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Luce Irigaray, contemporary women's cinema and practice-as-research
a caressing dialogical encounter

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Luce Irigaray, Contemporary Women's Cinema and Practice-as-Research:

A caressing dialogical encounter

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

PhD

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Abstract

This thesis formulates an original contribution to scholarship by exploring Luce Irigaray's philosophy of the caress with and through contemporary global women's filmmaking in dialogue with audio-visual Practice-as-Research. Irigaray's quest for a feminine subjectivity has received ample attention within studies of philosophy, psychoanalysis, feminist film and phenomenology. The application of the Irigarayan caress to embodied audio-visual praxis remains to date an uncharted field. This research project functions as a dialogical encounter between a written thesis (70%) and a body of innovative audio-visual practice pieces (30%) through "pensive-creative praxis". The thesis focuses on Irigaray's philosophy of the caress in relation to oneself, and the other, aiming to deepen an understanding of the concept by addressing themes of violence, voice(s) and silence(s) – omitted in Irigaray's own account of the caress that ultimately, however, speak to and support her broader project of establishing a feminine enunciation.

The thesis begins with a detailed exposition of Irigaray's theory of the caress, investigating its potential as a novel philosophical and methodological tool for Practice-as-Research. Close textual analysis of Claudia Llosa's (2009) *The Milk of Sorrow* and Shirin Neshat's (2009) *Women Without Men* underpins the written part, whilst a wider corpus of films informs the practice component. My project feeds into the current interest in and validation of the audio-visual essay format as a form of academic practice, providing a novel reading of the audio-visual essay format in parallel with the Irigarayan caress and arguing for its potential for feminist, intersectional scholarship. My audio-visual practice unveiled several contradictions and complexities implicit in the Irigarayan caress, allowing me to exemplify how Practice-as-Research deepens philosophical enquiry. My thesis expands and refines the work to-date on Irigaray's conceptualisation of the caress, emphasising the potential of a dialogical encounter between theory and practice for feminist film-philosophical research.

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Publications

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Single-authored publications:

Rifesser, J. (Forthcoming 2022). The collector/sampler/ editor: A feminist perspective on the screen- writing process. In: K. Yu & R. Turina (eds.) *Essay Film and Narrative Techniques: Global Perspectives on Screen-Writing Non-Fiction*. London: Intellect.

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Filmography

A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night (2014) Directed by Lily Amirpour. USA.

American Honey (2016) Directed by Andrea Arnold. UK & USA.

Berlin Remake (2005) Directed by Amie Siegel. Germany.

Circumstance [Šar'ayet] (2011) Directed by Maryam Keshavarz. France, Iran & USA.

Close-Up [Nema-ye Nazdik] (1990) Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. Iran.

Corps Étranger (1994) Directed by Mona Hatoum. France.

Everyone Else [Alle Anderen] (2009) Directed by Maren Ade. Germany.

Fat Girl [A ma sœur] (2001) Directed by Catherine Breillat. France.

From the Pole to the Equator (1986) Directed by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci-Lucchi.

Italy.

Fuses (1967) Directed by Carolee Schneemann. USA.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) Directed by Howard Hawks. USA.

Ginger and Rosa (2012) Directed by Sally Potter. UK.

Girlhood [Bande de filles] (2014) Directed by Céline Sciamma. France.

Histoire(s) du Cinéma (1988-98) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. France.

I You He She [Je Tu Il Elle] (1974) Directed by Chantal Akerman. Belgium.

Images of the World and the Inscription of War (1988) Directed by Harun Farocki. Germany.

Imitation of Life (1959) Directed by Douglas Sirk. USA.

In the Cut (2003) Directed by Jane Campion. Australia & USA.

In-Between [Bar Bahar] (2016) Directed by Maysaloun Hamoud. Israel & France.

Innocence (2004) Directed by Lucille Hadžihalilović. France.

Jacquot de Nantes (2001) Directed by Agnès Varda. France.

Jeune Femme (2017) Directed by Léonor Serraille. France.

Lady Bird (2017) Directed by Greta Gerwig. USA.

Letters from Siberia [Lettre de Sibérie] (1958) Directed by Chris Marker. France.

Light Reading (1978) Directed by Lis Rhodes. UK.

Madeinusa (2005) Directed by Claudia Llosa. Peru & Spain.

Magic Mirror (2013) Directed by Sarah Pucill. UK.

Man with a Movie Camera [Человек с киноаппаратом] (1929) Directed by Dziga Vertov.
Russia.

Measures of Distance (1988) Directed by Mona Hatoum. UK.

Meshes of the Afternoon (1943) Directed by Maya Deren. USA

Mustang (2015) Directed by Denis Gamze Ergüven. Turkey, France & Germany.

News from Home (1977) Directed by Chantal Akerman. Belgium, France & Germany.

Night Passages (2004) Directed by Trinh T. Min-ha and Jean-Paul Bourdier. USA & Japan.

Now I am yours (1992) Directed by Nina Danino. UK.

One Sings, the Other Doesn't [L'une chante, l'autre pas] (1976) Directed by Agnès Varda.
France.

Orlando (1992) Directed by Sally Potter. UK.

Rachida (2002) Directed by Yamina Bachir-Chouikh. Algeria.

Rapture (1999) Directed by Shirin Neshat. Iran & USA.

Riddles of the Sphinx (1977) Directed by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen. UK.

Ritual in Transfigured Time (1946) Directed by Maya Deren. USA.

Rose Hobart (1936) Directed by Joseph Cornell. USA.

She Monkeys [Apflickorna] (2012) Directed by Lisa Ashan. Sweden.

Still the Water [Futatsume no Mado] (2014) Directed by Naomi Kawase. Japan.

Summertime [La belle saison] (2015) Directed by Catherine Corsini. France.

The Fourth Dimension (2001) Directed by Trinh T. Min-ha and Jean-Paul Bourdier. USA &
Japan.

The Milk of Sorrow [La teta asustada] (2009) Directed by Claudia Llosa. Peru & Spain.

The Milky Way [La Voie lactée] (1969) Directed by Luis Buñuel. France & Italy.

The Piano (1993) Directed by Jane Campion. New Zealand, Australia & France.

There is a Myth (1984) Directed by Catherine Elwes. UK.

The Tango Lesson (1997) Directed by Sally Potter. UK.

Thriller (1980) Directed by Sally Potter. UK.

Tom Tom the Piper's Son (1969-71) Directed by Ken Jacobs. USA.

Turbulent (1998) Directed by Shirin Neshat. Iran & USA.

Van Gogh (1948) Directed by Alain Resnais. France.

Vital Statistics of the Average Citizen Simply Obtained (1977) Directed by Martha Rosler. USA.

Water Lilies [Naissance des pieuvres] (2007) Directed by Céline Sciamma. France.

Where Do We Go Now? [w halla' la wayn/ Et maintenant, on va où] (2011) Directed by
Nadine Labaki. Lebanon, France, Egypt & Italy.

Women Without Men [Zanan-e Bedun-e Mardan] (2009) Directed by Shirin Neshat. Germany,
Austria & France.