also something of a mystic⁵ and wanderer, an Algerian Jew who has spent most of her adult life in France, having found in the French language perhaps the only space in which she feels truly at home.⁶ These shared qualities of Ignatius and Cixous take us toward consolation, for they indicate deeper, underlying concerns for the freedom and flourishing of the whole human person, a caring commitment to the well-being of the other that we know as consolation.

Now I want to more formally begin, though my method might be called informal, by circling around the meaning of consolation. I include the personal and am sometimes repetitive in themes, in sounds, and deliberately so, as I seek a deeper knowing of »consolation«. My poetic way of proceeding is greatly influenced by Cixous's reading and writing practices, particularly that of *écriture féminine*⁷, a term meaning much more than its literal translation as »feminine writing«. It may be considered a spiritual practice and is as much body and soul as mind, reflecting not so much sexual difference according to gender but something more fluid and dynamic ranging widely in either man or woman. Writing is encounter, transgressing boundaries and subverting the conventional order of things. My attempt here, in bringing together Cixous and Ignatius, is akin to her frequent practice of mingling those authors (»these heroes of writing«⁸) and texts for whom she feels the greatest affinity, in order to go »in the direction of truth«. ⁹ I have discovered an »alchemy« that occurs in joining Cixous and Ignatius – the outcome of the mixing of the two is often more precious and alive, more »true«, than each alone.¹⁰ Ignatius, in turn, will assist me as I move from a general definition of consolation to less common understandings of the term as suggested by usage found in his *Spiritual Exercises* and to the particular meaning of Ignatius's idea of »consolation without cause«, which he describes as being »without any preceding perception or knowledge of any subject by which a soul might be led to such a consolation through its own acts of intellect and will«. ¹¹ I will take the latter definition, which is specific to the *Exercises* and the Ignatian spirituality that derives from them, and play with it for my own purposes in order to see what we can say about these strange and graced acts of reading and writing experienced by these two disparate yet essentially compatible figures.

What, then, can we begin to say of consolation? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word as »The action of consoling, cheering, or comforting; the state of being consoled; alleviation of sorrow or mental distress«. ¹² There is not much more than that brief description provided in the usually verbose OED, but it is more than enough to tell us that consolation is an act, requiring a subject who acts intentionally, for the good of an other; it is that care as felt by the other when it is received; and it is a lessening of the pain that must be the initial felt state of the other in order for consolation to occur. What we can say about the arising of consolation is that it seeks to aid and heal a grieving other's pain and sadness, without which consolation does not exist.

The latter statement takes me by surprise, for it makes me suddenly realise that I cannot write about consolation honestly without acknowledging my own or others' need for it. I think of Cixous. Thinking of her father nearing death, she writes: »*I do not want to put a name on my anguish.*« ¹³ I do not want to put a name on my anguish. Perhaps I will be able to name it and so name the consolation it cries out for by asking questions of Ignatius and Cixous that arise out of our beginning definitions. What is the pain and sadness in which consolation visits them? What is my own that draws me to this topic, and how is it related to the appeal of these figures, to whom I return again and again? What is the origin of their grief? For whom are they mourning, if anyone, before their textual encounters?

—— »WE NEED A DEAD(WO)MAN TO BEGIN« ¹⁴ ——
 In *Hélène Cixous: Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, a marvelous and moving work that is a mélange of family photo album, genealogy, reflections on writing, interviews, commentary and notebook entries, »interactive« and intertextual in a very real sense of those words, Cixous writes: »One goes forward, sowing the stones of grief behind oneself.« ¹⁵ Cixous is writing of loss and frailty, and doing so in a concrete, material manner. While leafing through family photograph albums, she notes that some of the photos are decaying, the pictures of her relatives falling out of their corners, down the page to meet family they may never have known in life. ¹⁶ More than forty of Cixous's maternal relatives died in concentration camps. They are listed here, matter-of-factly, in a family tree: Klein, Ehrlich, Freund, Orli, Friedlander, Unger, Fleischman. The litany of names in the family tree suggests the importance of identity, memory, remembrance and so, consolation, in the naming and saying of the dead. After the first reference, the words »concentration camp« are abbreviated »c.c.«. ¹⁷ (Because there are so many instances? Because it is too painful to repeat the words in full? The place names of the camps are rarely listed, perhaps unknown? Cixous does not say. The dead are named, the camps

not, and this gives the dead dignity they did not have in dying, at least for me, this naming and not-naming.) Survivors and their many descendants live around the world: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Paris, Los Angeles, New York, Toronto.¹⁸ Two fates for the huge Klein family, Cixous writes, concentration camps and »the scattering across the earth. This gives me a sort of worldwide resonance. I have always felt it because the echoes always came from the whole earth. From all the survivors«.¹⁹

