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Jeffrey N. Peters, *The Written World. Space, Literature, and the Chorological Imagination in Early Modern France*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018. vii + 272 pp. Figures, notes, and index. \$34.95 (pb). ISBN 978-0-8101-3697-7; \$99.95 (cl). ISBN 978-0-8101-3698-4; \$34.95 (Kindle). ISBN 978-0-8101-3699-1.

Author's response by Jeffrey N. Peters, University of Kentucky, Lexington

There is a reason *The Written World* concludes with the story of Orpheus, as told by Maurice Blanchot in *L'espace littéraire* (1955). The space opened up as Eurydice falls away from Orpheus's gaze is for Blanchot a tragic condition of literary art: the mysteries of poetry, together with the desires they provoke in us, are lost when we look back, when we attempt to consider them directly. We are left, like Orpheus, with song, with a work of art founded on a separation. It is an open question, however, as to whether that constitutive Orphic distancing founds a negativity and an emptiness at the heart of poetry or an opportunity for engagement and affirmation; Blanchot himself seems to ponder this very question in his later *Le livre à venir* (1959). [1] The Orphic predicament is also, it seems to me, a feature of the critical enterprise: how and under what conditions does our object of inquiry elude our scholarly gaze? But how, correspondingly, does the distancing conventionally achieved by criticism also open and promote an active, relational field of attachment and engagement? To what degree, as Bruno Latour might put it, is critical agency broadly distributed across a collectivity rather than narrowly concentrated in a single authority? [2]

These are the kinds of questions I find myself asking as I think about the pleasure of collaboration afforded by the H-France forum. How does my own attempt to get at something of the mystery and drama of poetic invention in early modern France, especially in a book precisely *about* the tensions between aesthetic transcendence and human limitation, open up gaps and distances--not to mention the inevitable lacunae and deficiencies--to be pursued, explored, and ultimately enriched by other scholars? What a pleasure indeed--a formidable pleasure, to be sure--to have one's work read with such care and considered with such seriousness of purpose by scholars as accomplished as Elizabeth Hyde, Anna Rosensweig, Volker Schröder, and David Sedley. Each has raised important questions in response to *The Written World*. Each has taken my speculations in new and productive directions. In the spirit of Orpheus endeavoring to understand the nature of his work, I would like to thank my four reviewers, and respond to their thoughtful and generous comments, by looking back at two key moments in *The Written World* which I think constitute the book's central ambition.

The first of these moments, from Chapter Three ("The Invention of Pierre Corneille: Place and the New"), concerns *L'illusion comique* (1635). In his dedication of the play to Mademoiselle M.F.D.R., Corneille writes, "Voici un étrange monstre que je vous dédie." [3] Corneille is referring here to what he calls the peculiarities of the play's composition, or, in the more properly rhetorical terms he uses, its invention. The play is, as Corneille puts it, stitched together ("cousu ensemble") from a motley collection of dramatic genres, including romance, pastoral, picaresque, tragedy, and comedy of manners. An echo certainly of Horace's prohibition on joining metaphorically

dissimilar bodies of speech in the *Epistle to the Pisos*, Corneille's extravagant monster does not, presumably, embody anyone's idea of poetic perfection. It does, however, seem to indicate an acute awareness of the messy and often painful nature of writing and the difficulty of turning mere words into the thing we call poetry. It may be weird, Corneille writes, but at least it's new ("Qu'on en nomme l'invention bizarre et extravagante tant qu'on voudra, elle est nouvelle").

The second key moment I want to emphasize comes from the introduction to *The Written World* ("On Poetic Becoming in the Seventeenth Century") where we find Dominique Bouhours reflecting in the *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671) on the inscrutable mystery of art, which, Bouhours suggests, is of a piece with the secrets of nature itself: "La nature aussi bien que l'art, a soin de cacher la cause des mouvements extraordinaires: on voit la machine et on la voit avec plaisir; mais on ne voit pas le ressort qui la fait jouer." [4] Though it contains its own aesthetic specificity, art shares with nature, and the material world of objects more generally, a power to affect us, a power whose origin and location are unknown: "l'esprit humain . . . ne connaît pas ce qu'il y a de charmant dans un objet sensible qui touche le cœur" (284). The evanescent phenomenality of art does things, it has an effect, and it solicits from us, and opens itself up to, an often affective response--our hearts are touched. It seems, in fact, that art, like nature, breathes with a life force of its own. Drawing repeatedly on a widespread vocabulary of elemental composition, humoral disposition, and climatic and meteorological transformation, Bouhours suggests that art and the natural, and even social, world are animated by a common, circulating vital impulse of unknowable cause.

