

**Yvonne Sherwood (with the assistance of Anna Fisk), ed., *The Bible and Feminism: Rempapping the Field*.
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The Bible and Feminism: Rempapping the Field is a challenging, inspiring, exhilarating, and at times frustrating work. The volume collects essays from thirty-six scholars working in or adjacent to feminist biblical studies, broadly construed. The contributors hail from Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia, though skewed toward western Europe (especially the United Kingdom) and the United States.

In the introduction, which runs a brief eleven pages of the 709 total pages in the volume, Sherwood sets forth an ambitious programme. Where other volumes on the Bible and feminism are bound to the canon, as well as haunted by the bad old ghosts of feminist criticism past, *The Bible and Feminism* sets forth to do something different entirely. Sherwood writes of the project of compiling the volume:

I set out to *disturb canons* on at least three levels. First the canon-within-a-canon of texts assumed to be of particular interest to feminist biblical scholars: for example, books with female names and protagonists (Judith, Susanna, Ruth); female metaphors (the “prostitute” in the Prophets, and Hokhmah/Sophia); and women and their absences in the New Testament and early Christianities. Second, I set out to disturb those canonical versions of the history of the discipline orbiting around a canon of established scholarly signatures all located within biblical studies and tracing disciplinary origins as far back as Elizabeth Cady Stanton as first pioneer. I wanted, third, to move beyond the limits of a text-orientated reading ... [and] to encourage a focus on material Bibles and lived religion and to invite scholars from Anthropology and Sociology of Religion as well as History, Theology, and Literature. I wanted to challenge the presumed boundaries between “biblical studies proper” and other disciplines, without endorsing too simple dichotomies between textual disciplines and “the real” (3).

To a remarkable degree, the volume succeeds at these goals. And yet this very success also leads to unexpected gaps and even threatens to undercut some of the value of the volume.

As a feminist biblical scholar and professor at an undergraduate institution, I am sympathetic to the fatigue that attends what Sherwood names “the canon-within-a-canon.” I too have spent too many days to count in the company of Ruth and Naomi, not to mention Gomer and Oholibah. I know the peculiar sense of boredom and exhaustion that can come from having to rehearse all the well-worn moves for a class of students first encountering feminist biblical criticism. I too have sighed while hearing these arguments repeated as if new at conferences and in the pages of scholarly volumes. Still, the resistance to the canon-within-a-canon has produced here a volume of feminist biblical criticism with some peculiar lacunae. “You can never quite avoid Eve,” (5)

Sherwood writes, and yet the other women of Genesis—the matriarchs and their slaves, major figures for a long history of feminist criticism—are mostly missing, as are Miriam, Mary the mother of Jesus, and a host of other “A-List” names. Also missing is any sustained attention to what Phyllis Tribble called the “texts of terror,” including the rapes of Hagar and Tamar, the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter, and the rape and murder of the Levite’s concubine. In seeking to move biblical studies beyond a focus on women of the Bible (Sherwood notes, “the idea that feminist biblical criticism was originally centred on Great Women may be something of a straw woman, a false memory” [6]), these women become the object of a curious neglect, even as contributors turn to other questions, such as masculinity.

In the second goal, moving beyond “canonical versions of history of the discipline,” the volume is clearly successful. It is true that the history of feminist biblical studies has been documented ably elsewhere, including in Susanne Scholz’s three-volume *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect* and in multiple essays in the two-volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, edited by Julia O’Brien (Scholz 2013-2016; O’Brien 2014). Still, without a working knowledge of the “greats” of feminist biblical criticism, the volume’s “move beyond” is less successful as a gesture. The final goal, of interdisciplinarity and attention to the Bible as an object of inquiry in other academic fields, is also well executed. Sherwood name-checks sociology and anthropology, but it is literary studies that is most apparent as a disciplinary interlocutor here, followed by cultural studies.

