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WONDER BETWEEN TWO: AN IRIGARAYAN READING OF GENESIS 2:23[1]

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In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray argues that the possibility of an ethical intersubjectivity between woman and man requires that we return wonder to its first locus, that of sexual difference. For Irigaray, wonder represents the possibility of an ethical mediation of the interval of sexual difference inasmuch as wonder is an acknowledgement that the one who differs from me sexually is essentially a mystery to me; she escapes my every attempt to name, circumscribe, or appropriate her.[2] This account of wonder, and this vision of the relationship between woman and man, provides fertile ground for a theological reconsideration of the question of sexual difference and of intersubjectivity between woman and man, a reconsideration I propose to undertake here. I will argue that Irigaray's description of wonder can be mapped onto the creation narratives of Genesis and, more specifically, that the cry of the first man, when he is brought face to face with the first woman, may be interpreted as an instance of wonder. This is to say that wonder can be incorporated within a theologically determined account of intersubjectivity between woman and man. The article will unfold in four movements. In the first I offer a sketch of Irigaray's notion of wonder as it is developed by way of engagement with René Descartes, paying particular attention to Irigaray's later theory of sexual difference. In the second I turn to consider the cry of the first man in Genesis 2:23 in order to demonstrate that it is an expression of wonder interpreted along Irigarayan lines. In the third movement of the paper I consider the patterns of communication that must prevail between woman and man if wonder is to be successfully relocated

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between them. In conclusion it will be helpful to attend to two theological questions which arise in view of this theocentric account of wonder between two.

1. Recovering Wonder: Irigaray and Descartes

In his *The Passions of the Soul*, René Descartes argues that wonder is the first of the passions:

> When the first encounter with some object surprises us, and we judge it to be new, or very different from what we knew in the past or what we supposed it was going to be, this makes us wonder and be astonished at it. And since this can happen before we know in the least whether this object is suitable to us or not, it seems to be that Wonder is the first of all the passions.[3]

The subject's first encounter with something new or different gives rise to wonder, a passion that expresses a person's surprise at that which is novel to her. Descartes argues that wonder is the first of the passions, or the primitive passion, because it is prior to any judgment whether the novel object is good or bad—prior to any judgment about whether the object is 'suitable' to the subject. As Geneviève Rodis-Lewis argues, wonder is a moment in which we are put on alert with respect to an object we have never previously encountered, an object that we cannot immediately situate within our categories of understanding—in this sense, the object surprises us.[4] Additionally, unlike the other passions, which can be defined in terms of their opposition to another passion (love vs. hate, esteem vs. scorn, etc . . .), wonder "has no opposite, because if the object has nothing in it that surprises us, we are not in the least moved by it and regard it without passion."[5] Marguerite La Caze describes the functioning of wonder as follows: "objects of wonder stand out against the undifferentiated background of those everyday and familiar things that we can easily categorize. We can perceive that something is different or unfamiliar without making a judgment or assenting to anything particular about it."[6] At the same time, however, it is important to note Voss's contention that wonder "is normally aroused by *a judgment about a thing's relationship to us*," by which he means to say that while wonder does not coincide with the categorization or quantification of an object, wonder nevertheless cannot be experienced with respect to that which is utterly foreign to us.[7]

For Descartes, wonder is an intellectual passion, which is to say that this passion is determined by the functioning of the intellect alone.[8] He writes: "Wonder is a sudden surprise of the soul which makes it tend to consider attentively those objects which seem to it rare and extraordinary. So [wonder] is caused first by the impression in one's brain that represents the object as rare and consequently worthy of being accorded great consideration . . ."[9]

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When a person encounters an unfamiliar object, it is the intellect, and not the bodily senses, that are implicated in the forming of an impression regarding the object. An important aspect of our experience of wonder, for Descartes, is the support this passion provides to the human subject in terms of *memory*. As Descartes expresses it, the impression made upon the brain by wonder sets in motion spirits which "advance with great force upon the place in the brain where [the impression] is, to strengthen and preserve it there . . ."[10] Here it should be noted that our everyday experience of wonder correlates with Descartes' assertion concerning the mutual implication of wonder and memory, since those things that are novel to us are more easily remembered.

Those who are familiar with Irigaray's work may be surprised to find her engaged in a positive way with the thought of René Descartes, father of the *cogito*, of the solipsistic knowing subject of western philosophy.[11] Notwithstanding her objection to important aspects of his philosophy, however, Irigaray engages positively with Descartes on the question of wonder. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* Irigaray writes:

> To arrive at the constitution of an ethics of sexual difference, we must at least return to what is for Descartes the first passion: *wonder*. This passion has no opposite or contradiction and exists always as though for the first time. Thus man and woman, woman and man are always meeting as though for the first time because they cannot be substituted one for the other. I will never be in man's place, never will a man be in mine. Whatever identifications are possible, one will never exactly occupy the place of the other—they are irreducible one to the other.[12]

Irigaray's exploration of wonder, here, is tied closely to her new elaboration of the Hegelian negative.[13] According to Irigaray's account of the negative, the human must be understood as irreducibly two—the two terms of the dialectic are not superseded in favour of the *one*. This is to say that neither woman nor man can be construed as the whole and also that 'the human' cannot be reduced to an abstract identity constructed on the basis of characteristics common to woman and man. To acknowledge the negative, which lies at the heart of human subjectivity, is to acknowledge: "I neither am nor represent the whole. I am only half of the human." To encounter a woman is therefore to encounter someone who is other than me and who resists every attempt at definition in terms of my own identity. Thus, in every encounter between a woman and a man, according to Irigaray, the appropriate response is wonder, the first of the passions. To wonder at the other is to recognize that she is not reducible to me: "This other, male or female, should *surprise* us again and again, appear to us as *new*, *very different* from what we knew or what we thought he or she should be."[14] Although Descartes does not think of wonder in terms of sexual difference, Irigaray argues that "this feeling of surprise, astonishment, and wonder in the face of the unknowable ought to be returned to its locus: that of sexual difference."[15] Wonder, then, entails

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recognition of the difference between woman and man and requires cultivation of the interval that persists between their respective lives and worlds, so that this interval might also become a threshold of encounter.[16]

Wonder, it should be added, is closely related to the idea of the other as an enigma or mystery. In *Democracy Begins Between Two*, Irigaray contrasts our capacity for knowledge of another culture with our capacity for knowledge of one who is sexually different from us. She suggests that, while we might be able to understand another culture in terms of its diachronic development, "the other, if s/he is still alive, remains incomprehensible to us since, with every moment, s/he is the source of new gestures whose origin remains a mystery to us. The other is moving within a horizon, and constructing a world, that lie beyond us."[17] This sense of the other as a mystery or enigma is similarly expressed in *The Way of Love*: "The other is the one toward whom we advance in darkness, the disclosure of their coming never being revealed in the light of day."[18] This is to say that sexual difference, conceptualized on the basis of the negative, implies awareness that the other is forever a mystery to me and is, thereby, beyond my capacity for explanation, for evaluation, and for naming. According to Irigaray, since the other must remain a mystery to me, the appropriate response to this other is wonder, a passion that precedes any act of evaluation, judgment, or comparison. The question is: How could one stand in judgment of that which is a mystery? That which is a mystery to me cannot simply be accommodated to my standards and categories but resists such categorization. Embracing Descartes' language, Irigaray explores this resistance in terms of that which is 'suitable' to me, or not:

> Wonder goes beyond that which is or is not suitable for us. The other never suits us simply. We would in some way have reduced the other to ourselves if he or she suited us completely. An *excess* resists: the other's existence and becoming as a place that permits union and/through resistance to assimilation or reduction to sameness.[19]

To reduce the other to a known quantity, to that which is suitable to me (or not), is to refuse the mystery of the other and is to refuse the first passion, a passion that would make possible a cultivation of the interval of difference.

