



An open letter to Rakhi Kumar: You are no role model either

by Akynos Shekera (Notes) on Monday, April 29, 2013 at 10:15am

If you are reading this, please spread it on the internet like a disease. Spread it like a disease the way prohibition feminists and their cohorts do surrounding sex and sexuality, and a woman's right to use her body in the way she chooses. Thanks to Brittany for the edits and recommendations.

Dear Rakhi,

This is a long response to the article you recently wrote here ---> <http://shine.yahoo.com/beauty/open-letter-michelle-obama-beyonce-not-role-model-231900311.html>. I wanted to shorten it, but I see no way to address all the discrepancies in your article otherwise.

Your open letter to Michelle Obama was offensive and degrading to multi-faceted female role models everywhere. It also displayed a flagrant ignorance of sex workers and sex-positive feminists who refuse to be sexual victims, and are clear on their own sexuality. I am honestly quite tired of reading the writing of women like you who believe they are doing the world good by spreading their propaganda against sex, aimed at women who do not live up to their utopia; women like you who really are victims of this patriarchal and sex-negative culture and cannot recognize it. You create a dichotomy between virgins and sluts that is shameful, as it pits women against each other - instead of recognizing that each one of us are unique individuals worthy of love and respect.

It's one thing to attack Beyonce, but to discredit her many achievements in the entertainment industry by bringing down an entire group of [other] women is another. You see, the thing is that I am a sex worker, and a proud one at that. I openly discuss, organize and fight for the rights of myself and the men, women, trans persons, queer, lesbian and gay and bi-sexual people involved in this industry. And like Michelle and her daughters, myself and my comrades are sometimes mothers, daughters, sisters, friends and role models. To add to that I am a strong minded, self reliant, creative creature who has bred two well rounded children. My children read way above grade level, studied a second language, were on the honor roll, been working since they were 14; volunteered in their community and now they are on college tours. They did all this with their bad-ass Whore mother at their side. You dare bring up Beyonce's costumes as something degrading only to be seen in brothels and strip clubs? It was strip clubs that helped me support my children for the majority of their younger years.

The music industry is no more misogynist than your degrading, ignorant comments. I am happy to see Beyonce become so comfortable in her sexuality that she can now step on stage wearing a sheer bodysuit with nipples showing [sic]. Personally I would have loved for the bodysuit to actually have been sheer. That particular costume is the worst use of sparkle I've ever seen. The design is tacky, it makes Beyonce's breasts look like burnt pancakes. And what appears to be glitter on her nipples is a disgrace to the women in the burlesque community who would have put that glitter to better use. But I am not here to say Beyonce should fire her stylist (though it is highly recommended.) Nor am I here to defend her as being one of the best live entertainers this generation will have.

I am however questioning your connection to your own sexuality and your inability to grasp the concept that sex not only sells, it's a powerful tool. A tool that should not be condemned or vilified but instead embraced and understood. Your piece was incredibly difficult for me to read. It comes off as the rant of a bitter sexually displaced woman who has the gall to split the sisterhood by telling one group of women why they should look down on another group of women.

Yes, variations of Beyonce's costume can be found in sex trade establishments world wide. But what is wrong with that exactly? For the record, and I am going to go out on a limb here, most women involved in these sex trades are there by choice. They are making their own rules and following their own feelings and dreams, regardless of whether a manager is present. Women like myself who are involved in the sex-for-sale business are not victims of this industry, we run this shit.

Another thing in your article that just boils my blood is the [sex-trafficking statistic](#) you threw out. Not merely because the number you presented is actually a myth fabricated by right-wing, sex deprived, patriarchal martyrs and angry prohibition first wave feminists. These erroneous

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statistics have been disproved by actual thorough research many times. By repeating these statistics you carelessly, and dangerously, give women the impression that somehow expressing their sexuality freely puts them at risk of being disrespected and abused. Your statements suggest to me that you: a) Watch too many movies that do not accurately represent sex workers, adult entertainers and women, and b) Watch too many news programs who follow the Fox news format. If you don't know what I mean by that, please ask someone. I also want to enlighten you, women are sexual beings that men respond to inappropriately. They need to appreciate our goddess sexuality without treating us like mere objects for their trivial uses. And it matters not what we wear or what our profession is. We get cat-called, targeted, sexually harassed, sexually abused, raped and experience so many acts of violence against us. The common denominator? No, not that we all dress provocatively, but that we all have vaginas. Quite frankly I'm concerned that you have unconsciously adopted a rapist mentality.

