

## GENDER WARRIORS: THE POLITICS OF SHARIA FEMINISM

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The politicization of feminism, most strikingly in America, is all-apparent in the phenomenon of sexual correctness—conformity to the prevailing feminist sentiment regarding the issues of sexual harassment and “date rape.” This conformity mandates an exaggerated sensitivity to these issues. As such, it is a major component of political correctness: sensitivity and conformity to the preferences of special-interest groups and minorities. It should also be noted that both political and sexual correctness have become institutionalized in American society, above all, on university campuses and the workplace.

In the process, a cult of victimization has sprung up in which women portray themselves as delicate flowers in constant need of protection from the assault of males, all of whom allegedly have lecherous designs on them. It is becoming increasingly unclear, however, who is the victim and who is the victimizer. Examples abound:

On one American university campus, a female student declared herself “sexually harassed” because one of her professors had a photo on his desk of his wife in a swimsuit.<sup>1</sup>

A Pennsylvania State University lecturer claimed that a print of Goya’s “The Naked Maja,” which hung in her classroom interfered with her ability to teach. She found it sexually harassing, and was thus successful in getting the university administration to remove it.<sup>2</sup>

At the University of New Hampshire, a professor of English literature used a sexual simile to explain a writing technique: “Focus is like sex . . . Focus connects experience and language. You and the subject become one.”<sup>3</sup> Several of his female students felt humiliated by this comparison, and immediately went to the university office for “Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Rape,” where they filed a complaint. The professor (who three years prior had been recognized for excellent teaching) was fired, fined and ordered to attend a sexual therapy course, the cost of which he had to pay himself.<sup>4</sup>

At Northwestern University, a law professor tried to make basic street remarks (“love ya’ baby,” etc.) legally punishable because, she asserts, they are examples of assaultive behavior that limits a women’s liberty.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthias Matussek, “Hexenjagd auf dem Campus,” *Der Spiegel* 20 (1994), 153. (In this and other quotations from Matussek’s article, I have provided the English translations)

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Crichton, “Sexual Correctness,” *Newsweek* Oct. 25, 1993, 52.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in M.D. Carnegie, Review of *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America’s Future*, in *The American Spectator*, Dec., 1994, 81.

<sup>4</sup> Matussek, 153, 156.

<sup>5</sup> Crichton, 52.

A professor at Princeton University told a female student that he liked her hairstyle and that it looked less severe than before. The student was outraged, calling his remark sexual harassment.<sup>6</sup>

Another professor at Princeton was conducting a literature class, in which two students started arguing whether Robert Lowell was a misogynist. At one point, he said he was enjoying the discussion and wanted to continue it. A third (female) student later said that the professor's remarks were tantamount to a gas station attendant watching a pornographic video.<sup>7</sup>

A female college student declared she had been sexually harassed when one of the campus jocks came up and pretended to lean against her, and asked when they were going out. She admitted he hadn't touched her but he had "invaded her space."<sup>8</sup>

In America a few years ago, a female student swimming in her university's pool alleged that a goggle-wearing elderly male faculty member had "stared offensively" at her. He was strongly reprimanded, ostensibly for his "male gaze."

Such seemingly limitless definitions of sexual harassment are not confined to universities and colleges, however. American high school and elementary schools are also subject to "harassment fever." Almost any physical contact, no matter how innocent, is labeled "gender terrorism." In the process, 85 percent of female and 76 percent of male students in the eighth through eleventh grades in America allege they have been sexually harassed.<sup>9</sup>

One such example of sexual harassment involved an eighteen-year-old girl who sued her school district because she happened to see obscene graffiti on a wall. She was awarded 20,000 dollars damages. A seven-year-old girl happened to overhear little boys exchanging dirty jokes in a school bus. She also sued her school district for an unspecified amount of damages, in addition to setting state and federal legal measures in motion.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, expanded definitions of sexual harassment take root at an early age. Indeed, they form a part of the school curriculum. Images of men as hunters and women as hunted, of boys as a sexual threat and girls as vulnerable are drummed into young, impressionable minds.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, being a "victim" of sexual harassment is a good way to get attention, and in the process, victimhood is instilled. Mere children are introduced early on to the American cultural obsession with sexual violation.<sup>12</sup>

Central to all the new definitions of sexual harassment is the "victim's perception." The word "uncomfortable" also looms large. Thus, Princeton University defines sexual harassment as "unwanted sexual attention that makes a person feel uncomfortable or causes problems in school or at work, or in social settings."<sup>13</sup> "It is to be *defined by the person harassed* (italics added)<sup>14</sup> and it can occur between two people regardless of whether or not one has power over the other."<sup>15</sup> The definition, then, turns on gender rather than status.

