

edited by

**GRISELDA POLLOCK**  
and **VICTORIA TURVEY SAURON**

# THE SACRED AND THE FEMININE

imagination and sexual difference



# THE SACRED AND THE FEMININE

Imagination and Sexual Difference

EDITED BY

GRISELDA POLLOCK AND VICTORIA TURVEY SAURON

Published in 2007 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd  
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010  
[www.ibtauris.com](http://www.ibtauris.com)

In the United States of America and Canada distributed by Palgrave Macmillan  
a division of St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

Copyright © 2007 Griselda Pollock and Victoria Turvey Sauron

The right of Griselda Pollock and Victoria Turvey Sauron to be identified as the  
authors of this work has been asserted by the authors in accordance with the  
Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or any part  
thereof, may not be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or  
transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,  
recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN (HB): 978 1 84511 520 3

ISBN (PB): 978 1 84511 521 0

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

A full CIP record is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: available

Printed and bound in the Czech Republic by FINIDR, s.r.o.  
From camera-ready copy edited and supplied by the author

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## Chapter 1

- 1.1 Georgia O'Keeffe, *Cow's Skull with Calico Roses*, 1932, oil on canvas, 92.2 × 61.3 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago (Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Gift of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1947.712).
- 1.2 'Uncle Sam', photograph reproduced by Aby Warburg in his lecture 'Images from the region of the Pueblo Indians of North America', 21 April, 1923. Reproduced courtesy of the Warburg Institute, London.
- 1.3 Augustus John, *Jane Ellen Harrison* (1850–1928), 1909, oil on canvas, 62 × 75 cm, Newnham College, Cambridge.
- 1.4 *Red Cow*, 15–13,000 BCE, Lascaux Dordogne, France. French Ministry of Communication and Culture.
- 1.5 *Isis Suckling the Infant Horus*, Egyptian, Late Period, 664–525 BCE, Bronze, height 21.5 cm, Freud Museum, London.
- 1.6 (a) Master of Flémalle, *The Nativity*, 1420, oil on wood, 87 × 70 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon. Detail. (b) Sandro Botticelli, *Mystic Nativity*, 1500, oil on canvas, 108.6 × 74.9 cm, NG 1034, National Gallery, London. Detail.

## Chapter 8

- 8.1 Ranjana Thapalyal, *Lady Lotus*, 2000, colour transparency. Copyright Ranjana Thapalyal.
- 8.2 Ranjana Thapalyal, *Menaka*, 2000, colour transparency. Copyright Ranjana Thapalyal.

## Chapter 9

- 9.1 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Still.
- 9.2 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Still.
- 9.3 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Still.
- 9.4 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Still.

- 9.5 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Film strip.
- 9.6 Nina Danino, *Stabat Mater*, 1990. Still.

### Chapter 11

- 11.1 Paula Rego, *Nativity*, 2002, pastel on paper mounted on aluminium, 54 × 52 cm. Copyright Paula Rego. Photograph courtesy of Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., London.

### Chapter 12

- 12.1 Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Death of a Chicken)*, 1972, performance, University of Iowa, photographer unknown. Courtesy José Bedia, Miami.
- 12.2 The Painter of Louvre MNB 1148, attributed, *Leda and the Swan*, c.350–40 BCE, Apulian red figure ware loutrophoros, 86.AE.680, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.
- 12.3 Ana Mendieta. *Untitled (Blood and Feathers)*, 1974, Raquelin Mendieta Family Trust Collection.
- 12.4 Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622–25, marble, Borghese Gallery, Rome. Copyright 2006. Photo Scala, Florence/Luciano Romano.
- 12.5 Ana Mendieta, *Old Man's Creek or Tree of Life*, 1976, performance, Iowa city, Iowa, Raquelin Mendieta Family Trust Collection.
- 12.6 Ana Mendieta, *First Silueta or Flowers on Body*, 1973, performance, El Yagul, Oaxaca, Mexico, Hans Breder Collection.

