FEMINIST BIBLICAL STUDIES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Society of Biblical Literature

The Bible and Women

An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History

Edited by Jorunn Økland, Irmtraud Fischer,
Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Adriana Valerio

The Bible and Women
The Contemporary Period
Volume 9.1: Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century

FEMINIST BIBLICAL STUDIES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SCHOLARSHIP AND MOVEMENT

Edited by

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Society of Biblical Literature
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Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

Abbreviations

ANQ	*Andover Newton Quarterly*
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BiKi	*Bibel und Kirche*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CH	*Church History*
CR:BS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
Enc	*Encounter*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien
GHAT	Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HThK	Herders Theologischer Kommentar
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
INPUT	Interdisziplinäre Paderborner Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IFFTR	Internationale Forschungen in Feministischer Theologie und Religion
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JESWTR	*Journal of the European Society of Women in Theological Research*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JHS	*Journal of the History of Sexuality*
JITC	*Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*
JRT	*Journal of Religious Thought*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
MQ	*Mankind Quarterly*
MR	*The Massachusetts Review*
MWJHR	*Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
NRTh	*Nouvelle revue théologique*
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RelSRev	*Religious Studies Review*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RIBLA	*Revista de interpretación bíblica latino-americana*
RivB	*Rivista Biblica italiana*
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBLGPBS	Society of Biblical Literature Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship
StPat	*Studia Patavina*
TD	*Theology Digest*
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TP	*Theologia Practica*
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
WSQ	*Women's Studies Quarterly*
WW	*Word and World*
ZNT	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

Between Movement and Academy: Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century

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According to its main editors, this encyclopedia, Bible and Women, is conceived as a reception-history project in theology and gender research that originated in Europe and developed into an international undertaking. They understand the project as follows:

> This encyclopedia could … be seen as a gender-inclusive display room of what the reception history of the Bible might also be if we include a focus on the reception of gender-relevant texts and interpretations generated by women.… They represent, in fact, an untapped world that we believe biblical scholars should pay more attention to rather than continuing to inhabit only a small part of the "museum."[1]

1. Charting Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century

While this is a very important goal, the present volume on the twentieth century seeks more than just to occupy a room in the "museum" of reception history. Rather, it seeks to chart a rupture, or break, in the malestream reception history of the Bible, which includes wo/men's Bible readings, and it does so by reconceptualizing biblical studies in a feminist key. It uses the much controverted term "feminism" not in the narrow sense of women or gender studies but in a "performative" sense that is spelled out and qualified differently

1. Jorunn Økland, Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Purto, and Adriana Valerio, "Introduction—Women, Bible, and Reception History: An International Project in Theology and Gender Studies," in *Torah* (Bible and Women 1; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 28.

in different social-cultural and theoretical-religious locations. The f-word, "feminist," serves here as an umbrella term for gender, womanist, liberationist, postcolonial, Asian, African or indigenous, Latina, queer, interreligious, and transnational studies and many other kyriarchy-critical perspectives and approaches. Moreover, the volume situates the topic "women and the Bible" in the space between wo/men's movements for justice and liberation on the one hand and the academic study of sacred Scriptures on the other.

However, the volume's stated restriction to the twentieth century is somewhat misleading, since feminist biblical studies have their roots in the women's movements of the nineteenth century. Beginning in the nineteenth century with works such as Grace Aguilar's *Women of Israel*,[2] newly edited by Mayer I. Gruber, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Woman's Bible*, feminist studies moved in the twentieth century into the academy. It continues to articulate feminist biblical knowledge into the twenty-first century. While the roots of academic feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century wo/men's movements around the globe are unquestionable, it is not certain whether we will use our analytic academic tools to "dismantle the master's house" (Audre Lorde) in the twenty-first century, rather than seeking merely to gain more space in the "master's museum" of the academy. To chart or to map biblical studies in the twentieth century and to foster it into the twenty-first, we need not only to ask what kind of analysis to bring to bear on the biblical text, but we must also continue to ask, in the interest of the wo/men's movements around the globe: "How do we move from analyzing what is or has been to announcing the advent of what might or should be?"[3] When mapping the genealogy of feminist biblical interpretation, it becomes evident that much remains to be done.

