

## Regular Article

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# Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and the Quest for the Historical Jesus

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**Abstract:** The feminist theological and historical work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has been met with diverging responses. For feminist biblical scholars, Schüssler Fiorenza is essential reading, with even her works from the 1970s and 1980s still standing as key reference points. For mainstream (“malestream”) biblical scholarship, however, her entire body of writing is typically ignored, including within historical Jesus research (HJR), despite its value in both problematising and advancing the so-called Quests for the Historical Jesus. By evaluating and synthesising Schüssler Fiorenza’s HJR work on fundamentalism, feminism, and anti-Semitism, this article situates the effects of Schüssler Fiorenza’s work and the credibility of her critics within the Quests. While the themes Schüssler Fiorenza addresses, such as feminism and Judaism, are key features of the Third Quest, Schüssler Fiorenza’s proposals with regard to HJR, including the politics of interpretation, the shift to memory and orality studies, and the evaluation of meaning-making itself, are theoretically critical and self-reflexive in a way which the Third Quest has rarely been. Given the emphasis Schüssler Fiorenza places on self-evaluation, and her critical examination of the work of her peers in HJR, one is led to consider the possibility that her work may represent a Third Quest Critical-Stream, or even a Fourth Quest.

**Keywords:** quests for the historical Jesus, feminist biblical scholarship, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, historical Jesus research, critical theory, feminism, anti-Semitism, fundamentalism

With a career spanning over fifty years, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has consistently worked to enhance feminist studies and their reception in the field of biblical studies. Medi Ann Volpe attributes this lifelong work towards an equal playing field to Schüssler Fiorenza’s “struggle for acceptance in a male-dominated field,” following her completion of Roman Catholic theological training at the University of Wurtzburg.<sup>1</sup> Volpe concludes that at the core of Schüssler Fiorenza’s work is “the recovery of women’s voices in the history of the church in a distinctively feminist-theological key.”<sup>2</sup> This, I would argue, provides an excellent summary of the overarching thrust of Schüssler Fiorenza’s scholarly and public work. However, in this article, I will narrow in on an area where her work has not received the attention it is due, assessing Schüssler Fiorenza’s place within the so-called quests for the historical Jesus. As such I will often refer to the Third Quest and its questers.<sup>3</sup> This should be understood as referring to the period between 1980 and

<sup>1</sup> Volpe, “Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1938–),” 712–4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 712.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted early on that there has been some backlash towards the use of the “quest” language in recent years. While I accept that it might be the source of some “confusion and disagreement,” I maintain that the concept of the “quest for the historical Jesus” is useful in characterising some aspects of historical Jesus research, and I would argue that this makes historical Jesus research more accessible. I agree that the naming of the “Old Quest” and “No Quest” is inaccurate and unfair,

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the present day, with the quest itself being characterised by the discovery and publishing of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scrolls, and an awareness of the previously underestimated diversity of early first-century Judaism and its implications for the study of Jesus' historical context.<sup>4</sup> The diversity of themes explored in Schüssler Fiorenza's historical Jesus research, and the criticism her work has received, makes it hard to confine her work to any one genre, or even quest.

Schüssler Fiorenza's monograph, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*, and the earlier article of the same name seek to critique the state of historical Jesus scholarship and to advocate for an alternative method of study. A key point of Schüssler Fiorenza's critique of historical Jesus research relates to the tendency among Third Quest scholars to argue from two distinct standpoints. The first, a liberal view (as in the work of John Dominic Crossan), is critiqued throughout Schüssler Fiorenza's work and summarised by Eloise Rosenblatt as "outdated in its reliance on a nineteenth-century European ideal of maleness, which 'understands Jesus as the exceptional individual, charismatic genius, and great hero.'"<sup>5</sup> AKM Adam attempts to condense this aspect of Schüssler Fiorenza's critique, pointing to the constant battle in historical Jesus research between "identification with Jesus" (which encourages scholars to use Jesus as a vehicle for their own agenda) and a second research framework, which sees Jesus as "fundamentally different (thus as a safely displaced other)."<sup>6</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza's alternative solution is as follows:

(Historical Jesus discourses) need to shift their theoretical focus and frame of reference away from the Historical Jesus, the exceptional man and charismatic leader, to the emancipatory Divine Wisdom movement of which he was a part and whose values and visions decisively shaped him.<sup>7</sup>

This quote allows us not only to summarise Schüssler Fiorenza's relevant scholarship but also to understand her place within the quests for the historical Jesus. Helen Bond identifies Schüssler Fiorenza within the Third Quest, describing Schüssler Fiorenza's methods as leading to a picture of Jesus as "a wisdom teacher preaching a radical egalitarianism," which Schüssler Fiorenza termed "Divine Wisdom movement."<sup>8</sup> However, I would argue that locating Schüssler Fiorenza within the quests is a more complex task than it might seem.

