and serve those in genuine need. With Ward's most welcome language (228), we can have meaningful conversations on how exactly to do so.

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Athena to Barbie: Bodies, Archetypes, and Women's Search for Self. By J. Lenore Wright. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2021. xv + 204 pages. $32.00.

J. Lenore Wright's *Athena to Barbie* is a re-theorization of pregnancy as it appears in four famous Western archetypes of woman: Mary, Athena, Venus, and Barbie. By assessing the liberating and constraining potential of these four archetypes, Wright invites women to construct empowering experiences of pregnancy for themselves, paving the way for conscious, agential appropriation of archetypal experiences. Though jargon threatens its clarity at times, *Athena to Barbie* is an accessible example of interdisciplinary research. The work draws together theology, philosophy, critical theory, art criticism and history, and incorporates visual data via numerous color reproductions of pertinent art pieces.

In Chapter 1, Wright explores the Marian archetype, emphasizing womb as sacred space. Her Mariology is a liberal, Protestant one and Catholic readers may balk when she describes Mary as a "passive, generic vessel" (14) whose "rational assent to the Holy Spirit is … secondary to her physical assent" (23). At the same time, she rightfully argues for the need of more archetypes of female dominance and authority, noting that certain construals of the Virgin Mary have hampered women's appropriation of their own agency. She concludes that the archetypical Marian pregnancy is a passive reception of the sacred other.

Wright's strongest chapter, Chapter 2, explores the goddess Athena. Athena's archetypical pregnancy involves physical virginity for the sake of birthing the polis. For Athena, pregnancy is a creative birthing of ideas. Yet this archetype contains a warning: Athena's birthing of ideas comes at the expense of her femininity. She suppresses her female body in order to bring her fecundity to a man's political world. Wright asserts that this image of female intellectual fertility is one that has long been sorely lacking in the Western imagination, while arguing that new paths must be forged, granting women space to birth ideas without eschewing embodied femininity.

Chapter 3 introduces Venus's erotic womb. Venus uses fertile sexuality as a domesticating influence on male violence. For Venus, wombed subjectivity can be both sacred and civilizing (67). Yet, when the Venus archetype was appropriated by the medical establishment in the development of wax "anatomical Venuses" for surgical study, the

cultural understanding of Venus shifted with the growing "desacralization of the body" (85). Wright details the effect of the growth of anatomical science on the cultural meaning of the female body, including striking photographs of these eighteenth century sculptures.

The final chapter introduces Barbie as the archetype that reveals woman as a material commodity. Barbie, unlike Mary, Athena, and Venus, does not give birth. Rather she "casts herself" as a woman with maternal potential: "She suggests but never enacts pregnancy" (96). Wright connects Barbie with Judith Butler's gender performativity, demonstrating the "limitations of poststructuralist solutions to gender oppression" (100) and showing how the devaluation or rejection of the material realities of female bodies does a disservice to embodied female living. Fertile wombs are not, in and of themselves, cultural constructions, Wright counters. Her archetypal approach affirms material reality while still freeing women to become agents of their own bodily living. Wright concludes her book with the charge that women, who cannot escape their wombed subjectivity, should replace their understanding of pregnancy as a biological experience with an understanding of it as "self-constituting and self-affirming" (123). Mary, Athena, Venus, and Barbie all represent ways that women have attempted to deal with "their vexed, bodily nature" (124) and, for Wright, all four of these archetypes fall short.

Athena to Barbie takes symbols and archetypes seriously as sources of liberation for women. Its interdisciplinary method of interpretation is idiosyncratic and lacking the type of scholarly rigor achievable in single-discipline works, but the process of engaging with age-old symbols and appropriating them for women in the modern context is a successful one. Departing from the concrete political theory which American feminism frequently emphasizes, *Athena to Barbie* highlights the way images and symbols affect the imaginations of concrete women. It provides indispensable information for the reader interested in the liberatory potential of cultural archetypes. Though not a work of theology, it also contains some value for the theologian looking to address the wombed embodiment of pregnancy from a feminist and symbolic perspective. By richly describing four archetypical approaches to pregnancy, *Athena to Barbie* demonstrates the agility of interdisciplinary projects in coping with problems that remain intractable when trapped within a single discipline. There is much room for a theologian to further develop this line of inquiry, as Wright stops short of connecting woman's search for self with woman's search for God.

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