— *Sowing the stones of grief. My mother, née June Begly, died in January 2014. I write her name because I can't bear the callousness of the possessive pronoun when people talk of their unnamed relatives, taking away their identity, or so it seems to me. There is no better way I can think of to describe these past months of grief, that heaviness and burden of stone, that every so often and ever so slowly I let drop, hoping the stones will turn someday into something beyond sorrow.*

My own loss is insignificant to that of Cixous. It seems obscene to note it. Still, her work has focused on and owed itself to the death of one, her father, Georges, who died from tuberculosis when she was eleven, at the age of thirty-nine.²⁰ Cixous wrote forward out of mourning for her father and found life. She writes of death in tones that ring true. Writing is consolation, arriving unbidden:

— The first book I wrote rose from my father's tomb. I don't know why, perhaps it was the only thing I had to write then, in my poverty, my inexperience, the *only asset*: the only thing that made me live, that I had lived, that put me to the test, and that I felt because it completely defeated me. It was my strange and monstrous treasure. I didn't think about all this, otherwise I wouldn't have written. For a long time I lived through my father's death with the feeling of immense loss and childlike regret, as in an inverted fairy tale: Ah if my father had lived! I naively fabricated other magnificent stories, until the day things changed color and I began to see other scenes – including everything I could imagine that was less consoling – without overinvesting.²¹

You can see here how I would find these words consoling in my grief, as they hold out the possibility of a time when consolation is not so much needed and desired, a day when things change color. I did not turn to the expected texts of consolation after my mother died. No psalm consoled, nor any writing considered spiritual by convention. It was this text, oddly passages like this one that consoled me in its honesty in facing death and yet affirming life.

— *Sowing stones of grief behind oneself. Since June died I keep losing things that matter to me. A pen from Tiffany, gift from a dear friend. A silver bracelet of my mother's fell off my wrist in the spring. Summer I lost a watch, another gift. On an autumn plane trip, exiled from a place I love, I could not hold back the tears, and the weeping itself felt like loss. It is not like me, this losing of things.*

In the text of hers I love best, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, Cixous claims, »we lose and in losing we win«. ²² Writing of the author Thomas Bernhard, Cixous tells the story of how he suddenly wrote in abundance after the death of a beloved grandfather, »the poet, the one who had always loved him, who was everything to him«. ²³ Death comes to those we love; we live; »it is an act of grace«. ²⁴ Writing is a »vital spring brought about and ordered by the disappearance of the one who was the source«. ²⁵ It is

— »this learning to die,« that is, not to kill, knowing there is death, not denying it and not proclaiming it. [...] Our crime isn't what we think, it isn't the crime in the newspapers, it's always a bit less and a bit more. In life, as soon as I say *my*, as soon as I say *my* daughter, *my* brother, [or, I add now, *my* mother] I am verging on a form of murder, as soon as I forget to unceasingly recognize the other's difference. You may come to know your son, your sister, your daughter [she does not mention her mother, who still lives, close to Cixous, well past 90] well after thirty or forty, or fifty years of life, and yet during those thirty or forty years you haven't known this person who was so close. You kept him or her in the realm of the dead. And the other way around. Then the one who dies kills and the one who doesn't die when the other dies kills as well. ²⁶

— *The final ten years of her life, June became harder and harder to recognise. She had Alzheimer's. It was as if she were slowly disappearing, piece by piece, memory by memory. But I wonder, did I ever recognise her? Did she, me? We often did not understand each other, often we stayed hurt in the other's misunderstanding and non-recognition. Verging on a form of murder. Maybe that is what Cixous means about killing each other, at least when we are alive. Harder to bear may be what she refers to as »the unpardonable in ourselves«, ²⁷ that we are alive after the other has died, that we are glad we are not them. An unpardonable consolation.*

