



ENFLESHING  
THE UNCONSCIOUS

Feminist Imaginings

EDITED BY  
MEGAN CLAY





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production of this book.

Front cover illustration: Silvia Martínez Cano,  
*Perfect Woman*, acrylic and oil on canvas, 2018.

Frontispiece image: 'Ah, what peace is possible when  
we can dwell in the silent depths of being which underlie  
the chaos of manifestation' by Deborah Ireland.

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# I. ART/THEO/LOGY: THEOLOGICAL-ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

SILVIA MARTÍNEZ CANO

Translation: Teresa Sánchez Roura<sup>1</sup>

Romano Guardini says that ‘the visible form does not only ‘refer’ to a deep and invisible mystery, but it is also its manifestation – it reveals it at the same time that it watches over it.’<sup>2</sup> As an artist and a theologian<sup>3</sup>, I deeply believe that the theological creativity that explores reality with other languages, typical of our times, can save us from a broken and suffering history, from the static nature of fear and the vertigo of insecurity. Visual language – the artistic expressions in their materiality – is a means for a theological knowledge that truly connects us with G\*d. This is so since production processes transgress the limits of the ‘formal’, and are located on untrodden roads, in spaces of outer borders, in open and dialoguing contexts. Religious experience shares these qualities with art: perception, observation, learning and collective construction. By bringing together these two experiences, the aesthetic and the religious, events, causes, attributes and purposes are exchanged, and a renewed religious experience is then deconstructed, discarded, ordered and constructed again. From there, from the re-constituted, re-formulated and re-imagined, a creative action in the world is possible, leading it back to G\*d.

In this text I intend to relate religious experience to aesthetic experience. First, I will frame the current artistic context, defining the concept of contemporary art. Then I will link aesthetics to theology starting from a critique of theological aesthetics taking cultural changes into account. To this end, I

Fig. 1 Silvia Martínez Cano,  
*Devil Woman*, acrylic and oil  
on canvas, 2018.

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: All quotations are in Spanish in the original text. These have been translated into English. Please refer to the various authors for their original texts.

<sup>2</sup> Romano Guardini, *Los sentidos y el conocimiento de lo religioso* (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1965), p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.silviamartinezcano.es](http://www.silviamartinezcano.es)



This way we narrate life, we recreate it with imagination and creativity. Thus, we enter the last hermeneutical stage. It is the stage of creation, where our face is now a collective face of interconnected bodies. The personal experience of the encounter with those different from me, by welcoming them and being welcomed by them, makes our relationships strong unions against the grief, adversity or injustice of this world.

We recreate the relationship with G\*d, without intermediaries, which allows us a vital growth to make decisions about our lives and build our identity as women believers. Likewise, feeling like a 'visible' body connects our feelings and experiences. It interweaves the love and desire of G\*d with the intelligence, wisdom, autonomy and moral conscience that is awakened. In this infinite and creative complexity, which is proper to the human being, is where we celebrate the encounter with G\*d, in the diverse bodies that now do count. The collective diversity of women contributes new ways of encounter with G\*d and 'gives birth' (Jn 16: 21-23) to in-between spaces for the construction of these relationships (Fig. 6).

## CONCLUSIONS

Our artistic artefact, our Art/Theo/Logy, has been completed, since it has gone from the individual to the collective, from the sterile to the fertile, from the violent to the supportive.

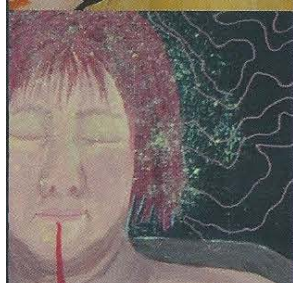
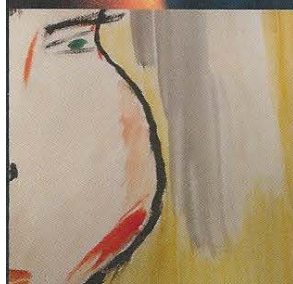
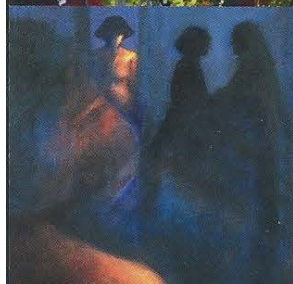
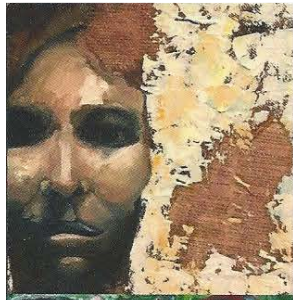
Every theology that seeks places of encounter is a theology that opens new windows to produce knowledge from the dialogic and polyphonic standpoints. The artistic process that has expressed this religious experience helps to imagine these spaces, where more dialogical attitudes can be born within theological knowledge. Art/Theo/Logy has allowed us to locate the corporeal within the field of research and the experience at the point of departure, because from the narrative we embrace the suffering caused by rejection and the possibility of rising again, from the hand of Jesus. The faces of women are no longer behind the text, and they have shown themselves with more light, with more clarity.

In the process, we discover three factors that enable personal transformation: openness, creativity and change.

The **openness** of the search, is sometimes planned and sometimes not, for the presence of G\*d in the nature of things. This allows us to understand what humanises us and what dehumanises us as women, and in this way, to show what is oppressing us and making us invisible and reject it.

The **creativity** enables us to think differently and to try new ways to define ourselves and situate ourselves with respect to G\*d. This produces slow, gradual but continuous changes. It produces a seed where there was oppression and death.





The contributors to this book have each given a unique perspective of their creative journey through journaling their process. The challenge of 'Enfleshing the Unconscious', beginning with meditation, has been met by seven female artists and artist/ theologians through various artistic expressions and the written word.

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