This collection of essays, therefore, begins this initial work by charting the efforts of feminist biblical studies around the globe, if only in a preliminary way. It does so despite limited written resources and feminist historical scholarship for this task. It is important to chart the terrain of feminist biblical studies so that our feminist history is recorded and not forgotten. We need many more dissertations, research projects, oral histories, and archives to gather and research the beginnings, developments, and institutionalizations of feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century so that it can continue to flourish in the twenty-first. This collection of essays can do so only episodically, since such extensive scientific historiographic work on feminist biblical

2. Grace Aguilar, *The Women of Israel* (ed. Mayer I. Gruber; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2011); first published in 1851 by Appleton.

3. Virginia Burrus, "Mapping as Metamorphosis: Initial Reflections on Gender and Ancient Religious Discourse," in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele; Leiden: Brill: 2007), 1–10, here 3.

studies is still lacking. But it does provide substantive work on the development of feminist biblical studies. Hence, this volume must be seen as a first major step on the road toward a history of feminist biblical interpretation that must be continued and strengthened in the interest of progressive movements around the world.

This initial mapping of feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century seeks to explore four areas of inquiry demanding further investigation. It attempts first to chart the beginnings and developments of feminist biblical studies not only in the U.S. and Europe, but as a conversation among feminists around the world. In a second step, it introduces, reviews, and discusses the hermeneutic religious spaces created by feminist biblical studies, and in a third segment it discusses academic methods of reading and interpretation that were developed to "dismantle the master's house" (Audre Lorde) of androcentric language and kyriarchal authority. The book's fourth, concluding section returns to the first with work that transgresses academic boundaries in order to exemplify the transforming, inspiring, and institutionalizing feminist work that has been and is being done to change religious mindsets of domination and to enable wo/men to engage in a critical reading of the Bible.

The encyclopedia project of which this volume is a part rightly assumes that wo/men[4] have read, understood, and applied biblical texts and ideas to their lives throughout the centuries. What was new in the twentieth century, and what will be highlighted in this volume, is not only that wo/men for the first time were able to join the ranks of biblical scholars, but also that we developed feminist approaches and theories of interpretation. A feminist reception history that traces the interactions between wo/men and the Bible, therefore, cannot be solely interested in how the text has been understood by wo/men and applied throughout history. It also must analyze the powers that have excluded wo/men from the authoritative traditions of interpretation. Thus, we need also to recognize how feminist biblical studies have sought to interrupt and rupture not only the malestream reception history and *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the Bible, but also the structures of domination that determine not only men's but also wo/men's biblical interpretations.

Feminist scholars in religion have not simply joined the long and exclusive "procession" of clergy men and men of letters (Virginia Woolf), but we have insisted that the study of the Bible and its reception history must be changed, since such malestream scholarship has not only theorized and served interests of domination, but has also silenced wo/men as recognized subjects of

4. I write wo/men in such a fractured way not only in order to indicate that wo/men are not the same or have an essence in common but also to include disenfranchised men.

interpretation by excluding us from professional biblical studies. Hence, feminist studies have raised the issues of power, exclusion, and domination. In the latter part of the twentieth century, postcolonial, differently abled, and religiously situated African, Asian, and Latin-American critical scholars of emancipation joined in this work.

Engaging the definition of feminism ascribed to Cheris Kramarae and Paula Treichler, which states that "women are people," I understand feminism in a political sense as the radical notion that wo/men are fully entitled and responsible citizens in society, academy, and organized religions. At the SBL meeting in 2010, the authors present adopted the following exposition of the meaning of "feminist," which Monica Melanchthon articulated as follows. Feminist work:

- must challenge/destabilize/subvert the subordination of wo/men, rather than strengthen or reinforce it;
- must reflect appreciation of and respect for wo/men's experience by acknowledging wo/men's capacities and agency;
- must be sensitive to context—both the immediate and possibly the larger context as well;
- must be critical of the manner in which wo/men have both aided and resisted oppression, subjugation, and violence;
- must have as its consequence far-reaching changes in religion and society, as well as political and revolutionary significance. Hence, it must be practical, this-worldly, transformative, renewing, and transitional.

Hopefully, other volumes of the encyclopedia will take over these ethical-political imperatives as critical interpretive lenses and criteria, whether or not they adopt the identification "feminist."

In line with this understanding of feminist work, the articles in this volume indicate that feminist biblical studies have their roots in feminist movements for change in religion. This comes to the fore particularly in the reports from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as in those from Europe and the U.S. They also indicate that feminist biblical studies are currently in danger of becoming ensconced in academic readings and debates rather than in developing methods and habits of interpretation that empower wo/men in their struggles for survival, dignity, and rights. This danger can be seen especially in the U.S. and Europe, where wo/men have gained greater access to the academy.

