

Abusive Tweets Raise Questions About, How Women are Really Viewed in Society

UK journalist and feminist campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez began receiving a barrage of online abuse after the Bank of England announced author Jane Austen would feature on the next £10 note – which had been the goal of her most recent campaign. She reported receiving around "50 abusive tweets an hour" with graphic rape and death threats, saying that she was made to feel 'under siege'.

A debate has ensued: Why was there such abhorrent abuse towards a woman who was standing up for the equality of women – A notion which is supposed to be part of the fabric of society?

After three waves of feminism, people maybe a little startled as to why such misogyny towards women still exists in 2013. Feminists may argue that we have come a long way but we will always have problems – However this still does not answer why such ugly manifestations of misogyny erupt today. Because despite the tireless work by the feminists for over a century now, (or more depending on when you think feminism started) we see consistently that women are not treated equally in the workplace, on the street. One in five women are still a victim of a sexual offense in the UK (Home Office, 2013) and equality in the workplace is still a distant dream. Why? The answer lies in the culture you see around you in liberal societies. If you observe a few billboards, TV adverts, the type of women in the media and entertainment – businesses across the board - you will see that it is the sexually appealing woman who is glorified and most celebrated, not the woman who achieves the most in public life. Whilst feminists have been busy fighting men in society, they forgot the real enemy – Capitalism, which has allowed businesses to glorify the objectified view of the woman, which is the real obstacle to worth and value for women in society. As Alex Bilmes, editor of a mainstream men's magazine admitted about women featured in his magazine, *"I could lie to you if you want and say we are interested in their brains as well. We are not. They are objectified"*.

This it may be hard to swallow, but the truth is to view a woman as a sexual commodity, is the norm in society over viewing her outside of her femininity for her potential and mind. To put an end to such abuse against women therefore, needs an end to such a view of women. Which means an end to the objectification of women under Capitalism, in the name of profit.

As the debate has developed as to how such abuse can be regulated, commentators have suggested a need to educate people with 'responsible' speech. But again, when women are commonly viewed as something to exploit from music to pornography, one can see how responsible ideas about women - forming the basis of responsible speech - Is what is absent across society. If the media, entertainment, beauty, fashion industries are all busy telling society it's the physical appeal of the woman that is most important, then do we not expect these ideas about women to be reflected in 'speech' in society?

Islam deals with all these dilemmas from the onset. There is no room for the woman to be viewed in a manner which damages her honour and standing in society. And the host of Islamic social rules ensure this – hijab conceals a woman's beauty, segregation stops the mixing of men and women, minimising the agitation to exploit women; and all forms of objectification of women in jobs and fields are forbidden. There is a harsh punishment for anyone who even slanders a woman wrongly, let alone harass her with abusive statements. This creates an environment where the ability for men to exploit or sexualise the woman in the public sphere is stopped dead in its tracks. This leaves ample room for the productive and healthy view of women in society to thrive - Which is as counterparts in society to cooperate with men, respected and valued.

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