If not the “Great Women” of either the Bible or feminist biblical scholarship, what then? Sherwood provides an enticing list:

feminist materialisms; kyriarchy; spatial theory; memory and trauma; visual activism and the politics of the image; intersectionality; post-identitarian “nomadic” politics; gender archaeology and ethnoarchaeology; lived religion, material religion, and material Bibles; postcolonial theory; queer theory; and theories of the ‘human,’ the posthuman, and ‘social flesh,’ (2)

all of which are used to explore

a range of social and political issues. These include neoliberalism and the neoliberal university; hate crimes and hate crimes prevention; the interaction between the human and the “nonhuman”/the “environment”; divorce and family law; migration and xenophobia; abortion; the politics of publishing; children and “childlessness”; misogyny and anti-feminism; “pinkwashing”; the legacies of colonialism; LGBTI rights; the second amendment and gun legislation; terrorism (“Christian” and “Islamic”); Islamophobia; nationality and nationhood; memory and state-sponsored acts of commemoration and forgetting; the politics of “the veil”; sexual violence, trafficking, and AIDS. (2-3)

These are ambitious promises, and they filled me with excitement as I read the introduction. And to be fair, each of the issues that Sherwood names is indeed

addressed by at least one essay. And yet the essays themselves are rarely as complex or as ambitious as the list above suggests.

The essays in *The Bible and Feminism* are a mix of new work (often excerpted or adapted from work-in-progress), rehashings of old work (frequently summarizing or extending the argument of a previous monograph), and freestanding pieces, written for the volume. As a sampler of “what’s happening” in and around feminist biblical studies, the volume is effective and even persuasive; as a single and standalone work introducing the field, somewhat less so. Often, the margins receive attention at expense of the core: a feminist practice of re-focalizing, perhaps, but also one that can lead to omissions or neglect. The coverage is somewhat erratic; thus Vashti appears in three essays; Chronicles is the subject of two contributions, but familiar feminist topics such as the rape of Dinah never appear. In uneasy contrast to this focus on the margins and marginal are the handful of essays, especially from senior figures in feminist biblical studies, that largely repeat their authors’ already well-known arguments.

The volume is divided into three sections. Ostensibly, the division is between major figures in the history of feminist biblical interpretation (Part I), feminist readings of biblical texts (Part II), and textual “afterlives” and/or “material Bibles” (Part III). I will treat the sections in order, while discussing the essays thematically within each section. At the end of the review, I offer some final comments and critical reflection.

Prophets and revolutionaries

The opening section, “Prophets and Revolutionaries,” is especially challenging to treat as a grouping of essays, as the section includes both essays recovering or reconsidering neglected female interpreters (Christine de Pisan, Sor Juana, Emily Dickinson) *and* essays from major feminist interpreters who are still living (Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Alicia Ostriker). In other words, some contributors are writing *about* prophets and revolutionaries; others are positioned *as* prophets and/or revolutionaries.

The volume opens with violence and juxtaposition. In “Death and the Maiden: Manifestos, Gender, Self-canonization, and Violence,” Jorunn Økland triangulates between three manifestos: Valerie Solanas’ SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto, Anders Behring Breivik’s “2083,” and the book of Revelation. Solanas was a radical feminist and artist; Breivik was the Norwegian extremist who killed 77 people in a combined bombing and shooting rampage in 2011. Økland reads the three manifestos against and through each other, drawing out the dynamics of gender, violence, writing, and self-canonization.

Several of the essays engage historical women as biblical interpreters. Jane Shaw’s “Joanna Southcott and Mabel Barltrop: Interpreting Genesis and Revelation” discusses two prophetic women at the centre of a religious movement in Britain. In 1792, Southcott received prophetic revelations and became the founding figure of what became known as “Southcottianism”; a century after her death, Mabel Barltrop learned of the movement, began to receive her own revelations, and eventually claimed the identity of “Shiloh, daughter of God” (46). Shaw explores the two women’s biblical exegesis, which described the special role of women in reversing the Fall and redeeming

the world. Pamela Kirk Rappaport gives us “Another Esther: Sor Juana’s Biblical Self-Portrait,” a study of Juan Inés Ramirez de Asbaje, a child prodigy turned Hieronimite nun in seventeenth-century Mexico City. Sor Juana was also an acclaimed author of many religious works. Closely combing her corpus, Rappaport suggests that she was in fact hiding her Jewish heritage, and signalled as much through her references to, and reworkings of, Esther, as well as the Virgin Mary. As Rappaport’s attention to Sor Juana’s writings suggests, literature as a mode of biblical interpretation is also a repeated concern. Jennifer Leader takes up Emily Dickinson’s poetry. In “Reading ‘The revelations of the Book / Whose Genesis was June’: Emily Dickinson’s Hermeneutics of the Heart,” she traces “Dickinson’s own feminist hermeneutic for understanding the Bible.” Her essay offers a close reading of the poet’s religiosity and use of biblical language and motifs. Ilana Pardes writes about Toni Morrison in “Toni Morrison’s Shulamites: The African-American Song,” with a focus on *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*. She considers both novels as scenes of biblical reception of the Song of Songs, while also exploring the literary representation of African-American experience that Morrison offers.