Insofar as feminist biblical studies have gained a foothold in universities and theological schools, they must fulfill institutional requirements and

academic standards. Thus, many young feminist scholars no longer have the time and freedom to work with wo/men who read the Bible or to study how wo/men use it. Moreover, they are encouraged to write dissertations and pen articles that are "acceptable" in terms of academic standards and interests, but not in terms of the needs of the movement. This pressure to conform to traditional academic standards has proven costly to the continuation of feminist studies in religion. For instance, we need more dissertations that study the history of the development of feminist movements in religion and ethnographic works that elaborate feminist biblical studies in the contexts of academy and wo/men's conscientization. We are lacking research that focuses, for instance, on the work of leading scholars in the field, and on oral histories of wo/men rabbis and ministers who have shaped the movement.

We also lack institutional spaces and foundations that would sustain the academic and activist work that has been done and that will support such work in the future. We lack critical feminist books and electronic media for children, materials for grammar and high school teaching, and Bible study materials for religious communities. The contributions to this volume celebrate the creative work that has been and is done, but at the same time also indicate the work we have still ahead of us.

Since its contributors seek to record and sustain such work, I want to contextualize this volume by focusing on the theoretical framework articulated in various ways by its contributors and the critical lenses of interpretation that are needed for future work in order to sustain critical feminist biblical studies in the theoretical and practical space "between" movement and academy. Obviously, any articulation and delineation of such a theoretical framework is shaped by each author's own theoretical perspective. Yet, I venture to say that most of the contributions in this volume work with an intersectional analytic of domination, although they may use different nomenclatures, and are rooted in and indebted to wo/men's struggles for justice and change.

2. A Critical Feminist Decolonizing Analytic

Wo/men's studies began by naming the cultural-political power at work in our world as patriarchy, which literally means the father's domination over the members of his household, but was then generally understood as the domination of man over woman.[5] Since the mid-1980s, this key category of feminist analysis has been problematized and replaced by that of gender.

5. Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender, and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Patriarchy," in *An A to Z of Feminist Theology* (ed. Lisa Isherwood and

2.1. Gender

In the 1970s, women's studies distinguished social gender roles from biological sex, and by the mid-1980s gender studies emerged as a distinct field of inquiry that questions seemingly universal beliefs about woman and man and attempts to unmask the cultural, societal, and political roots of gender.[6] Since then, gender has become a key analytic category alongside race, class, age, and colonialism, an analysis that has led to an "adding up of oppressions" approach, or an adding-up of the diverse structures of domination working alongside each other and constituting different dualistic frameworks of analysis. This dualistic gender analytic has constituted the notion of diversity as an aggregate of such dualistic identity markers. Women's studies scholars first objected to the introduction of this analytic category because it no longer articulated that *wo/men* were the focal point of feminist analysis. It is also interesting to observe that the analytics of gender arrived on the scene at the time when neoliberal globalization and postmodern academic discourses gained ground worldwide. Moreover, by replacing the central analytic categories of *patriarchy* and *androcentrism* (male-centered ideology) with gender, the question of power relations was muted and often eclipsed. Neglecting the question of power relations is also in danger of overlooking the harmful

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Dorothea McEwan; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 173–74; Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil, 1990). See for instance Ernst Bornemann, *Das Patriarchat: Ursprung und Zukunft unseres Gesellschaftssystems* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1991); Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (New York: Palgrave, 1999); Lorraine Code, "Patriarchy," in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* (ed. Lorraine Code; London: Routledge, 2000), 378–79; Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (trans. Richard Nice; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

6. Conversation partners in this section are Marjorie Agosín, ed., *Women, Gender, and Human Rights: A Global Perspective* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001); Dennis Baron, *Grammar and Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). Hadumond Bussmann and Renate Hof, eds., *Genus: Geschlechterforschung/Gender Studies in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften: Ein Handbuch* (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 2005); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End, 1990); Judith Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Semeia Studies 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); and my "Gender, Sprache, und Religion: Feministisch-theologische Anfragen," in *Erträge: 60 Jahre Augustana* (Neuendettelsau: Augustana Hochschule, 2008), 83–90; online: http://www.augustana.de/dokumente/ertraege/ertraege_neu/jubilaeums_sonderheft_2008.pdf.

effects of gendered language. Gendered language articulates power relations and reinscribes cultural-religious gender assumptions. Western androcentric languages and discourses do not just marginalize wo/men or eliminate us from historical records, but as kyriocentric languages they also construct the meaning of being a woman or a man differently. Hence, feminist studies in general, and feminist religious studies in particular, must confront this problem of gendered language.