<sup>6</sup> Katie Roiphe, *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1993), 118.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>9</sup> Matussek, 162.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Roiphe, 162.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>13</sup> "What You Should Know About Sexual Harassment." Princeton, N.J.: SHARE.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

"[H]arassment can also occur when no such formal [power] differential exists, if the behavior is unwanted by or offensive to the woman."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, gender itself becomes a sufficient source of power to constitute harassment.<sup>17</sup> Catherine MacKinnon, who was wrestling with definitions of sexual harassment long before the issue became popular, believes that "situations of coequal power—among workers or students or teachers—are difficult to see as examples of sexual harassment unless you have a notion of male power. I think we lie to women when we call it not power when a woman is come on to by a man who is not her employer, not her teacher."<sup>18</sup> With this added dimension, male power is extended beyond that of social power.<sup>19</sup>

Does not such a definition, however, legitimize the notion that men are intrinsically more powerful than women? Is it not, as such, blatantly sexist? Is not such an image of women vulnerable to almost anything (a dirty joke, a photo, a stare) a projection of female weakness? Are not women's hard-won gains and authority thereby undermined?

Traditionally, sexual harassment was defined as the guarantee or promise of career or job advancement in return for sexual favors. The boundaries were clear-cut, the parameters limited to objective reality. With newer definitions, such as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's environmental harassment, any conduct is considered sexual harassment if it "unreasonably interferes" with a person's working environment or creates an "intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment." This definition, like so many others, precludes measurement by objective standards. It is purely subjective, and therefore nebulous. The aforementioned Princeton University definition explains that sexual harassment "may result from a conscious or unconscious action, and can be subtle or blatant."<sup>20</sup> But to hold people responsible for their unconscious actions is Orwellian; it "legislates thought."<sup>21</sup> To paraphrase Barbara Amiel, we have not yet made it illegal to think about sex.

Moreover, in the enforcement of such vague definitions, the due process of the accused is often thrown out the window. University administrations are under such pressure from feminists who advocate these definitions that overcompensation occurs. The universities think that swift action reflects responsiveness. Thus, a tenured professor at a well-known university was dismissed unilaterally, without a faculty hearing, legal counsel, or the calling of witnesses in his defense.<sup>22</sup> An official of the American Association of College Professors commented, "There tends to be publicizing of names at too early a stage, and trigger-quick action to suspend without suggestion of immediate harm."<sup>23</sup>

Feminists Billie Wright Dziech and Linda Weiner justify the suspension of due process as follows:

"Let a single 110-pound nineteen-year-old muster the courage to complain about being fondled or threatened by a Shakespeare professor, and other professors are likely to

<sup>16</sup> Michele A. Paludi, ed., *Ivory Power: Sexual Harassment on Campus* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 38.

<sup>17</sup> Roiphe, 88.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 89.

<sup>19</sup> Roiphe, 88.

<sup>20</sup> "What You Should Know About Sexual Harassment," Princeton, N.J.: SHARE.

<sup>21</sup> Roiphe, 91.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>23</sup> *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 10, 1991.

rediscover the bonds that unite them. They will as a chorus mouth platitudes about loyalty to the institution, academic freedom and due process."<sup>24</sup>

For them, fairness is of lesser importance because they view the "male hierarchy" as conspiring against the tiny victim.

Curiously, this obsession with sexual harassment seems to be uniquely American. Feminists in other countries view this preoccupation as a sign of Puritanism and repression. France's former secretary of state for women's rights commented that in America, "the slightest wink can be misinterpreted." She advises French women who feel harassed to give the perpetrator "a good slap in the face."<sup>25</sup>

Yet American feminists, such as Catherine MacKinnon, think that "all women live in sexual objectification the way fish live in water."<sup>26</sup> Further, MacKinnon states categorically that "only 7.8 percent of women in the United States are *not* sexually assaulted or harassed in their lifetimes (italics added)."<sup>27</sup> With limitless definitions, and the "victimization" that ensues, that figure might not be far off.