The nature of Schüssler Fiorenza's work as a critical scholar makes identifying similarities between her work and that of her contemporaries and predecessors more complex, but not impossible. Bart Ehrman's *Lost Christianities* begins with an accessible breakdown and description of a number of apocryphal texts, a task which according to Jonathan C. P. Birch is "aimed at popularising the fact of ancient Christian diversity while problematising the whole question of scriptural authority."<sup>9</sup> Like Schüssler Fiorenza, Ehrman takes an approach which exposes the reality of Christian diversity.

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but to talk about the Third Quest is not to be complicit in this ignorance, nor is it to agree that "the first part of the twentieth century is a period devoid of research." Furthermore, when characterising research within the context of the quests, my intention is not to say, for instance, that historical research has *only* been used in the Third Quest, or that the Third Quest is *only* interested in historical research as opposed to theological. Instead, it is to note that there has been a growing trend in historical research which has now become associated with a certain period of time. Schüssler Fiorenza is not the first to challenge researchers to look beyond what is recorded by biblical authors; more than 200 years ago Joseph Priestley was known for his "egalitarian tendency which sought to bring women and the socially marginalised within the fold." This is not to say that Joseph Priestley is a "Third Quester" or that Schüssler Fiorenza's work is more suited to the "Old Quest." Reference to the "Third Questers" in this article is intended to juxtapose the work of Schüssler Fiorenza with that of her contemporaries in order to show how her work might be better suited to a "Third Quest Critical-Stream;" Bermejo-Rubio, "The Fiction of the Three Quests: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Historical Paradigm," 211–53, 222–3, 234; Birch, "Revolutionary Contexts for the Quest: Jesus in the Rhetoric and Methods of Early Modern Intellectual History," 35–80.

4 Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 19.

5 Rosenblatt, "Review of *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*," 204–5.

6 Adam, "Review of *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*," 419–22.

7 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*, 21.

8 Bond, *The Historical Jesus*, 21.

9 Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faith We Never Knew*, xi–xv; Birch, "Cracking the Canon: John Toland, 'Lost' Gospels and the Challenge to Religious Hegemony," 85–112.

Throughout this article, there is evidence that authors agree with Schüssler Fiorenza's arguments and that her work is not consistently disputed; despite this, she is not widely cited.<sup>10</sup> In looking at the relationship between Crossan and Schüssler Fiorenza, we could conclude that Schüssler Fiorenza is a Third Quester but that her input is overlooked for not aligning with the appropriate framework. This argument I infer from a reading of Schüssler Fiorenza's critique of Crossan, in which she points to "the neglect of feminist work as not the exception but the rule in much of malestream biblical scholarship" and argues that Crossan overlooks feminist work simply because it is not rooted in his own "method and reconstructive framework."<sup>11</sup> In defence of Crossan, Adam points out that since Schüssler Fiorenza is just one of many scholars publishing in a popular field, "how guilty should conventional scholars feel about overlooking her work in favor of the publications of scholars who play by conventional rules?"<sup>12</sup> However, I would argue that this defence of Crossan is also, then, a defence of Schüssler Fiorenza, given that Schüssler Fiorenza dedicates her work to exposing these "conventional rules" as kyriarchal. In contrast to Adam, Rosenblatt supports Schüssler Fiorenza's frustration at not being cited more frequently, writing, "The impatience of feminists at male scholars' failure to cite women's abundant scholarship of the last 20 years is surely justified."<sup>13</sup> The diversity in responses to Schüssler Fiorenza is, I would argue, testament to the value, albeit controversial, of her proposed amendments to biblical scholarship.

Schüssler Fiorenza's work spans both the time periods of the New Quest and the Third Quest, so, in considering her placement within the quests, it is important to consider her reactions to themes characteristic of these movements. I would argue that we could disregard the possibility of locating Schüssler Fiorenza within the context of the New Quest, which is characterised by the use of various criteria in form criticism and a separation between Jesus and Judaism, for instance the criteria of dissimilarity which "seems almost engineered to produce a Jesus strangely dislocated from both his Jewish environment and the church which followed him."<sup>14</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza makes an important distinction between the two quests regarding the tone of anti-Judaism in biblical scholarship; she writes,