The experience of wonder, tied as it is to Irigaray's account of sexual difference, and to her new elaboration of the negative, also has implications for one's understanding of human subjectivity. As noted, Irigaray's account of the negative requires recognition that I will never be or understand or accomplish the whole and requires, therefore, that we abandon the dominant western account of subjectivity. According to Irigaray, the (male) subject of western culture is one who assimilates the other to himself, who defines the other in terms of himself, and who appears as master of nature and culture. However, this form of subjectivity becomes impossible when a woman or man speaks the phrase: "I am not the whole" or "I am only half of humanity," and Irigaray makes an intriguing suggestion when she asserts that "wonder

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is a mourning for the self as an autarchic entity . . ."[20] This is to say that a genuine encounter with the other (an event that has not yet happened in western culture, according to Irigaray) corresponds to the death of the subject as it has been. For those who conceive of the self as autonomous and self-certain, an encounter with the other as enigma and mystery means the end of this self—indeed, the sense of security that this notion of subjectivity had provided is understood as the illusion it always was.[21] Therefore, to wonder before the face of the other is to acknowledge that the autarchic self, the subject of western philosophy and culture is dead, and is to realize that there is no going back. It is for this reason that wonder can be understood both as "the advent or the event of the other," and as "the beginning of a new story."[22] Irigaray's point, then, is not that subjectivity is finally elusive, or that the self must finally dissolve into nothing. Rather, she is arguing that a new understanding of subjectivity must be formulated and that a new way of telling the story of human identity must be discovered. In this new narrative of human identity, the appearance of the other is in some sense constitutive of my identity since we together constitute the human—we together build the future.

In anticipating whether and how Irigaray's account of wonder might be mapped onto the creation narratives of Genesis, it is important to note Irigaray's contention that "the passions have either been repressed, stifled, or reduced, or reserved for God."[23] Whereas the first locus of wonder is between the sexes, according to Irigaray, she argues that wonder has been appropriated by man in relation to his God. This contention closely mirrors Irigaray's argument that the mutual transcendence proper to woman and man has also been projected onto God, by man. Irigaray suggests that man's projection of transcendence and wonder onto God reflects the difficulty of the boy in coming to grips with the originary transcendence of the maternal You.

> The transcendence of this *you* evades any possible knowledge on his part: he cannot make himself the arbiter of her truth. If and when he attempts to do so, she escapes from all of his logical judgments founded upon non-contradiction. She sends the pendulum swinging indefinitely from one pole to the other with no possibility of it stopping on one univocal truth. And he will not be able to decide once and for all if she is this or that. She escapes the mastery of his judgments.[24]

The boy, since he comes from one who is different from him, and since he will never be like her, is in a space of mystery and has to devise a strategy to keep himself from been engulfed by this mysterious origin. Thus, the boy/man invents objects for himself (even transcendental ones—God, Truth), objects that he can control, in order to resolve the difficulty of the relationship between himself and the one who carried and birthed him.[25] Furthermore, in view of the boy's difference in relation to the mother, and in view of his difficulty in relating to this one who is different from him,

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the mother becomes "fused with an undifferentiated nature from which he must emerge and distinguish himself, and that he must deny as a possible partner in any communicative exchange."[26] This produces a solipsistic and autological subject, according to Irigaray, a subject who may finally project transcendence onto God, but does so precisely in order to establish a solid foundation (certainty, truth) for his own subjectivity—a subjectivity built, that is, on the forgetting of the mother.[27] While Irigaray seems to acknowledge that the becoming of the man required that he hypostasize the original difference and transcendence onto God (his difference from his mother in some sense required it), she argues that "this Absolute of justice and goodness prevents him from considering the alterity of the other in its reality . . ."[28] Where the difference of the mother remains unaccounted for, and where man remains incapable of acknowledging her transcendence to him, there is a concomitant denial of an ethical intersubjectivity between the sexes. Woman's subjectivity is elided and woman is reduced to a state of natural immediacy while he takes his place within a hom(m)osexual culture and thereby progresses toward transcendence.[29] Here, as should be apparent, wonder between woman and man has become impossible.

Before turning to consider Genesis 2:23 as an expression of wonder, it is important to acknowledge that Irigaray's account of sexual difference often elicits discomfort in those most familiar with feminist thought in the Anglo-American context. In that context, emphasis has generally been placed on the achievement of equality between women and men, so that one of the sexes (man) is not elevated at the expense of the other (woman). Within this framework, any insistence on difference between the sexes is generally looked at askance, since the oppression and marginalization of woman has all-too-frequently been perpetuated precisely in the name of her difference. As should already be apparent, however, Irigaray's insistence on difference does not imply an identification of woman according to the logic of difference that has prevailed in western culture, according to which woman has been defined precisely in terms of man (as lack, complement, etc . . .). Furthermore, it should be noted that Irigaray's insistence on the transparency of sexual difference does not imply that she is an essentialist (as is frequently charged), since her theory of sexual difference advances an account of woman and man in which each is perpetually in a process of becoming.[30] That is, neither woman nor man has a fixed 'essence'. Over-against those who have argued that equality between women and men must be the primary goal of feminism, then, Irigaray believes that achieving equality between women and men is a secondary concern that can be addressed only when sexual difference has been brought to light and acknowledged. In achieving equality, Irigaray suggests, women merely exchange their role as not-men (which is how they have historically been defined) for that of like-men.[31] As she has rather famously put it: "To demand equality as women is, it seems to me, a

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mistaken expression of a real objective. The demand to be equal presupposes a point of comparison. To whom or to what do women want to be equalized? To men? To a salary? To a public office? To what standard? Why not to themselves?"[32] Rather than accepting the limited goal of equality, Irigaray argues for the necessity of establishing a culture of difference in which women achieve subjectivity and in which they are no longer merely the space, container, background, or screen against which man distinguishes himself and establishes his own identity. Indeed, Irigaray's account of wonder, as it has been outlined, confirms this view that woman and man must each be defined in terms of their respective becoming—and each must be free to become.