— CONSOLING TEXTS AND TRANSFIGURED BODIES —

In the work and lives of Cixous and Ignatius I perceive a potent

mingling of bodies and texts. Transformation, transfiguration, become possible in textual encounters. Cixous remarks on her perception of such transformation in her theater work: »It's the actor who is a saint, who exchanges himself often with one character. That is really the loss of one life and the undergoing of another. And it is the director who offers the world to the characters and erases himself into pure space.«²⁸

I sense a resonance in Cixous's saints of the theatre with the »real« saint, Ignatius, who »loses« one life, one self, and becomes »another« as he undergoes an intense experience of pain and consolation, or a »conversion« in religious terms. In the opening of his autobiography, dictated to another Jesuit, the self he will die to is described as one who is »given to worldly vanities, and having a vain and overpowering desire to gain renown, found special delight in the exercise of arms«. ²⁹ In 1521, this person, Ignatius the soldier, suffers a terrible injury when a cannonball shatters his leg in the battle of Pamplona. The bone is set, and he is carried on a litter to Loyola, a journey of several weeks. From his autobiography comes this description:

— His condition was serious, and the physicians and surgeons, summoned from many places, agreed that the leg should be broken again and the bones reset, since they either had been poorly set in the first place or had become dislocated during the journey, for they were now out of joint and would never heal. The butchery was repeated ...³⁰

Ignatius is thought to be near death and is given last sacraments. But then he takes an unexpected turn and begins to heal. The bones heal badly again, with one leg deformed. He demands the doctors operate again, and this time the pain is worse than ever. Again he heals and gradually recovers after nine months immobilized.³¹ This exterior immobilization will foster an inner dynamism, one that fleshes out our definitions of consolation.

Though it is little remarked upon, it is worth noting that a crucial figure of consolation in Ignatius's recovery is a woman, his sister-in-law Magdalena de Araoz, matron of the Loyola castle, who »welcomed Ignatius to the ancestral home and cared for him while the bone in his leg was reset«. ³² After a few months he is well enough to want to read his favourite fare, chivalrous romances, »novels dealing with knightly exploits [...] the best-sellers of the sixteenth century«. ³³ (Ignatius did more than read these stories; he also sought to live them. As Juan Alfonso de Polanco, his secretary and one of his closest associates, wrote, »Especially did he indulge in gaming, dueling, and affairs with women.«³⁴ This aspect of his life was excluded from his autobiography.) But Magdalena gives him the only books

she has, and these will be life changing: Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend* and Ludolph of Saxony's *The Life of Jesus Christ*.³⁵ Ignatius begins to perceive a difference in his response to these texts of the lives of the saints and Christ and his worldly thoughts. As he relates in his autobiography:

— There was this difference [...] When he thought of worldly matters, he found much delight; but after growing weary and dismissing them, he found that he was dry and unhappy. But when he thought of going barefoot to Jerusalem and eating nothing but herbs and of imitating the saints in all the austerities they practiced, he not only found consolation in these thoughts, but even after they had left him he remained happy and joyful. He did not consider nor did he stop to examine this difference until one day his eyes were partially opened, and he began to wonder at this difference and to reflect upon it. From experience he knew that some thoughts left him sad while others made him happy, and little by little he came to perceive the different spirits that were moving him; one coming from the devil, the other coming from God.³⁶

From this initial distinction between his responses to the religious and romantic texts, Ignatius will develop the practices of the discernment of the spirits, which are the core of his *Spiritual Exercises*.³⁷ His attentive reading leads to an eventual incredibly intricate and delicate awareness of his bodily responses, of what he terms movements of »consolation« and »desolation«. His use of the word »consolation« above is meant in the sense that he uses it in the *Exercises*:

— I call it consolation when an interior movement is aroused in the soul, by which it is inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, and as a consequence, can love no creature on the face of the earth for its own sake, but only in the Creator of them all. [...] I call consolation every increase of faith, hope, and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one's soul by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord.³⁸

