

Luce Irigaray: Expanding her symbolism for Aotearoa – New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Sexual difference, and the question of how to rebalance the relations between men and women for fecundity in love are central to the philosophical, ethical and aesthetic concerns of Luce Irigaray. Irigaray contends that such a balance will only be possible through addressing the representation of the feminine in the arena of the symbolic systems of culture. Feminism has necessarily been directed to the material conditions of women's lives. Irigaray exposes the continuity between the material and the symbolic systems of culture, and draws attention to the symbolic as the anchorage of material culture. Symbolic representation of the feminine is one of the major oeuvres of Irigaray's work. In this essay I am endeavouring to extend Irigaray's attention to sexual symbolic re-ordering, which she regards as necessary to the institution of a new ethics, to suggest that attention to the symbolic systems of culture will be necessary to engage an ethics for cultural /ethnic difference. This symbolic extension is made in reference to Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Man is an amphibian who lives simultaneously in two worlds - the given and the home-made, the world of matter, life and consciousness and the world of symbols. In our thinking we make use of a great variety of symbol-systems - linguistic, mathematical, pictorial, musical, ritualistic. Without such symbol systems we should have no art, no science, no law, no philosophy, not so much as the rudiments of civilisation: in other words we should be animals. Symbols, then, are indispensable. But symbols - as the history of our own and every other age makes so abundantly clear - can be fatal (Huxley, 1954: 9).

In Aotearoa - New Zealand, colonial imperialism is linked with the patriarchal heritage of the Western tradition: a tradition which, in Irigaray's schema, and which I will explain in the following paragraphs, is a tradition of sexual *indifference*. Sexual indifference refers to an imbalance between the masculine and the feminine - an imbalance which derives from the negation of the feminine. In this essay I will move from Irigaray's position that the system of suppression of the 'other' that is instituted with the negation of the feminine, gives rise to the negation of cultural or ethnic difference, which, in more sociological and political terms, is known as structured racism. This essay will explore a symbolic and literary methodology for suggesting an analogous account of the negation of the feminine with the negation of the racial 'other.' Mono-sexism is analogous to monoculturalism - both are forms of mastery, in Nietzsche's terms, mastery which is premised on the assimilation of the other. My purpose has an ethical focus: to disclose that the navigation from colonial history towards a just society for Maori with inclusiveness of different cultural groups, will

require sexual difference as integral to the rebalancing of cultural relations. I suggest that the healing of the split between the masculine and the feminine is a condition for bringing cultural/ethnic balance. This essay will focus on the constitution of a new sexual balance and an ethics which might bring a new balance in cultural relations. Most of the referencing to Irigaray will be from *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, a text in which symbolic representations for the feminine is foregrounded. Referencing to *Marine Lover* will necessitate some references to Nietzsche and Nietzschean terms, such as his temporal notion of 'eternal return', the 'overman' for which Zarathustra is Nietzsche's spokesman, and *ressentiment*: these will be briefly explained. In Irigaray's work, there is a complex relationship between a broad notion of symbolic representation, and the particularity of the Symbolic order, the oedipal economy, of psychoanalytic theory. Varying accounts of symbolic representation refer to representation in language, art, writing, poetry, mythology, the divine: detail will not be given to theories of symbolic representation. In the first part of the essay, I will refer to a psychoanalytic account of the Symbolic, which will be followed by introductory remarks on the symbolism in *Marine Lover*. In the third section, symbolic figures from *Marine Lover* are reinterpreted to open an account of colonial mastery, with considerations for an ethics of cultural difference.

