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The Feminists Have a Terrible Identity Crisis

Two years ago, the feminists marched into Washington, D.C. under the banner "The Year of the Woman." They made confident predictions that they were inventing not only a new kind of government and a new kind of Democrat, but even a new kind of woman. Hillary Rodham Clinton was the exemplar.

The bloom faded fast. The American people have had a good look at having our country controlled by the "politics of meaning" as defined by Hillary Rodham Clinton, Janet Reno, Donna Shalala, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Joycelyn Elders, and they said "No thanks" in the 1994 elections. The feminists' radical goals and extremist pronouncements are too far out of the mainstream of America. Democratic candidates didn't want either Bill or Hillary Clinton to campaign in their districts. Feminist candidates of both parties were trounced at the polls. Replacing them at center stage are a half dozen attractive, conservative, pro-life Republican women who were newly elected to Congress.

When Hillary Rodham Clinton moved into the White House, she proclaimed herself as a career lawyer and a fulltime White House official and policymaker, with her own separate White House staff. The female reporters rallied round and elevated her to the status of new feminist icon. She was the symbol, we were told, of the changing of the guard from the now-obsolete model of homemaker First Lady Barbara Bush to the new model of Presidential Partner.

The feminists' demand that we accept a new kind of marital and political relationship for the President and First Lady was always based on a myth. Hillary Rodham Clinton was never an independent career woman as, for example, is Elizabeth Dole. Mrs. Clinton's so-called prestige and income from the Rose law firm in Little Rock were based on fees from clients who were getting business or financial favors as a result of Bill Clinton's position as an Arkansas state

official or from the judges and bureaucrats he appointed. In other states, there are unpleasant names for that kind of cozy relationship.

With great fanfare, Hillary Rodham Clinton assumed control of the premier domestic issue, health care. The lawsuit filed by the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons proved that she deliberately and blatantly violated federal law by running her Health Care Task Force and Working Group in secret, in order to conceal the identity of persons who had provable conflicts of interest. After the court ordered the release of the Health Care documents, her Justice Department lawyers had to admit that they had lied to the court for a year and a half about the identity of the persons in her Working Group. If she had been anyone other than the First Lady, she would have followed Bernard Nussbaum and Webster Hubbell out of Washington.

Hillary Rodham Clinton's diehard defenders complain that the men who criticize her are misogynists or troglodytes or sexists or male chauvinist pigs (take your pick of epithets) who feel threatened by a "strong" woman. That's a childish argument. Nobody ever called Barbara Bush a "weak" woman, yet she enjoyed universal admiration.

The Pendulum Swings Back

The rise of the pro-family movement over the last two decades has given feminism a terrible identity crisis. Feminism has no happy role-models. Its ideology is sterile and its spokespersons are bitter.

Newspapers in the 1990s are full of stories with headlines such as "Superwoman goes home," "Working mothers jilt their jobs for home and family," "Young women trade jobs for marriage," and "Return of the sole breadwinner as fastest-growing family unit." One-third of preschool children now live in an "Ozzie and Harriet" family.

The very notion of a "mommy track" was denounced by feminists when it was suggested by Felice Schwartz in a 1989 *Harvard Management Review*, but it has now become a respectable career option for smart women. The Robert Half employment agency reports that 82 percent of professional women prefer a career with flexible hours and slower career advancement. Whereas 52 percent of mothers are employed, only 13 percent want to be.

Demographers are speculating about the causes of these changes: lower interest rates on homes, increased income taxes, the high costs of maintaining a second job (car, wardrobe, restaurants, etc.), daycare diseases, and the opportunities for telecommunication in the home.

Human nature just might be a factor, too. Except for the unfortunate women who were caught up in the feminist foolishness of the 1970s, most women just don't want to be liberated from home, husband, family and children.

The *Providence Journal* published a three-page analysis called "The Fading of a Movement." It quoted the consensus of Rhode Island feminists that today they have "not many women, not much movement." The aging feminists complain bitterly that young career women refuse to be called "feminists." They won't accept what they call the "F-word" because it "has come to stand for strident, argumentative, angry, humorless." They say, "It's your fault I can't have babies because I waited too long or took birth control too long or whatever. You told us we could have it all. Now we see we can't."

The feminists launched their movement in the early 1970s by proclaiming women as victims, laying a guilt trip on men, and demanding retribution. They built their ranks by a technique called the consciousness-raising session, in which feminists would come together and exchange horror stories about how badly men had treated them. Grievances are like weeds: if you water them, they will grow. With feminist nurturing, little grievances quickly grow into big grievances.

But you can't fool all the people all the time and, in the process, the American people have had their own consciousness raised. They discovered that the feminist movement is both socially destructive and personally disappointing. A *Time/CNN* poll confirmed that 64 percent of women do **not** want to call themselves feminist.