The mysterious, unlocated breath of what Bouhours calls art may well be what Corneille struggles to bring forth from the stitches and sutures of his dramatic proto-Frankenstein. The dedication to *L'Illusion comique* gives voice to the ways the world resists us and pushes back when we try to locate the source of its animating riddles. In *De anima*, Aristotle defines what it means to be alive, to live, but never does he tell us what life is. Instead, as Giorgio Agamben has pointed out, the concept of life in Aristotle becomes the object of a proliferating series of conceptual oppositions and divisions meant to isolate "life" indirectly by identifying what is alive and what is not. [5] In other words, we attempt to identify the world's mysteries through the contrivances we develop to harness and therefore limit their elusiveness. This is important because in *The Written World* I am centrally concerned with those instances in a literary work when an author reflects explicitly upon the conditions under which the work seems to pulse with a mysterious vitality. How, they seem to ask in those instances, does Corneille's strange monster come alive with Bouhours's extraordinary wonders? How, in other words, and with reference to the problem we observe already in Aristotle, does the recalcitrant messiness of the material world and the resistant thingness of our poetic tools – words, plots, rhythms – allow us to approximate, to approach orthogonally, the mystery of the ineffable? What, I have wanted to ask in *The Written World*, makes poetry poetic?

It is no coincidence that the approach to the concept of life in *De anima* is not unlike the definition of place Aristotle develops in the *Physics*. For place, like life, lacks ontological being and limits our pursuit of its essence to those related, secondary qualities through which we understand them to exist in the first place. There is place, Aristotle tells us, only to the extent that place is inseparable from the thing that is found there. [6] During the scholastic Middle Ages, these were related problems for philosophers and theologians. The distinctions between, on the one hand, the living and a vital life-principle, and between, on their other, place and the thing-in-place lay at the heart

of speculations about the origin, nature, and location of God's power in a cosmos understood to be determined by the finite spheres of Aristotelian physics.

Infinity is the specific focal point of David Sedley's response to *The Written World*, and I am indebted to him for emphasizing how the historical development of a cosmological problem so crucial to our understanding of early modern epistemology is closely bound up with what we would today call disciplinarity. Sedley is absolutely right that to conceive of an alternately literary and a scientific postulation of infinity makes little sense in the early modern world; he is absolutely correct to point out that it is inaccurate to assume, as he puts it, that "cosmology gets to infinity first" and that "literature avails itself of it only after cosmology has made it available." Sedley's comments are intended, however, as a critique of my approach to the emergence of early modern concepts of material space which, he suggests, does in fact assume that cosmology got to infinity first. The point is well taken and the fault clearly lies in the articulation of my textual analyses, for a central premise of *The Written World* is that space is not merely the *object* of literary speculation in the seventeenth century, that space and literature are not metaphors or analogies for each other. I have wanted to suggest instead that the literary and the cosmological become and develop together, that world-making is itself a crucial kind of *poesis*. My thesis concerning the nature of Platonic *chora* is central to this claim and I will return to it shortly.

My agreement with Sedley, in other words, amounts to what I must assume is a shared understanding of poetic art as something other, or indeed far more complex, than a mere reflection of the world. In my reading, which Sedley cites, Jean Racine's desire to bring forth "something from nothing," as Racine puts it in the preface to his tragic poem *Bérénice*, not only echoes several central themes of the play, but also engages in a kind of cosmological understanding, which, far from merely reflecting an ambient natural philosophical interest in the concept of infinity, is *itself* a species of natural philosophical speculation. In this connection, Sedley, I think, overstates what he describes as my reliance on Alexander Koyré's well known *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (1957). I do not quote Koyré in *The Written World*, but refer only to the title of the book as a common way, among historians of science, to summarize the epistemological transformations that occur around and between Galileo's celestial discoveries and Newton's *Principia*. (I would suggest that a more subtle and nuanced discussion of these transformations than Koyré's is a book like Fernand Halryn's *La structure poétique du monde* [1987], on which I do rely in *The Written World*.) For I couldn't agree with Sedley more that the conceptual developments that bring us notions of infinity, scale, and spatial distance are messy and uneven. A fundamental goal of *The Written World* has been to emphasize, through discussions of the fraught tensions in the literary works I discuss, how concepts of location and spatial emplacement are often contradictory, the product of rhetorical gestures and conceptual moves that often give lie to the neatness of our historical reconstructions.