As Mary P. Koss (who, incidentally, coined the term "date rape") remarked, "[E]xperiencing sexual harassment transforms women into victims and changes their lives."<sup>28</sup> And Kathryn Quina states that "many have difficulty recognizing their experience as victimization. It is helpful to use the words that fit the experience, validating the depths of the survivor's feelings and allowing her to feel her experience was serious."<sup>29</sup>

Such attitudes are ironically discriminatory towards women because they are infantilizing. They portray women as needing constant protection because they cannot defend or assert themselves. Further, they project weakness. Moreover, the expanded definitions of sexual harassment which engender these attitudes trivialize the real instances of sexual misconduct. The sexual harassment industry, however, universalizes these instances.<sup>30</sup> In the process, the spectre of Victorian morality is raised, and the concomitant "vulnerability" of women.

But sexual harassment is not the only issue which concerns neo-Victorian feminists. An even greater concern is "date rape." As with sexual harassment, the definitions have been limitlessly expanded. Thus Catherine MacKinnon can state that "politically, I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and feels violated."<sup>31</sup> "Compare victims' reports of rape with women's reports of sex. They look a lot alike. . . . In this light, the major distinction between intercourse (normal) and rape (abnormal) is that the normal happens so often that one cannot get anyone to see anything wrong with it."<sup>32</sup> For MacKinnon, men are members of "a group sexually trained to women-hating aggression."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Bille Wright Dziech and Linda Weiner, *The Lecherous Professor: Sexual Harassment on Campus* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 49.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, May 3, 1992.

<sup>26</sup> Catherine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 149.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Koss, "Changed Lives: The Psychological Impact of Sexual Harassment," in Paludi, 73.

<sup>29</sup> Kathryn Quina, "The Victimizations of Women," in Paludi, 99.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Kimball, "Sex in the Twilight Zone: Catherine MacKinnon's Crusade," *The New Criterion*, Oct. 1993, 11.

<sup>31</sup> MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 82.

<sup>32</sup> MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, 146.

<sup>33</sup> *New York Times* Dec. 15, 1991.

In the same vein, Naomi Wolf, the author of *The Beauty Myth*, asserts that "cultural representation of glamorized degradation has created a situation among the young in which boys rape and girls get raped as *a normal course of events*."<sup>34</sup> Susan Brownmiller echoes her in saying that "from prehistoric times to the present . . . rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear."<sup>35</sup>

Andrea Dworkin enlarges the "rape culture" even more: "The traditional flowers of courtship are the traditional flowers of the grave, delivered to the victim before the kill. The cadaver is dressed up and made up and laid down and ritually violated and consecrated to an eternity of being used."<sup>36</sup> Thus is rape comparable to death. Not surprisingly, then, "the annihilation of a woman's personality, individuality, will, character, is prerequisite to male sexuality. . . . Male sexuality, drunk on its intrinsic contempt for . . . women's lives, can run wild, hunt down random victims. . . ."<sup>37</sup> Thus, she believes that injuring women is an integral part of men's sexual pleasure,<sup>38</sup> and (perhaps therefore) declares that sex acts between men and women are contrary to nature.<sup>39</sup>

With such pronouncements, it is small wonder that women, especially young college students, are swept up by feminist hysteria. Thus are the walls of classrooms and dormitories sprinkled with graffiti warning women of the danger from males which lurks around them: "Sex is death," "Sex is rape,"<sup>40</sup> "Share your story with other women," "Sing with lesbians," "Redefine 'sexy' within self-love as a women," "Love a woman."<sup>41</sup>

Panic and fear result. At Antioch College's freshman orientation classes, women are admonished to always look under any car they get into, and to carry a whistle on their keychains at all times (not to mention the whistles they have in their showers).<sup>42</sup> Antioch College was also one of the first to enact rules for sexual activity in which every step must be verbalized audibly and precisely: "May I sit down next to you?," "May I put my hand on your shoulder?," "Can I put my arms around you now?," "May I kiss you now?," "Do you mind if I unbutton. . . ?"<sup>43</sup>

In spite of such draconian restrictions, one instance of "sexual assault" has been recorded at Antioch College. There is, however, some disagreement as to exactly what happened. One witness said the perpetrator had kissed his victim; another said he had danced "too closely." He was suspended from the college, but has since been allowed to return. He finished a compulsory sex therapy course, and had his statement of self-criticism published in the campus newspaper: "I . . . am guilty as charged. The offense occurred shortly before one o'clock Saturday morning while dancing. It happened without her audible verbal agreement. I feel terrible." One of his professors commented that his confession "has the charm of the Moscow Trials."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 167.