Just a thought: you'd be better off writing articles about women who are in seemingly socially acceptable relationships with men who are abusing them. Women are more likely to face abuse from their lovers, husbands, boyfriends, other male family members and friends, than from a man they met through the sex industry.

I also have to go a little further and ask you to never write another article that simplistically connects drug addiction to those involved in sex trade. Many musicians (think Whitney Houston, Janis Joplin, Amy Winehouse), actors, (think Charlie Sheen, John Belushi and Dorothy Dandridge). and athletes (Darryl Strawberry, Dwight Gooden, Chris Benoit), have all suffered from problems with drug addiction. Drug abuse can affect anyone, at anytime, in any business trade. By associating drug addiction with sex workers you further stigmatize those suffering from the disease of addiction as well as sex workers who do not abuse drugs.

And a little more enlightenment: the women in this trade are quite educated. I personally hold two degrees, one in computer science and the other in the field of sexuality/sociology. I know many Phd's and master degree holders who are or once were, escorts, strippers, dommes, erotic masseuses and so forth. Did you know there was a [sex worker in Brazil](#), by the name of Gabriela Leite, who even ran for office? Or one of my favorite former sex workers, Dr. Brooke Magnanti - a scientist who worked as a high end prostitute while working on her Phd. Watch her flawless interview here ---> https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=jZFDBkn9KB4

I would respect you if you were writing an article about women who allow themselves to be used for sex, instead of owning their sexuality. By 'owning', I mean using it as the powerful force it is and keeping themselves independent through the wise use of it. Instead you chime in on the rhetoric that a sexually liberated female is a deviant, that this attitude would only be embraced by a less intelligent minded woman, who would be better off aspiring to the bourgeois ideals of a sexually repressed culture. A culture that is anti-femininity and disconnected from the feminine embrace. A culture that is rape-ridden and pulls women away from their innate wild nature. One that does not allow each woman to be an individual with an independent mind. Your voice reminds me of the reason why [Slut Walks](#) take place globally. Your voice is a constant reminder that we live in a world where sexual liberation is perceived as some worthless, uncontrollable act, instead of being embraced as a powerful act of femininity, an indicator of independence. An indicator of a woman who will not be victimized by sex.

You are no role model either. Your well-intentioned article reveals your sex-negative and moralistic views. Sex-negative because you don't accept that a woman could bare breasts or sell sex and be a strong and positive female ideal. You are not a role model either because you're blind to the ways in which you are a victim of patriarchy. To me, it is women like you who are the reason none of us can truly be whomever we want. You have a narrow view on what it is to be a woman. Women like you are blinded to the fact that sex worker rights are also a fight for your independent rights as a female human being. You believe that a woman with brains needs to be

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deliberately displaying one's sexuality is a dehumanizing mindless act. And when I hear of read these pompous beliefs that come from another woman it just makes me shake my head in sadness. How can you be so naive as to believe that there is only one type of woman who makes this world positive, who sets trends and inspires? How can you be so ignorant as to disrespect and disregard the many women like me who fight for women like you? How dare you act as if the whole range of female role models can be wrapped in the little ball of your narrow beliefs. I dare you to open your mind.

-Akynos

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Miriam Ben-Dor

Monday, April 29 at 11:03am · Like · 1



Amie Ziner Oh. My. Goddess. Akynos, I love you. That is a magnificent piece of writing, and that narrow-minded victim of patriarchy author got S. E. R. V. E. D., thankyouverymuch !