In distinction to the Old and New Quests, the Newest or Third Quest does not seek to reconstruct the historical Jesus over and against first-century Judaism but sees him as totally integrated into his time and culture.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this, Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the Third Quest is ill-equipped to engage in interreligious dialogues because the discourses surrounding the questers remain kyriarchal.<sup>16</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza ties her critique of the "dualistic rhetorics of 'scientific' discourse of historical Jesus studies" to their promotion of "political conservatism, marginalization of wo/men, and anti-Semitism."<sup>17</sup> By creating an "either/or" dilemma in historical Jesus research, rather than accepting that in biblical research there are often a vast number of possible reconstructions, these dualistic rhetorics, Schüssler Fiorenza argues, serve to create division between groups that could be united. Amy-Jill Levine specifically refers to Schüssler Fiorenza's example of "Jesus and Judaism," whereby scholars within the field of biblical women's studies are led to "argue that it is not plausible that Jesus and his followers challenged the dominant patriarchal institutions of his time."<sup>18</sup> This is based on the argument characteristic of the Third Quest that Jesus was a devout Jew, and as such was Torah-observant – putting him in line with the context of patriarchy that surrounded his era.<sup>19</sup> This stance, Schüssler Fiorenza argues, promotes an anti-Jewish argument, since historically there has been an emphasis on

<sup>10</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza is not cited in the major works of John P. Meier (*A Marginal Jew* Volume 1 and Volume 4) or Dale Allison (*The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*).

<sup>11</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation," 343–58.

<sup>12</sup> Adam, "Politics," 421.

<sup>13</sup> Rosenblatt, "Politics," 204.

<sup>14</sup> Bond, *The Historical Jesus*, 17–8.

<sup>15</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, 73.

<sup>17</sup> Levine, "Review of *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*," 110–1.

<sup>18</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

presenting Jesus as unique in promoting a radically different ethical movement. This automatically assumes that Judaism promoted all that which Jesus worked against, exemplified in his willingness to risk death in order to confront “ritualistic or legalistic Judaism.”<sup>20</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza is keen to tackle anti-Semitism in Christian feminist scholarship in order to acknowledge the diversity of Second Temple Judaism and to consider Torah observance away from the New Testament context.<sup>21</sup> Through using a hermeneutics of remembrance, Schüssler Fiorenza encourages researchers to acknowledge Christianity’s Jewish origins and to remember “that the feminist Christian foundational story is that of Jewish women and their vision.”<sup>22</sup> Rosenblatt summarises Schüssler Fiorenza’s warning for feminist scholars, writing,

Feminist approaches to the New Testament must resist an innate tendency to reinscribe anti-Semitic prejudice. Dismissal of Judaism happens when scholars oppose Jesus’ liberating relationship with women against a false construction of “legalistic” ancient Israel. Feminists must carefully monitor their own interpretations for anti-Semitism.<sup>23</sup>

Another of Schüssler Fiorenza’s key critiques of the Third Quest is its positivism. Volpe notes Schüssler Fiorenza’s proposed shift “into a rhetorical space for interpretation that avoids any suggestion of a positivistic approach to biblical or historical texts.”<sup>24</sup> Rosenblatt writes that Schüssler Fiorenza challenges the “false presumption” of social scientists regarding the objectivity of their data before going on to describe Schüssler Fiorenza’s position: undermining the “quest for proof” and instead arguing that the “focus should be on the operation of memory itself as a re-constructive paradigm.”<sup>25</sup> In order then to undermine their “quest for proof,” Schüssler Fiorenza advocates a research approach based on the “politics of interpretation,” “meaning-making,” and memory.

Schüssler Fiorenza’s proposed shift to “memory” as a theoretical framework involves moving the Third Quest’s frame of reference from “Jesus as an exceptional human being” to encouraging scholars to engage with “memory in the discipleship of equals.”<sup>26</sup> By looking at Jesus’ teachings in terms of what they might have meant for the people listening, Schüssler Fiorenza advocates the view that is, for her, at the heart of Jesus’ teaching: that all people are equal.<sup>27</sup> A consequence of this shift, Schüssler Fiorenza argues, would be that “one can no longer hold that wo/men did not influence the Jesus traditions and movements,” despite the fact that “religious texts and traditions are formulated from the perspective of elite males and do not reflect the perspective and experience of women.”<sup>28</sup> Later in this article she shows how this view of Jesus as a challenge to the beliefs of his contemporaries is overstated and highlights the historical fact that Jesus was not the first challenge to the “dominant kyriarchal structures of society and religion in antiquity.”<sup>29</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza does not go on to describe any of these alternative movements in any detail (an addition which would have been appreciated); however, her point remains clear – a reformer doesn’t have to be “God striding over the earth” to have an emancipatory message.<sup>30</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza’s memory framework involves putting “practices, systematic structures and wo/men in the center of historical re-construction,” and then using this to better understand the Jesus movement in terms of what it meant for both the people it directly affected, and those it continues to affect today.<sup>31</sup> In the preface to *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet*, Schüssler Fiorenza writes that her work is

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>21</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza cites *The Women’s Bible* as a source of anti-Semitism: “Negative commentaries about Judaism in *The Women’s Bible* are concentrated in discussions of the so-called Old Testament, especially in relation to the claim of the Jewish people to be the elect of G\*d.” Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 68.