Luce Irigaray imagines the possibility of history shaped by a reconceptualisation of sexual difference. It will be a new history generated by two sexes, female and male both of whom are subjects - ethically constituted subjects. A suggestion of new history implies an old history. Old history may be considered as a metaphysics of truth, the truth of self-presence which Hegel interpreted as the relation between self and other - a relation of 'lordship' and 'bondage', or 'master' and 'slave.' In such an hierarchical relation, mastery is achieved through the negation of the difference of the other. Friedrich Nietzsche, building on the thought of Hegel, identified a sexual structure in this metaphysics of mastery - a structure premised on negation of the feminine, with 'woman' in the role as 'other' in supporting masculine mastery, or subjectivity. The dialectic economy of mastery has gained recognition as system of binary opposition. Luce Irigaray, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, following Hegel and Nietzsche, also regard the dialectic as a sexualised structure. Philosophy which is premised on the 'one' masculine subject as the universal, with the feminine as the supporting object, or other, denies representation of the female sex in its own right; and for this reason Irigaray nominates western philosophy as a philosophy of sexual *indifference*. Woman functions as other to man, rather than as different. Philosophy is indifferent to the feminine in that the feminine is not represented on its own terms but as an adjunct to the masculine; woman functions as an echo for the masculine subject.

Irigaray opens an horizon of sexual difference as a future for two sexes. She uses 'horizon' to refer to opening a new space for the feminine, a place that is not subordinate. As a horizon for feminism she says it is a test whether women will inaugurate a culture comprised of two sexes. The demand to create subjectivity and regenerate culture bring responsibilities that are different from struggles for inclusion based on equality, that have shaped feminism historically. Irigaray challenges the hierarchical structure of metaphysics and in doing so, reconceptualises the place and time (of the masculine) in terms of space and time for women and for sexual difference. In *Marine Lover* (1991a), she proposes a new position of women as 'speaking subjects.' Positioned in language, women as subjects means women taking up a new place in which feminine difference is affirmed. Affirmation of the feminine (rather than negation), suggests a different spatial relation to men - with a notion of asymmetry, rather than hierarchy, governing the difference. In Nietzsche's expose of the dynamics of mastery, space is conceptualised as a mechanism of distancing - the master achieves his 'height', his superior status through assigning his other an inferior place/space.

Although Irigaray positions herself in continuity with the concern with morality and ethics in the philosophical tradition, her critiques are within the genre of aesthetics, as part of her endeavour to go beyond binary opposition to create a new poetics - and a textual style which will appeal to feminine desire and an imaginary of sexual difference. Poetics, for Irigaray signifies movement out

of the safe lodgings of the known world, and of knowing as possessing. Poetics has a divine quality which Irigaray describes as

A risk taken at every moment by the poet, that seeker after a still sacred ether. Now so covered up or so deeply buried he can trust in no heaven, no earth. Learn his way from no mouth. Find no meaning in any sign. No place is inhabitable by one who is summoned to reopen a ferial site. He must therefore leave the world while remaining mortal. And go onward towards some distant shore that does not announce its name. For some non-assured life. A flowering for which he lacks the ground. Tearing himself away from the land of his birth to plunge his roots into a land still virgin. And therefore unknown. Unpredictable. Free, for risk (Irigaray, 1991 b: 213).

A cautionary note: distant shores usually do have names. Although Irigaray may be alluding to an imaginary for times and places for the recognition of sexual difference, her imagery of shorescapes and horizons and 'land still virgin' renders back aspects of old history - when empires dreamed of new horizons and those who dreamed of new places were unable to hear the language already be spoken on those shores and lands - language that often already spoke sexual difference. This lead, through the symbolism of her poetry towards critique of colonial mastery, will be pursued in the later section on an ethics of cultural difference. I will pursue the theme of the symbolic in reference to the construction of sexual difference.