Grammatically masculine language functions as so-called "generic" language, a "conventional" language function that obscures the presence of wo/men. Wo/men are subsumed under masculine typed language such as "citizens," "presidents," or "chairmen" which is not just male, but also *kyrios*-determined language. In order to lift into consciousness the linguistic violence of so-called generic male-centered language, I use the term "wo/men" and not "men" in an inclusive way. I suggest that whenever we read "wo/men" we understand it in the generic inclusive sense. In English, wo/men includes men, s/he includes he, and fe/male includes male. (However, this wordplay is only possible in English, but not in Spanish or German, making such an inclusive/generic hearing/speaking very difficult in these languages). Feminist studies of language have elaborated that Western androcentric language systems understand language as both generic and as gender-specific. Wo/men always must think at least twice, if not more times, in order to adjudicate whether or not we are meant by "generic" terms such as "men," "humans," "brothers," or "professors."

One can illustrate how such supposedly generic language works with reference to social position in advertisements that read: "University X is an affirmative action institution and invites applications from African, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American, and women candidates," as though these different types of Americans are all men and wo/men are only gendered but do not belong to racial and ethnic minority groups. African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American wo/men are thus doubly invisible in gendered language systems.

Moreover, it must not be overlooked that the meaning of the gender marker "woman" is unstable and shifting, and depends not so much on its sex/gender relation but on the sociopolitical context of the time and place in which it is used. For example, although the expression "woman" today is used interchangeably with "female," and thus has become a generic sex-based term, until very recently it was applied to lower-class females only. One can perceive the historical ambiguity of the term "woman" much more easily if one compares it with the term "lady," an appellation that readily reveals its race, class, and colonial bias. Not only has "lady" been restricted to wo/men of higher status or educational refinement, it has also symbolized *true womanhood* and

femininity. A statement such as "slaves were not wo/men" offends our commonsense understanding, whereas a statement such as "slaves were not ladies" makes perfect sense.

The sociopolitical classification of gender, like its grammatical counterpart, does not always correspond to the biological classification of sex. Anthropologists have pointed out that not all cultures and languages know of only two sexes/genders, and historians of gender have argued that even in Western culture the dual sex/gender system is of modern origin. Thomas Laqueur,[7] for instance, has maintained that a decisive shift took place in modernity from the ancient one-sex model to the present dichotomous, two-sex model. Wo/men were once believed to have the same sex and genitals as men except that the wo/men's were inside the body, as opposed to the men's, which were outside. In this one-sex model, the vagina was understood to be an interior penis; the labia the foreskin; the uterus the scrotum; and the ovaries the testicles.

What it meant to be a *man* or a *woman* in the ancient one-sex model was determined by social rank and by one's place in the household, however, and not by sexual organs. As a free man or as a slave woman, one performed a cultural role according to one's social status, and was not thought to be biologically one of two incommensurable sexes. Not sex, but the social status of the free, elite, propertied male head of household determined superior gender status. Hence, the ancients did not need to resort to sexual difference for supporting the claim that freeborn wo/men were inferior to freeborn men. Rather, because freeborn wo/men were subordinates, their "nature" was believed to be inferior.

Beginning with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the two-sex model—the notion that there are two stable, opposite sexes—emerges. In this period, the commonly held notion originates that states that the economic, political, and cultural lives of wo/men and men, or their gender roles, are based on two biologically given sexes. Just as in antiquity the body was seen as reflecting the cosmological order, so in modernity the body and sexuality are seen as representing and legitimating the social-political order. Because the Enlightenment's claims for democracy and equality excluded freeborn wo/men and subordinate men from full citizenship, new arguments had to be fashioned if elite freeborn men were to justify elite wo/men's exclusion from the public domain.

The promise of democracy, that wo/men and disenfranchised men were full citizens, generated new anti-wo/men arguments based on nature, physi-

7. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

ology, and science. For instance, those who opposed the democratic participation of freeborn wo/men sought evidence for wo/men's mental and physical unsuitability for the public sphere by arguing that wo/men's bodies and biology made them unfit to participate. Similar arguments were made with respect to subordinate men and colonized peoples.