2. *Wonder Between Two: A Reading of Genesis 2:23*

To shift gears now, I would like to suggest that Irigaray's account of wonder finds important resonances in the second creation account of Genesis. More specifically, I will argue that her description of wonder can be mapped onto the narrative's account of the first meeting of woman and man. I begin with a brief rehearsal of the second creation account, in which the Creator forms an earth creature from the dust of the ground and plants a garden within which this being might dwell. Having described the creation of the first human and of the garden, the narrative proceeds to acknowledge God's creation of plants and trees and his subsequent creation of other living creatures. Here it is important to note that the second creation account suggests that God creates the birds and animals, at least in part, for the purpose of finding a partner suitable for the earth creature. That the earth creature is incomplete without one appropriate to it (*k*^{e}*negdō*) is indicated by God's significant declaration that it is 'not good' for the creature to be alone, a declaration that is significant in view of the repetition of the phrase "And it was good" in the first creation account.[33] That is, through God's declaration that it is 'not good' for the earth creature to be alone, the narrative insists that humanity, as this one alone in the garden, is incomplete. Accordingly, there is a lack that must be remedied and evidently was not remedied through the presence of the animals in the garden—indeed, from the perspective of the earth creature's isolation, "the animals disappoint rather than delight."[34] In view of this continuing lack, God causes the first human to fall asleep, takes a rib from this being, and forms the rib into a woman. This creative moment is the inauguration of sexual difference and, as Trible points out, it is only at this point that we can begin to speak of 'man' since prior to sexual differentiation the earth creature is simply that, an earth creature.[35] Having inaugurated sexual difference, however, God brings the woman before the man, who responds with what are the first recorded words of a human person in the Hebrew Bible (and the only words spoken by man prior to the fall[36]), which also happen to be Hebrew poetry:

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> This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
> this one shall be called woman (*ʾiššâ*),
> for out of man (*ʾîš*) this one was taken.

I will argue that this initial response of the man to the presence of the woman can be characterized as a response of wonder, along Irigarayan lines. But, of course, an argument must be made, for there are certainly other ways of construing this passage.

It has often been noted that the poetic words of Genesis 2:23 follow a rhythmic pattern frequently present at the climax-point of narratives in the Hebrew Bible.[37] In view of this, it is possible to conclude that the second creation account is brought to completion in the poetic declaration of the first man and that the celebratory declaration of the first man ("This at last . . .") represents the completion of God's creative work and points to the fullness of the human. Beyond this, it is also significant that the words of the first man in Genesis 2:23 are further distinguished from everyday speech in virtue of the fact that they are a shout or cry.[38] Through this shout or cry, the first man announces his astonished recognition of woman as one who is a human being like him. His words could be paraphrased as follows: "At last! One who is like me." As Westermann argues, the first line has an almost explosive meter that expresses joyful surprise ("This at last . . ."), while the second line ("this one shall be called . . .") broadens the rhythm and gives a sense of solemnity and harmony to the man's declaration.[39] This joyful cry or surprised declaration is, in the first instance, an expression of amazement that God has provided one who is sufficiently like the man that she can be in relationship with him—she is one who might become a companion with him. As this joyful surprise is broadened out into a more solemn declaration, however, the question of difference also arises, for the one whom he recognizes as *like* him is one who is also *different from* him. In what follows, then, I will consider the questions of similarity and difference as they arise in relation to the poetic declaration of Genesis 2:23. Having done so, I will proceed to consider a number of other issues that must be addressed if the man's celebratory declaration is to be counted as an expression of wonder. I begin with the question of similarity.

In the second creation account, God evaluates the circumstances of the earth creature and finds them wanting by virtue of the fact that the earth creature does not have a partner appropriate to it. It is a divine evaluation, as Trible puts it, that "contrasts wholeness with isolation."[40] Furthermore, it is precisely in response to this divine evaluation that God acts to radically change "the nature of *hā-ʾādām* and [to] bring about new creatures so that female and male together become the one flesh that is wholeness rather than isolation."[41] Thus, the isolation and lack that mark the earth creature alone in the garden are remedied precisely by way of the inauguration of sexual difference and are remedied by virtue of a fundamental *similarity* between

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woman and man. Indeed, it is in view of this similarity that the man joyfully declares, before woman: "This one is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." With these words he declares that, although the woman is different from him, she is human as he is human; the two are sufficiently alike that they can relate to each other. Here isolation is overcome. As Westermann rightly points out, in highlighting the similarity between woman and man the narrative points to the possibility of "personal community between man and woman in the broadest sense—bodily and spiritual community, mutual help and understanding, joy and contentment in each other."[42] Brueggemann concurs with this when he insists that the phrase 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' is in fact a formula of "constancy, of abiding loyalty," a formula of "solidarity in weakness and strength," and not merely a statement of biological relation between woman and man, as has sometimes been argued.[43] Without some degree of similarity between woman and man a genuine relationship would be impossible—thus, sexual difference as portrayed in Genesis 2:23 is not so radical that communion between two is impossible. Rather, sexual difference is itself communion, and an answer to isolation.

To speak of a basic similarity between woman and man, however, raises the question whether I am already profoundly at odds with Irigaray's whole project, since her emphasis is placed squarely on difference. The question is: If Genesis 2:23 insists on a basic similarity between woman and man, does wonder not become impossible here? This conclusion, however, does not necessarily follow. Although Irigaray has criticized western culture's definition of woman in terms of man, and although she insists on the irreducibility of woman and man to each other, her thought does not require a thoroughgoing refusal of the generic category "the human." If her thought did require such a refusal, it would not be clear why woman and man should be at all concerned with one another. Irigaray's wider project, importantly, is concerned not only with the becoming of woman but also with *human* becoming as it is accomplished through the encounter of woman and man. The generic category of "the human", then, has at least some force in Irigaray's thought, even if she does not think it in the way that it has traditionally been thought. Even to describe the human as two, as Irigaray does, is to employ the concept "human", which suggests that there is a likeness between woman and man that allows each to be designated under this concept. Within Irigaray's thought there is indeed a likeness (a possibility for intersubjectivity) between woman and man that does not exist between woman, for example, and the bacteria that inhabit her digestive tract (otherwise why not speak of her becoming primarily in relation to one of these bacteria?). In terms of the second creation account of Genesis, then, the first man's declaration that woman is "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" is nothing more than an assertion that woman is sufficiently like him to enter into a relationship with him. This means that his declaration should not be read as affirming the

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tradition by which woman is defined specularly, in terms of the identity of man. Rather, the first man's poetic declaration is an assertion that the woman, together with the man, fulfills the human. Without woman, the human is incomplete. Without man, also, the human is incomplete. Without both woman and man, who are irreducibly different, the category of "the human" cannot be thought. As a result, the lack that characterized the earth creature alone in the garden is best described as *a lack in the human*, and is remedied by way of the inauguration of sexual difference.[44]

Moving beyond similarity, I would suggest that the poetic declaration of the first man entails an affirmation that there is an irreducible *difference* between woman and man. While the lack that characterized the earth creature was not remedied by the creation of the various animals, it is also apparent that God did not remedy the lack that characterized the earth creature by establishing a second earth creature to dwell alongside the first. God did not remedy the lack that characterized the earth creature by establishing what Irigaray has described as a "hom(m)osexual economy"—a culture of men amongst themselves.[45] Rather, the lack that characterized the earth creature was remedied through the creation of sexual difference (of *'îš* and *'iššâ*), the creation of two who were sufficiently alike that they could relate to one another yet who are evidently not the same. That the human is two (that sexual *difference* is basic to the human) is affirmed particularly when we read Genesis 2:23 against the backdrop of the first creation account. In the first creation account it is evident that the woman is not given merely as a helper for the man, since God says that God will create the human (*hā-'ādām*) in God's image, and according to God's likeness, and that *they* (humans, including women and men) will have dominion over the fish of the sea.[46] The text continues:

> So God created the human (*hā-'ādām*) in his image,
> in the image of God he created him;
> male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

