

Class 2a

## THE IMAGE OF GOD AND HUMAN IN FIRST & SECOND WAVE FEMINISMS

### Outline

- The composition of Genesis 1–3
- A hermeneutics of suspicion
- They say / I say: entering the conversation
  - Virginia Woolf and Prof. von X
  - Genesis 1:1–2:4a vs. Genesis 2:4b-25
  - Elizabeth Cady Stanton vs. biblical authors and interpreters
- Phyllis Trible – Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation
- Three Waves of Feminism

## The Composition of the Bible



## Approaching Texts as a Feminist Hermeneutics of Suspicion

### *Premise*

Our discourse about ourselves reveals and conceals something about the nature of being.

### *Consequence*

Therefore, our study of discourse needs to examine not only what is said, but what is *not* said in order to get at what *is*, rather than what appears to be.

### *Definition*

A hermeneutics of suspicion is a reading practice (or method of interpretation) which assumes that the literal or surface-level meaning of a text (including the Bible) conceals the political interests which are served by the text. The purpose of interpretation is to strip off the concealment, unmasking those interests.

- Paul Ricoeur, French Philosopher, 1970s

## Approaching Texts as a Feminist

### "Suspicions" to Pose to Texts

- Is there a woman or a woman's point of view in this text?
- How are women portrayed in this text? Do they speak? Are we given access to their point of view? Are they named?
- Who has the power in this text? How do women get what they want? And what do they want?
- How have women's lives and voices been suppressed by this text? Are women made to speak and act against their own interests?
- What hidden gender assumptions lie behind this text (e.g., that women lead men astray, that women cannot be trusted)?
- Is the import of the passage to reinforce or to alter contemporary gender roles? Does the text betray any anxiety about changing gender roles?
- Whose interests are being served?

## Elizabeth Cady Stanton

*The Women's Bible* (1895/1898)



Stanton in 1848 (age 36),  
with 2 of her 3 sons

# Phyllis Tribble

(1932 - )



Stanton in 1848 (age 36),  
with 2 of her 3 sons