The theory of "separate spheres" for men and wo/men thus arose alongside the dual sex/gender model. In Enlightenment discourses, elite wo/men were no longer construed as lesser men but as totally different from and complementary to men, as beings of a "purer race," or an "angelic species" less affected than men by sexual drives and desires. In order to bar wo/men from participation in the new civil society, the physical and moral differences between men and wo/men were conceived to ensure that elite wo/men and subordinate people were excluded from political decision making. Two incommensurable sexes/genders were the result of these ideological practices. However, one must observe that these gendered identity constructs primarily applied to elite bourgeois men and wo/men.

In short, gender is a sociopolitical institution as well as an ideological representation. The assumption of natural sex/gender differences serves as a preconstructed frame of meaning for individuals and cultural institutions. By presenting the sex/gender system of male and female or masculine and feminine as universal, this preconstructed frame of meaning obscures the reality that the very notion of two sexes is a sociopolitical construct for maintaining domination and not a biological essence. Sexual differences depend on sociocultural communicative practices and therefore can be developed differently or changed. Individuals recognize gender and appropriate gender ascriptions because they perceive them as real. Gender is thus a product and process not only of representation but also of self-identification. Understanding gender as a product and process makes it possible to analyze cultural masculinity and femininity with the intention of changing them.

2.2. Intersectionality[8]

Since wo/men's and gender studies have tended to focus on male/masculine power over wo/men but not on race, class, heteronormativity, disability, colonialism, and other structures of domination, a new mode of analysis

8. See Helma Lutz, Maria Theresa Herrera Vivar, and Linda Supik, eds., *Fokus Intersektionalität: Bewegungen und Verortungen eines vielschichtigen Konzepts* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2010); Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology, and Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2010); and Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, *Social Change and Intersectional Activism* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).

has become necessary. When race and colonialism come into view, then the gender dualism of masculine-feminine is generally transposed into the dualisms "First World and Two-Thirds World wo/men" or "white wo/men and wo/men of color." Thus, the dualistic gender identity framework engenders the dichotomy between the space marked "white wo/men/First World wo/men" and the space marked "wo/men of color/Two-Thirds World wo/men." Identity politics claims that white, First World feminists can speak only about and in the name of white, First World wo/men, whereas wo/men of color/Two-Thirds World wo/men are called to form coalitions and considered able to speak for all wo/men of the so-called Two-Thirds World. Feminist scholars in religion and theologians, so this argument goes, cannot but articulate either a "white/First world" or "a wo/men of color/Two-Thirds World" the*logy and hermeneutics.

Over and against such a discursive identity politics conceptualized in terms of gender, one must recognize that identity is not only constituted by gender but also by immigrant status, class, education, nationality, sexuality, ability, race, religion, and more. Hence, identity must be seen as multiplex and shaped by intersecting structures of dominations. One cannot assume that wo/men's identity is the same whether it is that of wo/men of color or that of white wo/men. If wo/men are not just determined by gender but also by race, class, heteronormativity, imperialism, and many more such structures of domination, it is necessary to develop a critical analytic that is able to deconstruct the global cultural paradigm of the "White Lady" and the power structures she embodies.

Conceptualizing gender as a practice that produces sex differences that are inflected by race, class, sexual preference, culture, religion, age, and nationality allows one to see that individual wo/men are much more than simply gendered. Rather, the intersection of race, class, sexuality, nation, and religion constructs what it means to be a "wo/man" differently in different sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Variegated feminist, postcolonial, and critical race theories have come together, therefore, in developing the analytic of intersectionality as an instrument to analyze the complex situation of global domination and to demonstrate that the structures of heteronormativity, gender, race, and class are inextricably intertwined.[9] These structures are often seen as working alongside each other, but have not been integrated to accomplish a critical intersectional analysis.

9. Lynn Weber, *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), v.

The term *intersectionality* was coined by the legal scholar Kimberly Crenshaw, and entails "the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually multiplicative vectors of race, gender, class, sexuality, and imperialism."[10] The theory of intersectionality has been articulated in a threefold way: as a theory of marginalized subjectivity, as a theory of identity, and as a theory of the matrix of oppressions. In the first iteration, intersectional theory refers only to multiply marginalized subjects; in its second iteration, the theory seeks to illuminate how identity is constructed at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and imperialism. The third iteration stresses intersectional theory as a theory of structures and sites of oppression. Race, sex, gender, class, and imperialism are seen as vectors of dominating power that create co-constitutive social processes that engender the differential simultaneity of dominations and subordinations.