<sup>22</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Rosenblatt, “Politics,” 205.

<sup>24</sup> Volpe, “Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1938–),” 12.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenblatt, “Politics,” 204. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 354.

<sup>27</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*, 91–2.

<sup>28</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child*, 74.

<sup>29</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 355.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 354.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 354.

not necessarily of Christological value; rather, it is “an attempt to scrutinize the linguistic and theoretical frameworks that serve as lenses for reading Scripture and engaging in feminist Christological debates.”<sup>32</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza is explicit in arguing that this text is not intended to provide another version of Jesus of Nazareth for the quest, but rather to critique the theoretical frameworks of such discourses.<sup>33</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza argues that if historical Jesus scholars are able to engage in an “emancipatory politics of interpretation,” then they will “cease to maintain scientific discourses of domination.”<sup>34</sup> The politics of interpretation thus lends itself to a study which identifies the “meaning-making” at the heart of historical Jesus writings, with Schüssler Fiorenza encouraging scholars to look at the Jesus movement in the context of “contemporary social movements” as part of their study.<sup>35</sup> This is because biblical interpretation cannot limit itself to what the author initially meant; it must consider a text’s theological significance today if a text is to be accurately reconstructed.<sup>36</sup> Regarding the importance of literary composition, Birch demonstrates significant similarities to Schüssler Fiorenza, for instance in arguing that the Bible’s content is directly influenced by the needs of the Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman community context in which it was written, and subsequently, the priorities of historic writers will undoubtedly be different to those writing for a contemporary audience.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, for John Barton, biblical criticism is “primarily a literary operation” and the “truth of a text is secondary to the primary critical function of understanding.”<sup>38</sup> This shows similarity to Schüssler Fiorenza’s politics of interpretation approach; a text must be evaluated historically/reconstructed in order that its function can be identified. This means that scholars must accept that biblical writings are pastoral–theological responses to the situations and problems of their own times.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Halvor Moxnes identifies a trend in dichotomies within historical Jesus research and writes, “The various approaches [to historical Jesus research] therefore reflect different modern concerns and, explicit or implicit, also different politics of interpretation.”<sup>40</sup> However, this approach has its critics. For instance, John H. Elliott argues that scholars should “avoid imposing on the ancient sources alien and unfitting modern categories.”<sup>41</sup> However, Schüssler Fiorenza’s work is not simply rooted in extracting historical facts from ancient sources; in her role as a theologian, she advocates for an ethical approach which recognises the real-life effects of these sources. Whether Schüssler Fiorenza’s work imposes “alien” categories is subjective, but I would argue that if historical Jesus research is to continue to be relevant, it must attempt to reconstruct ancient texts in a way that is relatable.

Schüssler Fiorenza’s focus on contemporary issues is a key element of her work. It is clear that the impact of historical Jesus research on both religion and society is important to her study, and this enables us to identify her firmly within her own historical context, although this doesn’t necessarily correlate with her historical place as a Third Quester. Schüssler Fiorenza actively critiques her contemporaries and draws attention to the sociopolitical locations of historical Jesus researchers. She cites Dieter Georgi, for instance, who locates the New Quest, “like the old one,” with its “social location within the evolution of bourgeois consciousness.”<sup>42</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza goes on to show how the Newest Quest for the historical Jesus coincides with the “resurgence of the political right and the revival of religious fundamentalism” exemplified in the reactive formation of the Jesus Seminar.<sup>43</sup> This is a prime example of Schüssler Fiorenza working to deconstruct the narratives advocated by those who make claims to the “truth,” as she shows how the context behind each study presents an unavoidable influence on the research. Narratives can be

32 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child*, ix.

33 Ibid., 4.

34 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 29.

35 Ibid., 29.

36 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 32.

37 Birch, “Gospel Narratives, Miracles, and the ‘Critical’ Reader: The Eclipse of the Supernatural,” 61–93; Birch, “Revolutionary Contexts,” 36.

38 Birch, “Gospel Narratives,” 70–1.

39 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 39.