Many interpreters of Genesis, wishing to mitigate the patriarchal tendencies of the Christian tradition, take Genesis 1:27 as affirming the equality of woman and man. Since each has been created in the image of God (or, they are together in the image of God), neither one can be thought of as superior or prior to the other. While I accept this "egalitarian" reading, my intention is to focus on the question of difference, and to argue that the creation narrative allows for an affirmation of the human as irreducibly two.[47] It must be observed, here, that the "them" in Genesis 1:27 does not refer to multiple instances of the same being but refers to the two instances of the human. When the poetic declaration of the first man, in the second creation account, is read in the light of God's creation of *them* in the image and likeness of God, it becomes clear that while the first woman is similar to the first man, she is also irreducibly different from him. Woman and man can enter into com-

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munion with each other, yet they are not the same (she is *'iššâ*, not *'îš*), and it is precisely on the basis of this similarity *and difference* that the text figures the woman and man as fulfilling the human. Here Trible's discussion of the word-play between earth creature (*hā-'ādām*) and earth (*hā-'ᵃdāmâ*) can be applied to the word-play between woman (*'iššâ*) and man (*'îš*): "[T]hrough the pleasure of language Yahweh God makes distinctions that result not in oppositions but in harmony. A punned separation articulates unity."[48] As I have put it, the astonished declaration of the first man acknowledges similarity between the sexes, yet also entails recognition of difference.[49]

In developing a "postmodern version of paradise", and in exploring the mimetic dimension of the creation narratives, Graham Ward concurs with my insistence that Genesis 2:23 affirms both similarity and difference. He writes: "When the moment of sexual differentiation comes, when the earth creature (*hā-'ādām*) becomes man (*'îš*) and woman (*'iššâ*), there is [a] God-ordained act of mimesis, an echo and a difference, a similarity and an otherness, in the dividing of one into two."[50] According to Ward, however, the poetic declaration of the man is a first step from good mimesis (the naming of the animals as a reflection of God's calling the world into being) into bad mimesis (the snake's words as a repetition, yet distortion, of God's words), inasmuch as the man's ejaculation "is curiously self-reflexive. It is spoken neither to God nor to the woman."[51] The first man's declaration seems to leave Ward wondering whether the man has grasped the significance of difference for intersubjectivity and language. One should hesitate, however, to accept this characterization of Genesis 2:23 as a moment of ambivalent mimesis, or this description of the man's declaration as merely self-reflexive. Instead, in view of the fact that the first man's astonished recognition is offered *in the presence both of woman and God*, it is better to describe his declaration as an acknowledgment, *before them*, that the human is fulfilled by man and woman in similarity and difference. That is, although the man does not speak directly to woman or to God, we are not prevented from conceiving his astonished declaration *both* as a self-reflective moment of recognition *and* as a communication to woman and God of this recognition. Genesis 2:23, then, can in fact be made to bear the mimetic weight that Ward might wish—the man's wondering declaration is an acknowledgment of sameness and difference. As such, the man's declaration expresses his recognition of sexual difference as a locus of desire, a locus in which the fulfillment of the human might/must be accomplished.[52] As Ward rightly frames the issue, the first step in the development of human identity and sexuality is the God-ordained division of the human into man and woman: "From henceforth, the self is always destabilized because it is only completed by the other."[53]

It is worth asking here whether Ward's hesitations over Genesis 2:23 are shaped by his sense that the first man's declaration is, in part, a naming of woman—Ward, it should be observed, will speak explicitly of "Adam's

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naming of woman (*'iššâ*, from *'îš*) . . ."[54] Of course, if Genesis 2:23 is an instance of naming this suggests that man takes the same posture toward woman that he takes toward the animals, and also that man bears God's image in a way that woman does not. Although I have neither the time nor space to offer a full explanation of why Genesis 2:23 is not an instance of naming, I would at least mention that the parallelism of the passage implies discontinuity rather than continuity between the naming of the animals and the "naming" of woman. For example, the verb "to call" in 2:23 is written in the passive form ("this one *shall be called* woman"), whereas the naming of the animals in 2:20 is written in an active form ("the man *gave names* to all cattle . . ."). This alone suggests that something different is at stake in these two instances of "naming". But I would also point out that within verse 23 the passive construction of "this one *shall be called* woman . . ." is paralleled by the passive construction of "this one *was taken out* . . .", which suggests that the one who has done the "taking" is the one who determines the "calling".[55] That is, the text can reasonably be read as suggesting that God both creates woman and determines that, based on the similarity and potential communion of woman and man, her name (*'iššâ*) will resemble his (*îš*). Thus, the man does not name her in Genesis 2:23 but simply *recognizes* that she is like him and will be called *'iššâ* in virtue of God's own intention. As Trible argues, "the creature's poem does not determine who the woman is, but rather delights in what God has already done . . ."[56] This interpretation of the verse, I would add, correlates with the poetic form of the passage—as poetry, it is an astonished acknowledgment of God's gift.

All of this is not to suggest that the creation narratives of Genesis are without patriarchal colouring, or that they do not progress toward a denial of sexual difference. I am not suggesting that these texts are not complicit, at some level, in a denial of woman's subjectivity.[57] It is important to note, however, that the slide into patriarchy becomes an accomplished fact, narratively speaking, only subsequent to the fall. In the post-lapsarian context, for example, the image of God is construed as a singular male possession, so that Adam can be said to have a son, Seth, in his own image and likeness. After the fall, that is, the image of God is thought to be perpetuated only through male genealogy. As another example, we note that the originary matricide that undergirds western culture is only a textual *fait accompli* after the fall. Thus, "and Seth became the father of Enosh, who was the father of Kenan, who was the father of Mahalalel, who was the father of Jared . . ." With respect to these two questions (the association of the divine image with the male, and the presence of the originary matricide in genealogies), it is important to note that procreation first takes place under the conditions of sin and patriarchy, which is to say that the Hebrew Bible does not provide us with an account of procreation or genealogy detached from the assumptions of patriarchy.

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Patriarchy is perpetuated in human history in such a way, however, that the creation narratives themselves are marked by it. For example, the association of *hā-'ādām* with the first man (Father Adam) is read back into the creation narrative in such a way that the man, already in the creation narratives, can be thought of as having a closer connection to the image of God than woman. In this regard, we observe that inserted between the phrases, "So God created *hā-'ādām* in his image/male and female he created them," in Genesis 1:27, is the phrase "in the image of God he created *him*," which suggests, again, that man approximates more closely to the divine than does woman.[58] Also, in the first creation account the patriarchal, specular, and oculocentric logic of the male subject is at play in the description of the human as male and female, since the word male (*zākhār*) is tied etymologically to the notion of the phallus while the word female (*n^e qēbāh*) is tied etymologically to the notion of something that is pierced. Thus, man is defined in terms of possession of the phallus while woman is defined in terms of lack. However, given that the language of patriarchy was the only language available to the scriptural writer (given the inevitability of patriarchy after the Fall), the presence of patriarchal assumptions within the creation narrative should not come as a surprise. Indeed, it is only remarkable that "the Hebrew narrators were somehow able to transcend the all-embracing, self-evident patriarchal context in which they no doubt lived and worked, in order to assert that 'in the beginning it was not so.' "[59]