<sup>35</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam, 1975), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Andrea Dworkin, *Letters from a War Zone* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988), 14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Crichton, 54.

<sup>39</sup> Matussek, 152.

<sup>40</sup> Roiphe, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Matussek, 152, 158.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>43</sup> *Heterodoxy*, Sept., 1993, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Matussek, 158, 160 *passim*.

Such programming of all sexual activity, however, takes the unexpectedness out of relationships between the sexes and renders courtship a nonentity. As Camille Paglia points out, pursuit and seduction are the essence of sexuality.<sup>45</sup> Further, she believes that "part of the sizzle of sex comes from the danger of sex,"<sup>46</sup> and "aggression and eroticism are deeply intertwined. Hunt, pursuit, and capture are biologically programmed into male sexuality."<sup>47</sup> Sex is inherently dangerous—for both women and men: "it leaves one exposed to everything from euphoria to crashing disappointment."<sup>48</sup>

Such arguments, however, would seem to be lost on America's female college students. For years now, they have been marching every spring to "take back the night." At various points in the campus march, the participants stop and gather around a microphone. Then one of the "survivors," or even a friend of a survivor, "speaks out." Often, she is a survivor of "date rape." She might have had too much to drink (alcohol plays a crucial role in date rape), and went up to his room where the "rape" occurred. (Thus, verbal consent to any sexual activity is not valid grounds to proceed if the woman is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or prescription medicine.) As the psychologist Mary P. Koss observed, "The law punishes the drunk driver who kills a pedestrian, and likewise, the law needs to be there to protect the drunk woman from the driver of the penis."<sup>49</sup>

The testimonies offered during these "take back the night" marches offer the "victims" the chance to break their "silence," as they put it. Indeed, voicelessness is a central leit-motif of the marches. As Katie Roiphe observes:

"Built into the rhetoric about silence is the image of a malign force clamping its hands over the mouths of victims. This shadowy force takes on many names—patriarchy, men, society. . . . It is the presumption of silence that gives these women the right to speak. . . . Silence is the passkey to the empowering universe of the disempowered. Having been silenced on today's campus is the ultimate source of authority."<sup>50</sup>

Thus does declaring oneself "silenced" become a source of power. At Harvard, one woman claimed having been a date rape victim, even though she admitted that she had not resisted the "rapist" physically or verbally. She said that using the word "rape" is an "accusation, a charge, a crime. Here is the power of my voice, finally." In the process, she can take back the power she thinks men have traditionally had on women, in addition to putting them on the defensive.<sup>51</sup>

Women, such as this Harvard University student, are no longer bound by the traditional definition of rape: forced sexual intercourse against the expressed will of the victim. As with sexual harassment, rape (including, of course, date rape) is now defined as including "verbal harassment and inappropriate innuendo,"<sup>52</sup> in addition to intoxication, as noted above. Indeed, the concept of verbal harassment or "coercion" that is prevalent in workshops and counseling sessions includes *verbal arguments*, not just verbal threats of force.

<sup>45</sup> Camille Paglia, *Sex, Art, and American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 59.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>48</sup> Crichton, 54.

<sup>49</sup> As quoted in *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Roiphe, 34–35.

<sup>51</sup> Roger Landry, "The Politics of Rape," *Campus*, Winter 1992, 14–15.

<sup>52</sup> As quoted in *Ibid.*, 14. (This definition is from Swarthmore College's student training manual.)

Again, such parameters imply that women are weaker mentally and emotionally than men.

Moreover, such an expanded definition enabled Mary P. Koss to assert that one in four female college students has been the victim of a rape or attempted rape in a study she conducted for *Ms.* magazine.<sup>53</sup> However, a professor of social welfare at the University of California at Berkeley, Neil Gilbert, has questioned the validity of Koss's statistic. He says that she herself defined what constituted rape instead of the people taking part in the study. Moreover, he points out that 42 percent of the women in the study who were identified as rape victims later had sexual relations with the men who had supposedly raped them.<sup>54</sup> He thinks a more realistic rape victim statistic is one in 1,000.<sup>55</sup> (The feminist Susan Faludi, however, has disputed this claim by saying that the one-in-1,000 figure is based on rapes and attempted rapes in a six-month period and that the one-in-four figure represents the number of rapes since a college-age woman turned 14.<sup>56</sup>)