Intersectional theorists usually conceptualize such social and ideological structures of domination as *hierarchical* in order to map and make visible the complex interstructuring of the conflicting status positions of different wo/men. However, I would argue that the label "hierarchy" for such a pyramidal system of domination is a misnomer, since it only targets one specific form of "power over"—power that is religiously sanctioned as sacred (derived from Greek: *hieros* (sacred/holy) and *archein* (rule/dominate). Hence, I have proposed to replace the categories of *patriarchy* and *hierarchy* with the neologism *kyriarchy*,[11] which is taken up by contributors to this volume. The diverse emancipatory articulations of feminist interpretation, I suggest, could work together by adopting a critical intersectional analytics of global domination understood as kyriarchy. [12]

10. Jennifer C. Nash, "Rethinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 3.

11. For a fuller elaboration of kyriarchy/kyriocentrism, see my introduction, "Toward an Intersectional Analytic: Race, Gender, Ethnicity, and Empire in Early Christian Studies," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings* (ed. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 1–24; and my books *Transforming Vision: Explorations in Feminist The*logy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); and *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

12. For the first development of this analytic, see my *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), 103–32; and idem, "Religion, Gender, and Society: Shaping the Discipline of Religious/Theological Studies," in *The Relevance of Theology* (ed. Carl Reinhold Bråckenhielm and Gunhild Winqvist Hollman; Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2002), 85–99. While the notion of kyriarchy has not been widely discussed in feminist theoretical works, it has engendered a wide-ranging discussion among young feminists on the internet. See, e.g., http://myecdysis.blogspot.com/2008/04/accepting-kyriarchy-not-apologies.html;http://www.deeplyproblematic.com/2010/08/why-i-use-that-word-that-i-use.html.

A critical intersectional decolonizing feminist analytic therefore does not understand domination as an essentialist, ahistorical, and hierarchical dualistic system. Instead, it articulates domination as kyriarchy, as a *heuristic* concept (derived from the Greek, meaning "to find"), or as a diagnostic, analytic instrument that enables investigation into the multiplicative interactions of gender, race, class, and imperial stratifications, as well as research into their discursive inscriptions and ideological reproductions. Moreover, it highlights that people inhabit several shifting structural positions of race, sex, gender, class, and ethnicity at one and the same time. If one subject position of domination becomes privileged, it constitutes a nodal point. While in any particular historical moment, class or imperialism may be the primary modality through which one experiences class, imperialism, gender, and race, in other circumstances gender may be the privileged position through which one experiences sexuality, imperialism, race, and class.

2.3. Kyriarchy[13]

The neologism "kyriarchy," understood as a gradated system of dominations, is derived on the one hand from the Greek word *kyrios* (Latin *dominus*)—the emperor, lord, slave master, father, husband, or the propertied freeborn male to whom all the members of the household were subordinated and by whom they were controlled, and on the other hand the verb *archein*—to rule, dominate, and/or control. In antiquity, the sociopolitical system of kyriarchy was institutionalized either as empire or as a democratic political form of ruling that excluded all freeborn and slave wo/men from full citizenship and decision-making powers. In the fourth century B.C.E., the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that the freeborn, propertied, educated Greek man is the highest of moral beings and that all other members of the human race are defined by their functions in his service. Kyriarchal societies need a "servant class" of people. The existence of a gendered "servant class" is maintained through law, education, socialization, and brute violence. This is sustained by the belief that members of a "servant class" are inferior by nature or by divine decree to those whom they are destined to serve.

Furthermore, according to Hannah Arendt, democracy rests on the distinction between the household and the public space of the *polis*. In contrast to the household, which was given over to necessity and economics, politics

13. See also my *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); and *Democratizing Biblical Studies: Toward an Emancipatory Educational Space* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

was the realm of freedom.[14] Therefore, the household as the realm of necessity was also the realm of domination. Freedom in the classical, Western political sense was exercised by freeborn propertied men only. Only the *kyrios*/*dominus*/*gentleman* was the free citizen. Western-type democracy imitates this kyriarchal structure of Greek democracy, which is built on the subordination and enslavement of the subordinated members of household and state.