To summarize, I have been arguing that the astonished declaration of the first man, when confronted with the first woman ("this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh/this one shall be called woman for out of man this one was taken"), may be construed as a declaration of wonder, along Irigarayan lines. When the woman is brought before him, the man does not attempt to circumscribe her or define her or name her; his posture toward her is decidedly not one of mastery or superiority. The second creation narrative, then, and the declaration of the man before woman, affirms that whereas the human was incomplete as the earth creature alone in the garden, the creation of woman and man alongside each other brings fullness to the human. Here we are not told what it means to be woman or man, and neither the woman nor the man assumes any other posture toward the other than that of wonder. Indeed, the fact that the man does not name woman until after the Fall (if one considers Genesis 3:20 an instance of naming) suggests that the woman is a mystery to the man in the garden. His joyful exclamation, marked by recognition of both similarity and difference, should be construed as nothing more than a wondering astonishment that God has seen fit to complete the human. The woman is like the man (such that they are capable of communication with each other), yet there is a profound difference between them such that she can be thought of as a mystery to him—she is not the same as him; therefore, how can he claim to know what "woman" is? Thus, not only should the relationship between woman and man in the garden be construed

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as an egalitarian one (they, together, are in the image of God), but their equality must be construed in terms of an equality and unity in difference (A + B = One) along lines suggested by Irigaray.[60] Each can only wonder before the face of the other.

3. Transforming Language, Expressing Wonder

Turning again to Irigaray's thought, and to a possible overlap between her account of wonder and the poetic declaration of the first man, I would point to Irigaray's insistence that re-locating wonder between the sexes must have implications for the communicative patterns that prevail between them. Due to the limits of time and space, I offer only a very brief discussion of this question. As observed, Irigaray objects that man has reserved transcendence and wonder for his relationship to God and has thereby displaced wonder from its first locus, between the sexes. In view of this, Irigaray has also written:

> The modalities of the utterances or sentences which imply or signify the act of a "dialogue"—are they not used [by men] in the relation to God? In commands, prayers, appeals, graces, cries, dirges, glories, anger, and questions? Performatives, the means of gaining access to the presence of the other, to the relation to the other in and through language, as well as across time, are habitually reserved for the relations between man and his God, and not for the exchange between men and women as others.[61]

Irigaray is suggesting that the language we have reserved for God, and for the opening up of communication in relation to the divine (by way of what she refers to, here, as performatives), must also be returned to its locus between the sexes. In order to clarify Irigaray's point, it is important to mention her contention that intersubjective communication in western culture has become a matter of passing on a closed truth, rather than of creating a space of encounter between worlds irreducible and mysterious to each other. On the model of the master-student relationship, intersubjective communication has become a matter of passing on information or discussing particular physical needs. In response to this communicative pattern, Irigaray argues that genuine communication is not

> a question of transmitting an envelope in which a meaning would exist—speaking in a somewhat authoritarian manner, or at least a pedagogical or hierarchical one—unless it intends to annul the two in a supposedly common third, in the neuter, expropriating in this way the relation. It is instead a question of calling for an exchange . . . a question of opening some possibility or possibilities leading to sharing.[62]

This possibility of sharing between two—this possibility of an encounter between those who are a mystery to each other—will only be actualized

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when the language that we have reserved for God, performatives, find a place also in the relationship between woman and man. The gap or interval of transcendence that persists between sexuate beings is such that it cannot be bridged merely through the exchange of information, or through discussion of particular physical needs. Rather, this gap or interval requires precisely that a free space of encounter be created; it requires the generation of a free space of encounter, in wonder, that has not yet come to pass between woman and man, according to Irigaray. To return to Graham Ward's discussion of difference and desire, and to his insistence that language finds its origin in the difference/desire nexus, we are reminded that, according to Irigaray, the historical lack of a culture of sexual difference implies that communication and conversation between woman and man is yet to be inaugurated.

In *I Love to You*, Irigaray extends this discussion by considering the various ways in which communication patterns would necessarily be transformed if the subjectivity of woman and man, and the mystery of each to the other, were instantiated intersubjectively. In the context of her discussion of indirection in speech, for example, she highlights those words and phrases that are better at respecting two subjects who come together, words and phrases that therefore make possible an encounter in difference:

> I hail you I praise you
> I thank you I celebrate you
> I ask you I bless you, etc.
> I offer you
> These words generally involve two persons, and the participation of the two in a relation, in reciprocity. Here the secret vector would always be: *Who are you?*[63]

Rather than reserving mystery for God alone, mystery and wonder are re-situated between woman and man, which implies that the encounter between sexes is best exemplified by those patterns of speech which imply the question: "Who are you?" This question, of course, expresses the truth that the other is forever a mystery to me, and is moving within a horizon, and constructing a world, that lies beyond me—which is to say that I cannot simply meet her by way of the categories and language that have grown comfortable for me. We must create a space of encounter, then, through language, a space of encounter that respects the mystery of the other and does not foreclose possibilities that might be actualized through this encounter. As Ward rightly observes, here "the addressing of the I to the other comes close at times to the quality of prayer."[64] Irigaray will also insist, to offer another example, that the insertion of the word "to" in the phrase "I love you" (giving "I love to you") might introduce a mode of indirection that emphasizes the distance between two and respects the interval of wonder between woman and man:

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> The "to" is the site of non-reduction of the person to the object. I love you, I desire you, I take you, I seduce you, I order you, I instruct you, and so on, always risk annihilating the alterity of the other, of transforming him/her into my property, my object, of reducing him/her to what is mine, into mine, meaning what is already a part of my field of existential or material properties.
>
> The "to" is also a barrier against alienating the other's freedom in my subjectivity, my world, my language.[65]

According to Irigaray, then, the "to" of indirection might open up the possibility of genuine exchange between woman and man inasmuch as it recognizes the transcendence that persists between us, and inasmuch as it recognizes that I am not free to circumscribe, or possess, or appropriate the other. This "to" she suggests, in a more positive vein, declares: "I hope to be attentive to you now and in the future, I ask you if I may stay with you, and I am faithful to you."[66] Here, encounter becomes possibility. Here, fecundity between woman and man is prior to and outside of any consideration of procreation—fecundity is precisely the unfolding of the human through the encounter of worlds and lives irreducible to each other.

Returning to the astonished declaration of the first man, with Irigaray's account of wonder and of intersubjective communication in mind, it should be noted (i) that the first recorded words of a human person in scripture are those of Genesis 2:23, (ii) that these words are rendered in a poetic form, and (iii) that the man's poetic and astonished declaration is offered in the presence of both the woman and God. Although I hesitate in drawing conclusions from that which is *not* in the text, it is significant that the man's first words are not, as Irigaray would put it, a matter of passing on a closed truth, or of transmitting an envelope in which a meaning could exist. Rather, the first man's words are poetic. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that Irigaray believes, as Ward suggests, that "Poetry . . . is the medium best suited to present the unpresentable."[67] The poetic declaration of the man, then, represents precisely a refusal by man to name woman and a refusal to circumscribe her place in relation to him and to God. The first man's poetic declaration is nothing less than an expression of astonished wonder that God has seen fit to complete the human through this one who is capable of communication with him and is yet a mystery to him. Is it going too far to suggest that the man's poetic declaration is an invitation to communion between woman and man, that they might fulfill the human together? Is it going too far to suggest that, in order to move beyond the elision of woman's subjectivity, we must revert to communicative patterns that give expression to the wonder of the first man in Genesis 2:23? In continuity with Irigaray's account of a genuine meeting between woman and man, is it saying too much to suggest that a reversion to the astonished wonder of the first man would be a reversion to that which might make possible a first meeting between woman and man in freedom?