In addition to reading Morrison’s novels, Pardes reflects upon her own history of engagement with the biblical texts—in this case, the Song of Songs—and her shift in interest from metaphors to reception history. Other essays in this section also reflect upon their interpreters’ own tangled histories with the Bible. In “Reflections on Reading the Bible: From Flesh to Female Genius,” Alison Jasper tracks her own shifting feminist engagements with the Bible and texts such as the gospel of John, while also considering the helpfulness of interpretive voices like Julia Kristeva, who offers a theorization of “female genius” (87), and Jane Leade, a seventeenth-century biblical interpreter. Anna Fisk’s “Stood Weeping Outside the Tomb: Dis(re)membering Mary Magdalene” weaves together a personal narrative of grief, the remembering (and dismembering) of Mary Magdalene, and the image of the “bone collage,” borrowed from Michèle Robert’s novel *Impossible Saints* and describing the jumbled bones of St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgin martyrs mingling in a reliquary. Fisk tracks in particular her engagement with Jane Schaberg’s *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian New Testament*, as well as the desire bound up in the figure of Mary. A similar project of seeking and remembering animates Alicia Ostriker’s “The Wandering Jewess: Feminism Seeks the Shekhinah.” Ostriker revisits her own history of feminist poetry about the Bible, leading us through a project of reimagining and ending with a summons to join the task.

Other essays engage the political framings of the Bible and of biblical interpretation without focusing on a single exemplary interpreter. In “The First Woman Question: Eve and the Woman’s Movement,” Holly Morse suggests that feminist biblical studies should pay greater attention and “give a stronger voice to women’s encounters with the Bible throughout history” (61). Taking up Genesis 1-3, she amplifies the voices of female interpreters at three historical moments: debates over the *querelle des femmes* (question of women’s political participation) in pre-Revolutionary France, first-wave feminism, and second-wave feminism. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s focus, as indicated by her title “Feminist Remappings in Times of

Neoliberalism,” is the present neoliberal moment. More than any of the other essays in Part I, Schüssler Fiorenza’s contribution aims to *remap* (feminist) biblical studies. She presents her essay as “an attempt to caution us not to situate such an attempt of remapping the field within the context of neoliberalism” (170), introducing a number of helpful theoretical voices to this project, including Clare Hemmings’ *Why Stories Matter*, the problem of replacing “patriarchy” and “androcentrism” with “gender” (173), and the notion of “intersectionality” (173-4). Her critiques of the exploitative structure of academia, the prohibitive costs of publishing, and the threat posed to feminist work by the neoliberalization of the academy will no doubt resonate with many readers (as they did with me).

An unconventional tour of the canon

Entitled “An Unconventional Tour of the Biblical Canon, beyond the ‘Canon’ of Feminist/Womanist Criticism,” Part II contains, for the most part, the essays most closely linked to specific biblical books or passages. The order is set up roughly following the canon of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Among the New Testament essays, it is notable that there is no focused discussion of Revelation here (though Økland treats Revelation in her essay in Part I). However, the essays of Part II do not simply survey the canon. Instead, they also introduce a wide range of feminist methods and hermeneutic strategies. This is the most valuable contribution of Part II, more so than the rather scattershot (or “unconventional”) tour of the canon they provide.