2.4. A Critical Feminist Decolonizing Analytic

The intersectional framework developed by Lynn Weber and the renaming of patriarchy as kyriarchy provide a theoretical frame for feminist biblical analysis.[15] But whereas Weber speaks only of race, class, sexuality, and gender as structures of domination, I would extend her list to include heteronormativity, culture, and religion on the one hand, and subsume *sex* under *corporeality*, which is also characterized by age, disability, and other bodily markers, on the other. Thus, the analytic of kyriarchy can be summarized as follows:

- Kyriarchy is historically and geographically contextual and political intersectional. Taking a broad historical and global view allows one to register changes over time and place. It is socially constructed and not biologically determined. It is not engendered by biological imperative, inherent inferiority, or by immutable facts or ordained by G*d.
- Kyriarchal relationships are power relationships of dominance and subordination. Here the distinction between personal and social-institutionalized power is central. It is important to ask: How do people come to believe and internalize that they have no power in certain situations?
- Kyriarchal intersectional systems operate both on the macro level of social institutions and the micro level of individual life. When analyzing a situation, seeing the psychological manifestations of oppression is much easier than recognizing broad macro-level forces, which are more remote and abstract.
- Kyriarchal intersecting structures are interlocking axes of power. They operate to shape people's lives, imaginations, communities, and societies at one and the same time. Hence, one needs to analyze

14. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 143–72.

15. Weber, *Understanding Race*, 129–31.

not only the one most obvious structure in the foreground (such as gender), but all structures of domination simultaneously.

3. Religious Symbol-Systems, Biblical Imagination, and Neoliberal Globalization

Feminist theologies and gender studies in religion[16] have sought to bring about a paradigm shift in the way religion and religious texts, traditions, and communities have been seen and studied. We have sought to change and transform the traditions by engaging in a wide-ranging critique of disciplinary presuppositions, methods, and epistemology, as well as through creative reimagination and transformation of religious discourses and institutions. We thereby seek to rediscover and elaborate wo/men's subjectivity and agency within religious histories and contemporary communities. Insofar as feminist theory has revealed the gender encoding of all knowledge, feminist studies in religion has been able to show the gendering of religious knowledge and religious institutions. Feminist scholars in religion have used the theories of gender,[17] intersectionality, and kyriarchy to understand the second-class status of wo/men in religion and its sacred texts.

In many religions, men and masculinity are associated with the divine and the transcendent, whereas wo/men and femininity are seen as immanent, impure, profane, evil, and/or sinful. Many religious traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, and Buddhism, use binary gender oppositions to construct their symbolic universes. The deity (Jahwe, Allah, or Christ) is not only understood as masculine, but also as all-powerful ruler and judge, whereas wo/men are associated with sin, death and sex (Eve, Lilith, or Kali). As representatives of the divine and religious leaders in the major reli-

16. See Mireya Baltodano et al., eds. *Género y Religión* (San José, Costa Rica: Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana, 2009). See Durre S. Ahmed, ed., *Gendering the Spirit: Women, Religion, and the Postcolonial Response* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Elizabeth A. Castelli, ed. *Women, Gender and Religion: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, and God* (New York: Crossroad, 1989); and Darlene M. Juschka, ed., *Feminism in the Study of Religion: A Reader* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

17. I have been puzzled by the enthusiastic reception of gender analysis by feminist the*logians in Latin America at a time when a critique of gender analysis in favor of intersectional analysis emerged in the United States. However, this phenomenon becomes understandable if one takes into account that the intellectual conversation partner on gender in Latin America was liberation the*logy, which eschewed gender analysis, whereas the conversation partners of feminist the*logy in the U.S. and Europe were wo/men's and gender studies.

gions of the world, elite men have excluded wo/men from religious leadership, official teaching, and sacred ritual.

Because religious symbol systems are heavily gendered in masculine terms, they reinforce cultural gender roles and concepts and legitimize them as ordained by God or as the "order of creation." As Judith Plaskow has argued, Christian male theologians have formulated theological concepts in terms of their own cultural experience, insisting on male language relating to God and on a symbolic universe in which wo/men do not appear.[18] Similar observations can be made regarding other world religions.

Since the Industrial Revolution in Europe and America at the beginning of the nineteenth century, religion has been pushed out of the public realm and relegated to the private sphere of individualistic piety, charitable work, and the cultivation of home and family. Thus, religion has become culturally feminized while its leadership has remained predominantly male. Nevertheless, both religion and gender were crucial in shaping Western identity. For instance, as a "missionary religion," Christianity had the same function as the "White Lady." It was to "civilize the savages," who were understood as "untamed nature."

Hence, one must eschew a "woman in the Bible" or a woman's Bible approach. The intellectual tradition inaugurated in the nineteenth century by Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Woman's Bible* focuses on the conviction that biblical texts about woman need to be interrupted rather than continued.[19] Such a focus on Woman, consciously or not, works with the essentialist notion of "woman" that is culturally elaborated in the Barbie-doll image of the "White Lady." This image of the ideal woman is propagated by the media not only in Western countries, but also around the globe. It must therefore be critically analyzed rather than taken up as an analytic lens.