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4. Theological Considerations

Turning toward a conclusion, it should be acknowledged that a number of important theological questions arise in the context of this discussion of sexual difference—more questions than can be mentioned, let alone adequately addressed within the confines of this article. Perhaps a first question that might be addressed, however, is that of God's status as the middle term in every relationship (to deploy a Kierkegaardian notion).[68] In considering the astonished declaration of the first man in Genesis 2:23, it has been observed that his wonder is oriented both toward woman and toward the Creator who sets woman and man in relation to each other. Contrary to Irigaray's thought, this implies that *wonder is as appropriate to the human-God relationship as it is to the locus of sexual difference*.[69] In the second creation account of Genesis, it is God who brings the woman before the man, which suggests that the first man's joyful exclamation is also oriented toward the Creator God who establishes and mediates the relationship between two. Indeed, the three-fold use of the demonstrative pronoun "this" or "the one here" in Genesis 2:23 (which is employed with reference to the woman), affirms this focus on God. By referring to the woman in the third person in this way, the demonstrative pronoun (which has greater force in Hebrew than in English) is both a jubilant welcome directed to the woman and "a cry of joy *to the creator* that [God] has given the man a helper fit for him."[70] Or, as I have interpreted this passage, the poetic declaration of the first man is a cry of joy to the Creator that the human, which is incomplete as man alone in the garden, is brought to completion through the presence of woman and man to each other. Thus, Genesis 2:23 not only orients the man toward the woman given as a gift to the human, but also orients woman and man (together) toward the God who gives each as gift. This fulfillment and constitution of the human as two can only be acknowledged with astonished and joyful thanks before the Creator who constitutes the human as beings in communion with one another and with God.

Indeed, I would go further and suggest that it is precisely God's presence as Creator that makes possible and necessary an expression of wonder between woman and man. This is not to insert a deontological moment into the creation narrative, as if God stands over against woman and man with a commanding voice; as if God here claims a right to command wonder between the human and God, as well as in the locus of sexual difference. Rather, in Genesis 2:23 there is a realization that the fulfillment of the human is in two, and that a denial of the two is a denial of the human (a decidedly teleological orientation). Of course, it is God who establishes the human as two, and so the wonder they express before the mystery, power, and goodness of God is also an expression of their awareness that God has constituted the human in *this* way and not in some other way. The wonder and thanksgiving that woman and man express before the Creator, I would suggest, sets

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them free also to wonder at the one who is sexually different from her or him. In a spirit of wonder, and in the presence of the Creator, I must acknowledge: I will never occupy her place and she will never occupy mine, which is to say that the woman I encounter is forever new to me. I am perpetually surprised in this encounter, for she is different from what I knew or thought she would be.[71]

To insist on God as the middle term, however, is precisely to refuse Irigaray's understanding of the divine, which she conceives of in terms of the respective Being and becoming of woman and man. That is, while I want to insist that my reading of Genesis 2:23 is enriched by Irigaray's account of wonder, inasmuch as it opens up new possibilities for our understanding of the encounter between woman and man, this does not suggest a final confluence between Irigaray's account of sexual difference and the theological vision I am developing. In Irigaray's thought, divinity is decidedly not conceived in the Trinitarian terms of the Christian tradition. This becomes apparent when one attends, for example, to her inversion of the logic of incarnation, according to which she speaks of the becoming word of the flesh of woman and man, rather than of the becoming flesh of the Word.[72] Indeed, according to this inverted logic of incarnation (and consistent with her sensible transcendental) the later Irigaray explores the relation between the physical act of respiration and the spiritual becoming of woman and man as the locus of divinity. In *Between East and West*, for example, Irigaray argues that we cannot become autonomous women and men, and cannot become fully alive, until we take care, in a conscious and voluntary way, of our breathing.[73] Then, in *Key Writings*, she will suggest that "the accomplishment of humanity, its perfect realization, requires *the cultivation of one's own breath as divine presence, in ourselves and between us*." Indeed, she will go as far as to insist that her account of the sensible transcendental requires recognition that "God is us, we are divine if we are woman and man in a perfect way."[74] Here, in the shadow of Ludwig Feuerbach, is a god that is conterminous with the human in its becoming as two. This, of course, points to a profound discontinuity between Irigaray's vision of wonder and the theological vision I have been developing, inasmuch as the second creation narrative locates wonder between woman and man while also insisting that wonder must be located between human beings and their Creator. To refuse Irigaray's account of the divine is not to suggest that Irigaray's account of human becoming, and of the sensible transcendental, cannot become a significant resource for thinking through the nature of the human.[75] It is to insist, however, that the ontological difference between the human and the divine must be preserved within an account of intersubjective wonder that would trace its roots to the second creation narrative of Genesis. Not only must this ontological difference be preserved, but it is precisely this difference which makes possible the expression of wonder between woman and man as they receive each other as an enigmatic gift, given through the Creator's generous mercy.

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A second theological question to be asked, finally, is whether this reading of Genesis 2:23, and this insistence on sexual difference, does not entail reversion to an essentialist account of woman and man. This, of course, is the charge that is invariably brought against Irigaray herself. I cannot explore this question at any length, yet I would tentatively suggest that this account of wonder between woman and man, and the ethical vision to which it gives rise, implies precisely a *refusal* to offer an essentialist description of woman or man. That is, the sketch of wonder offered is decidedly formal in nature and, as such, requires that substantive questions concerning the nature of woman and man be held in abeyance. Since wonder before the face of the other is an acknowledgement of her enigmatic status, and is thus a refusal to name, circumscribe, or appropriate her according to my own logic, essentialist descriptions are ruled out from the start. In view of this, it is possible to conclude that any theological anthropology that takes its starting point in the proto-historical narrative of Genesis must be one that insists on the two-ness of the human but offers little or nothing by way of substantive description of what it means that woman is woman and man is man. Here theological ethics provides a constraint upon theological anthropology, provides a constraint against any essentialist account of woman or man. Wonder correlates with a refusal to define woman or man. This is not to say that the creation narratives must be given the final word on the nature of the human, or to say that further theological reflection might not result in a thicker description of woman, man, or the human. It is to say, however, that the narratives of Genesis, and the astonished cry of the man in Genesis 2:23, offers a profound limiting factor in the development of any theological account of woman or man.[76] How Christological, Pneumatological, or Ecclesiological reflection might impinge upon this account of an ethical intersubjectivity between woman and man, or vice versa, are questions that must be left for another day.