He describes another kind of consolation, as I've mentioned above, one that »God alone« gives, »without previous cause. [...] that is, without any preceding perception or knowledge of any subject by which a soul might be led to such consolation through its own acts of intellect and will«. ³⁹ This sense of consolation is of another degree altogether, and I suggest it is the type experienced by Ignatius and Cixous in their transformative encounters with texts. Michael Ivens has described

it as »gratuitous and impossible to induce«, a »breaking into«. ⁴⁰ Though many Jesuits might object to my appropriation of this phrase because its occurrence is thought to be extremely rare, others, such as Karl Rahner, may have supported it, as he saw such consolation as part of the grace that he believed infused everyday life. ⁴¹

And what was Ignatius's reading experience except for a »breaking into« his previous way of being so that he would be transformed and so transform others with the text he developed as a result of his reading? For it is from this initial experience of consolation as a result of reading unwanted and unexpected texts, gift and happy accident, that Ignatius will develop his *Spiritual Exercises* with its central practice of the discernment of the spirits. The *Exercises* are the basis of Jesuit spirituality, the basics of which entail developing skills of listening and discernment in order to live a more holy life, that is, a life that is whole, relational, authentic, selfless in its love for God and the other, a life conducive to the flourishing of the human person, a life that is consoling. To reiterate, in this discernment, Ignatius uses the term »consolation« in a particular way, in reference to what he called »movements of the spirit«, first discovered in his reading encounter, consolation being the sense of »the good spirit« and desolation being the influence of »the bad spirit«, though that is greatly simplifying things. One listens to those spirits and uses that knowledge to make a sound decision, to discern not so much the right way, but to rightly make the discernment itself.

As John O'Malley notes in his book *The First Jesuits*, the term also had a broader sense for the early Jesuits. It could be a greeting, or blessing; it was a word that resonated with their pastoral ideal, the conviction that God is accessible to all. ⁴² Consolation was and is, for the Jesuit, a reality of »a movement of the heart that came from God and brought one closer to God«. ⁴³ An early Jesuit and assistant to Ignatius, Jerónimo Nadal, described consolation as »an inner joy, a serenity in judgment, a relish, a light, a reassuring step forward, a clarification of insight.« ⁴⁴ Pierre Favre, one of the first companions of Ignatius and recently canonized by the Jesuit Pope Francis, who views Favre with special regard as an ideal himself, gives consolation an expansiveness and illustrates its importance to the Jesuits' pastoral mission. He writes in his *Memoriale*:

— With great devotion and new depth of feeling, I also hoped and begged for this [from God], that it finally be given to me to be the servant and minister of Christ the consoler, the minister of Christ the helper, the minister of Christ the redeemer, the minister of Christ the healer, the liberator, the enricher, the strengthener. Thus it would happen that even I might be able through him to help many – to

console, liberate, and give them courage; to bring them light not only for their spirit but also (if one may presume in the Lord) for their bodies, and bring as well other helps to the soul and body of each and every one of my neighbors whomsoever.⁴⁵

— *I first encountered Ignatius a decade ago in spiritual direction sessions with a Sister of Saint Joseph trained in Ignatian spirituality. In a series of spiritual conversations between us, she began to teach me Ignatius's discernment practice, to note my affective responses of consolation and desolation and to use that knowledge to make a decision well. Several years later, I would undertake the Spiritual Exercises, a thirty-day silent retreat experienced with others, in community, in which we placed ourselves in the Gospel narratives of the life of Jesus, from the Nativity to the Ascension. The goal of the Exercises was consolation in the aforementioned broad Jesuit understanding, to experience a movement of heart that came from God and brought us nearer to God, whatever our understanding of the divine might be.*

I have mentioned Cixous's mourning and the writing that was born of it, but there was another pain that occurred before her consoling encounter with a life-changing text. She describes it in terms of a desert experience, »ten years in the desert of books«, without »amies«, without women's voices, without their writing and reading. Then on 12 October 1978, »a garden enters [...] the unexpected comes to pass.«⁴⁶ She reads the Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector and is consoled.⁴⁷ Listen to the words she uses to describe the effects of this surprise text that enters her life without her willing it, helping her to create in her own work an economy of gift. Women, like Lispector, when they write,