Fake Feminist "Equality" in the Military

When the U.S. military sent nursing mothers of six- and eight-week-old babies out to fight the Gulf War in 1991, the American people recognized this as the

ridiculous result of the feminist dogma that women can do anything men can do. Even Sally Quinn accused the feminist movement of having become a fringe cause, anti-male, anti-child, and anti-family.

The feminist demand for "equality" in the U.S. military is a sham based on quotas and gender norming (which means faking the test scores). The 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces found that, in the scoring of physical tests at the U.S. Naval Academy, a "B" grade for women in the 1.5 mile run is roughly equivalent to the "D" grade for men. The women's "A" grade in push-ups is the same as a "C" grade for men. In the field obstacle course, men jump over a wall two feet higher than women have to jump.

In the Marines training regimen at Parris Island, males run 1-1/2 miles in 13-1/2 minutes at the beginning of training, while women run 3/4 of a mile in 7-1/2 minutes. At the conclusion of training, men run 3 miles in 28 minutes, while women run 1-1/2 miles in 15 minutes. Only one woman out of 100 can meet a physical standard achieved by 60 out of 100 men.

At any given time, up to 10 percent of Navy women are pregnant, and the figure is 10 to 15 percent in the Army. Since pregnant servicepersons must be kept within six hours of a medical facility, this causes great disruption at the time of unit deployment. This year, women will comprise 20 percent of our Armed Services, so the pregnancy problem is bound to get worse.

Nearly every week we hear a new news story about Pentagon decisions to "open new slots" and "expand career opportunities" for women on ships and aircraft. Even the Marines have surrendered and announced that they will put women on warships, with commanders telling the press this will "give them more flexibility."

Anyone who understands human nature could have predicted the current significant drop in male enlistments; real men don't seek to serve in a feminized military. The number of men who say they are likely or very likely to join the military has dropped from a 1990 high of about 35 percent to about 25 percent.

Feminist Hypocrisy About Harassment

The feminists are now trying to revive the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings and rewrite their history (in the fashion of George Orwell's 1984). The American people should remind themselves of the lessons they learned during those dramatic hearings. The feminists engaged in a malicious attempt to destroy an honorable man without any proof or corroboration. The Thomas hearings taught the

American people that the feminist agenda is based on the notion that all men are guilty until proven innocent.

The Anita Hill foray onto the national stage also gave Americans a good look at feminist dishonesty. For 20 years, feminists have been demanding to be treated just like men, to be "one of the boys," to be assigned to combat jobs in the armed services, to be firefighters, to walk into men's locker rooms, and to gain entry to Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel. Then came Anita Hill crying "poor little me," the damsel in distress who pleaded for Big Brother Federal Government to defend her from the wolves in the workplace. Her theatrics were phony, all the more so because she was a lawyer fully capable of protecting herself if any harassment had happened.

The intensely ideological nature of the sexual harassment issue is shown by the way the feminists continue to support their political allies even when they are men whose own lifestyle involves unacceptable treatment of women (e.g., Bill Clinton and Ted Kennedy). It is irresistible to ponder the fix into which Paula Jones has put the feminists. It remains to be seen whether she will be able to convict Bill Clinton, but she has already convicted the feminists of hypocrisy and double standards.

Now the feminists are saying that Clinton should be considered innocent until he is proven guilty. Oh, really? Anita Hill has been traveling the college campus circuit expounding on her theory that a woman's accusations should be believed on their face, and we haven't heard any feminist repudiation of this extraordinary doctrine.

The feminists say Paula Jones shouldn't be believed because she "waited too long." But how long is too long? How can Paula's two-year wait be "too long" when Anita Hill waited ten years?

The feminists allege that Paula Jones should be disbelieved because her case is assisted by some of Bill Clinton's enemies. Well, well! Anita Hill was surrounded, promoted, and coached by feminists and liberals who had identifiably political motives to block the confirmation of Clarence Thomas as Supreme Court Justice. Anybody who attended the Thomas confirmation hearings would have seen the whole galaxy of feminists and liberals clustered around her and cheering, including the National Organization for Women, the National Abortion Rights League, and the staffs of Senators Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum.

Feminism's Fundamental Defects

Feminism is incompatible with the truth. It's based on the lie that American women are oppressed and mistreated, whereas in fact American women are the

most fortunate class of people who ever lived.

Feminism is incompatible with marriage and motherhood. Women's lib raised false expectations that young women could "have it all" right now. But while the feminists rejected motherhood, not many men changed their attitudes and babies didn't change at all. A *Wall Street Journal* study showed that 52 percent of successful women are divorced or unmarried, compared with only five percent of men.

Feminism is incompatible with human nature. The premise of the feminists is that God goofed in making us in two different sexes, and our laws should remedy His mistake. They've taken on an impossible task in trying to change human nature and the eternal differences between men and women. Despite feminist attempts to deny it, women do have a biological clock that influences their lives. I went to law school after I was 50 years old, but I'm glad I didn't have my six children after I was 50.