Perhaps surprisingly, Karl Barth offers something of an affirmation of this vision of wonder between two and of the implications of this vision for any attempt to construct an essentialist anthropology.[77] In the *Church Dogmatics*, he affirms the logic of sexual difference when he argues that "the first and typical sphere of fellow-humanity, the first and typical differentiation and relationship between [human] and [human], is that between male and female."[78] Indeed, Barth will insist that the human "never exists as [abstract humanity], but always as the human male or the human female."[79] Furthermore, consistent with my insistence on the encounter between woman and man as an encounter in wonder and mystery, Barth will argue that

> We have no right, especially if we ask concerning the command of God, to define or describe this differentiation [between man and woman]. Otherwise we presume to know in advance the content of the will of God concerning which ethics can only ask. The command of God will find man and woman as what they are in themselves. It will disclose to them

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> the male or female being to which they have to remain faithful . . . In all this it may perhaps coincide at various points with what we may think we know concerning the differentiation of male and female. But it may not always do this. It may manifest the distinction in new and surprising ways. The summons to both man and woman to be true to themselves may take completely unforeseen forms right outside the systems in which we like to think.[80]

This bears an astonishing degree of resemblance to the argument that has been offered here, inasmuch as woman and man must not foreclose the other's possibilities for becoming. Here woman and man owe fidelity to the God who has created and redeemed them in Christ, and not to the assumptions of one who differs from them sexually.

Here it must be acknowledged, however, that Barth proceeds directly from his vision of wonder between the sexes to an insistence that man precedes woman (as A precedes B) in the order of creation and salvation. Man leads, and woman follows. As Graham Ward rightly points out, Barth's thought is determined here by the hom(m)osexual logic that Irigaray has so decisively criticized in her work. "The consequence of this hommosexuality is that no genuine sexual difference can be established, because the other sex is always interpreted from the perspective of the one, monolithic sex, the male. The female is only a variant of the male; his other half, that which fulfills and supports him."[81] What should be noted, for the purposes of my own argument, is that Barth does not for one moment think that his vision of wonder between two is compromised by his re-inscription of the logic of sameness, by his insistence on man's primacy (primacy only in subservience to Christ, we acknowledge) in relation to woman.[82] This, of course, raises the possibility that my own account of wonder could be subsumed within a theological anthropology that repeats the patriarchal assumption that man precedes woman (that woman requires the leadership, or initiative, of man) in becoming human before God. It raises the possibility that my account of wonder could be subsumed within a theological anthropology that defines woman and man in complimentary terms—according to the logic of the same. Yet the reading of Genesis 2:23 offered above requires that such an assumption be rejected, since the fulfillment of the human is not expressed in the order "man then woman," but in the mutual wonder of woman and man before the God who gives each as enigmatic gift to the other and to the human. My reading of Genesis 2:23, and the theocentric ethics of sexual difference that corresponds to it, then, not only provide a constraint against the development of any essentialist theological anthropology, but also against the attempt to re-inscribe patriarchal assumptions concerning the primacy of the male human. Woman and man are indeed ordered to one another, but simply as fellow humans. They are ordered to one another in the fulfillment of the human, in which neither one may claim primacy.

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Luce Irigaray's vision of wonder between two, built as it is upon her insistence on the irreducibility of woman and man to each other, gives expression to an ethical intersubjectivity in which the failures of phallocentric culture might be mitigated or displaced. Her vision of wonder, furthermore, is a rich resource for a theological re-thinking of intersubjectivity between woman and man and of the nature of the human. I have suggested that Irigaray's account of wonder can be mapped onto the astonished declaration of the first man in Genesis 2:23—he can do no more than wonder before this one in whom God brings the human to completion. While I have suggested that a theological vision of sexual difference must refuse important aspects of Irigaray's theory of sexual difference, this in no way mitigates the significance of her contribution to this vision. In acknowledging her contribution to this theological account of sexual difference, I give the last word to Irigaray as she describes the encounter between woman and man, in wonder:

> Because I love you absolutely, I, myself, am no longer absolute. Recognizing you gives me measure. Because you are, you impose limits upon me. I am whole, perhaps, but not the whole. And if I receive myself from you, I receive myself as me. We are no longer one. Contemplating each other, we do not lose either the night or the light. Each can leave to the other his or her own life: sun, moon, stars. Being faithful to you requires being faithful to me. Does existing not mean offering you an opportunity to become yourself?[83]

NOTES

1 My thanks to Francis Watson, Daniel Shute, and Patricia Kirkpatrick, as well as to two anonymous reviewers for *Modern Theology*, for many helpful comments offered on previous drafts of this paper. Of course, I remain responsible for the limitations of the article in its final form.
2 If I at times speak of the fact that woman is "a mystery to me," this simply reflects the fact that I, as author, am a man. This manner of speaking in no way implies that man is not, as much, a mystery to woman.
3 René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss, introduction by Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1989), p. 52.
4 Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, "Introduction" in Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, p. xix.
5 Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, p. 52 (italics mine).
6 Marguerite La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", *Hypatia*, 17/3 (Summer, 2002), p. 3. La Caze provides a very good discussion of Descartes and Irigaray on wonder and my sketch of wonder in this first section in various ways follows hers.
7 See Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, p. 52, footnote 6.
8 La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", p. 2.
9 Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, pp. 56–57.
10 *Ibid*., p. 57.
11 On this question see Anthony David, "Le Doeuff and Irigaray on Descartes", *Philosophy Today*, 41/3 (Fall, 1997), pp. 374–378.
12 Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 12–13.

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13 Irigaray's new elaboration of the negative is described at greatest length in her work *I Love to You*, trans. Alison Martin, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996).
14 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 74. La Caze adds that wonder is not curiosity; "rather, it leads to an appreciation of the other's qualities." La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", p. 6.
15 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 13.
16 La Caze writes: "Wonder provides a model for the way . . . the sexes should respond to each other." La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", p. 4. For a good account of Irigaray's later theory of sexual difference, see Alison Stone, *Luce Irigaray and the Philosophy of Sexual Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
17 Luce Irigaray, *Democracy Begins Between Two*, trans. Kirsteen Anderson, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), p. 7.
18 Luce Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, trans. Heidi Bostic and Stephen Pluháček, (New York, NY: Continuum, 2002), p. 155.
19 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 74. So La Caze: "If the other "suited us" completely, in the sense of being enough like us not to surprise, we would have reduced the other to ourselves, and would understand and respond to them only on our own terms. La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", p. 5.
20 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 75.
21 La Caze, "The Encounter between Wonder and Generosity", p. 5.
22 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 75.
23 *Ibid*., p. 13.
24 Luce Irigaray, "Beyond All Judgment, You Are", trans. Michael Warton, in Luce Irigaray (ed), *Key Writings* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004), p. 69.
25 Luce Irigaray, *Thinking the Difference: For A Peaceful Revolution*, trans. Karin Montin, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), p. 110.
26 Irigaray, "Beyond All Judgment, You Are", p. 68.
27 For a discussion of the originary matricide in Irigaray, see Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 163. For a discussion of the meaning of "originary", see Joanna Hodge, "Irigaray Reading Heidegger" in Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford (eds), *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 191–210.
28 Irigaray suggests, curiously, that "It is understandable that man has, for a time, made the working-out of his becoming dependent on a God-the-Father." See Irigaray, "Beyond All Judgment, You Are", p. 70.
29 For a discussion of this question, see Penelope Deutscher, *A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 93.
30 Thus, Diane Perpich will argue that Irigaray's is an ethics of becoming. See her "Sensible Subjects: Levinas and Irigaray on Incarnation and Ethics" in Eric Sean Nelson, Antje Kapust, and Kent Still (eds), *Addressing Levinas* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), pp. 307–308. Amy Hollywood rightly argues that Irigaray's insistence on the transparency of sexual difference requires some minimal account of what it is to be a woman or man. Irigaray's account of woman's "nature" and man's "nature" is indeed minimal. See Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 232.
31 Deutscher, *A Politics of Impossible Difference*, p. 11.
32 Luce Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. Alison Martin, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), p. 12.
33 The significance of the lack is expressed also in the "At last!" of Genesis 2:23. See Francis Watson, *Text Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), p. 150.
34 Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 94. Gunkel remarks: "The man feels distant from [the animals]: they are not "helpers" for him." See Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), p. 12. Trible's reading of the creation narratives in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* continues to be important for those who would resist patriarchal readings of these texts. I appeal to her throughout. For criticisms of Trible (and those who share her approach) see, as

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one example, Jerome Gellman, "Gender and Sexuality in the Garden of Eden", *Theology and Sexuality*, 12/3 (May, 2006), pp. 319–335.