Irigaray's critique of the symbolic in psychoanalytic theory

The Symbolic order of psychoanalysis is central to Irigaray's elaboration of feminine subjectivity. In psychoanalytic theory the Symbolic refers to the oedipal structure in which the phallus is the organising signifier for masculine subjectivity, and the positioning of woman as object. Irigaray shows how the symbolic referenced to the phallus functions to establish and maintain a symbolic system of 'one' sex, by negating the female sex. 'Woman' is not represented in feminine terms in the oedipal symbolic economy, which leads Irigaray to the claim that the feminine does not have a place in the symbolic - she is marked by absence. It is the non-positioning of the feminine symbolically that leads Irigaray to assert that psychoanalysis, as a model of sexuality, is unethical (Irigaray 1991b: 191). In psychoanalytic theory, Freud may be read as providing a more material account of the oedipal economy, whereas Lacan gives an account of the oedipal economy in terms of symbolic positioning in language. Irigaray's research has become increasingly focused on the sexualisation of discourse (1985: 168) and when Irigaray privileges women becoming positioned as subjects through language, she is directing attention to symbolic representation of the feminine as making a place/space for the feminine as subject. She is anticipating a symbolic system which includes an imaginary of the feminine that is referenced to the female sex and therefore brings the possibility of feminine identity.

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the Oedipus complex is the structure through which sexual identity is organised in the child through the primacy of the paternal figure. For Freud, sexual difference is referenced to biological difference, specifically to the penis (or lack of one). Lacan shifted Freudian psychoanalysis towards a symbolic interpretation, in which sexual organisation is achieved through language. For Lacan, the biological signified penis becomes the signifier, the phallus, and becomes part of the symbolic linguistic chain. The phallus is the linguistic sign through which the child accedes to subjectivity and sociality. The symbolic status given to the anatomical penis, as the phallus, as the marker of sexual identity and subjectivity (as having one or lacking one), makes language the potent signifier of sexual identity and subjectivity. The Symbolic, for Irigaray is the codified symbolic system constructed on the privilege of the phallus, and is the system through which the mother is accorded inferior status (she does not have the phallus, therefore she is castrated (Lacan, 1977: 289)). In order for women to become constituted as subjects (through speech) a reorganisation of the Symbolic is required in which women become represented as subjects. Irigaray argues for the symbolic representation of women in the multiple discourses of

western culture, which are pervaded by the phallic sexual economy, which she regards as an economy of one sex.

When Irigaray challenges the psychoanalytic conceptualisation of the mother as castrated, she is challenging the way in which the mother is represented in male terms. This is the basis of her claim that the sexual economy is structured on one sex in a binary arrangement in which 'she' is the other of 'he.' 'She' is only different in the sense that she is other to he. She is not represented in her own right, but referenced to the male. The psychoanalytic sexual referencing to castration, produces a certain pathology for men too - castration anxiety which in affect brings avoidance of the work of relationship that recognises, and does not repress, or negate difference. This avoidance, and the re-affirmation of patriarchal mastery is achieved through male projection of the fear of castration onto women. Castration represents non-symbolisation, a 'hole' in signification which represents death as non-identity and nonrepresentation of origin. Men may fear such a vacuum in meaning, but women, as unsymbolised and therefore without an attributed origin, are regarded, in a monosexual economy, as the hole, the abyss, the 'dark continent' - the other of symbolisation.

Irigaray gives considerable attention to the 'black continent, hole in the symbolic, breach in discourse' or the '*dark continent* of the *dark continent*' (Irigaray, 1985: 176; Whitford, 1991: 77). In the psychoanalytic account the relation to the mother is not symbolised; the phallus is the signifier of identity. He has one and she lacks one. The male is represented in language by this signifier and the woman is not represented: no signifier is assigned to represent her specificity, and this constitutes her loss of origin. 'Symbolic castration, in its most neutral sense, is a way of referring to what is called loss of origin, ie, the entry into language and the symbolic, and thus the definitive loss ('castration') of the original symbiotic relation with the mother' (ibid: 85). What is not represented in language is in effect denied recognition or incorporation into cultural narratives. In being described as castrated, recognition is only given in terms of masculine subjectivity, with no language for the relation to the mother. Representation in language signifies the possibility of identity and of entry into culture as 'a functioning social human being' (ibid: 84). Non-symbolisation, non-representation in language means that, not having an origin, women are threatened with psychosis (ibid: 84).