But Sedley's comments helpfully raise a broader problem and require a further refinement concerning the notion of *chora*, which lies at the heart of my discussions in *The Written World*. In his discussion, Sedley conflates *chora* and infinity and assumes that because *chora* is, in Plato's meaning, unavailable both to the senses and to the mind, it is also infinite. Infinity must therefore, and necessarily in Sedley's view, serve as a basic object of analysis in *The Written World*. And indeed I am thoroughly persuaded by Sedley's discussion of how linear perspective, recently invented, engages with the problem of infinity, emphasizing some things and minimizing others.

However, *chora*, though it means many things in Greek, must not be understood as a version of what the early modern world would come to call infinity. It is, as *Timaeus* emphasizes repeatedly throughout the dialogue, a far more mysterious thing, neither physically located nor logically coherent, neither of the world nor of the mind. It locates but does not itself have location. It is a force of becoming--the material world becomes from the divine Idea by way of its mysterious power--but it does not itself become. It is obscure but not infinite in any recognizably modern way. The early modern phenomenon that most closely resembles *chora* is not infinity, but void and the related notion of void space. Infinity is an important *attribute* of space, as Pascal famously notes with alarm, but it is not, itself, the situating force of becoming which, as I speculate throughout *The Written World*, informs the problem of poetic invention in seventeenth-century France. Infinity is precisely *not* the form-giving force of *chora*, but is instead what we might call its by-product. I would suggest in fact that it is not too far-fetched to find in the mathematical concept of infinity another strange monster fashioned to account for the emergent mysteries of the new cosmology.

For *chora* is what Plato offers us in the *Timaeus* to explain the becoming of the material world. I will refrain here from rehearsing the details of *chora*, but I do want to emphasize a crucial aspect of *chora* that bears directly on the issue of poetic creation in the seventeenth century. *Chora* is, in Plato's discussion, the principle through which the divine ideas become physical matter. As a derivative copy of the idea, the world must become in some place, a locating concept (but not a location) Plato calls *chora*. But Plato emphasizes at length the fact that *chora* is nothing in itself. It is form-giving. It has form only to the extent that it takes on the shape of what becomes in and through it. As such--and Plato is very clear about this--its nature can only be described indirectly, through often specious clarifications, through what he calls "a bastard reasoning," a "myth," or a "dream." [7] In essence, what Plato is saying is that we understand the world through the "likely stories" or "probable myths" (*eikos logos*) we create to explain its generation. That the *Timaeus* posits not only a principle of creation, but a principle of poetic speculation to explain the principle of creation is, in my view, the crucial insight of Jacques Derrida's 1993 essay "Khôra." In his painstaking reading of the *Timaeus*, Derrida reveals that what emerges from Plato's primary statement of cosmology is a model for the way we express our statements of cosmology. *Chora* creates the world, but it also creates a way of thinking about the creation of the world, and that way is indirect, contradictory, obscure, oneiric, and often irrational--in other words, poetic.

To be sure, this immediately raises the question of creative agency, as Volker Schröder rightly points out. In his review, Schröder notes, first, that I do not bring Plato's demiurge into the equation of cosmic creation, and, second, that I seem to vacillate between a concept of *poesis* based on human or divine making and one derived from a place-less, autonomous force. Schröder is correct on both accounts. Though the demiurge creates being and the eternal ideas, and brings them forth from an originary chaos, Plato does not turn to him (and the demiurge is unquestionably masculine, a question I will return to) to explain the power of *chora*. Indeed, *chora* does appear to enclose an inexplicably autonomous force of generation distinct from the authority of the demiurge. What is of crucial interest, in my specific view, is not, however, the apparent tension between a life-giving demiurge and a world that becomes a copy of the divine idea, but the tension between the creative mystery of the world's becoming in the place-less place that is *chora* and the likely stories we are led to tell to explain its mysterious power. If La Fontaine's bees in the fable "Les frelons et les mouches à miel," to take an example from *The Written World* discussed by Schröder, turn to a

contest of making and fabrication to determine ownership of the disputed honey (honey is a conventional ancient metaphor for poetry and eloquent speech), it is precisely because they are unable to explain the origin of its value (its beauty, its order, its taste); agency, it turns out, at least in this case, is indeterminate and undetermined. [8]