### Chapter 13

- 13.1 Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, *Altar of the Cornaro Chapel (Ecstasy of St. Teresa)*, c.1645–52, marble, height 350 cm, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome. Copyright 1990 Photo Scala, Florence/Fondo Edifici di Culto.
- 13.2 Louise Bourgeois, *Homage to Bernini*, 1967, Bronze, 54.6 × 49.5 × 58.4 cm. Courtesy Cheim & Read, New York. Photograph: Peter Bellamy.
- 13.3 Louise Bourgeois, *Femme-Maison*, 1983, marble, 63.5 × 49.5 × 58.4 cm. Courtesy Cheim & Read, New York. Photograph: Allan Finkelman.

### Chapter 14

- 14.1 Helen Chadwick, *One Flesh*, 1985, photocopies, 160 × 107 cm. Copyright Helen Chadwick Estate. Courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries (Henry Moore Institute Archive).
- 14.2 Helen Chadwick, *Ecce*, 1987, leather, plywood, electric light and slide projection, 150 × 150 cm. Copyright Helen Chadwick Es-

tate. Courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries (Henry Moore Institute Archive).

- 14.3 Helen Chadwick, *The Birth of Barbie*, 1993, c-type photograph, 15 × 10.5 cm. Copyright Helen Chadwick Estate. Courtesy of Zelda Cheate Gallery.
- 14.4 Helen Chadwick, *Lofos Nymphon*, 1987, installation with canvases, oil paint and slide projections. Copyright Helen Chadwick Estate. Courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries (Henry Moore Institute Archive).

### Chapter 15

- 15.1 Tracey Emin, *May Dodge, My Nan*, 1963–93, framed memorabilia in five parts, dimensions variable. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube (London).
- 15.2 Tracey Emin, *My Bed*, installation Turner Prize Exhibition, Tate Gallery, London, 20 October 1999–23 January 2000. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube (London). Photograph: Stephen White.
- 15.3 Tracey Emin, *Homage to Edvard Munch and all My Dead Children*, 1998, single screen projection and sound, shot on Super 8, Duration: 2 minutes 10 seconds. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube (London).
- 15.4 Tracey Emin, *Exploration of the Soul*, 1994, hand-written text and photograph on paper, overall display dimensions variable, unique.
- 15.5 Foetal image, taken using a Philips Ultrasound HD11 XE, capable of 3D/4D colour imaging.
- 15.6 Tracey Emin, *The First Time I was Pregnant I Started to Crochet the Baby a Shawl*, 1999, yarn, needle, wood and Plexiglas and framed text, 141.5 × 40.5 × 40.5 cm. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube (London).
- 15.7 Tracey Emin, *Poor Love*, 1999, monoprint, 29.7 × 42 cm. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube (London). Photograph: Stephen White.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research for this book was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the University of Leeds, and the editors gratefully acknowledge that support. The book would not have appeared without the patient editorial and gifted design work of Anna Johnson. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Josine Opmeer, CentreCATH's former administrator, and the enthusiasm and courage of our editor at I.B.Tauris, Susan Lawson.

This volume uses Common Era (CE) and Before Common Era (BCE) in lieu of AD and BC for all dates.

## SERIES PREFACE

### NEW ENCOUNTERS

Arts, Cultures, Concepts

*Griselda Pollock*

*How do we think about visual art these days? What is happening to art history? Is visual culture taking its place? What is the status of cultural studies, in itself or in relation to its possible neighbours art, art history and visual studies? What is going on? What are the new directions? To what should we remain loyal?*

*New Encounters: Arts, Cultures, Concepts* proposes some possible ways of thinking through these questions. Firstly, the series introduces and works with the concept of a transdisciplinary initiative. This is not a synonym for the interdisciplinary combination that has become de rigueur. It is related to a second concept: research as *encounter*. Together transdisciplinary and encounter mark the interaction between ways of thinking, doing and making in the arts and humanities that retain distinctive features associated with disciplinary practices and objects: art, history, culture, practice, and the new knowledge that is produced when these different ways of doing and thinking encounter one another across, and this is the third intervention, *concepts*, circulating between different intellectual or aesthetic cultures, inflecting them, finding common questions in distinctively articulated practices. The aim is to place these different practices in productive relation to one another mediated by the circulation of concepts.