Feminism is incompatible with personal happiness. Its technique of identifying and exaggerating grievances produces a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude toward life as well as a disdain for traditional values and roles.

Feminist bitterness has been most eloquently explained by Anne Taylor Fleming in her new book *Motherhood Deferred*. She describes herself as part of the sisterhood of the infertile, a lonesome, babyless baby boomer now completely consumed by the longing for a child of her own. She wrote that she's tempted to shout out loud, "Hey, hey, Gloria, Germaine, Kate. Was your ideology worth the empty womb?"

This cry comes from a woman who, 20 years ago, proudly asserted her feminism, with all its cruel condescension of homemakers, and said in a CBS debate against me, "If I were pregnant now, I'd go out and have an abortion."

Feminists Love Big Brother Government

The feminists claim they want to be independent of men, that they never want to defer to a husband or to be financially dependent on a husband. On the Phil Donahue show, feminist Robin Morgan boasted, "We are becoming the men we once wanted to marry."

Don't believe their demands for independence! In fact, the feminists who proclaim their liberation from men always run to Big Brother Government as a replacement.

Need a job? Big Brother will get you an affirmative action quota position. You don't meet the physical requirements? Big Brother will gender-norm the test results and give you a higher score. Not satisfied with your salary? The Comparable Worth commission will order your employer to give you a raise. Want a

promotion? The Glass Ceiling commission will force your employer to give it to you.

Need time off to tend to a sick child? The Family Leave commission will arrange it for you. Need a babysitter for your child? A federally-funded daycare center will relieve you of the burden of caring for your child. Need an abortion? Universal health care will pay for it.

Want to punish your boss for some remarks you didn't like? The Sexual Harassment gestapo will give him a hard time. Not getting along with your husband? The Legal Services Corporation will get you a divorce. Want to punish your husband? The Violence Against Women agency will give you free housing while you accuse your husband of spousal "rape" and the local prosecutor will believe your story without corroboration.

Feminism is incompatible with common sense. The rejection of the family flies in the face of all human experience. The family is the proven best way for men and women to live together on this earth. A family provides people who care about us, a nest and a shelter from which we can face life's challenges. The family is the original and best department of health, education and welfare.

Faith, commitment, hard work, family, children and grandchildren still offer the most fulfillment, as well as our reach into the future. Feminism is no substitute for traditional marriage. Liberation is no substitute for fidelity. Political Correctness is no substitute for chivalry. Careers are no substitute for children and grandchildren.

Feminists Thrive on Your Tax Dollars

Despite the failure of the feminists, don't expect them to quietly fade away. They have become a potent force in politics because so many hold taxpayer-funded perches from which they continue to promote their agenda. You'll find them with well-paying jobs in government, in the media and in academia, where a handful of determined activists can do a lot of mischief. They are dominant in the Clinton Administration, where they strive to achieve through administrative orders, court rulings, and downright deception what they cannot achieve in the legislative process.

The big spending bill for elementary and secondary schools that passed Congress this year, S. 1513, includes a well-larded pork barrel for the radical feminists to put their people on the public payroll. The section is called "Equalization assistance, technical and other assistance regarding school finance equity." It is based on the spurious allegation that public schools are unfair to girls because they are subjected to various

"gender inequities" such as "less attention from classroom teachers." To remedy this alleged problem in the schools, a whole new industry called "gender equity" will now be financed by the taxpayers.

Twelve pages are devoted to the numerous purposes for which feminists are invited to apply for taxpayer funding: "technical assistance activities . . . the operation of centers . . . the convening of conferences . . . applied research and analysis designed to further knowledge and understanding of methods to achieve greater equity . . . grants to, or contracts or cooperative agreements with any public or private organization . . . the evaluation of curricula, textbooks and other educational materials to ensure the absence of gender stereotyping and bias."

The idea for this special-interest legislation originated in a report issued last year by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) purporting to show that classroom bias systematically undermines schoolgirls by depleting their confidence and self-esteem. This report caused newspaper headlines all over the country parroting the theme that "gender bias is shortchanging girls."

As pointed out by Christina Hoff Sommers in her new book, *Who Stole Feminism?*, the data used by the AAUW were never subjected to peer review and it was very difficult for reporters to inspect any of the AAUW material at all. Professor Sommers's book provides a mountain of documentation to prove that dozens of feminist allegations about discrimination are unscholarly, unscientific, and just plain untrue.

The complaint that teachers discriminate against girls because they call on boys more often than girls is ridiculous. The authors of those findings ignore the obvious gender difference that boys in school are "called on" because they are reprimanded more often than girls.

Our societal policy should be to let women make their own decisions about marriage vs. career without the interference of taxpayer-funded gender-equity federal busybodies. Trying to change human nature won't work, but the effort will waste a lot of taxpayers' money and mess up a lot of young women's lives.

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