— it is to surround the birth of life with the most delicate care ... And their writings are voices changed into hands to come very gently to meet our souls, when we are searching, we have needed to leave to search for what in our being is most secret. Because a woman's voice has awakened our heart.⁴⁸

Cixous's encounter with the text of Lispector is presented as a religious experience, salvific in its effect on her. She is able to listen with extreme attentiveness to her interior movements, with »ears in prayer«, with »inner ears«:⁴⁹

— I had almighty ears for attending the Encounters, inside, at the moments of grace, necessary, of repeated miracle, of the welcoming of things giving themselves to one another,

giving rise to each other, echo, passage, continuation, one in the other, one near the other, I listened to my ears opening, dilating, straining, my soul burning with trust, with expectation ...⁵⁰

Of course, the texts read by Ignatius and Cixous are quite different. Those read by Ignatius are explicitly religious, while Lispector's work is not. Yet, what matters here is not so much whether the texts are religious but that the *reading* is »religious«. What I mean to suggest here is well articulated by Robert Detweiler, who proposed that we practice a »religious reading« in which texts are »absorbed, taken in and then offered up not to a relentlessly analytical readership but rather to a contemplative fellowship«.⁵¹ Cixous's reading makes a spiritual shift to an embodied, contemplative mode of knowing, resonant with that undertaken by Ignatius.

A woman's voice has awakened our heart. Perhaps that is why I sought Cixous for consolation. Her voice awakened my heart, surrounded it with the most delicate care. There is a text to which Cixous regularly turns that she seems to find consoling, though I don't recall if she ever uses the word. »Text« is perhaps not quite right, for this text is made up of scraps of paper Kafka wrote on when he was dying of tuberculosis. He could not speak. The fragments were later published at the end of a collection of his letters under the title »Conversation Slips«. ⁵² What type of conversation is Kafka's last? His great lifelong friend, companion, and consoler, Max Brod, describes the notes as »mere hints; his friends guessed the rest«. ⁵³ He tells us what we already know once we've read them, that is, that they »show that Kafka's intellectual powers, profound kindness, and imagination remained unclouded to the end«. ⁵⁴ The dying Kafka is attentive to the flowers in his room. »I'd especially like to take care of the peonies because they are so fragile,« he writes. ⁵⁵ Cixous is so moved by this conversation that she claims she »loved Kafka because of these scraps of paper«, which she describes as belonging to an economy in which »there is something extraordinarily tender and precise«. ⁵⁶

Something extraordinarily tender and precise. I don't know that there is any better definition for consolation than that. Was it there in the death of Cixous's own father? It was only recently that I recalled that at least part of the reason Kafka's end is so powerful for her is that her father died of consumption also. Her description of his death lacks the delicacy of her writing of Kafka:

— Last images: he is in a narrow room, in his own radiological clinic, lying on a small divan. I was allowed to go and see him. He no longer speaks. (He spoke no more

– cf. Kafka.) I do not want to put a name on my anguish.
He addresses me with signs.⁵⁷

Notice, there are no slips of paper about caring for the flowers of the room. It is not as magnificent and mysterious as the final words of Kafka, which Cixous will take as the title for one of her books, *Limonade tout était si infini*, a work that springs from what she, and I, experience as the most marvelous and mysterious »slip« of Kafka's final conversations: »Limonade it was all so boundless.«⁵⁸ It is one of two times in her life Cixous says she does not recognise her father. It is terrible. »I saw my father enter into silence while he was alive. Everything held back: smile, held back, breath, held back, life, held back.«⁵⁹

— *It is terrible. June did not speak, did not write on slips of paper, and had not been able to for some time. Her breathing was agonizing. Everything was difficult. Still, I was there and held her hand. I could speak to her, touch her, tell her I loved her so she would know she was not alone, or so I hoped.*