Rachel Havrelock opens her essay “Home at Last: The Local Domain and Female Power” by asking, “What if we told a familiar story a different way?” (240). Her essay explores the ways we might answer this question by offering a spatial reading of women, water, and wells in the ancestral history of Genesis (Genesis 12-50) and Numbers. Adding to a body of literature on the Bible and spatial criticism, Havrelock insists on the importance of “the categories of the regional and the local” (242). The local, moreover, “encompasses female political participation” (243). Drawing on Edward Soja’s categories of Firstspace/secondspace/thirdspace—categories now familiar in biblical deployments of spatial theory—Havrelock describes thirdspace in relation to water systems. This re-description opens the text in new feminist directions. Like Havrelock, Jennifer Koosed also uses a handful of related biblical stories to introduce a new method of reading, and to model how it might be done in a feminist mode. In “Moses, Feminism, and the Male Subject,” Koosed introduces masculinity studies, while exploring the complicated relationship this subfield holds to feminist biblical interpretation (some studies of masculinity are decidedly feminist, others are decidedly not, and a great number fall somewhere in-between). She tracks the disappearance of Moses as feminist biblical studies emerged and began to reject the “great man” model of biblical criticism, as well as Moses’s re-emergence, via the “rise of masculinity” in biblical studies. Like Havrelock’s treatment of space, Koosed’s essay is an exemplary overview of specific modes of feminist criticism (here, feminist masculinity studies), while also offering a readable account of Moses and a persuasive argument for *feminist* masculinity studies.

Masculinity and the male body also figure in Ken Stone's contribution, "Judges 3 and the Queer Hermeneutics of Carnophallogocentrism" which weaves together a reflection on animals, flesh, sexuality, and sacrifice. As his subtitle suggests, Derrida's concept of "carnophallogocentrism" is central here, as is the larger animal turn in contemporary criticism. Stone takes up the relationship between "animal differences and sexual differences," as well as "the process by which the 'properly human' is constructed and policed" (265). He offers such a reading of Ehud's killing of Eglon, a murder executed by Ehud's left hand in the private intimacy of the toilet, and thus often read as a queer moment in the text. The move beyond the human is also the focus of Denise K. Buell's essay. Buell's "Embodied Temporalities: Health, Illness, and the Matter of Feminist Biblical Interpretation" explores recent work in science studies and critical theory challenging the idea of the "human" (the so-called "posthuman turn"), arguing that "feminist biblical scholars can not only benefit from this work but also support and complexify it by offering both positive and negative resources in early Christian traditions" (454). Buell introduces feminist materialisms, relational ontologies, and the call for intersectionality to be expanded beyond the human (456, 457, 459). She then explores how early Christian texts, including magical papyri and amulets and New Testament texts such as Ephesians, might be used in posthuman critique.

Several of the essays speak directly to the religious location or identity of the author. Deborah Kahn-Harris writes from an explicitly Jewish positioning. In "The Inheritance of *Gehinnom*: Feminist Midrash as a Vehicle for Contemporary Bible Criticism," Kahn-Harris argues for the value of midrash as a feminist interpretive practice. Her essay operates on several levels: introducing midrash to readers unfamiliar with the genre or its conventions, making a case for *feminist* midrash to those readers who consider the genre hopelessly sexist, offering a brief methodological introduction to feminist midrash, and constructing a model feminist midrash of Gen. 1:26, God's creation of humans (*'adam*) "in our image, according to our likeness." Meanwhile, in "Unveiling the European Woman," Fatima Tofighi calls for interpreters to look beyond Jewish and Christian contexts. For biblical studies to be sufficiently diverse, as well as postcolonial, "people outside Christian and Jewish confessional contexts need to be taken into account when the ethical implications of biblical interpretation are studied" (477). Tofighi offers a reading of 1 Cor. 11:5-16, the injunction that women veil their heads, that models what such an interpretation might look like. She also directs attention the Eurocentric and Orientalist assumptions that often tacitly inform discussions of this passage. Identity is also a concern for Anne-Mareike Schol-Wetter. In "My Mother was a Wandering Aramean: A Nomadic Approach to the Hebrew Bible," Schol-Wetter, writing "from the perspective of one who calls herself both a feminist and a believer" (329) calls for disciplinary transformation. In particular, she advocates for Rosi Braidotti's notion of "nomadic becoming" as a way of drawing out the Bible's status as a text "*written from the margins*" (333; emphasis original). She explores this reading with reference to Lot's wife and Ruth.