There is a further aspect to the loss of origin, or the 'dark continent' - the hole in signification for women as the non-representation of the mother-daughter relationship. The imaginary of the mother-daughter relationship, which psychoanalytically, exists prior to the oedipal organisation taking effect, and therefore exists prior to language. Without language to symbolise the mother-daughter relationship there is no representation of maternal genealogy and therefore no relationship to her own beginning. A woman can only serve the maternal function, because she replaces the mother when she becomes a wife, and she continues the role from which she has never been able to separate - taking her mother's place in the phallic economy. This is a continuity which effectively denies a past or future, because her (non) representational status never changes and she is always present to support the patriarchal system.

Irigaray regards the non-representation of the feminine in the symbolic system as the genesis of the negation of the feminine, and the origin of an economy of dualism that is governed by opposition - the subjectivity of one achieved at the expense of the other. Oppositional dualism is played out in the well-known assignments of rationality, autonomy, action, spirit, mind as attributes of the masculine, with emotion/passion, dependence, passivity, body, matter as the inferior others constituting the feminine. Irigaray challenges the sexual economy in which rationality is regarded as an attribute of maleness, with its opposite term, passion, assigned to woman: In her analysis the logocentric conceptualisation of rationality as transcendent and excluding of the feminine, is sterile and infertile. A re-organisation of rationality that includes both reason and passion, is contemplated by Irigaray, so that rationality, as an attribute of both sexes can enable rational exchange between the two. A redistribution is an important tactical oeuvre for the entry of the feminine into the symbolic. The power of the symbolic, for Irigaray is in its social work (1985: 173), meaning that the symbolic economy is a powerful determinant of social organisation - the economy, in the broad

sense. The separation of the symbolic from the social and material is countered by Irigaray's elaboration of the continuity between the symbolic and the material. A symbolic system that is constructed on the phallus as the privileged signifier has its counterpart in the social order, which materialises as patriarchal social organisation; which is constructed on a symbolic of one sex. A symbolic of both sexes - a 'double syntax' - is necessary, in Irigaray's view, to break the monopoly of the symbolic of the phallus and the social values and systems of exchange based on property, propriety and commodification. Irigaray often refers to the economy of the 'same' as the economy of the 'proper', constructed on ownership, a concept which has been the central premise of liberal philosophy and which has been inscribed in that tradition from John Locke. Irigaray's critique of the 'proper' is associated with Derrida and his deconstructive approach to metaphysics: in a note to 'Differance' (1973: 133) the proper is explained as 'that which is one's own, that which may be owned, that which is legally, correctly owned - all the links between proper, property, and propriety.

In the oedipal organisation of hierarchised sexual differentiation, the feminine is distanced from the masculine and given *no* symbolic place as subject. That the sexual demarcation is accomplished in language is the basis of Irigaray's sustained position that the repositioning of women is to be accomplished in language and in women's access to the symbolic. In *Marine Lover*, Irigaray employs this psychoanalytic account to interrogate Nietzsche, to expose the distancing operations to which the feminine is subjected despite Nietzsche's account of subjectivity as an endeavour to reach beyond dualism. For Irigaray, Nietzsche's 'new man' the 'overman' who is no longer driven by the aspiration to dominating power, but rather by the potency of artistic becoming, is not constituted in relation to the feminine as subject. In Nietzsche's writings, Zarathustra (1982) could be regarded as the herald of such an artist. Although *Marine Lover* engages Nietzsche's work as a whole, it is substantially addressed to Nietzsche's figure, Zarathustra, who anticipates the possibility of crossing over the threshold of the dualistic paradigm. Through her critique of Zarathustra/Nietzsche, in *Marine Lover*, Irigaray opens the way towards a textual enactment of a woman as a subject in language, speaking her own desire for relationship and for love as a subject.