By the time I finish writing this essay, more than a year has passed since June died. Though it was not my intention, the writing of it has been a consolation. And how could it not be, considering all I have said here. Writing is consolation, arriving unbidden. I continue to find consolation in Cixous and not to find it in those places one expects to provide it – church, community, prayer leave me empty and dry. It happened again today in the public library of a small North American town I am visiting, while reading a passage in Cixous's book *Manhattan*, about a French woman scholar visiting Yale's Beinecke Library. Something about the library reminds her of the hospital where her father died. »The images of the dead who are part of us and have departed from us do not die and they start flashing whenever a setting lends itself, so the Beinecke reminded me of my father's last days and that moment when not yet dead already he wasn't on the same side of life as me and was drifting off without moving like a ship in a dream.«⁶⁰ Reading Cixous, writing of consolation, living after death, I am consoled. —■

■ — ENDNOTES —

1 Ignatius began studies in the humanities at the University of Paris in the winter of 1528 when he was in his late 30s. As Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J., notes in his commentary to Ignatius's autobiography (*A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. (San Francisco, 2001 [1985]), 137), »Classes were in session, and Ignatius registered at Collège de Montaigu but discovered, after an entrance exam, that his background was still insufficient for advanced work. Thus he decided to repeat these

courses, attending classes with boys in their early teens and even younger. When he successfully passed one stage, he advanced to another, following the established program of studies then in force in Paris.«

2 Ignatius of Loyola: *Personal Writings: Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters, including the text of The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Joseph A. Munitiz & Philip Endean (London, 1996), 113–115.

3 For background on Ignatius of Loyola, see, for example, *The Autobiography and Personal Writings*.

4 Hélène Cixous: *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell & Susan Sellers (New York, 1993), 5.

5 A word of explanation may be needed here in my description of Cixous as »mystic«. She is mystic in the sense that she seeks another kind of knowing beyond the intellect. This »mystic« knowing is to be found in and through a writing that attentively listens, gradually unfolds and/or is led by an »other«, is embodied, active in its passivity, and concerned with the inner depths of the writer/reader.

6 »Neither France, nor Germany nor Algeria«, Cixous writes in »My Algeriance«: »No regrets. It is good fortune. Freedom, an inconvenient, intolerable freedom, a freedom that obliges one to let go, to rise above, to beat one's wings. [. . .] I feel perfectly at home, nowhere.« (»My Algeriance: in other words To Depart not to Arrive from Algeria« in *Triquarterly* (Fall 1997), 155.) A good source for background on Cixous is Hélène Cixous and Mireille Calle-Gruber: *Hélène Cixous Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003 [London, 1997]).

7 Verena Andermatt Conley gives an apposite definition of the term in her perceptive introduction to Cixous's *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (London, 1990, vii): »écriture féminine is a working term referring less to a writing practiced mainly by women than, in a broader logical category, to textual ways of spending. It suggests a writing, based on an encounter with another – be it a body, a piece of writing, a social dilemma, a moment of passion – that leads to an undoing of the hierarchies and oppositions that determine the limits of most conscious life.«

8 Cixous: *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, 154.

9 Ibid., 36. *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* is an excellent example of this aspect of Cixous's thinking.

10 See, for example, »Reading as Active Contemplation«, in Francesca Bugliani Knox and David Lonsdale (eds.): *Poetry and the Religious Imagination: The Power of the Word* (London, 2015), 189–206.

11 Ignatius of Loyola: *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, trans. Louis J. Puhl (Chicago, 1951), #320.