Lot's wife, transfigured into a figure of salt, is a marker of memory, and indeed, memory is a concern that reappears in multiple essays. Ann Jeffers' "Forget It: The

Case of Women's Rituals in Ancient Israel, or How to Remember the Woman of Endor" uses memory studies, along with ritual studies, comparative studies, postcolonial theory, and art history to recover the story of the Woman of Endor (1 Sam. 28) often maligned as a witch. She also seeks to reconsider "the role of women as religious practitioners in ancient Israel" using this text as a starting point (283). Memory also figures in the two essays that address the genealogies in Chronicles, Ingeborg Löwisch's "Miriam Ben Amram, or, How to Make Sense of the Absence of Women in the Genealogies of Levi (1 Chronicles 5.27-6.66)" and Wong Wai Ching Angela's "The Politics of Remembrance: Genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 and Haunting Memories in China." Löwisch explores the "gaps and absence[s]" (361) in the genealogies of Levi, reading first along the grain, then against it. Unsurprisingly, many of these gaps involve missing references to women, especially in the limited reference to Miriam, who is listed among the *banim* (sons) of Amram. Wong explores the same text but sets it in the context of contemporary China, exploring "how ordinary deceased people ended up in entanglement with the nation through the assemblage of genealogies" (373). She also explores "the duty to remember" in both biblical and contemporary Asian contexts, linking the obligation to remember to "the hope of our future" (383, 387).

Traumatic memory is linked to other forms of trauma and pain. A "trauma" is a "physical wounding," as Jennifer A. Glancy reminds us in her exploration of the story of the slave whose ear is severed at the time of Jesus' arrest. In "Corporal Ignorance: The Refusal of Embodied Memory," Glancy uses "the vulnerability of slaves to violence" (397) as the starting point for an exploration of violence, memory, guilt, and the uses of other people's pain. She cautions that "the desire to find meaning in suffering bodies is not an innocent desire" (399), not least because this meaning is often used to disavow memory and perpetuate further suffering (400). This essay is an especially beautiful and persuasive reflection on the ethics of bodies in pain. The ethics of interpretation are also a central concern in Jennifer Knust's "Can an Adulteress Save Jesus? The *Pericope Adulterae*, Feminist Interpretation, and the Limits of Narrative Agency." Knust wrestles with the efforts of feminist biblical criticism to "save" the adulteress in John 7, noting, "none of these feminist interpretations have rescued this story for me" (406). She then explores some narrative theories of desire, including Eve Sedgwick's theorization of the "erotic triangle in *Between Men*, before applying them to readings of the John passage (the *Pericope Adulterae*). While finding no single feminist solution, she instead offers a striking map of the difficulty faced by interpreters.

Several essays are insistently political. Erin Runions' "Sexual Politics and Surveillance: A Feminist, Metonymic, Spinozan Reading of Psalm 139" starts from the observation that Psalm 139 holds a special place for both the pro-life movement and for gay rights activists. How can this be? Drawing on Spinoza's writings on affect and analysing the psalm's effects on the reader's body, Runions concludes, "the bodily sensations of the psalm, if taken on by readers, produce positive emotions and increase a sense of self, even as they reinforce and idealize a surveillant higher power" (311). Joseph A. Marchal's "Pink-washing Paul, Excepting Jesus: The Politics of Intersectionality, Identification, and Respectability" takes as its starting point the critique of homonationalism advanced by Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages*:

Homonationalism in Queer Times (Puar 2007). One important feature of homonationalism is “pink-washing,” the use of a positive representation or treatment of LGBTQ people to gloss over or distract from other human rights violations. Pink-washing is one example of exceptionalism, which names a range of discourses that single out a specific person, state, actor, etc. as “exceptional” and thus beyond reproach. Marchal explores how pink-washing and exceptionalism circulate in liberal readings of the New Testament, especially in descriptions that pit the good, loving, exceptional Jesus against the bad, hateful Jews, or the good, anti-imperial Paul (or Jesus) against the bad, imperial Romans, or even the good Jesus against the bad Paul.