In addition, Gilbert also takes issue with the wording of the questions in the Koss survey. One of the questions used to define rape was "Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man gave you alcohol or drugs?"<sup>57</sup> This inclusion of intoxication in the definition of date rape negates the free will of college women. Should they not be responsible for deciding if they want to use alcohol or drugs? Even if a man offers them to her, is it not her decision whether to accept them? Does this not suggest that women are so helpless and naive that they can't be trusted to conduct themselves responsibly? As Camille Paglia points out, "the only solution to date rape is female self-awareness and self-control. A woman's number one line of defense is herself."<sup>58</sup>

All these new, increasingly wide definitions of rape underscore the difference between "stranger rape," and "acquaintance rape" or "date rape." Stranger rape is clearcut; for example when a man breaks into a woman's apartment and forces her to have sex. Acquaintance rape is nebulous. First of all, the parties involved know each other; thus consent and refusal are harder to determine. As Ernest van den Haag notes:

"The victim may consent to sexual play but resist going all the way. She may communicate (or *make*) her decision only at the last moment. Her partner may feel that the liberties she permitted implied her consent. She may feel that she made her unwillingness clear, but that clarity may emerge only in retrospect. The idea of some feminists that anything but an explicit verbal statement must be taken as a refusal is patently absurd. Genuine willingness or unwillingness can be conveyed by non-verbal means, and is usually not hard to discern. But sometimes the man cannot be certain, because his partner is not. [S]ome risk of actual or claimed rape is unavoidable, as long as people want privacy. And, without privacy, how will they find out whether they care for one another (*sic*), or are attracted? The very situations that make rape and claims of rape possible are indispensable to developing intimacy."<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Crichton, 54.

<sup>54</sup> Neil Gilbert, "Realities and Mythologies of Rape," *Society* 29, (May-June, 1992).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Susan Faludi, "Whose Hype?," *Newsweek*, Oct. 25, 1993, 61.

<sup>57</sup> Gilbert, "Realities and Mythologies of Rape."

<sup>58</sup> Paglia, 53.

<sup>59</sup> Ernest van den Haag, "Thinking About Rape," *The American Spectator*, April, 1992, 56.

Intimacy, however, is what many feminists—the gender warriors<sup>60</sup>—disdain. Rather, in a throwback to Victorian times, they want to preclude it. Indeed, the parallels between the rhetoric of Victorian women and modern-day feminists is striking. Consider the following exhortations to present-day female college students:

“Since you cannot tell who has the potential for rape by simply looking, be on your guard with every man.”<sup>61</sup>

“Do not put yourself in vulnerable situations.”<sup>62</sup>

“Are you hearing *love* when your boyfriend is saying *sex*?”<sup>63</sup>

“Isolation is the best protection.”<sup>64</sup>

“Especially with a recent acquaintance, women should insist on going only to public places such as restaurants and movie theaters.”<sup>65</sup>

Compare the foregoing injunctions with the following passages from Victorian manners guides:

“Never join in any rude plays, that will subject you to being kissed or handled in any way by gentlemen. Do not suffer your hand to be held or squeezed without showing it displeases you by instantly withdrawing it . . . sit not with another in a place that is too narrow . . . let not your eagerness to see anything induce you to place your head close to another person’s. These, and many other little points of delicacy and refinement, deserve to be made fixed habits, . . . heightening the respect of all who approach you, and operating as an almost invisible though a very impenetrable fence, keeping off the vulgar familiarity and that desecration of the person that has so often led to vice.”<sup>66</sup>

“The more attractive his exterior, the more dangerous he is as a companion for a young and inexperienced girl, the more likely to dazzle and bewilder her mind . . . He can with a subtlety almost beyond the power of her detection, change her ordinary views of things, confuse her judgements, and destroy her rational confidence in discriminating the powers of her own mind.”<sup>67</sup>

Such “protection” of women, whether in Victorian times or today, is an “endless prolongation of childhood . . . endless coddling and pampering of people who are in fact adult.” “[It] is another paternalistic way of turning back the clock . . . There is a fundamental prudery about sex in all this.” “It is the revival of the old Protestant ethic, which repressed both sex and emotion as part of the Puritan bequest.” “[C]urrent feminist ideology . . . represents not progressive thinking but a throwback to pre-Sixties conventionalism, rigid, narrow, and puritanical.”<sup>68</sup> In this sense it converges with Islamic fundamentalism. As

<sup>60</sup> Christina Hoff Sommers’ term. She is the author of *Who Stole Feminism?*, Simon and Schuster, 1994.

<sup>61</sup> Gilbert, “Realities and Mythologies of Rape.”

