

# Irigaray an essentialist or not

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Is Luce Irigaray an Essentialist? The question as to whether Luce Irigaray is an Essentialist has been debated for long. While it is observed that she is not an essentialist on one hand, there are strong reasons to make one believe that indeed Luce Irigaray is an Essentialist. Therefore, this discussion seeks to argue that Luce Irigaray is an Essentialist, based on her advocacy for various essentialists' strategies, especially the Strategic essentialism and the concept of mimesis (Fuss, 57).

Luce Irigaray has been widely involved in the advocacy for the application of the Strategic essentialism, especially by the female gender. She observes that women have been traditionally excluded from history of philosophy and psychoanalytic theories, only being related to other categories of the nature and matter instead. This denies women an opportunity to gain their own female subject position, which is distinguishable from the aspects of nature and matter (Fuss, 63). According to her, in the concept of philosophy, psychoanalytic theory and linguistic structure, a separate female position and identity does not exist, and thus women only gain subjectivity, when being associated with men. It is on the basis of this fact that she advocates for the concept of mimesis, which allows the members of a social group to come together, despite their differences, to take the advantage of the similarity that they exude, and forge a common identity, which would allow them to achieve certain goals (Fuss, 58). This advocacy requires women to take the advantage of the femininity, and forge an identity that they apply to push for recognition and advocate for their rights, whenever they feel that such rights are not easily granted.

Through the observation that women has no distinct subject position from that of nature and matter, Irigaray goes further to subject the stereotypes

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that are often given about women to scrutiny, to analyze such subjective views and put them into perspective (Fuss, 64). This is perceived through the lens of philosophy history and language. She upholds that women are not subjected to real views of themselves, and thus they should apply the views they are subjected to, to deny the stereotypes and show their true position. Therefore, if women are stereotyped to be illogical, then they should speak and act logically, so that they can disapprove that notion (Fuss, 71). She holds the view that negative prejudices and views against women cannot be overcome by merely ignoring the views, rather through confronting and demystifying the views in a more positive note, which allows for a favorable understanding of women.

The fundamental opinion that Irigaray holds is that; women has been subjected to unfair consideration through negative stereotype, or through having their bodies being undermined as lacking in some aspects. This has given their male counterparts an unfair advantage, contributing to higher undermining of women (Fuss, 65). To address this, women should not shy away from making attempts that will shed more lights into their abilities and the appropriateness of their bodies, thus shift the concept of female subjectivity and their body into a more positive consideration, regarding language use and philosophy (Fuss, 70). It is this extreme focus on women as a social group under prejudice and inconsideration that portrays Luce Irigaray an essentialist.

#### Works Cited

Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989. 55-72. Print.