Finally, several of the essays focus on reading women in the texts, or doing so in new ways. In “A Foolish King, Women, and Wine: A Dangerous Cocktail from Lemuel’s Mother,” Mercedes L. García Bachmann offers a reading of the figure of Lemuel’s mother in Proverbs. While Proverbs contains multiple female figures, including Lady Wisdom, its representations of women remain limited and part of the “patriarchal agenda,” which “co-opts His-Mother [here, Lemuel’s mother] for its own purposes” (325). Deborah F. Sawyer’s “Queen Vashti’s ‘No’ and What It Can Tell Us about Gender Tools in Biblical Narrative” offers a feminist reading of Vashti, comparing her to Luce Irigaray’s “mimetic woman” (351) and arguing that “she is a true daughter of Eve, ‘a sublime representation of self-centred woman’” (351; the internal quote is from E.C. Stanton).

Offpage

Part III is entitled “Offpage: Actualizations and Performances of Scripture beyond Protestant Models of ‘Reading.’” The essays collected here are a mix of archaeology (Stavrakopoulou, Meyers), contemporary contexts (Llewelyn, Moslener, Rodman, Sherwood), comparative work (Kassam, De-Whyte Sarfo, Masenya), and art and film (Bal). “Reading” is in this section expanded to a broad project of critical and cultural (re)imagining.

Francesca Stavrakopoulou and Carol Meyers offer two perspectives on gender and archaeology. Stavrakopoulou’s “The Ancient Goddess, the Biblical Scholar, and the Religious Past: Re-imagining Divine Women” takes up goddess worship in ancient west Asia, including Israel and Judah, and how it has been treated by scholarship. Her essay critiques “the caricaturing of goddesses and their depictions as primarily or exclusively ‘biologically’ or anatomically sexual in form and function” (500), including associations with maternity, fertility, and dangerous sexuality. This is an important indictment of the tacit (and explicit) sexism and essentialism of Syropalestinian archaeology and biblical studies. Meyers’ “Seeing Double: Textual and Archeological Images of Israelite Women,” explores what we can know about Israelite women’s lives and religious practices, drawing on her own voluminous research in this area. She discusses ethnoarchaeology, bread production, and women’s household power.

Several essays bring together biblical texts with contemporary social issues. Janice Ewurama De-Whyte Sarfo’s “The Reproductive Rite: (In)Fertility in the Ashanti and Ancient Hebrew Context” compares infertility and rituals of birth in the Hebrew Bible and the Ashanti culture of Ghana. After introducing the significance of infertility

in Ashanti culture, De-Whyte Sarfo compares the infertility narratives of Sarah and Rebekah, drawing out “the socio-economic and spiritual implications of infertility” (566), as well as the ways “infertility threatens the very identity of a woman” (566). In “‘Limping, Yet Made to Climb a Mountain!’ Re-Reading the Vashti Character in the HIV and AIDS South African Context,” Madipoane Masenya (Ngwan’a Mphahlele) explores the usefulness of taking Queen Vashti from the book of Esther as a model when “engag[ing] the Hebrew Bible within the HIV and AIDS discourse” (539). She explores Vashti’s encounters with violence, her experience of “heteropatriarchy,” and her “boldness to speak truth to power” (542, 543).

While De-Whyte Sarfo and Masenya each suggest that the Bible offers some sort of resource for negotiating social problems, Zayn Kassam is more skeptical. In “Muslim Liberative Approaches and Legal Dilemmas Towards Gender Justice,” Kassam suggests “that feminist re-readings of sacred texts are not in and of themselves sufficient to bring about positive change but rather act in conjunction with efforts by civil society organizations to bring about changes in the law” (622-623). As the essay’s title suggests, the focus is on Islamic law and Muslim-majority societies. As a comparative case, it is an interesting idea, but the connections drawn to the Bible, or to feminist negotiations of biblical texts, are slight. Sherwood’s contribution to the volume, “The Impossibility of Queering the Mother: New Sightings of the Virgin Mother in the ‘Secular’ State,” also takes up the Bible in the contemporary state. Her focus is on parental rights in cases of divorce, with particular attention to the difficulty fathers face in gaining custody. She suggests that the contemporary neoliberal state’s assumptions about gender are haunted by biblical notions, including the myth of the Divine Father (and his frailty) and representations of the virgin mother. Woven into this analysis are a sustained discussion/reflection on Sherwood’s own partner’s unsuccessful efforts to gain primary custody of his children. Another perspective on the Bible and the state comes from Rosamond C. Rodman, in “Scripturalizing and the Second Amendment.” Rodman explores the “scripturalization” (a term adapted from Vincent Wimbush) of the Second Amendment, while also directing attention to its imbrications with ideologies of gender, including “racialized masculinity” (635, 639). Her essay models another way of thinking gender with and beyond sacred texts, including the Bible.

