

Proposed Title

Participation and Witness in the Creative Act: A Womanist Exploration of Genesis 1, 2 and Exodus 35, 36

Background

The act of making, of developing aesthetic work, is often understood through lenses of production and profit. While reception and interpretation are based on consumerist engagement with the work, the process of making offers sustained reflection that points to the possibility of new creation. The act itself is imbued with divine relationship. What we see in Genesis 1, 2 and Exodus 35, 36 is a commitment to creating that is rooted in the communal experience. The artist functions as a co-creator with God, bringing their intention, inspiration, and vision to the process of making. The finished work is then shared with an audience, whose engagement is crucial in witnessing God's redemptive dream at play in the world. Taken together, there is a witness in the journey toward making and a shared witness in response to the making.

Womanist theology, itself born from engagement with aesthetic works by and about makers on the margins of society, models a theology of making guided by divine inspiration, human participation, and life giving relationship to the Creator.

Thesis Statement

The creative act outlined in Genesis 1 and 2, and the resulting aesthetic work produced in Exodus 35 and 36, each bear witness to the redemptive dream of God on earth. A womanist reading of Scripture points to creative making as a witness to the possibility of new creation, empowering those made in the imago dei to then create work that honors a similar expression.

Project Purpose

An exploration of Genesis and Exodus uncovers the spirit of redemption behind aesthetic work, emphasizing the process of making alongside the finished work. The Hebrew Bible begins with the story of a Creator God ordering the world in goodness, then creating human beings in God's image. Divine relationship is disrupted in the Garden of Eden, yet God continues to create a path forward for divine and human relationship to flourish. The connection is further solidified through the creation of the Tabernacle in Exodus, where specific artisans are identified as having been given the Spirit of God to create a work that functions as a new creation of Eden. Today, humanity is still invited to participate in and bear witness to the Spirit of God at work in the world through the act of making.

Womanist theology offers a framework for both understanding the participatory nature of creative making and communal response to the finished work. It is a theology informed in part by aesthetic works in literature, visual art, and music. These makers embraced the medium's unique capacity for storytelling as a means of witness and formation to experiences of those rendered unseen. These works speak to the vision of a world in which all peoples are seen and dignified, while simultaneously bearing witness to the systemic and relational failures which suppress that vision from bearing fruit for the marginalized. The project offers a redemptive understanding of creativity for today's faith communities and develops a theology of creating in light of womanist witness.

Intended Audience

This work is intended for artists and makers who identify in the margins of society. The intent is to equip these creatives with an understanding of how to produce aesthetic work in a manner that is altogether sustainable, communal, and redemptive. For those within communities of faith, this project offers biblical interpretation on the divine presence at work in the process of making, and creativity's capacity to aid the revelation of new creation.

Learning Goals

1. To explore a womanist understanding of creativity in Genesis 1, 2 and Exodus 35, 36
2. To develop a theology of making in light of womanist witness
3. To provide models for participation in the creative act
4. To offer a redemptive understanding of creativity for communities of faith today

Preliminary Outline

Introduction - The Consumption of Creativity

Chapter 1 - Womanist Witness to Scripture: An Exploration of Genesis 1, 2 and Exodus 35, 36

Chapter 2 - A Theology of Creating: Inspiration, Relationship and Witness

Chapter 3 - Participation in the Creative Act: Exemplars and Visionaries

Conclusion - The Redemption of Creativity

Sample Bibliography

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Proposed Schedule

1. May to August 2026 - Foundational Research and Sources
2. September to December 2026 - Develop First Draft of Thesis
3. February to March 2026 - Develop Second Draft of Thesis
4. March 31, 2026 - Submit Completed Draft to Advisor
5. April 2026 - Receive reviewed Thesis from Advisor and Reader
6. May 2026 - Submit Completed Thesis to Library