Sexual difference and ethics in the return of the marine lover

Irigaray engages Nietzsche in *Marine Lover*, to employ his notion of the eternal return for artistic becoming, to propose a return of women, the feminine as a lover, and therefore as a subject in the artistic and aesthetic process of becoming. Irigaray elaborates distance in critique of the distance through which mastery is asserted, and in critique of Nietzsche's adulation of the dissimulating resources of 'woman' as actors at a distance through which 'woman' escapes 'being.' Irigaray reconceptualises distance in a number of ways. In placing her 'woman' in immemorial time, and therefore exceeding the boundaries of the place of opposition, Irigaray places the Marine (Mary-an) Lover outside the boundaries of metaphysical mastery. As object, in the opposite place, woman has been denied the position of a speaking subject and in *Marine Lover*, Irigaray traces the denial of rights of speaking subjects to women, to the processes of the symbolic institution of phallic gods. In the patriarchal religious systems of the west - Greek, Roman and Christian, the institution of gods is another reflection of the oedipal system at work.

Irigaray positions woman in a new place, a 'place' symbolised by water as the 'marine' element that is missing from Zarathustra's visage on the mountain. Spatially, Irigaray endeavours to bring Zarathustra's gaze which is directed upwards to mountain tops, not to the earth as the visible difference from his height but to the depths of the sea - beyond his gaze. From such an 'infinite' distance, woman comes to *speak* to him as a lover (therefore also from outside the oedipal symbolic economy). Coming as an interlocutor of Zarathustra, she brings an invitation to love. Irigaray has contended that the relation between subject and object, love is not possible; if woman plays the role of dissimulating other of man, she gives him the gift of mastery and of phallic identity. Love for a man and a woman, in her account, is a relation which supports the subjectivity of each. Returning

from a different place/space, as a speaking subject and lover, she brings the opportunity for the song to which she alluded in the 'Fecundity of the Caress' -the 'song of songs' (Irigaray, 1993).

Marine Lover is a textual imagining for feminine symbolics and ethical relationship. Irigaray has in play multiple conditions for an ethical economy. A new structure of two valued genealogies brings the possibility of a new balance, and different forms of mediation between the two terms. An economy of sexual difference will be reflected in mythologies that represent two sexes positively and creatively. Irigaray positions the Marine Lover as coming from far away, and inviting Zarathustra to a new place in relation to her as a lover - to a distance of an interval, a space of traversable boundaries. Irigaray often marks the economy of positive sexual difference temporally and spatially, by the interval - a time of pause alluding to rhythm and the space of the interval as a marker of difference or discreteness of each term as alterity of the other through which relationship is encountered. Difference, alterity, relationship and new spatial and temporal arrangements are major conditions for sexual ethics.

In the house of western metaphysics, symbolising the feminine means constituting a feminine that has never been allowed to become, that Irigaray suggests, has only existed in immemorial time. Irigaray is endeavouring to give a place from which to articulate a feminine that is not assimilated to masculine desire or logic, which she signifies by immemorial time - time that is anterior to history. The symbolics of *Marine Lover* is presented in fragments and piecing together of what might represent the feminine as subject. Irigaray is dealing with the complexities of sexual subjectivity, *and* the questions of the relations across sexual difference, or ethics. Irigaray's methodology of place is directed towards opening and creating a place for women in the symbolic order - in metaphysics, as a prerequisite to making a place for her in culture.

Poetics for cultural difference. Marine travellers – imperial Mariners

In the inauguration a new poetics for the representation of sexual difference, a poetics for cultural difference is suggested in the symbolism of *Marine Lover*. The marine element through which Irigaray interrogates Nietzsche, is symbolic of another othering and another horizon of difference. Sea and shores and sails, horizons and land are images of imperial arrivals - perhaps in most parts of the 'new world' - including the Pacific. These arrivals from distant shores brought new notions of distance and of the negation of difference. Irigaray's imagery seems compelling for interpreting imperialist repetitions of mastery:

Could it be that the unexplored reaches of the farthest ocean are now your most dangerous beyond? Though they lie just outside your present project. No doubt they promise new discoveries. But will you not need to move beyond yourself, lowering your sail even, if you are to approach another sight? For the man who searches too hard within the compass of his sails finds only what he has already found, and lost (Irigaray, 1991a: 38).