The Bible’s role in perpetuating gender roles, including an ideal of female sexual purity, is the focus of Sara Moslener’s “Material World: Gender and the Bible in Evangelical Purity Culture.” Moslener introduces us to “the girl-bible market” (612), which targets teenage girls with Bibles formatted like magazines and accompanied by quizzes, beauty tips, and “Love Notes from God” (611). Moslener links these Bibles to Evangelical purity culture and its fixation on teen virginity, as reflected in organizations such as “True Love Waits” and “Silver Ring Thing” (the latter, Moslener notes, publishes a *Silver Ring Thing Abstinence Study Bible*, 609 note 2). Moslener’s discussion of teenage evangelical culture is complemented by Dawn Llewellyn’s research on post-Christian women in “‘But I Still Read the Bible!’: Post-Christian Women’s Biblicalism.” While conducting fieldwork on the literature and spirituality, Llewellyn was struck by the degree of attachment that “post-Christian” women who have left the tradition, often for feminist reasons, showed to the Bible (571). For many of her

interview subjects, reading the Bible was a regular and meaningful practice, even after leaving the tradition. The essay also reflects on how post-Christian feminist theological work might respond to, and create space for, such post-Christian biblicalism, which is largely unacknowledged and excluded.

The legacy of biblical stories and images in “political art” (589) is the focus of Mieke Bal’s, “Sneaky Snakes: Seduction, the Biblical Imagination, and Activating Art.” Bal explores allusions to the snake in Genesis 3, surveying work by Edvard Munch, Nailini Malani, and Bal’s own filmmaking work with Michelle Williams Gamaker (based on *Madame Bovary*). Bal includes in her analysis “a plea for anachronism to de-naturalize the equation of priority with primacy that underlies the old misunderstanding of women’s derivative status, and re-naturalize an active, critical attitude towards chronology, stories, and their visual representations” (590-91).

Concluding Remarks

Even a brief attempt to capture the contents of *The Bible and Feminism* reveals the breadth of the work contained within it. The text is thematically, methodologically, and stylistically diverse, with a diversity of contributors and of exegetical and identity positions. Taken as a whole, the text is passionately committed to introducing new perspectives and expanding beyond the “canon-within-a-canon.” While this ambition in some ways limits the book’s utility as an introductory text—I might hesitate to recommend *The Bible and Feminism* as a first entry point into feminist biblical studies, if only because so many key questions and texts go unaddressed—as a “remapping” it works effectively and excitingly.

Still, it is also important to note what the remapping offered by this volume excludes or omits. Though intersectionality figures in multiple essays (for example, Schüssler Fiorenza, Marchal, Buell) and in Sherwood’s introduction, race is often missing. In particular, there is no discussion of womanist or black feminist biblical interpretation, though Pardes offers a reading of Toni Morrison and the Song of Songs, and “Womanist” appears in the subtitle of Part II. While this may be part of the project of moving beyond “great mothers,” it seems a bit troubling to neglect the significant contributions of black women to biblical studies, as well as womanist and black feminist criticism as major components of the discipline. Lesbian critique is also generally absent, or collapsed into queer. Trans and intersex perspectives are also almost completely missing, except as signalled by the expansive acronym LGBTI. Furthermore, while the feminist framing of a majority of the essays is clear, this is not always the case. Several of the contributions seem to assume that by, for example, focusing on recovering female interpreters of the Bible (or recovering famous women as biblical interpreters), they are *a priori* performing feminist labour. This goes against the framing offered in the introduction, and is somewhat weak as a feminist justification.

In spite of these weaknesses, *The Bible and Feminism* is a major accomplishment, and an essential volume not just for *feminist* biblical studies, but for biblical studies as a whole. Schüssler Fiorenza concludes her essay by writing, “only if we re-claim the

feminist authorship of the field can we struggle for and envision its feminist remapping” (183). *The Bible and Feminism* does vital work toward this end.

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