35 Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 80. She adds: " [T]he earth creature here is precisely and only the human being, so far sexually undifferentiated. The complete story of creaturehood is a process, the tale that is being told."

36 Bruce Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), p. 89.

37 Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 12.

38 Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion S.J., (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), p. 231.

39 *Ibid*.

40 Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 89.

41 *Ibid*., p. 94.

42 Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, p. 232.

43 Walter Brueggemann, "Of The Same Flesh and Bone (Genesis 2:23a)", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 32/4 (October, 1970), pp. 535 and 539.

44 Brueggemann suggests that the meaning of the relationship between woman and man (the *telos* of their communion and capacity for intersubjectivity) is not simply mutual enjoyment, but care of the earth. See his "Of the Same Flesh and Bone", p. 542. This is not inconsistent with my own reading, but we do not have room to explore this here.

45 See Elizabeth Grosz's discussion in *Sexual Subversions*, pp. 146–150.

46 Trible objects to the translation of *'ēzer* as "helper" and prefers to render it as "companion". She argues that while the English word "helper" suggests an assistant or subordinate, *'ēzer* is actually used most frequently to describe the God who creates and saves Israel. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 90.

47 Alison Stone suggests that Irigaray's thought is open to a form of sexual equality, if only an "equality in the ability to realize oneself culturally as a sexually specific being." See Alison Stone, "The Sex of Nature: A Reinterpretation of Irigaray's Metaphysics and Political Thought", *Hypatia*, 18/3 (Fall, 2003), p. 74.

48 Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 80.

49 Here note Brueggemann's contention that the wordplay between man (*'îš*) and woman (*'iššâ*) suggests a merely biological closeness. See his "Of the Same Flesh and Bone," p. 538. I am suggesting that this play on words, in the context of the poetic declaration of the man as a whole, points beyond biological derivation to the inauguration of sexual difference as communion in difference.

50 Graham Ward, "A Postmodern Version of Paradise", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 20/65 (March, 1995), p. 7. Graham Ward has been in the forefront of theological engagement with Luce Irigaray and, though his focus does not fully align with mine, his interaction with Irigaray is invaluable.

51 *Ibid*.

52 Ward generalizes this point when he writes: "Difference constitutes desire." See his "The Erotics of Redemption—After Karl Barth", *Theology and Sexuality*, 4/8 (March, 1998), p. 53. In "Divinity and Sexuality: Luce Irigaray and Christology", *Modern Theology*, 12/2 (April, 1996), pp. 228–229, Ward writes: "Only where there is space, where there is distance, where there is difference can there be love which desires, which draws, which incorporates."

53 Ward, "A Postmodern Version of Paradise", p. 11.

54 *Ibid*., p. 6. Of course, it is an open question whether, in 2:23, the man is already "Adam". Trible, as noted, suggests that he is not. Ward, however, wonders whether 2:23 represents the transition to "Adam". (*Ibid*., p. 7.)

55 My thanks to Dan Shute for this observation.

56 Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 100.

57 My discussion of the patriarchal tendency of the text is indebted to Watson's *Text, Church and World*, pp. 188–201.

58 The identification of God as a male raises a whole additional set of questions that are beyond the scope of this article.

59 Watson, *Text, Church and World*, p. 194.

60 Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, p. 106.

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61 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 139.
62 Irigaray, *The Way of Love*, p. 16.
63 Irigaray, *I Love to You*, pp. 138–139.
64 Graham Ward, "In the Name of the Father and of the Mother", *Journal of Literature and Theology*, 8/3 (1994), p. 324.
65 Irigaray, *I Love to You,* p. 110.
66 *Ibid*.
67 Graham Ward, "In the Name of the Father and of the Mother", p. 324.
68 Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 106–107.
69 Man and woman are ordered to each other as fellow creatures and together ordered to God as Creator, which implies a difference in the wonder expressed in each locus. I borrow the language of "order" from Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 31–52.
70 Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, p. 231 (italics mine).
71 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, p. 74.
72 Graham Ward considers the implications of Irigaray's logic of incarnation for Christology in his "Divinity and Sexuality: Luce Irigaray and Christology," op. cit.
73 Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West, From Singularity to Community*, trans. Stephen Pluháček, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 74–75.
74 Luce Irigaray, "The Age of Breath", trans. Katja van de Rakt, Staci Boeckman and Luce Irigaray, in Luce Irigaray (ed), *Key Writings* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004), p. 169 (italics mine).
75 Irigaray's insistence on the continuity between physical respiration and spiritual becoming, for example, can become an important resource for re-thinking Pneumatology and the relation between breath and Spirit. On this, see my "Sharing Air: Becoming Two in the Spirit" in Luce Irigaray and Mary Green (eds), *Luce Irigaray: Teaching* (London: Continuum), forthcoming in 2008.
76 In continuity with Kierkegaardian logic, I conceive of the self as both given and achieved through striving. On this (as one possible description of the self) see Anthony Rudd, *Kierkegaard and the Limits of the Ethical* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 68–80.
77 For a helpful discussion of Barth and Irigaray on essentialism, see Jone Salomonsen, "'Love of Same, Love of Other': Reading feminist anthropologies with Luce Irigaray and Karl Barth", *Studia Theologica*, 57/2 (December, 2003), pp. 103–123. I largely follow Salomonsen in this paragraph.
78 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/4 *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. G.W. Bromiley, T.F. Torrance, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), p. 117. With "fellow-humanity" Barth refers to the fact that humans, in relating to God, by definition relate also to other human beings. Also, note that in the original text, Barth speaks of "man", which for him includes male and female. I have re-written Barth's "man" as "the human" because the latter tends to correspond with contemporary usage and because, admittedly, it serves my purposes.
79 *Ibid*.
80 *Ibid*., p. 151.
81 Graham Ward, "The Erotics of Redemption—After Karl Barth", p. 66. Ward adds: "The woman has a function only within the economy of male desire wherein she functions as compliment, not difference. This maps onto a biological determinism whereby the male is a strong, active, performer on the public stage and woman is weak, passive and creates a space . . . to support and promote male productivity." (*Ibid*., p. 67.)
82 Salomonsen, "'Love of Same, Love of Other'," p. 114. See also Paul S. Fiddes, "The Status of Woman in the Thought of Karl Barth" in Janet Martin (ed), *After Eve: Women, Theology and the Christian Tradition* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1990), pp. 138–155.
83 Luce Irigaray, *To be Two*, trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), p. 15.

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