Alfred North Whitehead, whom Schröder also brings into the discussion, makes a similar distinction in Plato's dialogues between what Whitehead calls immanence and imposition, a distinction that derives, in Whitehead's discussion, from the contact of Western thought with Semitic monotheism: "In the first place, Plato's cosmology includes an ultimate creator, shadowy and undefined, imposing his design upon the Universe. Secondly, the action and reaction of the internal constituents is – for Plato – the self-sufficient explanation of the flux of the world." [9] It would appear that Plato's demiurge gives being to cosmic principles which are, in turn, immanent to themselves. Whitehead specifically, though briefly, traces the impact of *chora* on a wide range of early modern natural philosophers, including the Epicurean atomists such as Gassendi, then Leibniz, and, especially, Newton. He is particularly interested in the ways Platonic *chora* anticipates and ultimately resembles in principle and purpose Lucretian void space, whose paradoxically constitutive negativity would have a crucial impact on Newtonian physics.

But since Whitehead has come up, we can go one step further to recognize that Whitehead's *Process and Reality* in fact posits a cosmology which radically challenges the notion of an agential, creating god. While acknowledging the similarities of his metaphysics to that of Spinoza, Whitehead explicitly distances himself from the Spinozan schema by rejecting the distinction between a monistic substance and its multiple modes on which the entire classical logic of creator and creation, subject and object, subject and attribute, God and nature, is based. Cosmic coherence derives, as Whitehead puts it, not from the relation of each mode to the one substance, but from the immanence of every mode in every other: "the process, or concrescence of any one actual entity involves the other actual entities among its components. In this way the obvious solidarity of the world receives its explanation." [10] For Whitehead, there are only modes. There is no unified, creative substance, or divine creator, that embraces them. In this way, Whitehead's philosophy looks both back to the materialism of Epicurean atomism and ahead to the flat ontology described recently by Manuel Delanda, Graham Harman, and others. [11] As he puts it later, "the ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism. The creatures are atomic... Each atom is a system of all things." [12] If *chora* plays a conceptual role for Whitehead, as it does, briefly, but repeatedly, throughout much of his work, it is as a principle derived by Plato to explore the world's mystery, in Whitehead's words, which anticipates the quantum physics of the early twentieth century: "[t]he space-time of modern mathematical physics, conceived in abstraction from the particular mathematical formulae which applies to the happenings in it, is almost exactly Plato's Receptacle [*chora*]." [13] In other words, as Whitehead puts it, it receives its shape by reason of the instances that are actualized there.

What does any of this have to do with the arguments of *The Written World*? Beyond suggesting a continuity between Platonic cosmology and the origins of modern scientific inquiry from Galileo to Newton in the specific context of divine creation, Whitehead's arguments allow us to reflect upon the problem of critical anachronism, which Volker Schröder also brings up with respect to my use of Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Maurice Blanchot, and others to discuss poetic invention in the seventeenth century. As Isabelle Stengers has written, Whitehead offers us the adventure of

