

Riffat Hassan

1. "Fundamental Misunderstandings" claims to encompass "feminist debates on Islamism" in a global context but is, in fact, mainly about Algeria. The author does not offer any substantive reason why the observations she makes regarding Algeria can, or should, be considered relevant in other Muslim countries or societies.

2. The article has treated my pioneer work in feminist theology in Islam in a simplistic and reductionist way and has not offered a sound academic critique of my theological work.

3. Winter makes such sweeping generalizations as "I see all monotheistic religious texts as oppressive to women" and does not consider it necessary to justify these extremely debatable generalizations. While she rejects the views of scholars who think that religion in general, and Islam in particular, can be interpreted in a positive way, and calls these views "defensive" and "apologetic," she appears to consider her own atheistic perspective quite legitimate, if not self-evident.

4. Winter appears to have a positive view of the nongovernmental organization Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML), which has used my work extensively in its publications (mostly without my permission). It is interesting to note here that Marie Aimée Lucas, an Algerian woman who heads the organization, shares the author's atheistic perspective and, like her, is deeply biased against Islam. Although WLUML has managed to secure large funding from Western donors, this organization is suspect in the eyes of most Muslims, and its views are rejected by reputable Muslim scholars.

"Brief Comment on 'Fundamental Misunderstandings'", a response to "Fundamental Misunderstandings : Issues in Feminist Approaches to Islamism" by Bronwyn Winter, in *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 13, No. 1, Spring 2001, p. 46