- 12 *OED Online*: »consolation, n.« <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/39672?redirectedFrom=consolation> (accessed October 07, 2014).
- 13 Cixous & Calle-Gruber: *Hélène Cixous Rootprints*: »Hélène Cixous«: second para. after »My father in 1939«. Emphasis mine.
- 14 The subtitle opening Cixous's first »school« of writing, the »School of the Dead«, in her 1990 Wellek Library Lectures in Critical Theory at University of California, Irvine, which were later published as *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, 7.
- 15 Cixous & Calle-Gruber: *Hélène Cixous Rootprints*: »Hélène Cixous«: second para.
- 16 *Ibid.*, »Hélène Cixous«: fourth para.
- 17 *Ibid.*: »Hélène Cixous: Klein from Tyrnau (Slovakia) Family tree«.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*: »Hélène Cixous«: para. before »Klein from Tyrnau (Slovakia) Family tree«.
- 20 *Ibid.*: »Chronicle: Hélène's Father«.
- 21 Cixous: *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, 11-f.
- 22 *Ibid.*: 10.
- 23 *Ibid.*: 10–11.
- 24 *Ibid.*: 10.
- 25 *Ibid.*: 11.
- 26 *Ibid.*: 13.
- 27 *Ibid.*: 15.
- 28 Hélène Cixous: »The Scene of the Unconscious to the Scene of History«, trans. Deborah W. Carpenter, in Ralph Cohen (ed.): *The Future of Literary Theory* (New York, 1989), 15.
- 29 Ignatius of Loyola: *A Pilgrim's Journey*, 37.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 40f.
- 31 *Ibid.*, chapter 1. Ignatius is wounded May 1521 and leaves for Jerusalem February 1522.
- 32 *Ibid.*, Tylanda commentary, 41.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 43; quoting Pedro Leturia, S.J.: *Iñigo de Loyola*, trans. Aloysius J. Owen, S.J. (Syracuse, 1949), 42f.
- 35 Ignatius of Loyola: *A Pilgrim's Journey*, 44f.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 37 See, for example, Avery Dulles' preface to *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, trans. Louis J. Puhl, S.J., Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition (New York, 2000), xv.
- 38 Ignatius of Loyola: *The Spiritual Exercises*, #316.
- 39 *Ibid.*, #330.
- 40 Michael Ivens, S.J.: *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary: A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster, Herefordshire, and New Malden, Surrey, 2008 [1998]), 230.

- 41 Ibid.
- 42 John W. O'Malley, S.J.: *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 83.
- 43 Ibid., 20.
- 44 Ibid., 83.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Hélène Cixous: *Vivre l'orange/To Live the Orange* (Paris, 1979), 108.
- 47 Clarice Lispector (1920–1977) is one of the most important writers in 20th century Brazilian literature. Cixous began reading Lispector in the 1970s and helped bring her work to wider attention in Europe. Recently there has been a resurgence of interest with a biography and new translations by Benjamin Moser. (See Colm Tóibín's introduction to Moser's translation of Lispector's *The Hour of the Star*, the first (2011) in a series of new translations by New Directions (New York).)
- 48 Cixous: *Vivre l'orange*, 10.
- 49 Ibid., 44.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Robert Detweiler: »What Is Reading Religiously?«, in *Breaking the Fall: Religious Readings of Contemporary Fiction* (New York, 1989), 34.
- 52 Franz Kafka: *Letters to Friends, Family and Editors*, trans. Richard & Clara Winston (Surrey, 2011), 416–423.
- 53 Ibid., 493, n. 1.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Cixous: *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, 151.
- 57 Cixous & Calle-Gruber: *Hélène Cixous Rootprints: »Hélène Cixous«*: second para after »My father in 1939«.
- 58 Hélène Cixous: *Limonade tout était si infini* (Paris, 1982); idem, »Lemonade Everything Was So Infinite«, trans. Ann Liddle, in *The Hélène Cixous Reader*, ed. Susan Sellers (Abingdon, 1994 [1982]), 108. In »From the Scene of the Unconscious to the Scene of History« (cited by Sellers in *The Hélène Cixous Reader*, 9f, n. 5), Cixous writes of being enticed and inspired by this phrase: »*Limonade es war alles so grenzenlos* is a sentence of Kafka's. This isn't a sentence from Kafka – the writer. It is a sentence from Franz, the man, no longer writing books, agonizing, writing only rapid and sublime messages of life, life-phrases, flashes of eternity. It is a last sentence. Perhaps the last. Its purity, its symbolic and yet concrete strength, its density, make it one of the most beautiful poems in the world. Yet it was not a poem. Only a sigh. And also the portrait of Regret.«
- 59 Cixous & Calle-Gruber: *Hélène Cixous Rootprints: »Hélène Cixous«*: second para. after »My father in 1939«.
- 60 Hélène Cixous: *Manhattan: Letters from Prehistory*, trans. Beverley Bie Brahic (New York, 2007 [2002]), 74.