Feminist scholars insist that religious texts and traditions must be reinterpreted so that wo/men and other "nonpersons" can achieve full citizenship in religion and society, gain full access to decision making powers, and learn how to live out radical equality in religious communities. We argue that differences of sex/gender, race, class, and ethnicity are socioculturally constructed and not willed by God, and therefore must be changed. God, who created people in the divine image, has called every individual differently. The Divine Wisdom is to be found in and among people who are created equal.

18. Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin, and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Niebuhr and Tillich* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980).

19. See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with Shelly Matthews; New York: Crossroad, 1997), for one attempt to do so.

Since the authority of the Bible as the "word of G*d" has been, and still is, used to inculcate biblical texts that demand subordination and submission to kyriarchal power, it is necessary to investigate how Scriptures are still used in support of domination and exploitation. The debates around wo/men's reproductive rights and same sex marriage call to mind the biblical texts and injunctions of subordination whose implications are realized and elaborated in contemporary societies.

If kyriarchal power and prejudice is the political context of biblical interpretation, feminist scholars cannot afford to engage in a purely apologetic or positivist reading of the Bible, nor to relegate a critical biblical interpretation to "bourgeois" scholarship addressing the question of the nonbeliever. Rather, feminist biblical interpretations and the*logies need to engage in a critical analysis that seeks to lay open the "politics of prejudice" inscribed in sacred Scriptures. In the last four decades, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, postbiblical, and Goddess feminists have engaged in discussions of prejudice, articulated theoretical structural analyses, and worked toward a feminist transformation of biblical religions. In so doing, we have underscored that in all three so-called Abrahamic religions, sacred Scriptures and traditions have been formulated and interpreted from the perspective of privileged men and therefore reflect neither the perspectives nor the experiences of wo/men, the poor, or enslaved peoples. Religious prohibitions and projections and pious practices have often served to legitimate the*logies and behaviors that marginalize wo/men and other persons categorized as "subhuman," silence them, exclude them, and exploit them. The feminist discussion on prejudice must therefore be solidly anchored in a multifaceted critical interreligious, postcolonial, and anti-racist feminist analysis.

If one does not consciously deconstruct the language of domination in which biblical texts remain caught up, one cannot but valorize and reinscribe such anti-wo/men language. In attempting to rescue holy Scripture as anti-imperial literature, defensive arguments tend to overlook that the language of kyriarchy and the ways in which violence encoded in holy Scriptures has shaped religious self-understanding and cultural ethos throughout the centuries, and still does so today.

Such scriptural language of domination, subordination, and control is not just historical language. Rather, as sacred Scripture, it is performative language that determines religious-biblical identity and praxis. This must be made conscious and critically deconstructed, since the language of "power over" encoded in Scripture has two reference points: Near Eastern and Roman empires as context and social locations of the Bible on the one hand, and contemporary forms of neocolonialist of antidemocratic discourses on the other.

Biblical studies can inspire individuals and groups to support the forces of economic and cultural global dehumanization, or they can abandon their kyriarchal tendencies and together envision and work for a feminist spiritual ethos of global justice. Our scholarship can either foster fundamentalism, exclusivism, and the exploitation of a totalitarian global monoculture, or we can advocate radical democratic spiritual values and visions that celebrate diversity, multiplicity, decision-making power, equality, justice, and well-being for all. Such a the*-ethical-political "either-or" choice does not reinscribe the dualisms created by structures of domination, but struggles to overcome and abolish them. It calls religious wo/men and biblical scholarship to take sides in the global struggles for greater justice, freedom, and the well-being of wo/men and of all of creation.

In conclusion: This volume tries to map the vast field of feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century, but it can do so only by pointing out areas of research that need further development. It seeks to contribute not only to our knowledge about the genealogy of feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century, but also to our imagination of what still needs to be done. It attempts to situate feminist biblical studies in the intersectional activism of wo/men's movements for change, rather than just in the domain of academy and church, synagogue or mosque. Such a social location requires that we develop more fully an interreligious and transnational scope. It remains to be seen whether feminist biblical studies can fruitfully sustain its "in-betweenness" in the years to come, or whether it will withdraw its intellectual energies either to the ivory towers of the academy or to the pastures of organized religions. As long as feminist biblical studies remain committed to social movements for change, they will be able to dismantle the "master's kyriocentric house" in order to imagine and create a different feminist space of biblical interpretation and meaning making.