Cixous Introduction

Good evening. My name is Mark Poster. On behalf of the Critical Theory Institute, I welcome you to the Wellek Lecture Series for 1989-90.

I introduce our speaker Helene Cixous with special anticipation. In a lecture on our campus two years ago Helene Cixous demonstrated the enormous intellectual vivacity of feminist critical theory. She challenged the traditions of male theory not only in subtle argumentation but in the performative qualities of her talk. In her presentation a feminist position enacts a theoretical strategy that opens new horizons and delineates new perspectives which even the most complex male theory does not approach.

Helene Cixous has written numerous plays, several novels and many works of theory. Available in English are the book, The Newly Born Woman (coauthered with Catharine Clément), and essays such as "Laugh of the Medusa" and "Decapitation or Castration." She directs a doctoral program in gender studies in Paris which, as far as I know, is the only one of its kind in France.

Delivering this introduction annoys me because it delays Helene Cixous' presentation. Let me turn then with particular delight to our speaker and ask you to welcome Helene Cixous.