We stand at several cross-roads at the moment in relation to the visual arts and cultures, historical, and contemporary, and to theories and methods of analysis. *Cultural Analysis, Theory and History* (CATH) is offered as one experiment in thinking about how to maintain the momentum of the momentous intellectual, cultural revolution in the arts and humanities that characterized the last quarter of the twentieth century while adjusting to the different field of analysis created by it.



In the 1970s–1990s, the necessity, or the intrusion, according to your position, was Theory: a mythic concept with a capital T that homogenized vastly different intellectual undertakings. Over those decades, research in the arts and humanities was undoubtedly reconfigured by the engagement with structuralist and poststructuralist theories of the sign, sociality, the text, the letter, the image, the subject, the post-colonial, and above all, difference. Old disciplines were deeply challenged and new interdisciplines—called studies—emerged to contest the academic field of knowledge production and include hitherto academically ignored constituencies. These changes were wrought through specific engagements with Marxist, feminist, deconstructionist, psychoanalytical, discourse and minority theory. Texts and authors were branded according to their theoretical engagements. Such mapping produced divisions between the proliferating theoretical models. (Could one be Marxist, and feminist, and use psychoanalysis?) A deeper split, however, emerged between those who, in general, were theoretically oriented, and those who apparently did without theory: a position easily critiqued by the theoretically minded because being atheoretical is, of course, a theoretical position, just one that did not carry a novel identity associated with the intellectual shifts of the post-1968 university.

The impact of ‘the theoretical turn’ has been creative; it has radically reshaped work in the arts and humanities in terms of what is studied (content, topics, groups, questions) and also how it is studied (theories and methods). Yet some scholars currently argue that work done under such overt theoretical rubrics now appears tired; theory constrains the creativity of the new generation of scholars familiar, perhaps too familiar, with the legacies of the preceding intellectual revolution that can too easily be reduced to Theory 101 slogans (the author is dead, the gaze is male, the subject is split, there is nothing but text, etc.). The enormity of the initial struggles—the paradigm shifting—to be able to speak of sexual difference, subjectivity, the image, representation, sexuality, power, the gaze, postcoloniality, textuality, difference, fades before a new phase of normalization in which every student seems to bandy around terms that were once, and in fact, still are, challengingly difficult and provocative.

Theory, of course, just means thinking about things, puzzling closely over what is going on, reflecting intently on the process of that puzzling and thinking. A reactive turn away from active engagement with theoretical developments in the arts and humanities is increasingly evident in our area of academe. It is, however, dangerous and misleading to talk of a post-theory moment, as if we can relax after so much intellectual gymnastics and once again become academic couch-potatoes. The job of thinking critically is even more urgent as the issues we con-

front become even more complex, and we now have extended means of analysis that make us appreciate ever more the complexity of language, subjectivity, symbolic practices, affects and aesthetics. So how to continue the creative and critical enterprise fostered by the theoretical turn of the late twentieth century beyond the initial engagement determined by specific theoretical paradigms? How does it translate into *a practice of analysis that can be consistently productive?*

This series argues, following Mieke Bal's proposals for both cultural analysis and travelling concepts, that we can go forward, with and beyond, *by transdisciplinary encounters with and through concepts*. Concepts themselves arise inside specific theoretical projects. They now move out of—*travel from*—their own originating site to become tools for thinking within the larger domain of cultural analysis, a domain that seeks to create a space of encounter between the many practices that constitute the arts and humanities: the fields of thought that puzzle over what we are and what it is that we do, think, feel, say, understand and live.

Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History  
University of Leeds, 2007

# CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Series Preface—New Encounters <i>Griselda Pollock</i>	xiii
Editors' Introduction <i>Griselda Pollock and Victoria Turvey Sauron</i>	1
<b>Part I</b>	
1. Sacred Cows: Wandering in Feminism, Psychoanalysis and Anthropology <i>Griselda Pollock</i>	9
2. The Priestess of Athena Grows a Beard: Latent Citizenship in Ancient Greek Women's Ritual Practice <i>Barbara Goff</i>	49
3. The Sacred, the Feminine and French Feminist Theory <i>Daphne Hampson</i>	61
4. The Feminine, the Sacred and the Shared: The Ecumenical Space of the Sufi Dargah <i>Ananya Jahanara Kabir</i>	75
5. The Sacred and the Feminine: An African Response to Clément and Kristeva <i>Molara Ogundipe</i>	88

6. The Becoming-Woman of the East/West Conflict: The Western Sacralization of Life and the Feminine Politics of Death <i>Maria Margaroni</i>	111
7. Enunciating the Christian <i>Dieue</i> and Obscuring the Other: A Québec Perspective <i>Denise Couture</i>	125
8. Sringara Rasa: The Feminist Call of the Spiritual/Erotic Impulse in Indian Art <i>Ranjana Thapalyal</i>	135
<b>Part II</b>	
9. <i>Stabat Mater</i> —A Nameless Place: Film, the Feminine and the Sacred <i>Nina Danino</i>	150
10. Kathleen Raine: Poetry and Myth as Constructions of the Sacred and the Secret <i>Céline Boyer</i>	158
11. Paula Rego's (Her)ethical Visions <i>Maria Aline Seabra Ferreira</i>	166
12. From Leda to Daphne: Sacrifice and Virginity in the work of Ana Mendieta <i>Anne Creissels</i>	178
13. <i>Inside-out</i> : Sculpting Sacred Space in Bernini and Bourgeois <i>Victoria Turvey Sauron</i>	189
14. The Word Made Flesh: Re-embodying the Madonna and Child in Helen Chadwick's <i>One Flesh</i> <i>Leila McKellar</i>	202
15. Something to Show for It? Notes on Creativity and Termination in the Work of Tracey Emin <i>Vanessa Corby</i>	213
<i>Notes</i>	231
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	271
<i>Contributors</i>	287
<i>Index</i>	293

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

*Griselda Pollock and Victoria Turvey Sauron*

The initiating editor for this collection, Victoria Turvey Sauron, is an art historian working on the visual representation of the ecstatic woman in Western art and culture as an undecidable figure of the challenge to art and culture posed by female sexuality and subjectivity. Famously, Bernini's sculptural installation of Teresa of Avila in her vision (13.1) has challenged interpreters to deal with the ambivalence of the image: hovering between a spiritual and an erotic experience. Tracing the genealogy of the iconography and visuality of the enraptured female body through to contemporary representations that appear more overtly sexual, Victoria Turvey Sauron identifies the problematic of a visual representation of embodied feminine subjectivity and sexuality that refuses monistic interpretations and instead brings into view shifting borderlines between interior and exterior.

This book further arose out of one of CentreCATH's strategic research themes: the Politics and Ethics of Indexicality and Virtuality—a challenging exploration of both the imaginary and the semiotic in relation to embodiment, materiality, sociality and history itself. Virtuality and virtual realities appear to be the territory of new media and technologies that are capable of unforeseen fabrications and hence destabilizations of our notions of the real, possible, and actual or artficed. Yet philosophers claim that thought is virtual, language is virtual, the psyche is virtual in a different sense of holding open potentiality and change. We must distinguish between debates about virtualities and materialities and virtualities and indexicalities: the indexical drawn from the semiotics of C. S. Peirce retains its status as a form of meaning-making, a signifying process, in which the relation between signifier and signified has some kind of existential or experiential connection.

At this intersection, the concepts travelling in this collection are the sacred and the feminine. These open out onto a politics of meanings

and subjectivities inscribed in a range of practices of thought, representation, analysis, visualization and even political action. The sacred is not synonymous with the divine, even if the ways in which religions conceptualize the divine render it sacred. Nor is the feminine synonymous with women or social constructions of gender. Grasped theoretically and analytically, the feminine points to ways of thinking and principles of social organization around the eternal challenge of human responses to living and dying, and the making sense of the times, generations, sexualities and bodies involved in these defining processes. This book is not situated within theology or religious studies, although many papers may cross over with those disciplines, and writers speak from specific religious, cultural and geo-political positions. The book addresses feminist questions of creativity and the imaginary that stand firmly on anthropological, philosophical and psychoanalytical ground.