The compass suggests repetition of metaphysical totality for the man who continues operations of distancing. *Marine Lover* builds an address to Nietzsche through the element water, from which he came, but does not acknowledge, across which he desires to sail, but in which he will not be immersed. From his heights he overlooks the element (sea/she) through which he is related to her - but she wants the relation because that will be the way, if he can relate to her as different, by which *ressentiment* and nihilism will be overcome. *Ressentiment* is the drive to mastery by those who are negated - and is regarded by Nietzsche as the engine which drives the oppositional paradigm of dualism. Employing a metonymic association with Irigaray's symbolism of the sea, an account of cultural/ethnic negation is possible here - with settlers coming across the sea, spurred for adventure, conquest, new horizons, different shores at a great distance - driven by the winds and tides as supermen of exploration and navigation, as 'alpinists of the sea' (Irigaray, 1991a: 49).

Settlers in many cases came to escape the land of their birth - distancing themselves from origins to seek a better life in new lands, seeking polar opposites - a different association with

polarity than Irigaray has in mind when she critiques metaphysical polarisations – 'Extreme polar opposites seem more desirable alternatives to them than staying in the middle of the undaunting sea' (Irigaray, 1991a: 51). Irigaray finds with the presence of one term of the system of polarities, negation lurks in the shadows and the system recurs eternally – 'Eternal recurrence – the incommunicable. The time that cannot be spoken without breaking. Since any relation to an outside irreducible to the one already assimilated interrupts the perpetual motion of a cycle' (Irigaray, 1991a: 55). Thinking perhaps of escape, the settlers did not escape metaphysical polarities or the ontology of the proper, but brought assumptions of property rights vested in individuals, accompanied with symbols of the 'one' opposed to the (indigenous) other – one sovereign, one law, one god, one flag, one queen, desiring the heights of monocultural freedom. An assertion of the 'one' as good implies the other as evil, and guns indicate fear of the other in the assertion of the 'one' western political, economic and spiritual sovereign order. A repetition of what was what was already known – the same – was instituted – as nature to be tamed and with man establishing his dominion and ownership as matters of survival.

The symbols that represent sailing and arrivals do not represent single stories. Missionaries came for a relation with the indigenous people and even learned their language in order to ensure that relation, but it was not based on an ethics of difference. The 'other' were 'heathen', 'uncivilised', though surprising to them in their aptitude for literacy. Speaking the language brought murderous proximity and the resources for translation and interpretation of those who were indigenous, as other. The bilingual mediators of monotheism became also mediators for the British Crown. They assisted not only with replacing indigenous spirituality with monotheistic religion, but became also arbiters through which indigenous authority over land, sea and mountains was supplanted.

Settlers came with other horizons – not for relations with those who were indigenous, but for land and new life – with the resources of sovereign subjects, free for ownership and free from the conditions in the 'mother' country which negated them. According to Irigaray, where birth and the mother are denied, where there is no relation to maternal origin, the dualistic economy is reproduced: Zarathustra, seeking solitary heights and avoiding the sea, is found in a return of *ressentiment*. A similar return is indicated in a new land, where the same 'Western' law was instituted to establish property rights and ownership of land, individual franchise rights, and education which ensured one language, one discourse on the place of women, the privilege of one people's knowledge – the church establishing one sovereign god at a distance from hapu, tribes and indigenous law, teaching indigenous children to inhabit a foreign language. Europeanising meant bringing in the binary.

