Analyzing Contemporary Transnational Feminism Through a Critique of FEMEN

Hajar Hasani
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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
Who is FEMEN?

FEMEN ideology
Sextremism
Atheism
Feminism
FEMEN’s anti-religion, anti-Islamic stance

What are the implications of FEMEN defining itself as a secular organization in light of efforts to construct an inclusive global feminist movement?

How does the current divide between religion/secularism impact FEMEN’s stances?

Where can feminism within an Islamic context be placed on the spectrum of global feminism?

Cartoon created by a FEMEN supporter & tweeted by Inna Shevchenko 8/23/2013
FEMEN activists burning *tawhid* flag which symbolizes the oneness of God in Islam in front of a mosque in Paris

Femen’s ‘naked prayer’: Is this effective activism or just offensive?

Femen protesters stage topless demonstration in front of Tunisian Embassy in France to support activists on trial.

From Facebook Page “Muslim Women Against FEMEN”
Theory Empowered Activism

- How can theory help us build a more inclusive and effective transnational feminist movement?

- Examples:
  - Chandra Mohanty criticizing Western feminist scholarship
  - Lila Abu Lughod questioning the idea of “saving the Muslim woman” & the denial of agency

- Complicating ideas of subjectivity, agency, cultural relativism
**Theory Empowered Activism cont’d**

- larger theoretical frameworks in place have assisted in marginalizing the perspectives of minority groups of women including Muslim women.

- fundamentally changing the way that we think about certain issues is when progression in the realm of women’s rights can begin.

- research and an understanding of theory will lead to more effective transnational activism.

- a call for academia to increase accessibility and a call for a greater embrace of scholar-activists amongst feminists.
Stay Tuned…

Spring 2013: Academic Panel Featuring Speakers Discussing the Commodification of the Veil in Popular Media

- Why is there such an obsession and how has it been used to mark Muslim women as oppressed but then co-opted as a fashion statement in the West?

- How is Muslim women’s subjectivity defined through consumption in a neo-imperial and global capitalist context?