systematic speculation: “[a]s a mathematician-cum-philosopher, Whitehead transferred from mathematics to philosophy not the authority produced by demonstration, but the adventure and commitment to and for a question, ‘bad faith’ with regard to every ‘as is well known,’ all consensual plausibilities.” [14] Whitehead, Stengers writes, is interested in the non-knowing that lies constitutively at the root of all knowledge. Like the worlds he finds in every atom, the collective substance he considers in every Spinozan mode, and the becomings he discovers in every instance of Plato’s *chora*, Whitehead is concerned with the *condition* of inquiry that is immanent to every event of critical speculation. To ask questions about the origin of the mysterious force Dominique Bouhours finds in art, a *process* of speculation (in Whitehead’s sense), which, for Corneille, often begets rough and ill-fitting monsters, is to engage in what we might call an adventure of critical *poesis*. For, on the one hand, the goal of *The Written World* is to ask questions about the mystery of the *poetic*, as distinct from the *poem*. But, on the other, it is to wonder about the critical, even the scholarly, process wherein the seams and sutures of the textual bodies we stitch together to confront our object of study may yield new mysteries, new creative moments of speculative non-knowing. The past, Whitehead writes, is still happening as an event of the present: Cleopatra’s Needle, fashioned around 1450 BCE and moved to London in the 1870s CE, is actively becoming at every moment. Whitehead writes of the monument, “all you mean by stating that [the Needle] is situated on the Charing Cross Embankment is that amid the structure of events you know of a certain continuous limited stream of events, such that any chunk of that stream, during any hour, or any day, or any second, has the character of being the situation of Cleopatra’s Needle.” [15] To ask questions about the early modern world is to ask how, with perhaps creative “anachronism,” we can think with the early modern, to ask what concepts in the present we can devise to think the human predicament in a posthuman world in which philosophers search for increasingly non-anthropomorphic, non-anthropocentric models of critical speculation. [16]

If poetic invention in the seventeenth century discovers its mystery in the multiform instances of a more messy groundedness, I have wanted to suggest as well that the material sutures through which *The Written World* is made, open themselves to new moments of critical inquiry, new events of thinking-with. Anna Rosensweig’s response to *The Written World* is one such moment. As both Rosensweig and Schröder rightly point out, my discussion of what I have called the chorological imagination does not address Plato’s sharply gendered presentation of *chora*. The key passage is found in the *Timaeus*, 50d: “it is proper to liken the Recipient [*chora*] to the Mother, the Source to the Father, and what is engendered between these two to the Offspring; and also to perceive that, if the stamped copy is to assume diverse appearances of all sorts, that substance wherein it is set and stamped could not possibly be suited to its purpose unless it were itself devoid of all those forms which it is about to receive from any quarter.” Shortly after (in 52a), Timaeus calls these three elements by their familiar names: the self-identical form (the father), created by a male demiurge, the world of sensory objects (the offspring), and the receptacle, or, as it is often translated, place (the mother; *chora*), and, at other moments, Plato calls *chora* a womb and a nurse. In her discussion, Rosensweig notes that “[i]f *chora* is no place, has no place, and cannot be expressed, then the feminine also exists as a set of negations. Irigaray and Kristeva demonstrate how Plato situates feminine *chora* as that which is necessary for but necessarily excluded from patrilineal modes of generation, succession, and transmission.” This is an absolutely accurate statement of the problem, and it has the added benefit of identifying one reason that Whitehead was to compare Platonic *chora* to Epicurean void: it is, startlingly, nothing.

I am indebted to Rosensweig for opening up a line of inquiry that demands far more work, particularly with respect to specifically early modern epistemologies. The path has been laid by Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Elizabeth Grosz, scholars whose work I cite in *The Written World* but do not discuss in detail. [17] My reason for not doing so, I'm afraid, is an unsatisfying one. Though it stands strongly out in the *Timaeus* as a problem in need of systematic scrutiny, my focus on the relation of *chora* to poetry in the seventeenth century dictated certain, probably arbitrary, methodological constraints. I would add to Rosensweig's query that further discussion of *chora* in seventeenth-century France would no doubt lead to crucial insights around gender (and other forms of difference, as Rosensweig also notes, such as sexuality and race) in the period. For example, it comes immediately to mind that a "chorological" line of thought would have important things to say about the gendered politics of the salons. If Dominique Bouhours could describe the ineffable mystery of the *je ne sais quoi* in terms of natural phenomena, there is every reason to believe that consideration of the related concepts of *le bel air*, *le bon air*, *l'air aisé* as they were discussed in the salons (see, for example, Madeleine de Scudéry's conversation, "De l'air galant") as a form of both contested social negotiation and humoral circulation (air, breath, *spiritus*) could be informed by the material and gender implications of *chora*. How might the social and aesthetic criterion of *mediocritas* as a form of elegant (and masculinist) middleness – as form of *air galant* – benefit from an investigation of the ostensible, though problematic (see *The Written World*, pp. 145-47), betweenness, and apparent evanescence, of maternal *chora*?