40 Moxnes, “Jesus in Discourses of Dichotomies: Alternative Paradigms for the Historical Jesus,” 130–52.

41 Elliott, “Jesus was not an Egalitarian: A Critique of an Anachronistic and Idealist Theory,” 75–91.

42 Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 346.

43 Ibid., 349.



deconstructed through a politics of interpretation approach, and as such a hermeneutic of suspicion is essential in order that researchers might recognise that biblical texts are androcentric constructions of biblical history.<sup>44</sup> This point is fundamental to her work because of the direct implications of historical Jesus scholarship on not only the lives of Christian women but also the vilification of Jewish women.<sup>45</sup> A central aspect of Schüssler Fiorenza's argument, therefore, is that if the role of women in the New Testament were recognised by scholars, then the position of women now would also be improved.<sup>46</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza sees the discourses about Jesus as "intertwined with hegemonic cultural and societal ideologies." Her politics of meaning attempts to tackle this problem by seeing Jesus research in light of the impact it has not just on religious communities, as we have already seen, but also on "Western cultures."<sup>47</sup> As such historical Jesus research must tackle "its own internalization of hegemonic knowledge about Jesus" in order to recognise the ways in which its methods maintain kyriocentric behaviours. The "distancing gestures" and methods employed by historical Jesus researchers serve only to justify the repeated interventions and interpretations of Jesus by scholars.<sup>48</sup> For instance, Schüssler Fiorenza notes that the doctrinal paradigm presents a problematic research approach because in seeing the Bible as the direct revelation of God, the potential for interpretation and reconstruction is limited.<sup>49</sup>

Regarding her place within the quests, despite her large-scale critique of the questers, Schüssler Fiorenza is keen to find consensus among scholars and "to clarify the various positions of our time in order to be relevant to our contemporaries."<sup>50</sup> Does this desire for consensus, and willingness to accept the plausibility of a number of common claims, situate Schüssler Fiorenza in the Third Quest? Before we are allowed to ponder this question for too long, Schüssler Fiorenza clarifies that even commonly accepted statements about Jesus are not facts; they are still open to critique and must be critiqued in order to maintain their authority. Even the texts that scholars regard as "primary" are, for Schüssler Fiorenza, still up for discussion because they themselves are an interpretation (perhaps even a contamination) of an event, regardless of whether they happened in actuality or in mythological remembering.<sup>51</sup>

To conclude, Schüssler Fiorenza's work aims to expose faults in the current, and in some cases historical, trends in biblical research. This is done by highlighting a number of major areas for reform, based around a "politics of interpretation" approach to historical Jesus research. Researchers should then critique their work according to the following four key issues:

1. Is an anti-Jewish bias being maintained/reinscribed?
2. Does this reconstruction paint an accurate picture of historical women?
3. Does it acknowledge colonial or Western presuppositions?
4. Does it account for the fact that globalisation "promote[s] the politics of exclusivity, inferiority, prejudice and dehumanization in cultural or religious identity formation?"<sup>52</sup>

Concerning her position in the quests for the historical Jesus, I would argue that Schüssler Fiorenza must be placed within the Third Quest, although her work is so markedly different and radical compared to her contemporaries that there may well be cause for the proposal of a Fourth Quest, or a Third Quest Critical-Stream. Schüssler Fiorenza's consistent reference to the implications of not only her own research

<sup>44</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> Volpe, "Politics," 712.

<sup>47</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 42.

<sup>48</sup> Adam, "Politics," 420.

<sup>49</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 344.

<sup>51</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Politics*, 352. Since the writing of Schüssler Fiorenza's article in 1997, "globalisation" has taken on a multiplicity meanings, many of which do not see globalisation as a source of dehumanization, but rather one of liberation. Rather than "globalisation," I would argue that "white-supremacy" or even Schüssler Fiorenza's own term, "kyriarchy," would be a better fit here.

but also the research of her fellow historical Jesus scholars, on the self-conceptions of both individuals and communities, is testament to her unique approach. Schüssler Fiorenza acknowledges the far-reaching effects of research on the historical Jesus and, as such, works to encourage her contemporaries to do the same. The allegedly “bullish” way in which Schüssler Fiorenza does this is the main cause of criticism against her, with Adam writing that her criticisms are so pointed that they risk alienating even her sympathisers, leading him to question whether her cause is worth its implications.<sup>53</sup> Despite this, there is largely consensus across the reviews of Schüssler Fiorenza that I have read, that her work is done in service of her contemporaries, and that despite being difficult to read, biblical interpreters will be made “wiser and healthier” for having read it.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Adam, “Politics,” 421.

<sup>54</sup> Levine, “Politics,” 111; Adam, “Politics,” 422.