The collection is both an art-historical engagement with and theoretical response to the published correspondence between Julia Kristeva and Catherine Clément titled *The Feminine and the Sacred* that appeared in 1998 and was translated into English in 2001.<sup>1</sup> In a new, almost superseded tradition of women's epistolary literature, a Marxist-Jewish anthropologist and essayist travelling between Senegal and India corresponds with a self-declared Marxist psychoanalyst atheist deeply steeped in both the passionate Christianity of her father and in avant-garde textuality. In a series of embattled letters, radically different conceptions of the relation between women and the sacred are explored. Linked with Victoria Turvey Sauron's research, Clément opens with the suggestion that 'the sacred among women may express an instantaneous revolt that passes through the body and cries out.' Kristeva resists such hystericization and considers 'life as the intimate visage of the sacred'. As their arguments unfold through proposition and counter-proposition, revealing deep rifts between their underpinning cultural imaginaries, they seek to disentangle the sacred from issues of belief and religion in order to explore the sacred as a facet of human subjectivity: 'an unconscious perception the human being has of its untenable eroticism: always on the borderline between nature and culture, the animalistic and the verbal, the sensible and the nameable? What if the sacred were ... the jouissance of that *cleavage*?'<sup>2</sup>

Kristeva's position is to place the sacred, therefore, between life and meaning, to which she believes women have a particular and overdetermined relation through both the psychic freight of becoming mothers and the disposition of the feminine in terms of a phallogentric symbolic within which the feminine subject is a figure, not of exclusion, but of disillusion and hence less prey to unquestioned belief. For Clément the sacred does not lend itself to such privileging. Rather it blows the

roof off sexual difference, playing figuratively through forms of ambivalence: bisexuality or hybridity playing between purity and defilement.

Moving on through sacred cows, the Marian cult of the Virgin, pollution and sacrifice, their correspondence ends in late 1997 after the funeral of Princess Diana and the extraordinary public expression of grief associated with it. What happened in that moment around the tragic and sudden death of this young woman? Each has some thoughts on massacre and healing, on the necessary privacy of the sacred and public totalization, of the intersection between body and thought, biology and memory.

In a culture in which popular texts such as Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* (2003) or Kevin Smith's film *Dogma* (1999) are recirculating a certain kind of religious mystery associated with a reclaiming of sacredness for either the Mary of Magdala or Mary of Nazareth's descendants—that both build their challenge to orthodox religious Christianity on linking the Christ figure with a woman in sexual and procreative love, sensible and nameable—we must surely resist this degradation of the problematic relation of the sacred in human culture and sexual difference to a comforting recreation of a sacred feminine: a mythically divine woman. Instead this book has drawn upon the work of theoretically engaged international cultural thinkers from several disciplines and many traditions to meet the challenge of thinking critically the imaginary space, borderline, cleavage, alterity, that is the meaning of the sacred. Derived from the Latin word *sacer*, it means that which is set apart. *Sacer* gives rise to sacrifice: to be made set apart. The Hebrew word *kadosh* has the same resonance. Thus it marks a border, the fundamental mark of division and difference that is the condition of meaning and in the Hegelian tradition of becoming. Yet it also retains the relation it thus creates between its own becoming-other and that which is set up in the same instance as the profane, the ordinary, the unproblematic and unchallenging, the knowable, the masterable, utilitarian and productive.

In *Moses and Monotheism*, Sigmund Freud provided a psychoanalytical interpretation of the sacred.<sup>3</sup> Defined fundamentally by a prohibition that sets something apart from use, Freud sees the incest taboo and exogamy that follows it as prime exemplars of the sacred. Far from deriving from any remarkable features, the sacred inscribes into culture the 'will of the primal father', a figure of terrifying omnipotence and selfishness. Whether Freud's conception of human prehistory remains valid or not—it was after all a retrospective projection based on evidence regularly thrown up by patients and cultures in the present of analysis—the legacy of his analysis is to remind us of the sources of

the emotional or affective dimensions of experiences or ideas to which we give the epithet sacred as a way of marking a specialness, an awe, an intensity. These sources are in the complex movement of the human subject from the conditions of pre-human birth into full sociality in the matrix of relations to powerful others, powerful needs, and powerful rules.