<sup>62</sup> “Acquaintance Rape: Is Dating Dangerous?” Rockville, Md.: American College Health Association, 1987.

<sup>63</sup> “Ten Ridiculous Ideas That Will Make a Mother Out of You.” Oklahoma City: Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma, 1987.

<sup>64</sup> Roiphe, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Robin Warshaw, *I Never Call It Rape* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 153.

<sup>66</sup> Mrs. John Farrar, *The Young Lady’s Friend* (New York: Samuel S. and William Wood, 1857), 263.

<sup>67</sup> T. S. Arthur, *Advice to Young Ladies* (Boston: Phillips and Sampson, 1848), 151.

<sup>68</sup> Paglia, 67, 63, 30, 29.



one Jordanian member of parliament remarked, "It is a well-known fact that putting men and women in the same room is like mixing benzine and fire."<sup>69</sup>

The parallel with Islam is further evident in feminist challenges to men, such as "Cut it out or cut it off," or the Lorena Bobbitt case, in which a woman cut off her husband's penis because of alleged sexual harassment and assault. Indeed, feminist supporters of Lorena Bobbitt transformed the V-for-victory sign into a symbol of solidarity by making scissor-like motions with their fingers. As the executive vice-president of the Vienna, Virginia Women's Center stated, "Violence is done to women continuously and pervasively. And this is a retaliatory act of great dramatic value, where a woman has returned, retaliated in a way that is equally as violent and dramatic as the violence done unto her."<sup>70</sup> Thus, we have what Daniel Wattenberg calls "*sharia* feminism," because under Islamic *sharia* law, a thief's hand is cut off.

As Kenneth Minogue has observed, feminists "are reinventing the harem" because they work young women up into hysterical mistrust of men.<sup>71</sup> Camille Paglia echoes this view in saying "What feminists are asking for is for men to be castrated, to make eunuchs out of them."<sup>72</sup> (Although she meant this statement figuratively, in the above context it becomes quite literal.) Indeed, feminists have been successful in playing upon the guilt of the "malestream": men have become wimps who, in trying to appease feminists, have emasculated themselves. This is ironic because academic feminism has been financed by male-oriented universities. Moreover, it is itself a product of Western culture; its scholarly development would not have been possible outside the "patriarchal" Western tradition. As Judith Grant notes, "feminist theory [was] captured by the patriarchal ideas it sought to oppose. . . . It reunited [woman] with a notion of subjective experience which is where "she" had been all along under patriarchy."<sup>73</sup>

Feminism, with its cult of victimization, oppression, and survival, is not only desexing women, but undermining them as well. With its reactionary rhetoric, it is projecting an image of weakness and manipulability. This is in direct contrast to women's dominance in world mythology, and, it can be argued, their dominance over men. That is to say, women's sexual powers are enormous, and men have known it throughout history. Consider the love-sick poets Sappho and Catullus in contradistinction to Helen, Circe, Calypso, and Cleopatra.<sup>74</sup>

No less a feminist than Betty Friedan has written that "obsession with rape, even offering Band-Aids to its victims, is a kind of wallowing in that victim state, that *impotent rage*, that *sterile polarization* (italics added)."<sup>75</sup> Impotence, rage, sterility, polarization. These key words serve as both a description of modern-day feminism and a condemnation. As the novelist Joan Didion wrote a long time ago, "the feminist movement "is no longer a

<sup>69</sup> As quoted in Kenneth Minogue, "The Goddess That Failed," *National Review*, Nov. 18, 1991, 48.

<sup>70</sup> As quoted in Daniel Wattenberg, "*Sharia* Feminists," *The American Spectator*, Dec., 1993, 60.

<sup>71</sup> Minogue, 48.

<sup>72</sup> Paglia, 63.

<sup>73</sup> Judith Grant, *fundamental feminism: Contesting the Core Concepts of Feminist Theory* (New York): Routledge, 1993), 31.

<sup>74</sup> Paglia, 34.

<sup>75</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Second Stage* (New York: Summit Books, 1981), 362. Friedan has been vilified by feminists for departing from the "party line" on such issues.

cause but a symptom.”<sup>76</sup> Further, she condemned segments of the movement for creating “women too sensitive for the difficulties of adult life, women unequipped for reality, and grasping at the movement as a rationale for denying that reality.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> As quoted in Roiphe, 26.

<sup>77</sup> Joan Didion, *The White Album* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1979), 116.

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