Elizabeth Hyde opens up a different and compelling line of investigation. In her review, Hyde suggests that if a chorological imagination might inform our understanding of what we today call the classical, it would be useful to consider aesthetic principles that are neither absolutely abstract nor entirely material. In Hyde's example, this means becoming attentive to the processes of generation at work in the techniques of early modern horticulture, especially the cultivation of flowers and decorative plants. Flowers do not rely on words to tell their stories the way poems and novels do of course, but they nevertheless embody the becoming of a political idea. Moreover, the Versailles parterres, for example, were not intended to enact that becoming visually. Instead, as Hyde shows, the classical garden was designed to be observed in a "perpetual springtime," the culminating state and statement of the king's authority over nature and the nation.

A final thought: Hyde accurately encloses the word classical in quotation marks. The care she takes in this regard draws out the implications of an art form – horticulture – whose visual and rhetorical force emerges from the ways it occupies a place between the ineffable and the substantial. Hyde's circumspection reminds us that seventeenth-century France has all too often been the object of a host of historical and critical clichés, which Schröder suggests I occasionally repeat. My concern, however, has been with the specifically *receptive* quality of a period in French history that lies uniquely between the towering monuments of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The "siècle de Louis XIV," as Stéphane Zékian has recently written in a thorough history, has always been simultaneously, and therefore fascinatingly, "omniprésent et insituable": everywhere and nowhere. [18] As such, and as several generations of scholars have demonstrated, it is open to a dizzying array of political and ideological deployments and retellings. In *The Written World* I have wondered whether the labels so often attached to the seventeenth century might arise from the curiously widespread preoccupation in the period with, precisely, the unlocated and the unlocateable, with, precisely, a mysterious force of becoming—a perhaps chorological one—at once everywhere and nowhere.

## NOTES

[1] For an invaluable consideration of how Blanchot's concept *le blanc* as a poetics of radical negation becomes an invitation to affective attachment during the 1950s, see Claire Chi-Ah Lyu, "Blank Space and Affect: Reading Mallarmé through Balzac and Blanchot," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 47, 1-2 (Fall-Winter 2018-2019): 132-49.

[2] Rita Felski asks related questions in "Latour and Literary Studies," *PMLA* 130, 3 (2015): 737-42.

[3] Pierre Corneille, *Œuvres complètes*. 3 vols. Georges Couton, ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1980). 1: 613.

[4] Dominique Bouhours, *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*. Bernard Beugnot et Gilles Declercq, eds., (Paris: Champion, 203), 285.

[5] Giorgia Agamben, *The Open*. Kevin Attell, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 13-15.

[6] Aristotle, *The Physics*, 212a1. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. 2 vols. Jonathan Barnes, ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[7] 51e-52b. Plato, *Timaeus*. W.R.M. Lamb, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1925).

[8] For crucial statements on the problem of creative agency in the seventeenth century, see Ellen McClure, *Sunspots and the Sun King: Sovereignty and Mediation in Seventeenth-Century France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006) and Hall Bjørnstad, *Créature sans créateur: pour une anthropologie baroque dans les Pensées de Pascal* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010).

[9] Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1933), 121. See also 167-68.

[10] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 7.

[11] Manuel Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (New York: Continuum, 2006). Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures* (Ropley: Zero Books, 2010). Steven Shaviro, *The Universe of Things. On Speculative Realism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[12] *Process and Reality*, 36.

[13] *Ibid.*, 150.

[14] Isabelle Stengers, *Thinking With Whitehead. A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts* Michael Chase, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 6. I have slightly modified Chase's translation.

[15] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 167.

[16] See, for example, Joseph Campana and Scott Maisano, eds., *Renaissance Posthumanism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

[17] Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique: L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle; Lautréamont et Mallarmé* (Paris: Seuil, 1974) and *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985). Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill, trans. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993. ) Elizabeth Grosz, "Women, Chora, Dwelling." In *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), and the more recent *Incorporeal. Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017). Emanuel's Bianchi, "Receptacle/Chōra: Figuring the Errant Feminine in Plato's *Timaeus*," *Hypatia* 21, 4 (2006): 124-46.

[18] Stéphane Zékian, *L'invention des classiques* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2012), 15.

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