This second book in the *New Encounters* series is a small contribution to the creation of a theoretical and analytical space in which to consider the relations within this imaginary territory: the sacred and sexual difference. This is considered from an actively international feminist perspective that has run through and transformed the many disciplines for which this conjunction holds intellectual interest: art, literature, art history, theology, philosophy, critical theory, anthropology—in a word: thought.

Our title has reversed the terms of the Kristeva/Clément study: drawing on the mis-given title of a painting by Venetian artist Titian, known as *Sacred and Profane Love*. By placing the *feminine* in the position of the profane in the oppositional pairing, sacred and profane, we wish also to open a space to question the claim made by Julia Kristeva that there is a special intimacy between the feminine and the sacred, while accepting that the sacred is a fascinating area of research for transdisciplinary feminist studies that wish both to examine the genealogies of the feminine and the sacred and critically to explore new relations between body and language, the sensible and the verbal, based not on being set apart, but on being the active and embodied, hence psychically differenced makers of meaning.

The essays in the first part of the book have an ecumenical look which is, in fact, an international perspective on the more formalized traditions of thinking the sacred associated with both classical pagan, classical Hindu and the varieties of monotheistic traditions. Starting with a framing essay on sacred cows that journeys from Lascaux and the Hebrew Bible to contemporary feminist psychoanalytical theory, the first group of essays passes through analyses of the sacred and the feminine in Christian, post-Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Greek and Jewish thought to confront a challenging question of life and death in the contemporary imaginary world of that most challenging of recent phenomena: the suicide-bomber, analysed daringly here in the context of Kristevan thought on the psycho-economy of violence. Feminist cultural analysis provides the space for encounters outside of and across confined disciplinary spaces so that the problematic of thinking life and death, self and the other—the core of both the sacred and the feminine—can emerge from traditions that are formally perceived as patriarchal or phallogocentric.



The second part of the book takes the challenge of thinking the sacred and the feminine through aesthetic practices, music, film, image, form, movement. The focus falls much more on cultural analysis. Here it is the productions themselves, whether art, poetry, or film, which form the lens through which the concepts of the sacred and the feminine are seen.

Upon reading these eight papers together, a common discourse emerges. The past, whether in the form of visual or literary culture, myth or personal history or trauma, interacts with the present in the formation of a space both deeply personal to the creative artist, writer or academic but also able to negotiate much wider questions.

Nina Danino's presentation and contextualization of her film *Stabat Mater* is the first paper in this second part. Beginning with a powerful portrayal of the voice of the mother, which also haunts her film, Danino ponders the specificity of the visuality, materiality and temporality of film and its relation to language, sound and voice. Positioned as the fulcrum of this book, Danino's presentation of her creative work functions as a compelling proposal for a description of the space of the sacred and the feminine.

The representation, in the text of an academic article, of the visual, auditory and temporal experience of watching a film, while acting as an exemplar of the textual capture of this elusory medium also acts as an introduction to the second part of the book, where a combination of experienced and emerging researchers present cultural articulations of the encounter between the two concepts which form the heart of this book.

Ranjana Thapalyal's invitation to rethink the depiction of the space of the sacred with reference to the powerful Hindu feminine interacts productively with Céline Boyer's evocation of myth in her work on the expression of the sacred in poetry. Boyer shows how concepts from ancient cultures, such as the myth of Isis, are part of a monomyth of rebirth which the poetess Kathleen Raine inscribes in the feminine, in a poetry sited in corporeality, maternity, sacrifice—these metaphors enabling the poet to take on the role of the shaman, the conduit for the inexpressible sacred emerging from within the secret of her own consciousness.

The creative act, sited in the feminine, is also the subject of the five following papers. Themes of motherhood and the body return in Maria Aline Seabra Ferreira's work on Paula Rego. Ferreira argues that Rego's representation of the Virgin Mary in labour recovers the Virgin's physicality and bodiliness. Tracing representations of the pregnant Virgin throughout the history of art, Ferreira reads Rego's portrayal of the Virgin Mary as well as her representations of angels through the writ-