Colonial history brought western phallogocentric economy to another place. The binary brought from the imperial distance the division of body and soul, the same god and desire for eternity that keeps eyes upward to heaven, averted from the guardianship of the earth and sea. For Irigaray, the contempt for nature in Western philosophy and culture is the terror of birth, of the hole, of the abyss – the fear of death that is to be transcended with a god whose place is beyond matter. Yet death is a condition for breaking the cycle of the return of the same:

And what becomes of alternating black and white horizons, borders of days and nights, transparency of mask and nesting which is yet to appear, in that transmutation beyond the envelope in which life is offered for the first time? Doesn't this imply a change of skins that cannot happen without death? The abandon of the (female) one believed to be a sepulcher in favour of the other that leads you (vous) into nothingness? The essential thing being – to impose your will. Without sharing (Irigaray, 1991a: 65).

The fear of death is ameliorated when eternity is the horizon. Aspirations to 'goodness' and 'truth' were repeated with little attention to the difference in the land and sea and mountains, with little attention to the respiration of new air unpolluted by industrial smoke and desert-making. Irigaray conceptualises the growth of a desert as the imposition of the will to power without sharing (Irigaray, 1991a: 65). Colonial settlers grew instead a desert of sheep through an imposition of sovereign rights and Christian morality that made other evil, and feared. In *Marine Lover* Irigaray

discerns a repetition of fear and *ressentiment* in Zarathustra: in desiring eternity he seeks to avoid death, and therefore denies birth and the relation to the mother. His desire for a new self is not a relational self but a solitary self - a self who fears the abyss: 'And isn't it by forgetting the first waters that you achieve immersion in your abysses and the giddy flight of one who wings far away, perched at such heights that no sap rises there and no thread secures his way' (Irigaray, 1991a: 38). When the desire for transcendence is premised on escape and fear, the horizon across the sea does not bring new history, but repetitions of mastery. Masters came as mariners and missionaries and traders and pioneers. And women had to be aligned with men, to come. Where are women now? Would sexual difference make a difference?

A change in place to Aotearoa in the Pacific, a change in time for new opportunities, were changes which brought a return of the metaphysics of the 'one', of mastery and of linear time. The metaphysics of the 'one' only partly succeeded with the people 'who are the land' for whom place is the source of identity, and earth and sea and mountains are the origins and elements of belonging. Times of past, present and future are more concurrent than linear, with ancestors being past and present and future, and the sea is she whose waves shimmer with departing spirits who return on the ebb and flow of tides to impart their wisdom. Life and death are referenced to the genealogies of the mother *and* the father, bringing subjectivity for women *and* men, and sexual difference.

The potency - or the fecundity of cultural difference might have been here briefly. Hospitality made it possible for settlers to stay and exchange made it possible for 'English' houses to be built. Different language, new ships, new agreements suggested invigorating energies in plantations and cultivations, export and navigation, knowledge and trade. I have heard it suggested that a new star appeared on the horizon, suggesting hope. But the new came with the symbols and language of the old and difference became a fight for the institution of the same order of negation. Irigaray writes

(The) evil begins at birth, the birth of your language. You have to go farther back than the point when you saw the light of day. To set your coming in to daylight with this language-malady, does that not already mean acceding to your decline? Believing that what gives you life is an obstacle to life? and wanting life to be engendered from a language-body alone? (Irigaray, 1991a: 65).

Language here becomes the body of language which re-births mastery. Irigaray's attributes the institution of the metaphysics of negation, to the phallic Symbolic order, which is brought into effect through language. Language becomes the vehicle through which distancing and splitting and negation of the other, materialise. The birth from a woman is denied. Distancing and negation can be read as applying to colonial strategies of mastery in gaining access to land and sea, in the application of one law for all, one language and one god. The new history that is yet to come is that of affirming difference - that we might become 'more human' (Levinas), more relational (Irigaray) and fecund. In history and philosophy to date, the star of difference may have appeared on the horizon; whether it will be seen or heeded is a similar question to the Marine Lover's question to Zarathustra regarding his willingness to listen and to heed her.

Notes

1. See Hall (1986) and Locke (1960).

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